

Abstract of a habilitation theses

Uncivil groups and the regulation of public space

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To a bigger or lesser extent, incivility and disorder have always been associated with urban public space. Yet, how are these phenomena defined, treated and addressed in a society which only has a limited experience with them? This manuscript answers the question with a case from the Czech Republic during its transition period from communism to a market-based liberal democracy. The book analyses the discourses surrounding incivility and disorder in public space in the 1990-2015 period, focusing on particular groups placed on the uncivil pole of the grid of civil culture. As begging, homelessness, drug use and other phenomena had been all but absent in the streets of pre-1989 Czech cities, the post-1989 society in transformation had to find ways of framing these phenomena and incorporating them in the public discourse. The analysis shows that the steep rise of incivility policing across the period was related to the polluted images of three major groups – homeless people, Roma minority and so-called “unadaptable citizens”. The book argues that the waves of moral panics associated with these groups and the regulatory policies ranging from drinking bans to bans on sitting and picnicking co-acted in defining the core values of the transforming society and inscribing them into its public spaces.

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