

Counter-public during the Corona Pandemic - A Network Study

Critical situations require a high level of social cooperation to manage them. We have been experiencing this worldwide since 2019 with the Corona pandemic outbreak, which required social cooperation and solidarity defined by policy measures to manage its effects. The acceptance and voluntary adherence to these measures are largely dependent on the extent to which the population trusts in the truthfulness of expert opinions and the government. Questioning expert knowledge and doubting the government's decisions can cause individuals not to act in solidarity and thus endanger the security of vulnerable groups. Online media offer a space for expressing criticism and doubts in a time- and cost-efficient manner and making them available to a broad mass of potential consumers. The resulting discourse spaces could promote the emergence of a networked counter-public. During the Corona pandemic, it could be observed that, in addition to gatherings in public spaces, collectives and performances also appear in various media formats. In this context, media are a relevant factor for opinion formation and networking of individuals and groups. Whether this counter-public is controlled by individual actors or it is a matter of network-like structures is not yet known. Therefore, in this project we would like to look into the question whether the participants of protests against the Corona measures form a counter-public and what the underlying structure looks like. For this purpose, we will focus on the analysis of the media on the internet that are particularly frequently used by the counter-public, since the processes for the formation of a counter-public mostly take place via social media. With the help of a content analysis of the information shared in the media, we will first take a closer look into research field. Based on the insights gained from this, we will use researched keywords to take a closer look at the interactions between individuals and groups in one of therefore used social media platforms . The focus is on the structures of the counter-public.