



# Wie fühlt sich Demokratie an: Soziologie in Zeiten der gesellschaftlichen Polarisierung

**Dr.<sup>in</sup> Elisabeth Becker-Topkara**

Universität Heidelberg | Max-Weber-Institut für Soziologie

## **The Moving Poles of Polarisation: Migration, Minorities, and the Civil-Uncivil Divide in Europe**

This talk draws from over two years of ethnographic work in European mosques in order to explore the intersections of contemporary polarisations in Europe: specifically those perceived between Europe and migration, and Europe and Muslims. Drawing on a framework of a civil/uncivil divide, it at once traces the transformation of those who migrated as guestworkers or postcolonial migrants into Muslims, and also the intersection of these identifications, in which the categories of the migrant and Muslim become collapsed. Finally, it traces the processes of creating civil/uncivil distinctions on the backdrop of the Jewish experience in Europe, in which an civil/uncivil divide animated not only the creation of sociocultural and political boundaries but extreme violence. Bringing 20th century Jewish thought and experience to bear on the enduring challenges faced by Europe, it illuminates the moving poles of polarisation animated by the notion of (in)civility: shifting from the so-called Jewish Question and the so-called Muslim Question to the Question of Europe in a time of deepening political divides, uncertainty, and war.

Elisabeth Becker-Topkara is assistant professor/Freigeist fellow at the Max-Weber-Institute of Sociology, Heidelberg University. Elisabeth's research centers on the cultural construction and contestation of borders and boundaries. She explores the experiences and place-making practices of religious, racial, and ethnic minorities – Muslims and Jews in particular – in both Europe and the United States. Elisabeth has contributed to sociological debates on how migration and pluralism shape contemporary societies. She is the author of *Mosques in the Metropolis: Incivility, Caste and Contention in Europe* (University of Chicago Press).

**Dienstag, 24. Mai 2022, 17 Uhr**  
**Universität Wien, HS6 Franz König Saal**

Koordination: Anna Durnova & Petra Dirnberger  
Institut für Soziologie, Rooseveltplatz 2, 1090 Wien