„*Undeutsche* – racism as social practice in Medieval Prussia and Livonia"

The entire region east of the river Elbe has been affected heavily by the comprehensive settlement process called *deutsche Ostsiedlung* from the 12th century on. It led to drastic changes in demographics, culture and language and enabled and accompanied the Baltic Crusades, the conquest of Prussia and Livonia by the Scandinavian troops and by the Teutonic Order and the subsequent establishment of a state-like administrative structure. Prussia, the area of today's Polish voivodship Warmia-Masuria and the oblast Kaliningrad, was occupied and governed by the Teutonic Order between the early 13th century and the Reformation. Livonia, roughly covering today's Latvia and Lithuania, was governed by the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order, while Estonia was governed first as a Danish duchy (1206-1346), then also by the Order. In all of these cases, forced Christianization was followed by political domination and the establishment of German speaking elites particularly in the towns. Baltic and Slavic languages and religions disappeared. While the settlement processes originally had led to mostly peaceful processes of acculturation, the forced Christianization and establishment of centralized administrations quickly led to conflicts with local populations, which in return legitimized oppressive forms of government and a gap between the Slavic speaking resident populations and the German speaking immigrant elites. Already in the first period of Crusading, the category "Undeutsche" was created and used until the Early Modern period for social stratification, exclusion from guilds and networks, and oppression. This term is thus the most significant angle from which the construction of categories of social exclusion can be analyzed: was it based on religion, language, culture or other factors? Was it a racist category? Was it hereditary, and thus signifying a genealogical and biological "essence"? And which were the mechanisms of exclusion, the social practices connected to this category? A particular focus for all of these is the question of religion – the forced or voluntary adoption of Christianity, Crusading propaganda, and religious hybridity as a form of resistance, all of these underly the category "Undeutsche".

The societies created by these events were at the heart of both world Wars of the 20th century, in which national socialist Germany tried to expand even beyond the borders of the medieval territories. After 1945 and renewed in the 1990s, medieval scholars have fought heavily about the character of the settlement process, the German-dominated societies and administrations, and their modern repercussions. West German-Polish commissions discussing how the Teutonic Order was presented in schoolbooks in each country were an important part of reconciliation and peace processes since the 1970s, while the German state until today rejects some claims for restitution of medieval cultural goods and archival material stolen during the occupation.

However, the history of the region has never been discussed with the help of contemporary postcolonial and race-critical theories and terminology, even though it presents a significant example of the development of categories of social exclusion based on ethnicity as well as of the contemporary repercussions, namely, the development of anti-Slavic racism. The proposed study will offer a detailed overview of the medieval sources from the late 12th until the mid-16th century in the light of contemporary theoretical frameworks and thereby provide an important puzzle piece for subsequent projects with more geographically comprehensive studies of medieval racism and colonialism.

These questions need to be addressed in two chronological phases, dictated by the production of sources. The first phase comprises the historiographic works written within or in connection to the Teutonic Order (Peter of Dusburg's and Nikolaus of Jeroschin's chronicles, the Livländische Reimchronik etc, 13th – early 14th centuries). In these, the conquest of the territories and the initial contacts with the local population were described and the basis for the category "Undeutsche" was laid. The second phase comprises the urban administrative and normative sources of the 15th and early 16th centuries: town laws, regulations of guilds, diplomatic sources about transfer and ownership of houses and land, citizen rights etc. In a third step, the results from both phases will be discussed in relation to a postcolonial framework and terminology.