

Political Agency in the Digital Age

Media, Participation and Democracy

ECREA

Communication and Democracy conference 2015

9-10 October
Copenhagen Business School
Denmark

Parallel Paper Sessions

Special Events

Keynote abstracts and biographical notes

Presentation abstracts (in chronological order)

Parallel Paper Session: Friday

Parallel Paper Session 1 - 10.45–12.15

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Ayaz Ahmed Siddiqui: Social media electioneering in technologically challenged constituencies: how marginalised communities become part of a network society

Karin Larson, Francesca Giro, Todd Graham, Chris Peters and Marcel Broersma: Daily Democracy: A Comparative Study of British, Italian and Swedish MPs Use of Twitter in Non-election Periods

Asdourian Bruno and Zimmerli Virginie: Integrating “ordinary” people’s participation with an open data politic. A Switzerland case study of public transportation

Yang Wang: Framing Food Safety Issues in China: The Interplay of Official Discourse and Civil Discourse

Room 113: Media and struggles over independence and recognition

Chair: Yiannis Mylonas

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Sophie Long: Digital Dissidents: Struggles for Recognition in Neoliberal Northern Ireland

Reuben Ross: Imagining Nationalisms: Visual and Digital Culture in Scotland’s Independence Movement - CANCELLED

Torgeir Uberg Nærland: Popular music, symbolic recognition and civic affinities among minority youth in Norway

Kerry McCallum, Lisa Waller and Tanja Dreher: Mediatization and Political Participation in the Digital Age

Isidoropaolo Casteltrione: Mediating the contributions of Facebook to political participation: the role of media and political landscapes

Room 114: Data, technology and visual communication

Chair: Christina Neumayer

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Julia Velkova: “If you want to be free, you need to have all your production tools free”: open source digital tools and creative autonomy in visual cultural production

Sebastian Kubitschko: The communicative construction of (media) technology as a political category

Anders Koed Madsen and Anders Kristian Munk: Experiments with a data public

Azhagan Chenganna: Political Engagement of the Youth in the 2014 Elections in Mauritius: A Case-study of the ‘Vire Mam’ video

Thomas Poell: Protest Leadership in the Age of Social Media

Parallel Paper Session 2: 13.15–14.45

Room 112: The Eurocrisis and anti-austerity politics

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Maria Kyriakidou and Iñaki Garcia-Blanco: Constructing the Left as a political actor during the crisis: the press coverage of Podemos in Spain and Syriza in Greece

Laura Pérez-Altable: Social Media and the European Parliament Elections: the case of Spanish Political Party “Podemos”

Christina Neumayer, Björn Karlsson and Luca Rossi: “We are winning again!”: Staging #blockupy Frankfurt on social media

Bart Cammaerts: Opening the Black Box: The Reception of Anti-Austerity Movement Discourses

Giota Alevizou: The rights to the city: mediated and spatial politics of solidarity and civic culture in Greece

Room 113: Activism and political subjectivities

Chair: Julie Uldam

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Tim Markham: “I’m still optimistic but mostly I’m just busier”: Digital activism as work

Yosra El Gendi: Social Media Activism in Egyptian Politics

Elisabetta Ferrari: We protest, therefore we are: event-driven, action-oriented collective identities in contemporary social movements

Emil Husted: Mobilizing ‘the new we’: Exploring the management of subjectivity in radical politics

Lorenzo Coretti: The Myth of Facebook Democracy: Communication Protocols and Individual Agency in Networked Movements

Room 114: Online communities and empowerment

Chair: Jess Baines

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Bernadette Barker-Plummer: Re-thinking Pathways of Influence: #YesAllWomen, Feminism, and Social Change

Roxana Galusca: Gaming for Women’s Rights: The Ethics of Social Justice Games in the Digital Age

Rosemary Clark: Building a Digital Girl Army: The Radical Politics of Online Feminist Communities

Joyce Neys: Media practices that empower? Exploring remix and political agency.

Dimitra Milioni and Lydia Kollyri: Exploring the structure-agency dialectics in Facebook: Repertoires of user dissent (and compliance) in social media

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Room 112: NGO communication and alternative organising

Chair: Sebastian Kubitschko

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Michael Etter and Lindsey Blumell: Human Rights NGOs' social media use: A platform for outside voices or reinforcement of agendas?

Anne Vestergaard: 'It seems a lot like play-acting'. Child Slavery, Global Solidarity and Cosmopolitan Agency.

Hilde Stephansen: Understanding citizen media as practice: agents, processes, publics

Eduardo Gonçalves: Crowdfunding and the reconfiguration of public and private space

Room 113: Book Launch: Critical Perspectives on Social Media and Protest: Between Control and Emancipation

Chair: Lina Dencik

Pages 55-59

Veronica Barassi: Social Media, Immediacy and the Time for Democracy: Critical Reflections on Social Media as 'Temporalising Practices'

Anne Kaun: "This Space Belongs to Us!": Protest Spaces in Times of Accelerating Capitalism

Arne Hintz: Social Media Censorship, Privatised Regulation, and New Restrictions to Protest and Dissent

Greg Elmer: Preempting Dissent: From Participatory Policing to Collaborative Filmmaking

Emiliano Treré: Inhabited by paranoia: tracing the struggles within social media protest

Room 114: Networked politics

Chair: Lorenzo Coretti

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Jonas Kaiser, Markus Rhomberg, Axel Maireder and Stephan Schlögl: Energiewende's lone warriors: A hyperlink network analysis of the German Energiewende discourse

Elaine Yuan, Miao Feng and Xiyuan Liu: The (Re) Evolution of Civic Engagement: A Network Analysis of the Facebook Groups of Occupy Chicago

Tamar Ashuri and Yaniv Bar Ilan: Signaling and collective action: Hierarchical and non-hierarchical filtering in a networked environment

Harris Breslow: The Haptic Subject: A Critique of the Politics of the Networked Individual

Bolette Blaagaard and Mette Marie Roslyng: Networking the political

Parallel Paper Session: Saturday

Parallel Paper Session 4: 10.30–12.00

Room 112: Elections and social media

Chair: Iñaki Garcia-Blanco

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Fruzsina Nábelek: Campaigning outside the parties. Activity of non-profit organizations in the campaign of the Hungarian parliamentary elections of 2014

Jakob Linnaa Jensen: Social Media in the Danish 2015 Election

Anamaria Dutceac Segesten and Michael Bossetta: Activism or Slacktivism?: Twitter use during the 2015 British and Danish general election campaigns

Pekka Isotalus and Annina Eloranta: Live-tweeting during televised electoral debates – New form of public discussion?

Maximiliane Schäffer and Martin Emmer: Crowdsourced Election Monitoring in the Kenyan Presidential Election 2013: The Participatory Potential of ICTs under Conditions of Instable Democratic Institutions

Room 113: Childhood publics in a digital age? Possibilities and limitations

Chairs: Dr Sevasti-Melissa Nolas and Professor Rachel Thomson

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Sevasti-Melissa Nolas, Christos Varvantakis and Vinnarasan Aruldoss: Challenging representations of activism in a digital age: beyond rebel youth

Liam Berriman: Young People's Digital Participation in New Economies of Value

Jo Moran-Ellis: Politicisation in a digital age: the example of controlling children's encounters with digital sexualities

Lel Meleayal: Boundaries in a digital age

Room 114: Nationalist and right wing discourses

Chair: Torgeir Naerland

Pages 74-78

Michael Bossetta: Populist Performance through YouTube: Three European Cases Compared

Eleftheria Lekakis: Commercial Nationalism, Advertising and the Crisis: Political Agency and Resistance

Jannick Schou and Johan D. Farkas: Disguised as Islamists: Cloaked Facebook Pages and Danish Right-wing Groups

Benjamin De Cleen: Images of nativism. 25 years of radical right anti-immigration posters in Flanders (1979-2014)

Kristoffer Holt and Patrik Lundell: Mistrusting the media – now and then. A historical comparison of far right media criticism in Sweden

Parallel Paper Session 5: 13.00–14.30

Room 112: Young people and civic engagement

Chair: Tina Askanius

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Helena Sandberg and Ulrika Sjöberg: DigiKids - Digital practices and skills of young children and their families: a longitudinal study

Tanja Oblak Crnic: What kind of participatory digital culture and for whom? Political institutions and young citizens in Slovenia

Mats Ekström: Young people's everyday political talk: A social achievement of democratic engagement

Malin Sveningsson: "A little bit of this, a little bit of that and then I get a standpoint of my own": Young Swedes' experiences of political identity work

Giovanna Mascheroni: The practice of participation: youth's vocabularies around on- and offline civic and political engagement

Room 113: Cultural politics and civic engagement

Chair: Maria Kyriakidou

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Raul Castro: "Pop-litics": Citizen Power and Online Mobilization in Disenchanted Peru

Sohail Dahdal: Arabic Cultural Memes: Creating a Cultural Space to Engage Arab Youth

Joanna Doona: High stakes! Political comedy audiences and political engagement

Vesna Vravnik: Activism and Film: A Trojan Horse and Other Activist Tactics in the Queer Cinema from the countries of former Yugoslavia

Ekaterina Kalinina: Nostalgia, digital archives and civic engagement

Room 114: Journalism and civic engagement

Chair: Iñaki Garcia-Blanco

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Gustav Persson: Encountering journalism: ethical violence and threatening visibility

Chris Peters and Stuart Allan: Seeing, Witnessing, Contributing: The communicative value of citizen reportage and imagery

Yachi Chen: Game-changer or cash cow? When ordinary netizens become the dominant news source for media

Eiri Elvestad and Lee Shaker: Shifting Orientations toward Local, National and International News in the United States and Norway, 1995-2012

Elisabeth Le: From print to online news media: a shift in the representation of the public sphere

Parallel Paper Session 6: 14.45–16.15

Room 112: Political talk and social media

Chair: Julia Velkova

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Tanja Dreher: The other side of participation: political listening in the age of digital media

Scott Wright, Todd Graham, Andrea Carson and Shaojing Sun: Super-Participation and Everyday Political Talk Online: A Comparative Analysis - CANCELLED

Yi Liu: Passionate Participation under the Digital Era: Exploring Emotions within Political Deliberation in Cyber China

Marko Skoric: How do political expression, exposure to disagreement, and opinion shielding on social media relate to citizen participation? Evidence from Singapore and Hong Kong

Daniel Jackson, Scott Wright and Todd Graham: Online lifestyle communities and 'strong politics': a new stage of e-democracy?

Room 113: Political agency and civic cultures

Chair: Emiliano Treré

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Martin Belcher, Claudia Abreu Lopes, Matt Haikin and Evangelia Berdou: Digital citizen engagement - who is engaging, how and to what effect? Primary research findings from Brazil, Uganda and Kenya

Zrinjka Peruško and Dina Vozab: Mediatization of political engagement in digital mediascapes: comparing European online audiences

Sergei Kruk: Public communication in Latvia: the cultural reasons of social passivity

Dina Boswank: Construction for Destruction. Modes of access in/to media technology. A performative research into notions of creativity and participation in urban India

Murat Akser: A New Praxis at the Park: How Turkish Academics Turned Theory into Practice during Gezi Park Protests

Room 114: Politics and online media in the European Union: Rethinking power and legitimacy in the era of mediatized crises

Chair: Asimina Michailidou

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Hans-Jörg Trenz: The Spiral of Euroscepticism: Media negativity, framing and EU opposition

Yiannis Mylonas: The discursive frames of New Democracy's social media campaign during Greece's national elections of January 2015

Asimina Michailidou: The medium makes the public? Convergent EU audiences in divergent online spheres

Terje Rasmussen: Internet-based media and the crisis. A realist critique of the idea of a European public sphere

Parallel Paper Session 7: 16.30–18.00

Room 112: Communication Technologies and the Politics of Visibility

Chair: Anne Vestergaard

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Lina Dencik: The Advent of Surveillance Realism? Political Activism Post-Snowden

Jacob Ohme, Claes de Vreese, Kim Andersen, Camilla Jensen and Erik Albæk: Dimensionality of civic participation in a convergent media environment

Jayson Harsin: Citizen Participation, Popular Epistemologies, and Theories of Post-democracy/Post-Politics

Can Kutay: Occupation and Online Visibility - CANCELLED

Mark Carrigan: Distracted People and Fragile Movements: a relational realist theory of social movement in a digital age

Room 113: Protests and social media

Chair: Elisabetta Ferrari

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Mireille Lalancette, Vincent Raynauld and Sofia Tourigny-Kone: Taking It to the Twitterverse: Characterizing Uses of Microblogging for Advocacy and Political Engagement during the 2012 Quebec Student Protest

Oana Albu and Michael Etter: "Post it, Inch'Allah": The agency of social media technologies for the organizing of political activist groups

Ariadna Fernandez-Planells: Offline and online spaces of protests: A case study of news information habits among the 15M Movement activists in Spain and the Umbrella Movement activists in Hong Kong.

Jakob Svensson: Social Media and Protest Participation in a Middle-Class Activist Demand Connective Individualism, Expressive Issue-Engagement and Disciplined Updating

Ahmad Kamal: Views on social media in the twilight of Morsi

Panayiota Tsatsou and Yupei Zhao: Online Communication and Civic Activism: Testing the 'Two-level Social Capital Analysis' model in the study of the Sunflower Movement

Room 114: Participatory mediations of the political

Chair: Rosemary Clark

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Dean Lockwood: Beyond the rhizome: Modelling political agency for twenty-first century media networks

Dave Boothroyd: The one, the two and the many: the ethico-politics of individuation and encounter in participatory digital milieux

Martyn Thayne: 'Twitter storms' in a teacup: Digital activism and collective political agency

Rob Coley: The Terminal City: Topological Politics and Mediated Urbanism

Special Events

Saturday

Room s12: 10.30–12.00

Closed Workshop: Digital Activism in China, Scandinavia and the USA

Room s12: 13.00–14.30

Book launch: Civic Engagement and Social Media

Julie Uldam and Anne Vestergaard: Civic Engagement and Social Media: Political Participation beyond Protest

Frank de Bakker: Online Activism and Institutional Change of Corporate Social Responsibility: Towards a Typology

Itziar Castelló and David Barbera: Why Some Political Opportunities Succeed and Others Fail: Bridging Organizational Levels in the Case of Spanish Occupy

Eleftheria Lekakis: Responsible Retailing and the Greek Crisis? Corporate Engagement, CSR Communication and Social Media

Bart Cammaerts: Technologies of Self-Mediation: Affordances and Constraints of Social Media for Protest Movements

Anne Kaun: When Narratives Travel: The Occupy Movement in Latvia and Sweden

Julie Uldam: Corporate Management of Visibility: Social Media and Surveillance

Emil Husted: From Creation to Amplification: Occupy Wall Street's Transition into an Online Populist Movement

Jess Baines: Nurturing Dissent? Community Printshops in 1970s London

Room s12: 14.45–16.15

YECREA Workshop: Politics in Academia: On the (im)possibility of activist scholarship and scholarly activism

Chair: Tina Askanius

This YECREA workshop will address the possibilities and challenges of combining academia and activism by raising questions such as: How political can be in your research? How open do you want to be with your political sympathies? Will it help or harm you if you are known to be a leftist for example? What research ethical challenges does activist scholarship entail? What kind of criticisms will you face from other academics and external actors such as funders? How do you tackle internal peer pressure to adhere to hegemonic norms of epistemological objectivity? What are the personal security risks associated with certain forms of activist engagement such as the risk of attacks, arrest and subjecting yourself to state monitoring? How is it possible to juggle the time-consuming and “slow” research process of engaged community research and the output expectations in a ‘publish or perish’ environment? How is the neoliberal university making activist engagement harder for academics?

The session will open with a range of short talks by senior scholars sharing their experiences with and views on activist scholarship followed by an informal discussion that allows young scholars to pose questions and relate the talks to their own personal experience and concerns.

Confirmed panelists are:

Anastasia Kavada (University of Westminster, UK). Anastasia is a senior lecturer in the department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Westminster. Her work focuses on the use of digital media by activist groups. In this workshop, Anastasia will reflect on the (often creative) tensions of combining activism with academic research. She will discuss the challenges of conducting qualitative research in social movements, particularly with regards to the ways in which we position ourselves in the study. Is there ever a strategic need to distinguish between the two identities? If so, when and how can this be done? She will also address the ethics of activist research, as well as the challenges of producing scholarship that is useful both for activists and for academia.

Tobias Linné (Lund University, Sweden). Tobias is an animal rights activists doing teaching and research in critical animal studies with a particular focus on animals and media. He also coordinates a network on norm-critical pedagogy. In this workshop Tobias will address the possibilities and challenges of norm-critical pedagogical approaches to teaching, in particular focusing on how it is possible to build a supportive environment for students to expose, rethink, and challenge dominant ideologies of human-nonhuman animal relations.

Vasilis Galis (IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark). Vasilis is an active member of various online activist collectives. He is doing teaching and research in Science and Technology Studies with a particular focus on the use of social media by leftist groups. In this workshop, Vasilis will discuss, from a personal and theoretical viewpoint, different forms of politically engaged research in relation to epistemological choices of research topics and method, personal commitments to the fields studied, use of research findings in controversies, and the positioning of results in wider debates. What is it like to work as an activist academic researcher in a university with a strong neoliberal ethos? How can you participate in a protest without doing research? How can you do research that contributes to activist struggles?

Keynote abstracts and biographical notes

The changing topology of public engagement

Nick Couldry

London School of Economics and Political Science

The word 'topology' is much abused, but there is something difficult and puzzling in how public engagement is today configured in space, and one way of capturing this is through the idea that the topology of public engagement is changing. Building on the argument of Couldry's 2014 article 'The Myth of Us' (in *Information Communication and Society*), this talk will consider further how we can think spatially about the social processes that underlie the traces of politics in social media. Returning to Nancy Fraser's celebrated 2007 article on 'Transnationalizing the Public Sphere', Couldry will argue that Fraser underestimates the complexity of how the public sphere is being transnationalized, and in particular the complexities of how engagement now operates within still-existing national public spheres. This complexity is indeed a matter of topology, that is, the minimal degree of spatial complexity that national deliberations now involve. Focussing on this raises new questions about what is needed for a better and more democratic culture on all scales.

Nick Couldry is a sociologist of media and culture. He is currently Professor of Media Communications and Social Theory, and Head of the Department of Media and Communications, at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is the author or editor of eleven books including most recently *Ethics of Media* (2013 Palgrave, coedited with Mirca Madianou and Amit Pinchevski), *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice* (Polity 2012) and *Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics After Neoliberalism* (Sage 2010).

Rethinking the Collective in the Digital Age

Anastasia Kavada

University of Westminster

Digital media are commonly thought to facilitate the individualisation and personalisation of politics as they allow more scope for self-expression and self-organization, limiting the need for grand ideologies and formal organizations. This has raised important questions about the definition of the 'collective' in collective action, about our understanding of political actors and their agency to effect change. Drawing from the fields of organizational communication, media studies and social movement research, this talk outlines some of the ways in which we can conceptualize the collective in the digital age. It focuses on the collective as a phenomenon that is always in-process, as an open and inherently contradictory project, and suggests that to understand the role of digital media in its formation, we need to examine them as part of a broader communication ecology. The process of creating the collective involves the continuous negotiation and redefinition of its boundaries and shared codes, a process that unfolds in a variety of sites with different affordances for interaction. This more open conceptualisation of the collective also entails a different understanding of political agency that acknowledges its multiple and situated character.

Anastasia Kavada is Senior Lecturer in the Westminster Faculty of Media, Arts & Design at the University of Westminster. She is Co-leader of the MA in Media, Campaigning and Social Change and Deputy Director of the Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI). Her research focuses on the links between online tools and decentralized organizing practices, democratic decision-making, and the development of solidarity among participants in collective action. Anastasia's case studies include, among others, the Global Justice Movement, Avaaz, and the Occupy movement. Her work has appeared in a variety of edited books and academic journals, including *Media, Culture & Society* and *Information, Communication & Society*.

Activism: An Ambiguous Word for an Ambivalent Age

Guobin Yang

**Annenberg School for Communication,
University of Pennsylvania**

This paper explores the changing meanings of activism using Raymond Williams' keyword approach. The two editions of Williams' Keywords capture the spirit of his times with analyses of such keywords as radical, revolution, violence, and liberation. Conspicuously absent from Williams' classic is the word activism. However, in the decades since, but especially since the 1990s, activism has become a magic word in contemporary cultural and political discourse in proportion to a growing disenchantment with revolution and liberation. What does the ascendance of activism reveal about contemporary culture, society, and politics? Did the development of new communication technologies reinvigorate activism? How did the Arab Spring and the global "Occupy" protests redefine the meaning of activism? A keyword study of activism may provide a unique angle for understanding the meanings of political agency in the digital age.

Guobin Yang is Associate Professor of Communication and Sociology at the Annenberg School for Communication and Department of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of *The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online* (2009) and *The Red Guard Generation and Political Activism in China* (forthcoming) and the editor of *China's Contested Internet* (2015), *The Internet, Social Media, and a Changing China* (with Jacques deLisle and Avery Goldstein, forthcoming), and *Re-Envisioning the Chinese Revolution: The Politics and Poetics of Collective Memories in Reform China* (with Ching-Kwan Lee, 2007). Professor Yang is co-editor (with Zhongdang Pan) of the new SAGE journal *Communication and the Public*. He serves on the editorial boards of *Public Culture*, *Social Media + Society*, *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *Contemporary Sociology*, *The China Quarterly*, and *Chinese Journal of Sociology*.

Presentation abstracts (in chronological order)

HC Robinson: Shifted Personhood: Media Technology, Organizations, and Law in the United States

This paper tells a nuanced story about law, media technology, and social change in the United States. It is engaged with issues of citizenship, democracy, and communication, and takes a generalist and non-ideological approach crossing multiple domains of academic thought. The paper considers, in particular, a controversial U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010), which gave rise to a new kind of political actor in the United States—the “SuperPAC.” SuperPACs are organizations that aggregate money from undisclosed sources and use technologies of mass media to influence the American electorate. The paper illustrates how a particular theory of media is at the center of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Citizens United*, articulating a mainly passive role for citizens as listeners in a “marketplace of ideas” generated by modern, technology-mediated contexts. This theory was used to overturn legislation by the U.S. Congress that reflected an approach taken by many European states: to regulate the mass media in elections based on who and what is transmitting political communication, their relative power and transparency in the society, and the possibility for distortion of information. The paper asks whether constitutional charters can contain specific media theories, properly elaborated through judicial interpretation, or whether regulation of mass media is appropriately a matter for legislative control.

Ayaz Ahmed Siddiqui: Social media electioneering in technologically challenged constituencies: how marginalised communities become part of a network society

The effect of new media on election campaigns is of great interest particularly for transitioning democracies. The complexity of new media - specially its relationship with traditional mediums - however makes it puzzling for scholars to determine the exact nature of this effect. They often focus only on the direct impact of internet communication on voting behaviour. This begs the question, how does social media activation of political campaigns target constituencies that have poor access to internet? This is a similar concern to those bridging the digital divide. Literature focusing on mediatized events - events created specifically for the media - offer a promising way to answer this question. This paper attempts to explain firstly how such events in Pakistan's mediatized politics can be seen as an attempt to bridge the digital divide in campaign communication. It does so by taking Imran Khan's PTI party's innovative campaign for May 2013 elections as a case study. The party, whose major constituency is in a 'network-deprived' province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), made extensive use of 'dharnas' - curated protests that are unique to South Asian politics. However, rather than informed citizens deliberating as one might expect in Western networked societies the case shows that the events may result in perpetuating an elite mediated discourse. Thus Christian Fuchs model of human social activity is used to examine why this happens.

By conducting in-depth interviews with officials from PTI's social media wing and campaign planners in a major advertising agency in Karachi and a participant observation method the paper aims to answer these questions. Preliminary findings indicate that studies on May 2013 elections that simply link social media usage to high votes in KPK must be reinterpreted. That perhaps party's social media strategy was predetermined by the expected outcome. That votes in the end were determined by patronage politics rather than media use.

Karin Larson, Francesca Giro, Todd Graham, Chris Peters and Marcel Broersma: Daily Democracy: A Comparative Study of British, Italian and Swedish MPs Use of Twitter in Non-election Periods

Although the ubiquity of social media points to everyday concerns, when it comes to analysing its use by politicians research typically focuses on the exceptional, namely election campaigns. While this provides insight into a highly visible and strategically mediated phase of the political process, it ignores the communicative mundaneness of daily democracy. This paper accordingly investigates and compares the ways in which members of parliament (MPs) in three European countries – Italy, Sweden and United Kingdom – utilize Twitter during off-peak periods, focusing on the extent to which social media are fostering a more ‘connected’ and reciprocal relationship between citizens and politicians. Throughout many Western democracies, research points to the increasing valorisation of Twitter as an informal, intimate and open space for (everyday) political communication, raising important questions about what tweeting practices are particularly prominent and if and how connections with citizens are being cultivated. In order to begin addressing such questions, this paper uses hand-coded content analysis to examine tweeting behaviour during a two week non-election period. First, we map basic patterns of usage. Second, we analyse the types of tweets (e.g. retweet, @-reply); third, their function (e.g. self-promotion, critiquing, requesting input/support); fourth, interaction (whom MPs communicate with). Finally, we examine the content (the political/personal topics tweeted about). The unique comparative positioning of the study opens up analytical space for determining how national context may influence tweeting behaviour of MPs in diverging political systems. In light of this analysis, the paper explicates the interlinkages of political representation and inherent potential for bottom-up reciprocity between politicians and citizens engaging with social media. We discuss our findings in light of ongoing debates around postmodern politics and the empowering potential of new media. We argue that social media practices may foster new (more personal, intimate) forms of connectivity and interaction between politicians and citizens.

Asdourian Bruno and Zimmerli Virginie: Integrating “ordinary” people’s participation with an open data politic. A Switzerland case study of public transportation

The communication between users of digital media and public transportation organization are currently represented through a democratic way. Current scientific literature on digital technologies deals with both the case of organizations who provide to the crowd of citizens (Surowiecki, 2004) some internal data and also the increasing participation of citizens and the public deliberation (Wright, 2012).

The present study is oriented toward the uses of open data which are offered by organizations, as well as recovered by innovative Internet user communities and used by citizens through mobile applications created by these communities. What are the cultural factors that are in function in such a utopian project? What are the information flows and the relationships that are exchanged between these actors?

Based on the methodology of the case study, this research explores the context of the mobile application UnCrowdTPG through empirical data collected with stakeholders: Transports Publics Genevois (TPG); mobile experts – who created this mobile application; as well as from its users. This application integrates the data from public transport users.

The authors present a cultural context of civic engagement and, also, a communicational model between the players enrolled in a context of democratic exchanges related to a situation of open data. This research has shown that the improvement of the relationship between players through the use of these resources is a major challenge for the development of a new category of political actors: the users of digital services.

Yang Wang: Framing Food Safety Issues in China: The Interplay of Official Discourse and Civil Discourse

In contemporary Chinese society, “food safety” as a typical expression of modern risk have increasingly become part and parcel of people’s everyday life. All kinds of stakeholders – from institutional social forces such as the government and traditional media organizations, to social elites such as experts and public intellectuals, to the relatively unorganized and “powerless” general public – are actively striving for the most favorable position in the social construction of food safety issues. Media space, including both traditional news media and emerging digital media, is the main arena of diverse social discourse.

In this context, this article seeks to provide novel insight into the long-standing dichotomy of “official discourse” and “civil discourse” in current Chinese society, with a particular focus on the dynamic conflict and interplay of traditional media reports and new media public expressions in constructing food safety issues. Framing analysis and discourse analysis of relevant news reports in People’s Daily and Southern Metropolitan Daily, as well as relevant microblog texts in Sina Weibo were conducted to interpret the deep structure and ideology of this dichotomy. Moreover, this article also demonstrate the periodic trends of discourse rivalry revolving around food safety emergencies, and the role of various stakeholders during this social construction process.

Drawing on the empirical data, this article reveals that traditional media reports mostly follow the official standpoint of Chinese government and construct the “risk control prospect” of food safety emergencies, while public expressions in digital media space are more likely to carry out “moral interrogation” and probe into the long-term consequences of food safety problems. The “grand narrative” (e.g. political beliefs, economic development, social stability) produced in the framework of official discourses is gradually losing natural authority and being challenged by the “tiny narrative” (e.g. daily life, basic human rights) of emerging civil discourses both online and offline.

Sophie Long: Digital Dissidents: Struggles for Recognition in Neoliberal Northern Ireland

This paper utilises the political theories of esteem and recognition to assess the online political debates which constitute informal, political participation post-ceasefire Northern Ireland. The 1998 Belfast Agreement forged elite level institutional architectures, which were designed to restore devolved governance in the region. Many of the local, political actors who negotiated this Agreement were demonstrating political agency for the first time and in the aftermath of their efforts, have been sidelined and disempowered as traditional elites took up positions of power.

Following a period of instability, the St. Andrews' Agreement of 2006 once again saw power devolved to the region, as erstwhile sworn enemies, Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party, formed a duopoly of power. These parties built their political foundations on the support of the nationalist and unionist working classes, whom they have conveniently neglected since their ascension to political office.

In 2008, Northern Ireland underwent a “double transition”, as it sought to manage the twin challenges of devolved government and the global, financial crash. With international investment dwindling, a regime of neoliberal peace-building was pursued by the local and British governments. The politically sidelined working classes were confronted by increasing material inequality and multiple deprivation. Cities became spaces of consumption, and political contestation shifted from the physical to the digital sphere.

Using two case studies, this paper interrogates the opportunities and limitations of digital, democratic engagement in a deeply divided society. The overarching thesis of the paper is that each group utilises social media to assert their political identity. The pursuit of recognition, in this case, via the online pronouncement of rights and agency, is critical to group esteem and cohesion.

Reuben Ross: Imagining Nationalisms: Visual and Digital Culture in Scotland's Independence Movement - CANCELLED

Amidst persistent economic uncertainty and political and social unrest, nationalist politics have seen a significant resurgence across Europe. Many of the continent's historically marginalised regions are pushing heavily for increased autonomy or even independence – what some have called regionalism, regional nationalism or “neo-nationalism.” Most notable are Catalonia and Scotland, both of which have experienced large increases in civic political participation as a result of their popular “neo-nationalist” movements. This paper will focus on the potential for Scotland's ongoing independence movement to serve as a model for a more nuanced, integrated approach to social movement and political participation research, with a particular emphasis on visual and digital culture.

Last September, Scotland held a heavily contested referendum on independence. It was a rare opportunity to examine how state institutions, political parties and their offshoots, cultural organisations and “ordinary” individuals interact and participate in a campaign (and counter-campaign) to create a new Western European state. The referendum is widely credited with having dramatically increased political participation and civic engagement in the country; despite a vote against independence, Scotland continues to experience high levels of political awareness in its communities. Indeed, the independence movement continues in various forms, both online and offline.

Building on Benedict Anderson's concept of “imagined communities,” and Arjun Appadurai's work on “deterritorialisation,” this paper will explore the relationship between online political participation (often through social media) and offline, material change. The paper will present ongoing ethnographic research on Common Weal, a prominent independent “think-and-do tank” and campaigning organisation based in Scotland. It will combine critical theoretical discussion with ethnographic insights and include supporting multimedia material. Finally, this paper will offer some recommendations for the future development of visual methodologies in understanding issues of media, participation and democracy.

Torgeir Uberg Nærland: Popular music, symbolic recognition and civic affinities among minority youth in Norway

This study explores civic dimensions of musical reception. More specifically it explores pre-deliberative dimensions of discursive democracy, that is: how musical reception may contribute to the forging of civic bonds and affinities, which in turn may motivate discursive and political engagement.

A vast body of research documents that minority youth in Norway are subjected to systematically imbalanced and problem oriented representation through media coverage, and that symbolic exclusion hinders civic engagement. While the national hip hop scene is dominated by artists of minority origin, it also enjoys vast popularity among youth of both minority and majority origin. Thus, mass mediated hip hop music constitutes an alternative yet important source of representation, which in terms of granting minority youth positive affirmation of their identity and experiences, may also engender an experience of public recognition (Taylor).

Based on in depth interviews with a group of minority youth in Bergen, this study empirically explores the extent to which mass mediated hip hop music engenders an experience of representation, if this representation involve an experience of public recognition of their identities and experiences, and, if this experience of recognition contributes to the forging of civic affinities.

Theoretically, this article argues that symbolic recognition makes up an important supplementary concept to existing conceptualizations of the civic dimensions of media reception, in that it 1) constitutes a fundamental component of civic bond-forming generally, that 2) is of particular pertinence in cases where particular groups are subjected to media exclusion and misrepresentation.

Kerry McCallum, Lisa Waller and Tanja Dreher: Mediatization and Political Participation in the Digital Age

This paper considers how changing media practices of both marginalized groups and political and media elites impact on democratic participation in matters of national debate. Taking as its case study the state-sponsored campaign to formally recognize Indigenous Australians in the Australian constitution, the paper examines the interrelationships between political media and Indigenous participatory media – both of which we argue are undergoing seismic transformation. Discussion of constitutional reform has tended to focus on debates occurring in forums of influence such as party politics and news media that privilege the voices of only a few high-profile Indigenous media ‘stars’. Debate has progressed on the assumption that constitutional change needs to be settled by political elites and then explained and ‘sold’ to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. But our research to date has identified that the rapidly changing media environment has disrupted this assumption, and that vigorous public discussion is increasingly taking place outside the mainstream institutions of media and politics. Drawing on the long tradition in citizens’ media scholarship that foregrounds media production and dissemination, we argue that the vibrant, diverse and growing Indigenous media sphere in Australia is making marginalised voices increasingly accessible and arguably widening the focus of who can participate in political debate. At the same time, our research on the mediatization of policymaking has found that in an increasingly media-saturated environment, political leaders and their policy bureaucrats attend to a narrow range of highly politicised voices. Recent scholarship on participation and listening extends the analysis to offer a fresh perspective on political participation of the marginalized.

Isidoropaolo Casteltrione: Mediating the contributions of Facebook to political participation: the role of media and political landscapes

Over the last decade there has been a proliferation of academic studies addressing the relationship between the internet and politics, with an increasing number of publications focusing on how social networking websites (SNSs) can contribute to political participation. In relation to this topic, research has produced contrasting evidence, with some scholars stressing the positive effects of SNSs usage (i.e. optimists), while others minimising the mobilising power of these platforms, emphasising their tendency to reinforce existing participatory trends (i.e. normalisers) or highlighting their limited or even negative influence on political participation (i.e. pessimists). Drawing from the results of a cross-national comparative mixed methods study, this paper highlights the sterility of the debate between optimists, normalisers, and pessimists and the need to consider contextual factors when assessing the links between digital technologies and political participation. Focusing specifically on Facebook and on the cases of Italy and the United Kingdom, this paper shows that the contributions of this SNS to citizens' political participation are affected by the two countries' different media and political landscapes. A participatory gap between Italian and British participants is found, with Italians displaying higher levels of political participation through Facebook than their British counterparts. These findings are explained with reference to: the different diffusion and relevance of other online platforms in these two countries; Italian participants' more negative perception of traditional media linked to the high political parallelism typical of the Italian media system, further exacerbated by what could be described as the Berlusconi's anomaly; and the presence in Italy of a political party such as the Five Stars Movement making full use of the communicative and organisational affordances of Facebook.

Julia Velkova: “If you want to be free, you need to have all your production tools free“: open source digital tools and creative autonomy in visual cultural production

Free and open source software technical development has played a fundamental role in fostering divergent political and economic practices by reconfiguring the politics of intellectual property law and the material politics of cultural action (Coleman, 2013). Since mid-2000s aspiring computer graphics artists and technicians who work in the domains of digital painting and illustration, 3D sculpting, and animation film have increasingly started to adopt and collectively develop digital open source tools for visual culture production. The use and development of such tools has resulted in an increasing number of projects of 'open' cultural production, such as 'open movies' and 'open comics' where technology and content are released as commons. This paper investigates the reasons behind these developments with particular focus on understanding the value of open source graphics tools for cultural production. The results presented in the paper are based on in-depth interviews with more than 30 individuals who use and develop three popular open source tools – Krita for digital painting, Blender for 3D modelling and animation, and Synfig for 2D vector animation. While having a steep and demanding learning curve, open source digital tools seem to provide ways for cultural producers to obtain greater creative autonomy, skills and freedom of creative expression. Control over the creative process exercised through taking control over production technology allows producers to mould their tools to fit better the specifics of individual creative practices while forming vibrant communities of practice interconnected online around commonly owned and constantly fixed and improved technology. While these uses are more pragmatic rather than ideological, they show alternative ways of organizing cultural production that shares similarities with pre-industrial craft production models and revitalize theoretical ideas of technological transparency (Turkle, 2005), creative autonomy and democracy achieved through the power to control technology (Feenberg, 2002).

1 Quote from interview with Boudwijn Rempt, founder and maintainer of Krita, open source software for digital painting

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Sebastian Kubitschko: The communicative construction of (media) technology as a political category

In recent years, research on the relation between media and democratic constellations has predominantly focused on movement-based activism, mobilisation and protest. In addition, studies of the relation between media and political activism tend to have a one-medium bias. Most studies on hacker cultures are no exception in this regard. By presenting findings from qualitative research on one of the world's oldest and largest hacker organisations – the Chaos Computer Club (CCC) – the paper discusses how political engagement today relies on a wide range of emerging media-related practices and, at the same time, continues to be oriented towards “traditional” centres of political power. This is done in three aligned steps. First, the paper demonstrates how the hacker organisation engages with contemporary technologies by hacking existing artefacts as well as by articulating their expertise through multi-layered media practices and by interacting with institutionalised politics. Second, hacking and articulation are conceptualised as interlocking arrangements. Finally, the paper demonstrates how the linkage of hacking and communication processes enables the Club to thematise and problematise media technologies and infrastructures as political phenomena. By focusing on the communicative figuration (media ensembles, actor constellations, communicative forms and thematic frame) within which the hackers politicise technology the paper elaborates how the CCC communicatively constructs (media) technology as a political category.

Anders Koed Madsen and Anders Kristian Munk: Experiments with a data public

Democracy, it is said, is in a state of crisis. What exactly defines the crisis depends greatly on who, when and where you ask the question, of course, but the credo is frequently heard. Also, this credo often accompanied with visions as to how digital technologies can help to facilitate new democratic conversations that transgress the elite-driven institutional politics that many point to as the cause of the crisis.

Denmark is no exception to these tendencies and the recent reform of the Danish school system, traditionally a highly praised token of participatory democracy, has been a case in point. It has been criticized for being the result of a top-down process that neglected the voices of the practitioners that work with the school.

So what happens when elected politicians recognize that they can no longer act as trusted representatives and decide that a radically new dialogue with the public is called for? And what happens when they decide that this dialogue must be constituted where the public is already venting its frustrations, i.e. on social media?

In this talk we consider our recent experience of being enrolled as data-experts in a participatory democratic experiment that attempted to use Facebook and digital methods to collectively envision the school of the future in the municipality of Aalborg. This experiment took place from September 2014 - February 2015 and involved attempts at making the public visible in new ways.

More specifically, we want to argue that a) the use of digital methods in this participatory processes enabled us to create a novel (but not unproblematic) picture of the 'ordinary' people, b) that the continuous flow of data enabled us to facilitate an iterative deliberate process c) that the decision to leave the provenance of data transparent disturbed traditional distributions of political agency.

Azhagan Chenganna: Political Engagement of the Youth in the 2014 Elections in Mauritius: A Case-study of the 'Vire Mam' video

This study aims to examine the political impact of a Mauritian video amongst the youth in the context of the 2014 General Elections in Mauritius. The 2014 elections campaign was expected to be a forlorn and disengaging campaign given that after two successive mandates, the incumbent Labour Party (LP) was this time in an electoral alliance with the main opposition party, the Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM). The coalition of two of the biggest political parties locked the Mauritian political landscape and was automatically equated with a landslide victory.

With a political system that tends to favor alliances, the other smaller parties namely the Mouvement Socialiste Militant (MSM), the Mouvement Libérateur (ML), and the Parti Mauricien Social Démocrate (PMSD) – were forced to enter into an alliance named the “People’s Alliance” to oppose the LP/MMM which was named the “Alliance of Unity and Modernity”. If an electoral win seemed obvious for the latter, the “People’s Alliance” came up with an impactful and viral video campaign carrying the slogan ‘Vire Mam’ (an English translation of the Mauritian creole slogan ‘Vire Mam’ would mean ‘switch side’ or ‘switch allegiance’).

The video documented the verbal attacks that the leaders of the LP and MMM held against each other before their alliance as well as their incoherence and opportunism. The video was serialized focusing on specific campaign themes and circulated widely on the social networks, mobilizing the electorate, particularly the disgruntled youth. It called on voters to abandon their loyalties to the two mainstream parties and their leaders, to switch side and vote for the small parties regrouped under the “People’s Alliance”.

The paper aims to examine the links between the ‘Vire Mam’ video and its impact on the youth and the electorate generally. Using Dahlgren’s civic circuit model (2004; 2009), the paper aims to examine how the video has rekindled political engagement and participation amongst the Mauritian youth in a climate of rising political cynicism and apathy. The paper argues that in the context of the 2014 elections, popular media, in the form of the ‘Vire Mam’ video has allowed for participation and new modes of political engagement that have contributed significantly to the electoral win of the “People’s Alliance”.

Thomas Poell: Protest Leadership in the Age of Social Media

This article challenges the idea that social media protest mobilization and communication is primarily propelled by the self-motivated sharing of ideas, plans, images, and resources. It shows that leadership plays a vital role in steering popular contention on key social platforms. This argument is developed through a detailed case study on the interaction between the administrators and users of the Kullena Khaled Said Facebook page, the most popular online platform during the Egyptian revolution of early 2011. The analysis specifically focuses on the period from January 1 until February 15, 2011. It draws from 1,629 admin posts and 1,465,696 users comments, extracted via a customized version of Netvizz. For each day during this period, the three most engaged with posts, as well as the most engaged with comments, have been translated and coded, making it possible to systematically examine how the administrators tried to direct the communication on the page, and how users responded to these efforts. This analysis is pursued from a sociotechnical perspective. It traces how the exchanges on the page are simultaneously shaped by the admins' marketing strategies and the technological architecture of the Facebook page. On the basis of this exploration, we argue that the page administrators should be understood as 'connective leaders'. Rather than directing protest activity through formal organizations and collective identity frames, as social movement leaders have traditionally done, connective leaders invite and steer user participation by employing sophisticated marketing strategies to connect users in online communication streams and networks.

Maria Kyriakidou and Iñaki Garcia-Blanco: Constructing the Left as a political actor during the crisis: the press coverage of Podemos in Spain and Syriza in Greece

The current financial crisis in Europe has been dealt with harsh austerity policies decided in the boardrooms of the European Union and put into effect by national governments. The consequences of austerity have been met with increasing public outrage in Southern Europe. Wide sectors of the public show growing disaffection from traditional political parties, which are often blamed for the recession, and for agreeing to EU's austerity policies. Amidst widespread accusations of corruption, traditional parties are believed to be more interested in safeguarding the interests of the economically powerful than protecting the public interest. This public discontent seems to have found its voice in two left-wing parties with a clear anti-establishment agenda, which have experienced unprecedented support and success over the last year. Podemos in Spain and Syriza in Greece seem bound to challenge the political landscape in their respective countries and European politics in general.

Employing discourse analysis, this paper examines the journalistic construction of these two parties as political actors. Focusing on key dates, such as the European elections of 2014, the Greek general elections of 2015, and the regional and local elections in Spain in 2015 the paper explores how Podemos and Syriza were covered in Greek (Kathimerini, ta Nea, and Naftemporiki) and Spanish (El País, El Mundo, and ABC) newspapers. The paper illustrates how these parties have been constructed as a possible cure to the current economic and political crisis in both countries, but also as a threat to the political status quo and to national competitiveness.

Laura Pérez-Altable: Social Media and the European Parliament Elections: the case of Spanish Political Party "Podemos"

Recently there has been a growing interest in the use of social media by political parties. Because of this, the purpose of this study is to analyze the use of the social media by the anti-establishment, anti austerity and Internet based Spanish political party "Podemos" ("We Can") in the last Elections to the European Parliament. Podemos was founded in January, 2014 and registered as a political party in March, 2014. Podemos won almost the eight percent (in other words, five seats) of the Spanish vote in the European Parliament Elections, which took place on May, 2014, only four months later the foundation of the Podemos. Strategies used in this study include two methods. One method focuses on the social network analysis of data from the Podemos Twitter account (@ahorapodemos). Data were gathered in the period from January, 2014, when the party was created, to May, 2015, when the Elections to the European Parliament took place and it was collected using the online tool Topsy and Twitter advanced search. Later, we analyze the data to establish the network with the free software Gephi and also we analyze the links on the tweets to identify and describe the information flows. The second method focuses on the content analysis (including sentiment analysis) of the tweets published from the Podemos' account between January, 2014 and May, 2014. The preliminary outcomes show that the social media was an important tool used by Podemos for announce the political party, spread their messages, and for building a community of potential voters.

Christina Neumayer, Björn Karlsson and Luca Rossi: “We are winning again!”: Staging #blockupy Frankfurt on social media

In this article, we argue that social media tactics and practices on reporting street action are used to stage transnational protest events. This takes place in interaction with news media in two concurrent processes, one realized by activists and the other by authorities such as the police. The argument is based on the case of the trans-European Blockupy alliance, mobilized to block the opening of the European Central Bank offices in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, on March 18, 2015. The study combines ethnographic fieldwork with an analysis of social media data. The ethnographic fieldwork is composed of field notes from participant observation during the Blockupy action and interviews with activists. The social media data consists of a social network analysis of Twitter (n=229.911), collected on the basis of protest hashtags (#Blockupy, #18M, #Destroika, #NoTroika), as well as Facebook pages mobilizing for the events (12 groups).

In today's mediated environments, activists use new tactics to report from street protests through social media in combination with mainstream and alternative media. Smartphones have replaced the tent through which information was formerly uploaded onto the IndyMedia alternative media platform. On social media, images of riots, peaceful protests, artistic action, as well as police and news media form a mosaic of perspectives, setting the stage for a struggle for attention in today's saturated media environments. As a critique of European austerity measures, the Blockupy protest drew heavily upon imagery of crisis movements as well as the summit protests of the early 2000s, with the use of the “We are winning” slogan to reference the Battle of Seattle in 1999. Contextualizing the Blockupy Frankfurt action in contemporary summit literature, we conclude by identifying social media tactics in street protest as concurrent staging processes by activists and police in interaction with news media.

Bart Cammaerts: Opening the Black Box: The Reception of Anti-Austerity Movement Discourses

In this presentation I will address one of the most difficult issues relating to the relationship between media, communication and protest movements. While we find many studies that do a discursive analysis of movement frames, focus on the self-mediation practices of activists or expose the mainstream media representations of protest movements, the way in which movement frames and discourses are received by non-activist citizens either through their consumption of mainstream media or through internet-mediated practices, is still very much a black box. My aim is to try to open up this box, at least a little bit. Without falling into the trap of the dominant effects tradition or being overly media-centric, I will discuss the findings of a representative survey into the reception of the discourses of the anti-austerity movement relating to what I call a renewed politics of redistribution. The survey results will also be complemented by a set of focus groups with non-activist citizens aiming to deepen the outcomes of the survey which seem to indicate very high support for many of the frames of the anti-austerity movement.

Giota Alevizou: The rights to the city: mediated and spatial politics of solidarity and civic culture in Greece

The paper looks at different kinds of citizen organization sprung from civil society movements in Athens, Greece to contribute to an understanding of urban politics, opening new sites of confrontation and renegotiation, resilience and cultural recognition.

Existing studies discussing the particular context of civil society in Greece in relation to the urban character of the anti-austerity movement, have pointed to spatial dynamics and material attributes that make cities as ‘incubators’ of activist networks with specific political and economic conditions transforming some of these networks into hubs within wider social movements (Arampatzi and Nicholls, 2012; Leontidou, 2012; Pantazidou, 2013). Extending these perspectives I draw on archival and empirical research conducted in 2014-15 to offer a typology of civic practices and citizen initiatives operating in Athens, and other urban centres Greece. I offer reflections on a) the kinds of urban issues that precipitate action networks or collectivities at the neighbourhood and the city level, b) the kinds of civic agency (Dalhgren, 2009) expressed through transmedial, spatial and transnational networks, and c) how civic mobilisation or cultural recognition (Goode, 2010) are understood and practiced, within traditional and emergent formations of the Greek civil society.

Within this context, the ‘rights to the city’ (reappropriation and co-production of space, resistance to disrepair and privatization; participatory governance; civil and migrant rights, labour rights) and ‘rights through the city’ combine both radical and mainstream forms of organization, routes to solidarity and every day resistance. I suggest that although the city can indeed be conceptualized in relational terms to achieve a plethora, of (often antagonistic) political and creative ends, we need a better understanding of the interplay between politicized, holistic and social change actions and (often depoliticized) social or creative solution programs.

**Tim Markham: “I’m still optimistic but mostly I’m just busier”:
Digital activism as work**

There is a distinct tension running through arguments about what digital media have done to and for cultures of protest and activism. On the one hand, new media platforms are said to have done away with the old idea that political subjectivity is always hopelessly overdetermined: creative and unpredictable forms or ‘imaginaries’ (Taylor) are made possible by digital spaces and their generative affordances (Sassen). On the other, theorists such as Manuel Castells and Bernard Stiegler argue that what is different about social media protest movements is that individuals don’t have to subsume their identities to the collective: they aggregate and disaggregate fluidly and spontaneously, their own subjectivities intact. What appears novel then in fact brings us to a familiar theme in activism research – the relationship between the individual and the collective in political agency – and this paper proposes a return to Giddens’ structuration theory as a means to shed light on how this plays out in material contexts. In contrast to other recent work (Wolfsfeld, Gerbaudo, Aouragh) which has emphasised macrostructures as an antidote to the giddy celebration of digital media politics, the approach here is microstructural: focussing on how activism is practised and experienced amidst the routines of work and everyday life. It draws on interviews with media activists in Beirut, Lebanon to tease out the ways in which political performativity becomes reflexive, principle becomes ironic and subjectivity is neither chosen nor interpellated, but negotiated and navigated.

Yosra El Gendi: Social Media Activism in Egyptian Politics

Social media activism plays a growing role in political and social processes worldwide. In Egypt, the role of social media in political socialization and participation has been critical in the January 25th revolution and the political trajectory that followed.

The main question that this research asks is how social media activism has an impact on political outcomes focusing on the political trajectories in Egypt. This has not only to do with how the different political factions have made use of the social media tools but also how social media (Facebook and Twitter) engagement empowers some forms of participation (and types of participants) more than others.

While social media activism has changed the dynamics of political participation, the impact of social media on political outcomes cannot be generalized. Indeed, social media is structured in a way as to enable horizontal communication, allowing users to increase the awareness of their individuality and voice. However, social media activism are part of a greater political, social and cultural context in which they are embedded. In this respect, the final political outcomes are related to the greater contexts in which social media operate.

We make this analysis by using several theories. Marshal McLuhan's theory of "the media is the message" is important to analyze the impact of social media structure on political behavior. In addition, contextual theories of technology assist us to understand the different impact of technology in different contexts and different users.

We compare how social media was used in protests between January 25th 2011 and June 30th 2013, both which were turning points in the Egyptian case. We make use of activists interviews conducted at the times, surveys of Egyptian youth also conducted at the time and content analysis of Facebook pages of those periods.

Elisabetta Ferrari: We protest, therefore we are: event-driven, action-oriented collective identities in contemporary social movements

In this paper I focus on the role of protest events as powerful identity-building mechanisms for social movements. Based on my research on Occupy, I contend that movements' collective identities are becoming increasingly event-based and action-oriented, shifting to being a discourse about "doing something", rather than "being something" or "being for or against something".

I examine three factors that I suggest concur to the transformation of collective identity into an event-based discourse: the new media ecology, the influence of direct democracy and movements' strategies.

First of all, despite the increased possibilities afforded by new technologies, social movements still compete for scarce media attention, in the context of an extreme abundance of content.

To be relevant in such environment, movements need to adapt to the rules of mass media and supply a constant stream of content – which protest events can provide.

Secondly, recent movements have placed great emphasis on direct democracy – as a method and as a goal in itself. On the one hand, these internal processes might rise to being events in themselves, as in the case of the livetweeted General Assemblies of OWS. On the other hand, direct democratic processes tend to focus on discussing immediate actions to be taken. Either way, this emphasis contributes to the centrality of protest events.

Lastly, it is possible that social movements have chosen to downplay the ideological and collective components of identity, in order to maximize their recruitment. As Bennett and Segerberg (2013) contend, recent movements have relied on personalized action frames, insisting on the openness and the indefinite character of individuals' participation, with the aim of drawing large numbers to their events.

To conclude, I underline how the need for a constant flow of events, as a mechanism for identity building, can create pressure on the organizational capacities of movements.

Emil Husted: Mobilizing ‘the new we’: Exploring the management of subjectivity in radical politics

With the rise of political parties, such as Podemos in Spain, the Five Star Movement in Italy, and Syriza in Greece, a new wave of radical left wing politics currently seems to sweep across Europe. Greatly inspired by the global uprisings of 2011-2012, these parties seek to bridge the widening gap between ‘the people’ and the parliament by introducing novel procedures for active participation, democratic deliberation, and consensus-based decision-making. For that reason, these parties’ political objectives are rarely grounded in any pre-defined set of demands. Instead, the objectives are usually much more universal and wide-ranging. In fact, what unites these parties is often little more than a common opposition to the established neoliberal order. In this sense, such parties could very well be described as radical, counter-hegemonic, or even populist.

However, while these parties base their entire identity on universal opposition to the established system, they simultaneously strive to become part of exactly that system by running for elections. In doing so, they seek to bridge what Ernesto Laclau refers to as the unbridgeable gap between universal and particular identities. This unbridgeable dualism, however, poses a grand problematique for radical parties that somehow must be resolved. In this paper, I will argue that one way to do so is by maintaining an impression of being universal and particular at the same time. Through the case of The Alternative (Denmark’s youngest party), I will show how this is accomplished through the ongoing mobilization of a collective subject called ‘the new we’, and an individual subject called the ‘alternativist’, which is bestowed with values such as empathy, diversity, curiosity and open-mindedness. Drawing on the Foucauldian notion of subjectification, I will argue that, besides being generally attractive characteristics, these values ultimately deprives the subject of its ability demarcate, and thus, particularize the party.

Lorenzo Coretti: The Myth of Facebook Democracy: Communication Protocols and Individual Agency in Networked Movements

This presentation explores the impact of communication protocols on individual agency (Hewson, 2010) in the development of collective identity in networked movements. It focuses primarily on how communication protocols affect patterns of interactions and skew power relationships among a movement's constituents.

In Information Systems, communication protocols are resources for action that reduce the complexity of cooperation by providing a pre-computation of organizational structures that decrease possibilities of action for users. A protocol can be designed as a map or a checklist, either by offering a general heuristic framework for distributed decision-making within a relatively open environment, or by providing a script whereby options are narrow (Suchman, 1987).

The presentation suggests that the communication protocols of commercial social networking media, reducing individual action to narrow scripts, lead to fragmentation in social movements by eroding the interactional, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of collective identity. In this context, individual agency

The empirical material presented is part of a PhD dissertation on anti-Berlusconi political protest movements in Italy and their use of Facebook as a core communication and organizational platform. The data gathering is multi-methodological and relies on both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques in the form of a historical analysis of interaction patterns, and a content analysis of online conversations among activists.

Paulo Gerbaudo: From Indymedia to the “Facebook revolution”: Reflections on two generations of digital activism

In order to understand the evolution in digital politics and digital activism in recent years it is not sufficient to pay attention to the evolution of technology, in the shift from web 1.0 to web 2.0. It is also necessary to take into account the change in ideology, in the system of values and beliefs, of digital activists. To explore this aspect in this paper I argue that the attitude of digital activists has shifted from cyberautonomism to cyberpopulism, as to different ways of approaching the digital landscape and making sense of the position of activists within it. Animated by the principle of cyberautonomism, digital activists operating in the 90s aimed to create their autonomous digital spaces, as the alternative news site Indymedia and self-managed activist listservs as riseup or autistici. Very different is the attitude of contemporary digital activists that instead employ fully commercial and corporate spaces as Facebook and Twitter. This behaviour stems from a more strategic perspective than the one of the previous generation of digital activism, and from the desire to attract large sections of internet users rather than just small groups of already radicalised people. Besides providing a historicisation of digital activism the paper will also reflect on the opportunities and limits of both attitudes and connected strategies, and how they reflect the changing nature of society and of the Internet in the aftermath of the Great Recession.

Bernadette Barker-Plummer: Re-thinking Pathways of Influence: #YesAllWomen, Feminism, and Social Change

In pre-digital eras, social movements “got the word out” by using mass media. A successful strategy of second wave US feminist groups, for example, was to build relationships with sympathetic reporters. These interactions helped legitimate the movement and build policy agendas around “women’s issues” (Barker-Plummer, 2010; Bradley, 2005; Cammauer, 2000).

With the emergence of digital media platforms, that centrifugal architecture of the public sphere, in which commercial media were at the center, between publics and policy makers, has fundamentally changed. New circuits of communication, mobilization, and influence have opened up – for example through Twitter, Indymedia platforms and public blogs -- allowing more direct communication with publics and complicating linear models of influence (Jenkins, 2006; Dean, 2010; Boler, 2010; Barker-Plummer, 2013).

This project investigates the dynamics of these new circuits of communication through a case study of the 2014 Twitter campaign, #YesAllWomen. This campaign, in which millions of women tweeted about their personal experiences of sexual assault, was created in response to the 2014 Isla Vista, California, shooting -- a violent spree motivated by misogyny. In the aftermath of the killings, and in response to a Twitter stream that claimed #NotAllMen were misogynistic or violent, the #YesAllWomen hashtag emerged.

As a Twitter campaign #YesAllWomen was already a public event – the biggest ‘consciousness raising’ event around sexual assault in recent history (Solnit, 2014). But it also had a second life as a mainstream news story, and a third one, as these stories were in turn re-tweeted and commented on in the blogosphere and on late night talk shows -- arguably also influencing the US Office of Civil Rights guidelines on campus sexual assault that emerged soon afterwards. In this paper I track the content, timeline, and process of interaction of the #YesAllWomen campaign across platforms as a compelling example of new media dynamics.

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Roxana Galusca: Gaming for Women's Rights: The Ethics of Social Justice Games in the Digital Age

This paper examines a new trend in video gaming known as Social Justice Games. First theorized by video game designer Jane McGonigal in 2010, social justice games aim to persuade gamers to make social justice part of their daily entertainment. This new trend is exemplified by games such as the 2007 *World without Oil*, a game that simulates a world that has run out of oil and the *Superstruct* game that asks players to envision solutions to the imminent destruction of the planet.

I will focus particularly on the interactive open-access Facebook game *Half the Sky*. Based on true stories, culled from all over the world and launched on March 4th, 2013, *Half the Sky* originates in Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl Wu-Dunn's New York Times bestselling book *Half the Sky* (2010). The game tasks players with saving various female characters, encountered during virtual journeys through India, Vietnam, Kenya, and Afghanistan. During their humanitarian travels, players have the opportunity to take action by unlocking funds for the games' sponsors, such as collecting books for young girls in the virtual world and then activating real-time donations of the books to the non-profit Room to Read. Gamers can also make real-life donations to charities during the game.

By way of textual and discourse analysis, including readings of blog entries and players' Facebook comments, I theorize the game as a form of knowledge production, emerging at the intersection of multiple discursive regimes such as human rights, humanitarianism, international developmental discourses, and entertainment. *Half the Sky* in particular and social justice games in general mark, I argue, not only new directions in video gaming, but it also signals new trends in social justice and humanitarian intervention by defining the humanitarian actor as the ordinary individual who can make a change by engaging in a playful process of narration.

Rosemary Clark: Building a Digital Girl Army: The Radical Politics of Online Feminist Communities

Individual and collective empowerment through communal storytelling has been a core tactic of feminist activism in the United States since the movement's fight for women's right to vote. Articulating and collecting personal narratives of oppression was especially important for the second-wave feminists of the 1960s and 1970s, whose activism was characterized by consciousness-raising group meetings, publications, and art. The same emphasis on community-building through discursive exchange can be found among the movement's later "waves," particularly the Riot Grrrl generation of the 1980s and 1990s. Beginning in the late 1990s, however, the possibilities for feminist communities grew exponentially as the movement began to take advantage of digital media's radical potential. In this paper, I use data collected through ethnographic fieldwork to trace the personal, social, and political contours of one online feminist community, Girl Army Philadelphia. Through participant observation and interviews with Girl Army members, I identify digitally networked feminist spaces as sites for resistance that reflect and refract their analog predecessors' collective action tactics, values, and goals.

Joyce Neys: Media practices that empower? Exploring remix and political agency.

This paper explores if, and if so how, contemporary forms of individual online media practices such as for example political machinima and political remix videos, could be considered as a political act. These newer forms of individual political self-expression are often created while (re)appropriating and using elements from popular culture and/or news footage.

The practice of remixing in relation to political and civic engagement has recently regained scholarly attention, in particular with the rise of digital and on-line tools and sharing platforms such as YouTube (e.g. Dias da Silva & Garcia, 2012; Edgar, 2013; Van Zoonen, Vis & Mihelj, 2010). Among activists, however, these practices are long recognized with regards to their transformative and mobilizing power in particular because of the very limited financial resources that are needed to make and distribute them widely. Edwards and Tryon (2009) refer to the power of this critical digital intertextuality as one of the most powerful and effective methods of media activism. Remixes as such can then be seen as creative forms of political protests (Peverini, 2015).

In this paper we focus on two practices: political machinima and political remix videos. Machinima are movies created out of game play and other remixed content whereas political remix videos are created by citizens by reappropriating popular culture to create critical readings in the form of short remixed videos shared online. Following O'Dwyer (2015) remix is considered as discourse and as such several political machinima and political remix videos are analyzed. Additionally, via interviews with creators the paper explores if, and if so how, these practices can be considered as a political act. Using Couldry's conceptualization of voice (2010), the study aims to show how processes of communication can mediate individual empowerment, in particular because of the opportunities for political agency offered by new media platforms.

Dimitra Milioni and Lydia Kollyri: Exploring the structure-agency dialectics in Facebook: Repertoires of user dissent (and compliance) in social media

A growing number of contributions in the field of critical internet studies has begun to interrogate the celebratory and unreflected assumptions about the 'participatory' web and expose the ideological nature of these discourses that conceals the various forms of domination and exploitation online. Yet, unequal attention has been paid so far to the question of user agency, in ways that would enable the critical empirical inquiry of how users challenge network power in the contemporary ecology of 'social' media. Responding to this need, we pose the following question: how can we understand user agency and where do we have to look for forms of resistance in web 2.0 spaces, taking into account the multiple layers in which these online environments structure, condition and curtail users' activity? To address this question, we developed a conceptual framework that identifies five distinct dimensions on which network power and user agency operate: the structural-economic, the ideological, the institutional, the algorithmic and the discursive dimension. This framework is used to guide an empirical analysis (in-depth interviews) of thirty Greek Facebook users and Facebook 'quitters', in terms of their knowledge about and attitudes toward Facebook, as well as their everyday practices and behaviors in this online space.

The study findings reveal that user agency is stronger along the lines of economic-structural and the discursive dimension and much weaker in terms of the platform's institutional, algorithmic and ideological power. Having developed a typology of the various modes of respondents' contention, it was found that user repertoires of dissent were restricted at the level of awareness and resistance, never reaching opposition or subversion. The study is a first attempt to empirically explore user agency from a critical perspective; it provides, however, important conceptual tools for the empirical inquiry of the structure-agency dialectics in web 2.0.

Michael Etter and Lindsey Blumell: Human Rights NGOs' social media use: A platform for outside voices or reinforcement of agendas?

Social media technologies such as Facebook or Twitter are usually discussed from an instrumental perspective: i.e., social media facilitates information transmission that drives transparency and democratization (Johnson & Regan, 2014). An emerging stream of critical research indicates, however, that communication through social media does not simply represent reality but has both enabling and constraining properties. In this view, social media has the potential to enable and constrain how organizing is accomplished because these very dynamics that constitute social organizing can be both supported or disrupted by the material features of technologies (Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield, 2013). This paper adds to such critical discussions by exploring how social media (Facebook and Twitter) communicative interactions impact actors' coordination of freedom of speech campaigns.

The paper's empirical focus is on the case of a non-governmental activist organization (NGO) in operating in Gafsa and Tunis, Tunisia. The paper investigates an environment which is characterized by political instability such as Tunisia as here actors use social media for daily organizing activities that support freedom of speech such as making decisions, discussing topics, increasing the size of gatherings, and sharing information. By drawing on ethnographic interviews with activists and content analysis of their social media posts, the paper provides insight into how social media interactions function as agents who act on the activists' behalf and thus have both an enabling or constraining role for their social organizing activities.

Anne Vestergaard: 'Its seems a lot like play-acting'. Child Slavery, Global Solidarity and Cosmopolitan Agency.

The growing power of multinational corporations in a globalized world is shifting the power relations between state, economy and civil society. Where states lose power, a common argument runs, a democratising empowerment of civil society compensates. This argument, however, rests on the assumption that civil society groups are able to act as representatives of citizens and thus function as ciphers for a representative form of collective agency.

Discourse analyses of online debates concerning child labor and slavery testify to a social imaginary, which is devoid of any kind of collective, cosmopolitan agency and filled with doubt and uncertainty. The publics studied perceive of their global agency as individual, strictly economic and weak at that.

Hilde Stephansen: Understanding citizen media as practice: agents, processes, publics

Much recent commentary on citizen media has focused on the possibilities and limitations of online platforms as means through which citizens may disseminate self-produced media content that challenges dominant discourses or makes visible hidden realities. The promise (or otherwise) of citizen media for democratic renewal tends to be framed primarily in terms of their potential to facilitate the circulation of otherwise unreported news, stories and opinions in the mediated public sphere. This chapter seeks to go beyond a concern with media content to explore the much broader range of socially situated practices that develop around citizen media. Drawing on Nick Couldry's proposal for a practice paradigm in media research, the chapter suggests shifting the focus from 'citizen media' to 'citizen media practices' and develops a broad set of questions to guide research about such practices. Through a case study of communication activism in the World Social Forum (WSF), based on ethnographic research conducted between 2008 and 2013, it demonstrates how a practice framework can bring into view a broad range of citizen media practices (beyond those directly concerned with the production and circulation of media content), the different forms of agency that such practices make possible, and the social fabric they can help generate. The chapter concludes by arguing that a practice framework necessitates a rethink of the way that the concept of (counter-)publics is used in the context of citizen media. Citizen media practices of the kind described here can be understood not only as practices of 'making public' previously unreported issues and perspectives, but as practices of public-making: practices that support the formation of publics. By emphasising the social foundations of publics, a practice framework exposes some of the limits of accounts that see publics as constituted purely through the circulation of discourse.

Eduardo Gonçalves: Crowdfunding and the reconfiguration of public and private space

This ongoing PhD research consists of a social and political analysis of the crowdfunding phenomenon. Platforms such as Kickstarter or Indiegogo make initiatives tangible through actions of ordinary people, dismissing institutional support from government or corporations. Through a social and political analysis of these online gatherings, my ongoing PhD research calls into question the spaces where people pursue public and private interests.

The relationship between public and private spheres of action has been long debated in the literature. Arendt criticized the role of modern state as a guardian of individual freedom, highlighting that real possibilities of political action are still restricted to political elites. Simultaneously private interests of corporations have compromised the political sphere, argued Wolin and Schedler. According to them states take decisions within the private realm, diminishing the spaces for public interests. Finally Bellah argued that this scenario and its emphasis in the private interests favored individualism. Yet, he adds, people are not comfortable with it: the lack of social ties makes them eager for connections.

This paper introduces some of my data and findings, focusing on interviews I conducted with people engaged with crowdfunding in Brazil, the UK and the USA. I start from the point that if the institutional conjuncture seems to seize the public sphere from people, citizens might be fighting back recreating the public realm within this purportedly private space. Instead of traditional political organizations (such as parties or social movements) crowdfunding benefits from practical disruptions emerged from new technologies. Yet at the same time crowdfunding might grasp what post-representativeness could be or what a post-political pragmatic approach could look like. The discussion considers political possibilities and limitations of this new setting for private and public spaces.

Veronica Barassi: Social Media, Immediacy and the Time for Democracy: Critical Reflections on Social Media as ‘Temporalising Practices’

In this paper I consider the relationship between social media and the construction of the hegemonic temporal context of ‘immediacy’, and I explore its impacts on social protest. In contrast to Kheightley (2013) who believes that the concept of immediacy can only lead to techno-deterministic understandings of mediated time, I propose that we need to understand ‘immediacy’ by looking at the relationship between hegemonic constructions of social time on the one hand and everyday social media practices on the other. The first part of the paper, therefore, will discuss how we can theoretically understand immediacy by looking at three different albeit interconnected dimension: the political economic dimension; the cultural dimension; and the dimension defined by everyday practice. The second part of the paper will thus proceed to explore the impacts of immediacy on social media protest. Drawing on an ethnographic research amongst three political groups in Europe, I will argue that, despite beneficial to processes of information sharing, the temporal context of immediacy represents a challenge for processes of political participation, reflection and elaboration. Appreciating the challenges immediacy poses to political activists, is of central importance, if we want to develop a more critical understanding of the democratic opportunities and constraints of social media protest.

Anne Kaun: “This Space Belongs to Us!”: Protest Spaces in Times of Accelerating Capitalism

Protest movements are fundamentally about the production and control of space. Whether in a discursive or physically sense protesters aim to carve out spaces that give room to their political causes. The negotiation and contestation of the production of space has potentially changed in the context of social media that connect activists over vast distances and in real time. In line with that, media scholars, urban geographers and sociologists have attributed changes in the production and perception of space to emerging media technologies that are extending the human body (McLuhan 1964), contributing to deterritorialization (Tomlinson 1999) and space-time compression (Harvey 1990). What are then the strategies of protest movements that are actively challenging the hegemonic logic of the production of space and how are the strategies relating to communication technologies? What are the consequences of changes in the production of protest spaces for activism in terms of temporality?

This presentation investigates the changes in the production of space of protest movements in the context of advancing capitalism that is increasingly based on digital communication technologies. The questions outlined above are investigated by drawing on an in-depth analysis of Occupy Wall Street and one of its major direct actions, the march on Brooklyn Bridge in October 2011. In order to contextualize the production of space in relation to temporal structures historically, the presentation considers also two earlier protest movements that emerged in the USA in the context of the Great Depression in the 1930s and the oil and fiscal crisis in the early 1970s. With the help of this contextualization, I aim to complicate the current overemphasis on the role of social media for protest movements and trace significant changes in organizing and mobilizing protest that are related to media technologies. More concretely I identify a change from mechanical speed and perpetual flow to digital immediacy that is closely linked to a second change from space bias to hyperspace bias. Drawing on in-depth interviews with OWS activists and extensive archival research, the presentation argues for a (re-)politicization of media infrastructures that are constitutive of communicative capitalism.

Arne Hintz: Social Media Censorship, Privatised Regulation, and New Restrictions to Protest and Dissent

The role of social media companies in both facilitating and limiting dissent is becoming more prominent. Facebook, Google and others are increasingly restricting content that is published on or distributed through their platforms, for example by censoring activist pages and apps. The Snowden revelations of mass online surveillance have highlighted the key role of commercial social media platforms in large-scale data collection and their – sometimes reluctant, sometimes complicit – integration in NSA/GCHQ programmes. Intellectual property protection mechanisms have transferred the authority to define, detect and punish alleged copyright infringements to copyright holders and platforms such as Youtube, and have thus contributed to an emerging shift in regulatory authority to private intermediaries.

This paper demonstrates how social media companies and other private intermediaries have not only been assigned a greater role in implementing laws and regulations, but have moved towards actively formulating and setting policy that deeply affects freedom of expression and restricts the activities of protesters and activists. It discusses the democratic implications of this emerging authority of commercial actors that ‘outsources’ control over key civic rights, and situates this trend in the broader context of the privatisation of communication policy and of neoliberal politics.

Greg Elmer: Preempting Dissent: From Participatory Policing to Collaborative Filmmaking

This presentation discusses the role that social media and activist captured video can play in exposing and intervening in preemptive police actions before, during and after social protests. The presentation focuses on the conceptualization and production of the collaboratively produced creative commons documentary film *Preempting Dissent* (2014, G. Elmer & A. Opel Directors), as an effort at mobilizing the media content of activists and protestors against the preemptive actions of law enforcement agencies worldwide. This presentation will question how collaboratively produced and shared media can begin to expose and challenge this preemptive or participatory form of surveillance by police, in an effort at exposing widespread civil rights violations that continue to occur at protests around the globe. The presentation offers both conceptual and practical contributions, first through a reconceptualization of theories of surveillance, and secondly through a reflection on the limitations and challenges of collaborative, creative commons media making.

Emiliano Treré: Inhabited by paranoia: tracing the struggles within social media protest

In 2012, the #YoSoy132 movement emerged in Mexico asking for the democratization of the Mexican media and criticizing the strategy of the PRI Party and its candidate. In contrast to the celebratory literature developed around the movement that has praised the role of social media in the development of a fifth state, and conceived them as alternative media to the so-called Mexican telecracy, my ethnography of #YoSoy132 highlights a much more controversial scenario. In this presentation, I will show that everyday frictions and struggles, together with issues of exploitation, dataveillance, control and intents of delegitimization plagued the digital resistance of the Mexican movement. My aim is to contribute to the critical literature on digital activism by showing that the political economy lens can benefit from the integration of a focus on negotiations among activists that underline everyday conflicts and tensions. While investigating how communicative capitalism is constraining social media protest is a fundamental task, one has not to overlook the daily disputes around the use of social media for social change, struggles that are inherent to the recognition that technologies are not mere instruments that activists use against neoliberal power, but ecologies of mediations that are constantly crossed by clashes and conflicts and inhabited by suspicion and paranoia.

**Jonas Kaiser, Markus Rhomberg, Axel Maireder and Stephan Schlögl:
Energiewende's lone warriors: A hyperlink network analysis of the
German Energiewende discourse**

This contribution explores how political actors connect with other actors online in the highly controversial debate on the German Energiewende. In order to do so we analyze the hyperlink structure in the German election year 2013. The term 'Energiewende' describes the fundamental transition from non-renewable energy sources to sustainable sources. Naturally, this goal is both ambitious and very controversial. Numerous stakeholders try to make their voices and interests heard and as such politics has to both disseminate and collect information in order to include as many actors in the political process as possible. This discourse is also visible online.

For these reasons, this contribution pursues two objectives: On the one hand, it shall be analytically determined, to what extent the Internet can guarantee the integration of social actors into political communication processes in the policy field Energiewende, and whether the political actors are actively distributing and collecting information in order to include as many actors in the political process as possible. On the other hand, the theoretical objective of this contribution is to shed light on how far communication in the Internet contributes to the integration of social segmented publics.

Methodologically, we used Google's search engine to grasp documents that included the term 'Energiewende' within a period of 30 weeks (March to October 2013). This resulted in a total of 70.204 unique documents from 7.911 unique domains. By analyzing the hyperlink structures of the Energiewende network we were able to show that most actors tend to link within their own societal field. Especially political actors appear to be "lone warriors" who neither look left or right and mostly link within their own party and ignore other actor fields altogether. The role of 'society connecting' intermediary was not taken by the media but rather by NGOs and foundations. Scientific actors, however, were ignored by all societal fields.

Elaine Yuan, Miao Feng and Xiyuan Liu: The (Re) Evolution of Civic Engagement: A Network Analysis of the Facebook Groups of Occupy Chicago

Despite the hope and enthusiasm people had with “Twitter/Facebook revolutions” social media initiated political events across the world seemed to have exposed more deeply ingrained social issues than they were supposed to have solved. Nevertheless these mediated events have presented an interesting set of problems revolving the role of social media for the development of civil society as both a goal and a means to not only check unjust political orders but to nurture institutions and structures to sustain. Thinking along this line, we conceptualize civil society as networks of voluntary associations in this study. As such, civil society, embodied by and in the structure and constituency of such networks, both enables and is reproduced by the evolving forms of networked civic engagement.

This study carried out a network analysis of 2000 Facebook groups joined by 600 randomly sampled Occupy Chicago (OC) participants. The findings showed that large-scale social movements such as OC relied on broad sponsoring coalitions of civic interests embedded in diverse interconnected social networks running on social media networks. Instead of serving solely as technological or information platforms for mobilizing individual participants, Facebook enabled various forms of social integration from community socialization, network sociality, to event-based participation. It also embodied diverse cultures of civic engagement from life politics, consumer-citizenship, to professionalism. These variegated patterns of interconnection reflected the evolution of civil society amid at broad social political changes in late modernity. To the extent that communication via social media networks is mainly a result of user-generated efforts, the individuals are not left isolated but venture into constructing political causes and commitments of their own.

Tamar Ashuri and Yaniv Bar Ilan: Signaling and collective action: Hierarchical and non-hierarchical filtering in a networked environment

A substantial organizational transformation that occurs in the digital age is the shift of agency from the center to ends, and the emergence of decentralized, non-hierarchical organizations. Focusing on collective action organizations, we suggest that a decentralized configuration constructed around participants with greater agency indulge organizations to develop new filtering tactics for sorting out more effectively participating agents that are valuable to the group. Drawing on 'signaling theory', we offer an analytical framework that conceptualizes current filtering tactics as a 'trust game' between existing participating agents and new joiners. We show that in the process of filtering, participating agents detect cost-discriminating signals of 'true' attributes exchanged in both offline and online spaces. This conceptualization helps explain the decisions taken by participating agents regarding filtering at a lower level of analysis thus offering a micro-level investigation that complements the existing literature on civil participation. The analysis reveals some significant elements that characterize filtering in a digital era. Previous studies on filtering in collective action organizations have explained how boundary work actually works in bureaucratic settings with fairly clear boundaries. This study focused instead on how new patterns of collective participation emerge, and how novel norms and practices related to filtering are distributed through online and offline communication in a decentralized and non-bureaucratic organizations. The study makes additional points with theoretical implications. First, it explains organization's decision to conduct filtering measures - a decision that on the face of it is counter-intuitive since organizations operating in a digital environment can tolerate a decentralized configuration and the enclosure of 'free riders'. The second point relates to filtering practices. It shows that the emergence of new forms of participation, practices and norm encourages creativity in the development of specific filtering tactics with activists considering new tactics for achieving their goals.

Harris Breslow: The Haptic Subject: A Critique of the Politics of the Networked Individual

This paper addresses the rubrics of spaces of participation and protest and the materiality of media participation through a critique of Wellman's networked individualism. Wellman's understanding of social networks and online relationships reproduces the neoliberal subject and agency within a conception of cyberspace that echoes problematic modern notions of space and subjectivity. This paper will accomplish this through the following three arguments:

-1: Wellman conceives of the networked individual as existing at the center of a series of social networks that revolve around the subject, and which the subject unproblematically perceives, manages, maintains or exits for reasons of personal efficacy and gratification. In doing so Wellman reproduces modern conceptions of subjectivity that are founded upon Renaissance linear perspective, which situates the subject within a transparent space of mathematically regular relationships that are immediately and unproblematically perceived by the subject. In both instances perception—the act of perceiving things across space—and the relationship of perception to signification, agency and the production of the subject, are never questioned.

-2: Wellman thus understands cyberspace as an immaterial, discursive space whose navigation lacks both affect and effect. Although Wellman accounts for geographic distance when describing the limits to the efficacy of social networks, he fails to conceive of cyberspace in terms of its materiality. This conception of space also informs the articulation of the neoliberal subject: The neoliberal subject is hyper-rational, economically driven, and views social relationships instrumentally. The neoliberal subject exists in a space wherein all relationships are rationalised, regular and measurable—an immaterial, transparent space.

-3: Any critique of neoliberal conceptions of subjectivity and political agency must first reconceive of the environment within which the subject is situated and produced. I argue that Space—cyber or physical—is haptic; it is frictional in nature. Subjects experience this friction when moving through physical space or while navigating cyberspace in many ways; most importantly in the potential rearticulation of the relationships within which perception, signification, and subjectivity are produced and political agency is articulated

Bolette Blaagaard and Mette Marie Roslyng: Networking the political

Traditionally communication studies have referred to Jürgen Habermas' concept of the public sphere when theorising the political role played by communication. The concept favours mass media and in particular the press as the mediator between the systemic and the life worlds and the facilitator of political implications on civil society. It follows that mass media is granted a special place in the theory of the public sphere.

However, recently the impact of digitalisation, online interaction, and mobile media seems to have challenged the political role of mass media. Political party leaders comment and engage in debates on social network sites and online, 'ordinary people' may as easily engage in political conversation as MPs. This development changes not only the way in which we view and theorise the public sphere, but also how we view and theorise the political.

This paper argues that what is at stake is not only a shift from unitary understandings of political public sphere and party political power to multiple spheres and concepts of what is political. Rather the definition of the political and its role in partly online public spheres calls on a conceptualisation that takes into account the networked connections established between 'ordinary people' and politicians and mass media and mobile media. Moreover, the concept needs to take into account the blurring of the boundaries between these oppositional pairs and its implications.

In this paper we propose to understand the idea of the network as a series of connections that foster both connectivities and genealogies. That is, our concept of networked politics relies both on affirmative as well as critical thinking. We illustrate this conceptualisation through a case study mapping the blurring of the oppositional pairs in the context of Danish politics.

Fruzsina Nábelek: Campaigning outside the parties. Activity of non-profit organizations in the campaign of the Hungarian parliamentary elections of 2014.

An important feature of the post-modern election campaigns is that they are not limited to political parties. The citizens can appear not only as passive recipients of messages but as active participants who can create political contents on their own. A special form of participation is the emergence of politically active non-profit organizations. In Hungary, although we can find examples in the past, the phenomenon came into focus only during the recent election campaigns and the discussion about it is mostly related to political criticism and debates about campaign financing while the scientific study of the activity of these organizations is rare. In addition to the novelty and probably to the sensitivity of the topic this can be explained by the difficulty of conceptualization of campaign activity and of organizations which can be considered to be engaged in campaigning. This study aims to analyze the campaign activity of two types of organizations: those which are officially related to parties (i.e party funds and youth organizations of parties) and those which through their statements or their activity express commitment for or against a party competing in the elections. The main question of the paper is how these organizations can appear in the campaign. What messages and communication channels do they use? How is their activity related to the parties? Are they able to form the agenda of the campaign or do they only echo messages coming from the parties? To answer these questions the study first identifies the organizations which were active at the campaign period of the Hungarian parliamentary elections of 2014 and examines in what channels they communicated. In the next step using qualitative content analysis it identifies the frames used by these organizations and compares it to frames used by the parties.

Jakob Linnaa Jensen: Social Media in the Danish 2015 Election

With the digitalization of information, subsequently leading to a fragmentation of audiences (Benett & Iyengar, 2008) and a change in the prevailing media logic (Schulz, 2014), a convergent media environment has developed. Nowadays, social media offer a platform for converging streams of information, altering the media diet for a growing share of the population. In addition, social networks like Facebook or Twitter offer emerging ways of participation, mostly with less effort than traditional forms (Rotman et al, 2011). Yet, the role social media play in the political media diet was not fully assessed by prior research. Furthermore, a broadened approach is needed when measuring participatory behavior. Emerging forms of participation on social media platforms but also engagement among the public, not closely connected to the political system, are necessary to include, to see the full picture of civic participation.

For this purpose, a nationwide study in Denmark was conducted (N=4460), measuring the political media exposure of the citizens with a smartphone-based media diary over the course of 15 days in February 2015. Civic participation was measured with 32 items, including activities within the ranges of online and offline, active and passive as well as traditional and unconventional forms of participation. Subsequently, the influence of exposure to political information on social media on these different types of participation was tested.

Considering a change in citizenship (Bennett, 2008), especially among the young (Thorson, 2014), the concept of public orientation (Ekström, Olsson & Shehata, 2014) was used to detect underlying dimensions of participation, reflecting a trend towards a more individualized understanding of citizenship. Finally, using factor- and cluster analysis, a typology of participation in a convergent media environment was developed.

Anamaria Dutceac Segesten and Michael Bossetta: Activism or Slacktivism?: Twitter use during the 2015 British and Danish general election campaigns

Research on social media's impact on citizen involvement and participation in politics is still in its early stages. While some scholars praise social media's potential to empower citizens as digital activists via Web 2.0 communication, others are skeptical of online actors' capacity to affect significant offline political and social change. We propose to examine whether the political discussions on Twitter during the 2015 British and Danish general elections were examples of digital activism or slacktivism - a passive engagement with political issues. Furthermore, our comparison will explore whether there are national variations in digital activism on Twitter potentially attributed to political communication culture differences.

Using R programming software, we collect tweets with the predominant election hashtag in each country during the final week of election campaigning. The questions motivating our analysis of the collected data are:

Is Twitter a site for political deliberation among citizens; or, is Twitter primarily used by politicians/journalists as a digital medium of political communication? What type of content is created by politicians, media outlets and citizens online? What type of content is most re-distributed and endorsed, and by whom? Which type of Twitter user (politician/party, journalist/media outlet, private citizen, NGO) is the most active contributor to the political debate?

Examining the content of Twitter messages helps us assess online issue politicization, which correlates to higher voter mobilization, and mediatization, i.e. whether the online debate is genuinely political or highly spectacularized. We can also measure the hybridization of traditional and online media by tracing hyperlinking and cross-posting across platforms. Finally, by looking at who is most active on Twitter, we can discuss the potential of the medium to facilitate political engagement and communication for ordinary citizens, not just for politicians and journalists.

Pekka Isotalus and Annina Eloranta: Live-tweeting during televised electoral debates – New form of public discussion?

Social media and especially Twitter have become a crucial part of political communication and campaigning. Twitter enables ordinary people to take part in political discussion in real time which can enhance the dialogue between the elites or the political decision-makers and the public. Live-tweeting is a rather new form of public discussion that only few studies have yet researched. Most of the studies focus on the quantity of the tweets but especially theoretical qualitative research is needed in order to understand this unique public discussion. This research focuses on live-tweeting during a televised electoral debate that is part of the Finnish parliamentary elections in April 2015. The main focus is on the content of the tweets. The research seeks to find out which topics arouse conversation and what the tweets are like in terms of style (opinionated, statement, question etc.). Over 12 000 live-tweets with a specific hashtag were collected by NodeXL network analysis software. All tweets will be categorized manually and the analysis is mainly qualitative. Preliminary results show that majority of the tweets are opinionated and evaluative rather than neutral questions, statements or reports about the discussion. Popular themes seem to be evaluating the overall nature of the discussion and evaluating the party leaders' performance and opinions as well as the hosts' performance. In addition, especially questions about economy and employment seem to raise conversation during the televised electoral debate. In the final paper, the style of this new form of public discussion and its possibilities are more discussed.

Maximiliane Schäffer and Martin Emmer: Crowdsourced Election Monitoring in the Kenyan Presidential Election 2013: The Participatory Potential of ICTs under Conditions of Instable Democratic Institutions

Participation of all citizens in elections, party competition and free media are foundations of a functioning democracy. Communication research in the past twenty years has analyzed the impact of ICTs on these processes under many perspectives (Boulianne 2009; Tsagarousianou 1999). However, research still focuses on well developed democracies like the USA and European countries, while the majority of countries in the world are much less stable democracies, if democracies at all (Freedom House 2014). This paper focuses, by example of Kenya, on the potentials of ICTs for participation under conditions of instable democratic structures.

Kenya is a young democracy, where the political process is impeded by tensions between ethnic groups, inadequate media reporting and a high level of institutional corruption. In the midst of the 2007 “post-election crisis”, following massive election fraud and violence, a group of activists created “Ushahidi”, a system that mapped eye witness reports of voting irregularities sent in via SMS. In the 2013 elections, the elaborated version Uchaguzi.co.ke was set up to organize a Crowdsourced Election Monitoring system (CEM). Taking on an actor centered perspective, we conducted a Grounded Theory-based case study with 13 qualitative interviews with Uchaguzi developers and political experts to examine the potential of this platform for citizen participation and its general potential stabilizing the democratic system.

On a micro-level, findings suggest that the mobilizing potentials of CEM lie in the platform’s incremental low cost participation, which enhances people’s feeling of self-efficacy that is stimulated through trust-building participatory incentives. The potentials of CEM also become evident in the collaboration structure of the platform that results from self-efficacy and social capital building. Moreover, CEM provides potentials on the macro-level as it creates a bottom-up induced “counter-transparency” of the electoral process, forming the first step in of holding state institutions accountable.

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**Sevasti-Melissa Nolas, Christos Varvantakis and Vinnarasan Aruldoss:
Challenging representations of activism in a digital age: beyond rebel youth**

What makes research and public discourses continue to link political engagement to youth, especially young people in their teenage years and early adulthood? The proposed contribution addresses this question by presenting preliminary findings from the Connectors Study (<https://connectorsstudy.wordpress.com/>), an ERC funded cross-national and qualitative longitudinal study into children's participation in public life and the emergence of an orientation towards social action in childhood. Starting in 2014 the study follows a small group of 6- and 7-year olds in three cities (Athens, London and Hyderabad) over a period of four years using a multi-method ethnographic approach. The proposed contribution will draw on the cross-national analysis of the first wave of fieldwork carried out between September 2014 and May 2015 in order to engage with questions on the politics of age and the boundaries of 'youth activism'. Through the selective use of case studies from our sample, and framing our work with new publics paradigm that focuses on the intersection of the private, public and personal, we explore the meaning of activism cross-nationally and what 'political engagement' might look like at an earlier time in a biographical narrative. Our preliminary findings suggest that political awareness, and in some cases engagement, starts at a much earlier age and we explore the conditions of its emergence. In response to our launching question we argue for a biographical approach to the study of political engagement, that engages with the lifespan and foregrounds children's everyday lives as these unfold between institutions (e.g. school, family, the media) and overtime.

Liam Berriman: Young People's Digital Participation in New Economies of Value

This paper considers how youth digital participation in the UK has increasingly been framed in a binary logic of 'value' and 'risk'. Over the last decade, government and business rhetorics have positioned youth digital participation as of vital 'value' to the UK's competitiveness in future digital economic markets (Livingstone & Hope, 2011), with special emphasis placed on the entrepreneurial potential of 'digital making' practices such as coding and vlogging (Quinlan, 2015). Meanwhile, educational and safeguarding policy discourses have stressed the potential 'risks' of youth digital participation. Advanced through 'e-safety' campaigns, this rhetoric has increasingly placed the onus of responsibility for managing risk on the individual young person (Hope, 2014). By critically interrogating this value/risk binary, this paper will seek to examine the contradictory ways UK young people are urged to 'maximise the value' and 'minimise the risk' of their everyday digital participation. Ultimately, the paper will advocate the need to move beyond this binary logic, and to re-think how we can re-frame the value of digital participation on young people's own terms.

Jo Moran-Ellis: Politicisation in a digital age: the example of controlling children's encounters with digital sexualities

In this paper I look at the ways in which different legal and welfare responses to children's encounters with digital sexual content closes down or open up opportunities for a reflexive politicisation of sexuality at the level of everyday life. Taking two examples - teenage sexting on the one hand, and encounters with internet pornography on the other, I examine the spaces available for children's agency and the potential (or lack of potential) for their politicisation in respect of the dynamics of sexual relationships. Drawing on an actor network approaches, I will examine the ways in which childhood agency and social actorship in respect of digital technologies is rendered problematic conceptually by the mobilization of particular ideologies of innocence, moral corruption, and incompetence by adults and institutions of social control. At the same time, the problematics of digital sexual agency are intensified in a practical sense by the ways in which sexuality in childhood (including early adolescence) is discursively managed in inter-generational encounters. More specifically, the ways in which children knowing certain kinds of things about sexual activities and the politics of sexuality poses a threat to the integrity of the ideologies of innocence. In this way children are caught in a double bind and opportunities for a political sensibility concerning sexuality, sexual activities and sexual relationships are closed.

Lel Meleyal: Boundaries in a digital age

The huge growth of digital spaces such as blogs, Facebook, twitter and on-line communities of interest such as role playing games and virtual worlds have shifted the boundaries of our private and professional landscapes. The rapidly transforming environment of a digitized world is a place of new opportunities and challenges. Digital spaces and our interactions within them have consequences. Boundaries between private/public; adult/child; professional/service user; digital native/digital immigrant and digital inclusion/digital divides are increasingly unclear, uncertain and shifting and the potential for harmful boundary transgression and exclusion is high. This paper critically reflects on the theory and practice of boundaries in a digital age. It draws upon data from two sources: Firstly, from a review of professional conduct cases held by regulatory bodies in the UK which evidence boundary transgression in digital spaces. Secondly, from a small study with social work students which invited them to explain their understanding of professional boundaries in digital spaces. It is proposed that we must re-vision what is meant by boundary/ies and how we ethically engage with the more fluid spaces of the Internet, social media digital spaces. It is further proposed that such re-visioning is key to unlocking the many transformative opportunities they offer.

Michael Bossetta: Populist Performance through YouTube: Three European Cases Compared

Research on social media's impact on citizen involvement and participation in politics is still in its early stages. While some scholars praise social media's potential to empower citizens as digital activists via Web 2.0 communication, others are skeptical of online actors' capacity to affect significant offline political and social change. We propose to examine whether the political discussions on Twitter during the 2015 British and Danish general elections were examples of digital activism or slacktivism - a passive engagement with political issues. Furthermore, our comparison will explore whether there are national variations in digital activism on Twitter potentially attributed to political communication culture differences.

Using R programming software, we collect tweets with the predominant election hashtag in each country during the final week of election campaigning. The questions motivating our analysis of the collected data are:

Is Twitter a site for political deliberation among citizens; or, is Twitter primarily used by politicians/journalists as a digital medium of political communication? What type of content is created by politicians, media outlets and citizens online? What type of content is most re-distributed and endorsed, and by whom? Which type of Twitter user (politician/party, journalist/media outlet, private citizen, NGO) is the most active contributor to the political debate?

Examining the content of Twitter messages helps us assess online issue politicization, which correlates to higher voter mobilization, and mediatization, i.e. whether the online debate is genuinely political or highly spectacularized. We can also measure the hybridization of traditional and online media by tracing hyperlinking and cross-posting across platforms. Finally, by looking at who is most active on Twitter, we can discuss the potential of the medium to facilitate political engagement and communication for ordinary citizens, not just for politicians and journalists.

Eleftheria Lekakis: Commercial Nationalism, Advertising and the Crisis: Political Agency and Resistance

This paper is concerned with the way in which the spaces of national, the commercial and the political intersect in times of crisis. It explores the ways in which advertising attempts to mobilise political agency through the platform of a brand and the reception this attempt holds in terms of acceptance or resistance. The focus is on interrogating the link between the national and the commercial -what Kania-Lundholm (2014) calls the 'economization of the social- in the construction of political agency. The specific advertisement for the Johnnie Walker whiskey is indicative of 'commercial nationalism', the process through which commercial entities attempt to frame national identity (Volvic and Andejovic, 2011). The advertisement examined was launched in 2012 as part of the corporation's global campaign that sought to promote national progress.

In particular, the paper critically questions the extent to which advertising (the space of the commercial mediated online) attempts to engage citizens (political agency) in processes of solidarity (within the nation) and how this process is received by citizens. The advertisement was part of Diageo's global campaign which employed personalisation as a brand strategy for consumer engagement in a process of social change through the brand platform. There appear to be asymmetries in terms of political agency in commercial nationalism. Firstly, the ability to articulate solidarity is curtailed by the structure and the narrative of the advertisement. While citizens were able to add their own message at the end of the short advertisement right before the end credits ('we support one another'), and the product is not seen once, the product becomes the nation itself. Secondly, the reception of the advertisement was torn between welcome reception and resistant rejection; content analysis of comments on the YouTube link to the advertisement demonstrates dichotomous responses to commercial nationalism.

Jannick Schou and Johan D. Farkas: Disguised as Islamists: Cloaked Facebook Pages and Danish Right-wing Groups

Cloaked websites, i.e. sites that are deliberately disguised in order to conceal a hidden political agenda, is a phenomenon that has gained growing attention amongst scholars in recent years. While existing research has shown how individuals and groups may use cloaked websites for various political purposes, such as spreading propaganda against abortion laws and the civil rights movement (Daniels, 2009; 2014), less have considered how political groupings may appropriate pre-existing commercial media, such as Facebook, to deploy cloaking strategies. In this paper, we report on an on-going study of (extreme) Danish right-wing groupings that utilize cloaked Facebook pages in order to disguise as radical Islamists. The study is based on multi-sided ethnographic field studies as well as qualitative content analyses of a number of cloaked pages. Preliminary findings suggest that the Danish right-wing groups utilize various cloaking strategies to spread malicious propaganda by giving the impression that they represent radical Islamist groups. Furthermore, the study finds that these cloaking strategies have proven to be highly effective in making the public, including members of the Danish parliament, believe that the disguised Facebook pages actually represent “real” radical Islamists in Denmark. Thus, the cloaked pages have proven to be a powerful activist propaganda tool as it enables the right-wing groupings to influence political debates. Finally, the paper engages critically with the found cloaking strategies by discussing how cloaked pages, utilized by extreme political groupings, represent a fundamental democratic problem. Hence, the paper argues that critical research into the oppressive mechanisms utilized by radical political groupings is highly necessary.

Benjamin De Cleen: Images of nativism. 25 years of radical right anti-immigration posters in Flanders (1979-2014)

Throughout much of the party's history, poster campaigns have played a central role in the Flemish populist radical right party VB's (Vlaams Blok, renamed Vlaams Belang in 2004) communication strategies. As an outsider party, the VB's highly successful communication strategy used mainstream media, but was also strongly built on its own communication channels. The VB spent considerable budgets on carefully planned poster campaigns, whilst also using these visuals in large-scale leaflet campaigns, on its website and on social media. The paper studies the VB's posters as part of an ongoing discursive struggle, looking at the intertextual references in the VB's posters and at the visual responses of anti-VB movements to these posters.

Focus is on the VB's anti-immigration posters, nativist resistance against immigration and diversity being at the heart of VB rhetoric and of its electoral appeal (Mudde 2007). The paper presents a discourse-theoretical analysis (Carpentier & De Cleen 2007), combining a discourse theoretical framework (Laclau and Mouffe 2001), with social semiotic methods for analysing multimodal communication (Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996, 2001), critical discourse analytical strategies (Fairclough 2003; Krzyzanowski and Wodak 2008) and with the procedures of qualitative content analysis (Coffey and Atkinson 1996; Wester 1995).

An analysis of 25 years of VB poster campaigns makes visible the continuity of the VB's nativist us/them distinction and its continued strong rejection of diversity. At the same time, it reveals significant diversity and changes in how the VB communicated this core nativist message. The paper shows the growing importance of images, and discusses 'harder' and 'softer', 'positive' and 'negative' campaigns. The paper discusses how the interaction between different constituent visual and written elements of the posters allows the VB to communicate in a 'calculated ambivalent' (Wodak and Engel 2012) fashion. It looks at intertextual references to symbols of otherness and to the resistance against the VB, including parodies of anti-racist campaigns. At the same time, the paper also shows how anti-racist have parodied and subverted some of the VB's posters and their nativist message.

Kristoffer Holt and Patrik Lundell: Mistrusting the media – now and then. A historical comparison of far right media criticism in Sweden

Characteristic of many contemporary far right movements is a deeply rooted skepticism and suspiciousness towards mainstream media. During the PEGIDA marches in Dresden, Germany, “Lügenpresse” is a common slogan. The message is that hegemonic mainstream media conceal or distort information that does not fit the “politically correct” agenda. In Sweden far right movements, ranging from right wing populist parties such as the Sweden Democrats (SD) to more extreme identitarian think-tanks such as Motpol.nu exhibit the same attitude. (Holt, 2015) Radical right media channels therefore need to be analysed in the light of its position as a perceived corrective of traditional media and constrained public discourse. But is this a new phenomenon? In this paper we compare findings from two separate studies of radical right wing media criticism from different periods: the online contemporary identitarian wictionary Metapedia.org (Holt & Rinaldo, 2014) and the media criticism in the journal Sweden-Germany (1938-58) published by the pro-German National Society Sweden-Germany (RST). (Lundell, 2015) Our aim is to study historical antecedents to today’s far right media criticism and discuss contemporary far right media criticism in the light of what can be learned from history.

Helena Sandberg and Ulrika Sjöberg: DigiKids - Digital practices and skills of young children and their families: a longitudinal study

The purpose is to present DigiKids, a Swedish research project in preparation, starting 2016, and discuss the analytical framework as well as methodology for studying 3-6 year old children. DigiKids, will make an important contribution to the growing, yet very limited, field of research on young children's appropriation of digital media and development of digital literacy skills in early childhood. DigiKids will longitudinally investigate young children's digital practices in a family context, with the aim of advancing our understanding of the implications of these multimodal practices on childhood and modern family life.

DigiKids has two main approaches. One point of departure is the concepts of digital media practices and domestication. A second point of departure is the concept of digital literacy skills, referring to children's ability to engage with digital media technology; to seek, use, evaluate and create digital media output; and consequently lay ground for children's development of cultural citizenship.

Very young children cannot be investigated outside of the family context. This motivates an ethnographic approach departing from the home of the child, and a multi methodology. We will visit the same children and their families (n= 20) over the whole life span of the project (in total 8 times over 4 years); starting at age 3, ending when the child turns 6; answering questions such as: How are digital media made available to very young children? For what purposes are they used? How are they experienced? How do children over time develop various skills and creativity in handling digital media? What do the digital practices bring about in the everyday life, in the interaction and communication with family members?

Tanja Oblak Crnic: What kind of participatory digital culture and for whom? Political institutions and young citizens in Slovenia

The article reflects the findings of two interrelated empirical studies conducted in 2014 which together demand a critical understanding of political actors and their role in the online construction of digital citizens today. Firstly, the study refers to the quantitative analysis of the 63 websites of Slovenian political institutions which supports the thesis of the depolitization of institutionalized political digital sphere and confronts the idea of new “medization of political institutions”. The results show that online political institutions are less politically engaged and more media-structured: participatory, dialogical, creative and mobilized forms of participation are less present on their websites than is the expansion of news, photo, video and other self-centered promotional materials. As a consequence, instead of promoting an active and mobilized notion of digital citizen, characteristic for a “pluralist model of citizenship” (Artertone 1987), a “populist model of citizenship” comes into front, favoring passive followers and convinced voters without the potential for creating their own political input.

The reasons for such a state of digital political sphere can be conceptually explained as an institutionalized preference for the controlled “managing with citizens’ opinions” instead of the “autonomy of citizen opinions”. Such tendency, however, seems to be critically asserted in a group of young digital elite: as qualitative interviews with 14 intense digital users show, young citizens notice well what political institutional websites miss. In their eyes the political sphere is “like a newspaper”, offering “one-way communication”, aiming to promote “political faces”, which neglects the potential for a realization of the “actualizing citizenship” (Bennett 2008). However, the interviews in addition imply an important diversity in how the young perceive themselves as citizens: some are more strongly devoted to citizenship on their national grounds, while the others stress the citizenship as a duty; third groups seem to deny the importance of the concept as such, while the last group reflects themselves critically as “non-realised good citizens”. The question that needs to be explored in more detail is how such diversity is related to their political practices on the one hand and to their critical “readings” of institutionalised political websites.

Mats Ekström: Young people's everyday political talk: A social achievement of democratic engagement

Everyday political talk is as an important democratic activity (Eliasoph 1998; Eveland, Morey, and Hutchens 2011; Kim and Kim 2008; Walsh 2004). In conversations (among friends, in families, at school and work, in social media), individuals can discuss and make sense of public concerns, engage in self-expressions, shape and articulate opinions and civic identities. Research on young people shows the significance of talk (as a form of active agency) in political socialization (McDevitt 2006; Ekström and Östman 2013). However, politics has also been described as a delicate, risky and unsafe topic, best suited for intimate backstage settings (Eliasoph 1998; Mutz 2006). Social media have transformed the everyday social settings of political talk; the interactional frameworks, the publicity, the opportunities and the potential risks (Vromen, Xenos and Loader 2014; Thorson (2014 Sveningsson, 2014). This study investigates young people's own experiences of talking politics in families, peer groups and social media. The main questions are: What encourages or impedes young people to participate in everyday political talk? How is engagement in different setting experienced, and what makes it potentially rewarding, delicate, and unsafe? The qualitative study is based on a multimethod design comprising individual interviews, group interviews and diaries. The group consists of 28 high school students (aged 17-18). The study applies a social interactional approach and understands political talk as a social achievement. The empirical analyses show that young people's engagement in political talk is sensitive to the social settings. It is carefully managed in relation to interactional frameworks, norms, expectations, face (social values) and self-identities. And it involves a significant work on political self-identities (reflections on their own political engagement, knowledgeability, affiliations to values or ideologies). The family and peer groups are potentially important context for friendly small talk, argumentations, exploration of opinions and identities. The participants are in general more reluctant to express opinions in social media. The potential scale of a political act in social media (cf. Ellison and boyd 2013), the fear of face-threatening responses, of not being valued, are important aspect. The paper discusses the various aspects that make public political talk in social media into an active and demanding form of citizenships.

Malin Sveningsson: “A little bit of this, a little bit of that and then I get a standpoint of my own”: Young Swedes’ experiences of political identity work

During adolescence, the exploration of identity is central. It is important to find out who one is and where one stands in various questions. Sociologically oriented research on youth and identity work has often focused on gender, ethnicity, class and culture, and how these categorizations come to play in experiences and explorations of identity. However, identity deals with all aspects of people’s lives – not least political ones.

Forming a political identity concerns opinions and values, and taking a position in various questions, but is also about having one’s interest in politics evoked and beginning to see oneself as politically engaged at all. The latter often involves a long process (Manning, 2013). This paper focuses on a group of Swedish young people who find themselves in the midst of this process. They are more interested and active than the majority of Swedish youth, but have not reached the point where they want to see or position themselves as politically engaged.

Using a mixed qualitative methods approach, this paper aims to take a closer look at how these young people experience the process through which their political identities are being formed. Previous studies on political socialization have pointed out the family as central (McDevitt, 2006; Niemi & Jennings, 1991). Meanwhile, research on young people’s identity work in other contexts emphasizes how their lives are characterized by a movement away from the family, where an identity of their own can be formed. It has been suggested that peer networks may even be more important than parent-child relationships, also in the development of political values (Ekström & Östman, 2013). The study’s results show how a complex interplay between family, school and friends takes place, where knowledge, interest and standpoints acquired in the various spheres are tried out in interaction with the others, on a winding road towards a political identity.

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Manning, N. (2013). ‘I mainly look at things on an issue by issue basis’: Reflexivity and phronesis in young people’s political engagements. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 16(1), 17-33.

McDevitt, M. (2006). The partisan child: Developmental provocation as a model of political socialization. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 18(1), 67-88.

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Giovanna Mascheroni: The practice of participation: youth's vocabularies around on- and offline civic and political engagement

Based on in-depth interviews with young people aged 14-15 years who are active in youth voluntary associations, formal opportunities for youth participation (such as youth councils or student unions), political parties or social movements and live in Germany, Italy and the UK, this paper provides a qualitative portrait of young people's civic and political participation, focusing especially on the relationship between online and offline engagement. It draws on Bourdieu's theory of practice and on culturalist perspectives on participation and citizenship, in order to overcome the unproductive dichotomy between proponents of a "youth disaffection" thesis and the seemingly incompatible position of "cultural displacement" and youth engagement in emerging online participatory practices. Rather, this paper argues that participation can be better understood as a socially embedded and contingent practice that is shaped by the interrelation between habitus, forms of capital and online and offline fields. Young people who share vocabularies of participation also adhere to a shared habitus of participation produced by different combinations of resources (capitals) and experiences of political socialisation. Vocabularies of participation are articulated in three interrelated dimensions: 1) a vocabulary of citizenship orientation, which includes young people's own understanding of participation, their political knowledge and beliefs, as well as their self-positioning in the political field; 2) a vocabulary of citizenship practices, which includes the scale and repertoires of participation corresponding to each vocabulary of citizenship orientation; 3) a vocabulary of digital engagement, which includes young people's own understanding of the digital world and its participatory potential, which is grounded in their own citizenship orientation and their scale and repertoires of offline participation, as well as enabling certain online activities while inhibiting others.

Raul Castro: “Pop-litics”: Citizen Power and Online Mobilization in Disenchanted Peru

Is there something like “Pop” Politics in current public scenario? It is, I hold. I support that statement in the present work: “Pop-litics”: Citizen Power and Online Mobilization in Disenchanted Peru, in which I first discuss theoretical approaches to contemporary acts of social activism and civil protest in different regions of the world, to use then their major conceptual insights to explain two case studies recently occurred in Lima, capital city of Peru.

Departing from early notion of Alberto Melucci’s collective action (1996), I argue that the rise of digital and mostly social mediated activism and new civil protest globalized culture have their roots in the general unrest about the commodification of party membership, total loss of vocation in professional politicians and the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.

I follow John Postill (2011, 2013), using his concept of banal activism, and Jeffrey Juris’ idea of connective action (2008, 2012), among different authors and beliefs, to review the logic of contemporary mobilization. Then I proceed to describe and discuss under the light of that frame i) The rise of a Peruvian community of social media activists called “Meme No”, posting from its Facebook wall against an unclear revocation electoral process of the Mayor of Lima, Susana Villarán; and ii) The flashy digital reunion of a citizen movement action in rebel opposition to Town Hall’s photodigital fines under suspicion of corruption.

At the end, I am following the ideas of Paulo Gerbaudo in *Tweets and The Streets* (2012) to grasp a general interpretive approach about what I am calling “Pop-litic”.

I state that use of digital connective tools –as social media– by groups of recent mobilized people is part of a project of re-appropriation and re-enchanted, in emotional and aesthetic way, of public affairs participation, hold by mainly a new generation of citizens that have any experience in communal participation or civic agency (also disinterested in governance), but deeply engaged in a trendy liberal fashion promoting the return of decency to common life.

Sohail Dahdal: Arabic Cultural Memes: Creating a Cultural Space to Engage Arab Youth

In the aftermath of the Arab Spring Arab youth are finding themselves at a unique juncture; do they participate in the political discourse and thus follow either the extremist Islamic narrative or the pro-western anti-Islamic (and anti-Arab) narrative, or do they turn to a non-political narrative escaping the current political landscape? A third scenario less frequented is to seek Arabic cultural content aimed at creating a cultural shift where they can revive their cultural heritage connecting the past with the future also bypassing the current situation.

This paper proposes that the introduction of Arab cultural memes (viruses), might serve to infect strategic Arab youth social media channels with content able to generate a conversation around the Arab identity. This conversation, if conducted in an open environment as proposed by the contact theory, will form the bases of an Arabic language contact zone (or a cultural space) that is both participatory and fluid, able to alternate its existence (and actions) between the online conversation and the offline formation of identity. The paper relies on data from Arab youth surveys conducted by ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller spanning from 2009 – 2015 to examine the clear shift in the attitude of Arab youth from the euphoria of the Arab spring to a disappointment in the current situation. The latest survey indicates a shift in which Arab youth: 1) now believe that the Arab Spring had a negative effect on the region, 2) are increasingly conflicted on whether democracy can work in the Arab world and 3) while they still believe that the Arabic language is central to their identity, now also believe that the Arabic language is increasingly losing its value. The paper concludes that establishing this cultural contact zone must have memes that requires offline action able at creating strong ties and a cultural shift.

Joanna Doona: High stakes! Political comedy audiences and political engagement

Political comedy in various forms is increasingly popular among media audiences, directing scholarly attention to issues like shifting news habits and values, and further, potential impacts on civic cultures. But with the exception of media effects studies, audiences of political comedy remain largely under-researched (Marchi 2012; Jones 2013).

This paper deals with young adult audiences of political comedy, and their political engagement. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of cultural citizenship (Hermes 2005) and civic cultures (Dahlgren 2009), as well as the growing scholarly discussions on engagement, emotions and affect (cf. Coleman 2013; Papacharissi 2015), the goal is to create a more comprehensive understanding of political engagement, and political comedy.

By analysing qualitative interview and focus group data (with Swedish young 18-35 year-old audiences of political comedy; either the Swedish public service radio programme Tankesmedjan or popular American The Daily Show with Jon Stewart), the paper shows how these audiences are tuned into, interested in and, arguably, engaged in various ways, both in the political comedy itself, and the political issues it covers. The contradiction is that this engagement all too often seems coupled with a fear of, or pessimism towards, creating actual political change, or even making one's voice heard. This in turn seems to be linked to a hyper-awareness of the self (cf. Senft 2013), as well as an extensive knowledge of the actual problems facing western democracy today, quite like what Coleman calls "a consciousness of lacking the means required to exercise political power" (2013:229) – and reiterating the need for more scholarly attention towards what he calls the "affective deficit" (ibid.).

Vesna Vravnik: Activism and Film: A Trojan Horse and Other Activist Tactics in the Queer Cinema from the countries of former Yugoslavia

Who knows that in 1984 Yugoslavia held the first gay and lesbian film festival in Europe? Yet following the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 there has been a rise of attacks on queer communities in the countries of former Yugoslavia (ex-YU). Thus, commonly-held assumptions that the end of Communism led to political and sexual liberation in the East was not everywhere the case. In many instances, sexual preferences in the ex-YU became even more controlled and regulated by state and religious institutions, which enforced heterosexuality as a norm. Rather than historicizing the invisibility of these communities, this presentation introduces an interdisciplinary approach to addressing the issue of heteronormativity and homophobia in this region. I am especially interested in the specifics of negotiating homophobia through cinema. By focusing on the intersection between politics, society and art, I study the extent to which queer cinema from ex-YU have a potential for a political critique. I put emphasis on how some films have an activist and pedagogical potential for the community. I tend to closely examine how nationalistic homophobic discourses are being 'cheated' by queer activists to fight homophobia and to trigger sexual revolution and political change. I aim to develop a concept of a 'Trojan Horse,' as one of the activist tactics in films from the ex-YU, where homophobia is rampant and activism has to be cunning to sustain. Therefore, political messages in films are hidden in a so called 'Trojan horse,' trying to enter a hostile homophobic environment, protected with thick walls of heteronormative rules and legislations. Messages are masked with humorous stereotyping in order to please the audience and release the tension of a spectator yet its political potential jumps out of the 'horse' and engage the audience in political discussion.

Ekaterina Kalinina: Nostalgia, digital archives and civic engagement

The paper will investigate online nostalgic practices in order to explore new forms of civic engagement in Russia. As nostalgia is always a reaction to the current state of affairs and it is identified as one of the key reactions to traumatic events, the paper links back to the discussion about potential of nostalgia for critical evaluation of societal changes and political instability (Boym, 2001). The project poses a research question: How nostalgia is mobilized as a form of civic engagement?

The empirical starting point for this project is a digital archives: Moskva, Entsiklopedia Nashego Detstva [referred as END, Encyclopaedia of our childhood, 2006 - now]. This archive collects and preserves information about memories about the Soviet past by obtaining sought-after content through soliciting contributions from members of an online community, i.e. through crowdsourcing (Howe, 2006, 2008; Boiler, 2007; Surowiecki, 2004). In both cases, memories are crowdsourced from resourceful, committed, and, above all, networking people, the producers (Bruns, 2007; Ritzer, Dean & Jurgenson, 2012; Livingstone & Das, 2012). The data will be collected online in the form of user comments and online interviews with the users in the community forum.

Gustav Persson: Encountering journalism: ethical violence and threatening visibility

Scholarly discussions on the relationship between 'the media' and political activism have been resurfaced by recent political events and new technological developments (See for example Cammaerts, Mattoni, & McCurdy, 2013). Internal to most discussions there is a tension between constraint and potentiality in mediation. The structural opportunities for protest and activism in relation to mediation have for example been discussed by Cammaerts (2012) where Uldam (2014) recently have pointed to the consequences of the increasing surveillance of activist mediation. This paper preserves the element of such a tension intact, that between potentiality and constraint, it does so however with a different theoretical and empirical apparatus.

Methodologically and empirically the paper is oriented to an analysis of narratives articulated in interviews conducted with migrant rights-activists in Sweden. The focus in these interviews is on the activist's experiences of mediation (Silverstone, 1999), and the experiences of becoming visible to the public. More importantly the paper address the role of these experiences in processes of identification (Wetherell, 1998, 2008; Wood, 2010). The paper presents the central discourses as well different subject positions articulated by the activists. The emphasis is placed on tensions between different subject positions embodied by the activists and how such tensions can be understood in relation to further ideological struggles internal to participatory practices in and through the media (Carpentier, 2011). The main tensions, developed in the analysis, are those connected to threatening visibilities (lack of control, fear of police repression) and 'ethical violence' (Butler, 2005).

'Ethical violence' can give a conceptual grasp of how to understand the discourse on which the activists draw on when they discuss the epistemic proximity and insensibly they have experienced in the interaction with journalists.

Chris Peters and Stuart Allan: Seeing, Witnessing, Contributing: The communicative value of citizen reportage and imagery

It was in the aftermath of the South Asian tsunami of 2004 that the term ‘citizen journalism’ quickly gained currency with news outlets finding themselves in the awkward position of being largely dependent on ‘amateur content’. In the decade since, the value of citizen imagery produced when such events transpire has been recurrently hailed by news organizations, particularly with regard to its immediacy, eyewitness authenticity and emotive affectivity in politically-turbulent and/or crisis situations (see Frosh and Pinchevski 2009; Chouliaraki 2010; Allan 2013; Mortensen, 2015). Yet despite growing academic interest in the increasing prominence of citizen-led imagery in news reports, there has been scant attention to how diverse publics feel about such citizen reportage. This paper addresses this deficit by examining public perspectives regarding professional-amateur interfaces. It reports on findings from a qualitative study of a demographic cohort often described as ‘millennial’ users (people born between 1980 and 1999) to consider: 1) respondents’ views regarding the prospective role of them bearing witness and what it entails; 2) suspected motivations of those engaging in this type of activity; 3) uses of citizen imagery by news organisations; 4) presumed distinctions between professional and amateur photo-journalism; and 5) the politics and ethical questions of trust concerning such imagery. Several tropes emerge in the findings, from participants’ desire to share experiences with wider publics, to a willingness to stand-in for absent journalists, and a commitment to civic duty or related political forms of obligation. Yet individuals were not uniformly passionate about offering visual documentation, especially when personal risk is palpable. Based on these findings, this paper argues the perceived immediacy and truth-value of citizen imagery points to an undeniable reconceptualization of how journalism as we know it – or knew it – sees, witnesses, and documents in a digital era increasingly defined by co-operation, collaboration and connectivity.

Yatchi Chen: Game-changer or cash cow? When ordinary netizens become the dominant news source for media

Advancement of communications technology has not only sparked some debates over celebrity invention but nonetheless also empowered ordinary 'netizens' that can sometimes challenge the legitimacy of governance. This paper focuses on Taiwan's media coverage and the growing tendency to seek and include ordinary netizens' online comments and questions its impact on political participation and democracy. On the one hand, "people's voices" triumph those of power elites traditionally selected as news sources might indicate the resistance from the grassroots against traditional politics. However, how is general public's opinion presented by the media is an alarming issue on the other and thus is deserved to be analysed further.

This paper attempts to untangle the subtle power-shifts of hegemony and resistance of media discourse by investigating two prominent cases in 2014, namely a student-led protest dubbed Sunflower Movement in March and the mayoral election of Taipei City, the capital city of Taiwan, in November. As both case are often hailed as the victory of ordinary people, this paper tries to put in perspective media's coverage and representation of netizens, addressing the extent to which technology has empowered the people. Applying content analysis and critical discourse analysis, the researcher points out that political agency in the digital age is still vulnerable as netizens are often portrayed as cynical, populist, simple-minded, and anti-intellectual, and that can eventually be harmful to the fulfilment of a more well-rounded democracy.

Eiri Elvestad and Lee Shaker: Shifting Orientations toward Local, National and International News in the United States and Norway, 1995-2012

This paper presents a comparative exploration of citizens' changing orientations towards local, national and international news in Norway and the United States between 1995/6 and 2012. Prior research suggests that the recent expansion of media choice in developed nations correlates with a decrease in news consumption. News is not a monolithic construct, however, and citizens' varying orientations towards international, national and local news may impact their democratic behavior in democratic institutions at the local, national and international levels. Even if general news consumption has recently declined, the particulars of citizens' news habits today are less clear. The personalization of digital media and the rise of user-generated content makes it useful to study how audiences search for news in specialized ways since this may affect their political agency at different levels in society. Our data, from the Pew Research Center (US) and TNS Gallup (Norway), are unique in that they depict citizens' orientation to different kinds of news across national contexts and over time. Our analysis shows that more individuals are avoiding news today than in the recent past in the US and Europe, but we also find a pattern of specialization in news interest in both countries. In the two nations, there are indications of a shift in news specialization away from local news and towards national or international news. Collectively, these results indicate news audiences that are more discriminating today than in the past. National context matters, however, in that the strongest Norwegian trend is one of specialization, while the strongest trend in the United States is one of disconnection.

Elisabeth Le: From print to online news media: a shift in the representation of the public sphere

Skimming headlines is often a first approach to the news of the day and sometimes the only one for some of us. Headlines give us the gist of what media select as newsworthy for us, and in so doing present a specific view of the public sphere and of its participants. Major quality “traditional” media have had to adapt to technology change and offer now both a print and an online version of their perspective on the world. One may wonder whether their use of a digital platform that makes interactions with citizen-readers simpler and faster has broadened their conception of the public sphere. This paper compares the print and online headlines on the front and home pages of the French and American elite dailies, *Le Monde* and *The New York Times*, during six constructed weeks from September 2010 to February 2011, i.e. about 15 years after they both started their online edition. A linguistic analysis of the headlines thanks to the APPRAISAL system brings to the fore their level of heteroglossia, i.e. their incorporation of others’ voices, and the type of actors they include. These results are combined with those of a frame and content analysis in order to reveal which actors appear in which domains and to which end. These facts are presumably used by citizen-readers when they construct their general picture of who is considered worthy enough to appear in the public sphere and in which capacity. They also inform them on the value given to their own voice by established media. The results of the analysis do show some evolution from the print to the online representation of the public sphere, but maybe not as much as one could expect.

Tanja Dreher: The other side of participation: political listening in the age of digital media

This paper explores political listening as the 'other side' of participation in the age of digital media, where participation is commonly understood as finding a voice or sharing stories. While there is no doubt that the proliferation of digital media has enabled increased opportunities for diverse voices and stories to circulate via media, there is little concrete understanding of the extent to which this has led to increased influence in decision-making or voice that matters.

There have been resounding calls to bring listening to the forefront of attention in media research, practice and policy. This turn is particularly important in the context of celebratory claims around the capacity of digital media to ensure increased opportunities for voice, speaking up and sharing stories. At the same time, media theorists argue for greater engagement with political theory and a definition of participation as having an influence on decision-making, in order to develop a normative-critical framework for evaluating the possibilities and the challenges for participation in the digital age. This paper outlines the ways in which the emerging scholarship on political 'listening' in media and political theory can make a significant contribution to research and practice focused on 'maximalist' forms of participation in the age of digital media.

This paper conceptualises listening as a form of active participation which can enable voice and underpin recognition. Listening in response to marginalised voices emerges as a crucial contribution to democratic media. Shifting attention to the listening practices of key actors in the mainstream public sphere – including policymakers and journalists – highlights the importance of institutional listening to fully realise the promise of voice and participation. The focus on listening thus brings together an interest in the potential of digital media for historically marginalised voices, and the listening practices of political elites.

**Scott Wright, Todd Graham, Andrea Carson and Shaojing Sun:
Super-Participation and Everyday Political Talk Online: A Comparative
Analysis - CANCELLED**

This paper is an innovative, interdisciplinary and cross-national investigation that takes forward a new agenda for online deliberation research: the study of everyday political talk in formally non-political, online “third spaces” (Wright, 2012a, b). The importance of such talk to the vitality of civic life and community is increasingly recognized (Kim and Kim, 2008; Mansbridge, 2007; Hay, 2002): it is central to the formation of the public sphere (Habermas, 1984: 327). In previous research we have found that talk in third spaces can be deliberative; often leads to political actions; and that “super-participants” - people who create lots of content and set the discursive agenda - performed a positive discursive role (Graham and Wright, 2014; Graham, Jackson and Wright, in press).

This paper extends our research into the nature of political talk and super-participation in third spaces by moving beyond the UK, and to a cross-national comparative research design. Specifically, this paper comparatively analyses the extent and nature of political talk, and the role of super-participants within this, on two formally non-political online parenting discussion forums: Australia’s Bubhub, and China’s Yaolan. It addresses 5 research questions:

- 1) What is the nature of everyday political talk in Bubhub and Yaolan?
- 2) How many Super Posters (SP1s) are there, and what role do they play in the debate?
- 3) To what extent, and how, do people attempt to set agendas?
- 4) To what extent, and how, do moderators influence the debates?

To answer the research questions we analyze the volume and patterns of participation for each user in the forums to identify the super-participants. We then take a random sample from these and conduct a content analysis on 4000 messages, using Graham and Wright’s (2014) coding frame for identifying and assessing everyday political talk. This is supported by interviews with moderators.

Yi Liu: Passionate Participation under the Digital Era: Exploring Emotions within Political Deliberation in Cyber China

Everyone knows the importance of emotion and passion towards political process, yet due to a fundamental tension between emotion and reason as a central theme in western culture heritage, this essential dimension of social and political life has long been repressed in social and policy sciences. Certain normative assumptions about deliberation as a form of disinterested participation in the pursuit of consensus through rational, critical, nonemotive discussion has inspired and been well received by relevant theories in deliberative democracy. However, many recent works have expressed skepticism towards such normative version, arguing that the idealistic mode is perhaps out of the reach of human associations, meanwhile it is unfairly biased towards the values of dominant groups (man, in particular) and the more developed western society.

Specifically speaking, this normative mode works especially unsatisfied when trying to explain what is happening in Chinese cyberspace where most discussions towards political issues are actually highly charged by emotions and are full of emotional performances. Apart from the basic features of digital politics as being deeply influenced by 'affective' or even 'seductive' factors, this work highlights the very specific background of Chinese society which further intensifies such passionate scenario: China is still at the very preliminary stage towards a civil society where most citizens are in lack of relevant experience as well as ethical awareness of performing emotions and thoughts appropriately during political engagements. Meanwhile, different from western heritage, Chinese political culture never forbid emotion, which in fact enjoys its ontology in Confucian political philosophy and Maoist theories, to be further incorporated in political process.

In sum, this work argues for the necessity to understand how emotions perform and operate during the overall procedure in order to fully grasp the very nature of political deliberation in Chinese cyberspace, and it further demonstrates a three-layer analysis framework which puts emotions back into 1) the digital platform where those deliberations are placed 2) the very specific Chinese digital culture and 3) the social-cultural, political and economic context of modern China as to offer a deep, profound, and systematical analysis towards the current situation. In order to conduct the work pragmatically, one recent political issue which arises heated online discussion will be selected for further analysis. For methodological consideration, a preliminary mapping exercise which involves reading online postings closely and identifying key emotional features within them will be conducted at the initial stage of data analysis. Based on the results, a deep and intensive discourse analysis which incorporate the heritage of discursive psychology, critical discourse analysis, and political discourse analysis will be operated towards selected texts. Later on, several participants will be interviewed in order to better capture the process of text producing and consuming. People's experience of online political deliberation as well as their basic understandings of Chinese cyber ecology will also be approached at the early stage of the interview.

Marko Skoric: How do political expression, exposure to disagreement, and opinion shielding on social media relate to citizen participation? Evidence from Singapore and Hong Kong

Do social media mainly promote exposure to diverse viewpoints that stimulate engagement with the broader society or do they allow us to create echo chambers which helps us politically engage with like-minded citizens? Using two surveys conducted in 2013 in Singapore and during the 2014 Hong Kong protests, we test how political expression, exposure to disagreement and attempts to shield oneself from dissenting views are related to both civic and political participation.

We find that expressing political opinions on social media was linked with party rally attendance and protest participation in Singapore and Hong Kong, respectively. The analysis also reveals that exposure to dissenting views had a positive relationship with civic activities, but not with political or protest participation. On the contrary, we find that in the case of Singapore, hiding posts and deleting friends on Facebook was linked with increased partisan activity including donating money or attending party rallies.

In the case of Hong Kong, the results show that the frequency of hiding posts and comments with dissenting views, deleting Facebook friends, and using uncivil language was significantly higher among the more engaged group of student protesters, when compared to those who did not participate or who participated only sparingly.

The findings suggest that that offline partisan mobilization and maintenance of high levels of political protest participation, depend not only on extensive online political expression, discussion and mobilization, but also in parallel an intensified shielding from dissenting or critical views. For more civically-minded, non-partisan activities, exposure to cross-cutting, dissenting views on social media seems to be more beneficial. This indicates that while social media platforms enable citizens to be exposed to diverse views which fosters civic engagement, they also allow citizens to to create more homophilic environments when their needs for direct political action arise.

Daniel Jackson, Scott Wright and Todd Graham: Online lifestyle communities and ‘strong politics’: a new stage of e-democracy?

Although the ubiquity of social media points to everyday concerns, when it comes to analyzing its use research typically focuses on the formal and exceptional. While this provides insight into a highly visible and strategically mediated phase of the political process (both formal and extra-parliamentary such as social movements), it ignores the communicative mundaneness of daily democracy. We maintain that there is much to be gained by investigating how political talk and engagement emerges in everyday, online, lifestyle communities: i.e. third spaces.

But what happens when governments begin to engage with citizens in these communities, and – in Habermas’s terms – everyday discussion in lifestyle communities within the general public sphere sluices into formal channels of strong politics? In this paper we document UK government attempts to move their e-democracy strategy away from government-sponsored spaces, and increasingly into large, general-interest ‘user-generated’ ones such as The Student Room (n=49m posts), Money Saving Expert (n=37m), and Netmums (11m).

Through a detailed qualitative content analysis of the online debates around a series of policy-oriented government interventions led by both government and by forum controllers, alongside semi-structured interviews with forum moderators and owners and government civil servants, we examine how the UK government engages with third spaces in formal and informal consultation processes. We ask how government departments tap into and listen to the tone and content of public debates around specific policy areas; and how the citizens in these spaces respond to consultations. Do they embrace the opportunity to connect with formal political institutions and influence government policy, or is there a tension between the everyday essence of lifestyle communities and their potential ‘politicization’? Findings are discussed in the context of ongoing debates concerning the internet, public space and political participation.

**Martin Belcher, Claudia Abreu Lopes, Matt Haikin and Evangelia Berdou:
Digital citizen engagement - who is engaging, how and to what effect?
Primary research findings from Brazil, Uganda and Kenya.**

We report on a recent series of evaluation studies examining different aspects of digital citizen engagement; participatory budgeting in Brazil, crowd sourcing feedback and opinion forming engagement in Uganda and beneficiary feedback in Kenya. Primary research data will be presented from each evaluation project that looks at digital citizen engagement in terms of;

- Logic: what is the logic of intervention and is it appropriate?
- Control: Who controls and influences the digital engagement process?
- Participation: Who participates and how?
- Technology: How effective and appropriate is the choice and delivery of the technology?
- Difference: What difference is made to the stakeholders, processes and outcomes?

Participation data across all these studies shows a clear digital divide in terms of digital channels generally being dominated by young, well-educated males but not universally and rates of adoption and changes in engagement channels indicate that rapid change is underway and set to accelerate. In addition, the behaviour of people using digital channels does not necessarily reflect the behaviour of their class using non digital channels. A more complex picture of participation, behaviour and impact emerges.

We will present primary research data, conclusions and a set of recommendations about effective evaluation strategies for those working in the field of digital citizen engagement.

Zrinjka Peruško and Dina Vozab: Mediatization of political engagement in digital mediascapes: comparing European online audiences

This article explores the character of mediatized political engagement of European audiences in digital mediascapes in a multilevel, cross-national comparative research design. As political systems become mediatized, so are the citizen's practices starting to be molded into media forms (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999). Framing the mediatization of political engagement in the relationship of the macro level of digital media systems to micro level media audience practice, this article also draws on theories of the digital public sphere, media systems, and audience research.

Earlier research shows that the macro level of media systems as institutional contexts adds significant explanatory power to understanding of media use (Elvestad & Blekesaune, 2008; Curran et al, 2009, Meulemann, 2012; Peruško, Vozab, Čuvalo, 2013; Peruško, Vozab, Čuvalo, 2015, Shehata, 2010, Shehata & Stromback, 2011). This article builds on the theoretical model of digital mediascapes applied through cluster analysis to a 22 country European sample where four digital mediascapes/media system clusters were identified (Peruško, Vozab, Čuvalo, 2015). While first empirical operationalizations of media systems relied on the Hallin and Mancini (2004) media system centered on political journalism (Peruško, Vozab, Čuvalo, 2013, Brüggemann et al, 2014), in the operationalization of digital mediascapes media systems are defined by political and social inclusiveness, development of the digital media markets, media culture, and globalization (Peruško, Vozab, Čuvalo, 2015). In this article we build on these theoretical conceptualizations and empirical understandings of contemporary media systems to investigate the impact of institutional aspects on the character and degree of the mediatization (or digitalization) of the public sphere.

Two dimensions of political engagement in the digital public sphere are included – political information & political participation (the third dimension, political attitudes, are not included in this analysis) (Jensen, Jorba & Anduiza, 2012). The two dimensions are operationalized through audience use of news media in legacy and digital media (Internet), and through practices of participation exhibited in the digital public sphere. The audience data are from the nine European countries in the “audiences across media” study (Jensen & Helles, 2015).

The article aims to show how the digital mediascapes influence traditional and digital news consumption and production of digital content beyond individual level difference. Regression analysis will be performed using individual and structural level variables as independent variables to show the influence of macro-level media systems on micro-level political engagement.. The digital mediascape clusters will be related to data on political engagement in the digital public sphere.

Sergei Kruk: Public communication in Latvia: the cultural reasons of social passivity

Latvian civil society was usually very weak and it avoids influencing political decision-making or act as a check against the abuse of state power. The economic crisis broken out in 2008 created qualitatively new conditions favourable for grassroots social activism. The crisis exposed ineffectiveness of the previous model of political decision-making, and the old political elite was swept away in parliamentary elections in 2011. Rapidly expanding social media was a resource enabling a new political culture. Since the recession affected all social groups profoundly it was reasonable to presume that citizens would have engaged in various public activities from setting up public agenda to organizing collective movement. Nevertheless, the representative opinion polls carried out in 2013 and 2014 manifested no change in the attitude to public communication and social activism. To explain the reasons of social passivism this paper draws on Margaret Archer's distinction between Cultural System and Socio-Cultural interaction. The legitimate Cultural System draws on cultural nationalism which offer the pre-political consensus supposedly communicated in traditional culture. Modern society however requires qualitatively new procedures for management of pluralism of opinions. The elite discourse as well as the existing structure of political communication discourage individuals from developing and accepting new democratic procedures of public communication respecting pluralism. Therefore new media are perceived as creating a cacophony of voices presumably threatening social order rather than as tools enabling rational communication of difference. Archer's paradigm therefore permits to distinguish analytically the potential of communication offered by new media and the cultural enablement of their usage.

Dina Boswank: Construction for Destruction. Modes of access in/to media technology. A performative research into notions of creativity and participation in urban India

"Construction for Destruction. My compelled Drum Series"(1948, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India, ed. Gopalswamy Doraiswamy Naidu, UMS Press, archived at University Tübingen and Free University Berlin, Germany) is a compilation of letters documenting the performed destruction of G.D. Naidu's very own radio inventions at several fairs in India in the late 1940s. Those letter dialogues are full of curious questions, aggressive interpretations of those destruction performances and playful projections and thus form the basis of the research project.

Because of their age, but still significant and yet unexplored content, they bear the potential of being a discursive foil, that assembles both technological and cultural subjects of different times and matters. Thus the research aims to specifically explore notions about the entanglement of creativity and participation in communication technologies, as it is embedded in the fragmented landscape of media practice in urban India (with a focus on Bangalore and Delhi).

Methods and Objectives - Performative Research

Drawing from just emerging efforts to outline principles and references of performative research (Bolt 2008, Haseman 2006) I generally consider a practice-led PhD as a movement in-between aesthetic experience and productive knowledge. What of course poses the question of what is knowledge and what is experience and how both can produce mutually?

Researchers usually define a specific problem in the beginning and construct a statement of significance around them, what then leads to addressing quantitative or qualitative methods and a final textual outcome. A first characteristic of practice-led, instead of problem-led research is to "construct experiential starting points from which practice follows. [...] may be led by what is best described as 'an enthusiasm of practice'." (Haseman 2006: 4)

The letters of the book "Construction for Destruction. My compelled Drum Series" form the basis of research in a very literal sense. They are being re-enacted and mutually re-read in online meetings with cultural and artistic researchers in India¹, while none of them gets to see them before and the whole session is being recorded with an audio recorder. Then, breaking out of a consistent flow of reading, is what that set is looking for. Which phrases in the letters trigger curiosity, knowledge or experience? What notions of construction and destruction, from a contemporary position, are associated? How is G.D. Naidu related to the impact of technological modernity on India? Which modes of access are being described, acknowledged, claimed, ignored or reflected at all?

During the recording sessions I will be following the person's reactions and associations, hence I let notions of creativity, modernity or resistance emerge, creating their own context if given, rather than assuming those notions in the first place (Haseman 2006). The protocol itself is assembled through an audio archive, provided with keywords, metadata and analyzing tools, placed into the public domain and commonly accessible. (The archive Pad.ma - <http://pad.ma/>, short for Public Access Digital Media Archive - is being used. It is an open source/content project by CAMP from Mumbai, 0x2620 from Berlin and the Alternative Law Forum from Bangalore)

What asserts performativity in that process is exactly the access to a network of associations and interpretations that is made possible through the open frame of the archive and, as yet to be planned further, the playback of certain excerpts into the public space of Bangalore and Delhi in corporation with partners on site. (For autumn 2015 it is planned to stay at the Sarai Institute in New Delhi for that purpose, where corporation with local artists and technicians can be made possible. Web: <http://sarai.net/>)

Murat Akser: A New Praxis at the Park: How Turkish Academics Turned Theory into Practice during Gezi Park Protests

Turkish academics have long been criticized for living in their ivory tower, in their theory laden shells where they do not practice what they preached. Indeed the modernist westernized positivist formal education system created by the 1930s university reforms that mirrored fascist Germany nurtured a type of average Turkish academic who did not actively engage in civic affairs. The protests in June 2013 at Istanbul Gezi Park has changed the way Turkish academics reacted to state of affairs. The right to the city, ideas about representation of the minority opinions and capitalist disregard for the human led the academics to express their dissent at Gezi Park. Turkish academics, along with their students, fellow artists, workers and other oppressed classes entered the civic arena and created waves of protests that rocked the Turkish government. This paper aims to analyze the alternative ways of protests initiated by Turkish academics in summer 2013 and how these tactics critically reflected on their students. Such tactics include they ways Academics acted collectively, using social media for gathering and dispersal of information and crowds. They also include the utilization of playful discourses against the oppression of the government. Through free markets and services they created at the park academics were able to challenge the capitalist notions valorized by the ruling government. And finally the creation of alternative haven and lifestyles at the park showed to the students and unrepresented classes how Turkish academics could put their preaching into practice.

Drawing on different theoretical, conceptual and empirical perspectives, each paper reflects on how online media contribute to the transformation or preservation of power relations within the European public sphere.

Hans-Jörg Trezz: The Spiral of Euroscepticism: Media negativity, framing and EU opposition

Media scholars have increasingly become attentive to the effects of a negativity bias that applies to political news. In the “spiral of cynicism” the preference of journalism for negative news is seen as corresponding to the preferences of the public and its demand for sensational news. Media dynamics of contesting EU issues also explain inherent biases in the legitimation of national and international (European) order. Media frames are important in the attribution of responsibility and ascription of political legitimacy. Media can, in this sense, be made responsible for negative cueing about the EU and an inherent ‘nationalist bias’ in the representation of politics. This type of coverage, in turn, excites particular cognitive and emotional reactions from audiences, which lean towards hostility with the European project. The paper uses these insights about media framing for an explanation of Euroscepticism as an effect of negative learning through online news and social media inputs. The negativity bias of media news coverage of EU politics is however not entirely independent from the cognitions and judgements of online audiences, which receive information from different sources and process media content selectively also on the basis of collective interpretations and emotional reactions. These public judgments and emotions can be equally made responsible for the negative bias of news coverage and, in turn, inform both offline and online media frames and content. Negative learning through digital media discourses is thus a complex process in which providers of media content (journalists and political informants) and audiences interact and equally contribute to the structuring of public debates and expectations.

Yiannis Mylonas: The discursive frames of New Democracy's social media campaign during Greece's national elections of January 2015

This paper focuses on the use of social media platforms for political campaigning during the national elections of Greece, on the 25th of January, 2015. Based on the study of selected material drawn from the political campaign of the former governing party of Greece, New Democracy (ND), the chapter discusses the ways social media were used to intensify ND's electoral campaign in more affective, interactive and engaging ways, offering the party more space for political communication beyond the norms of political correctness that may often characterize official party campaigns. The analysis demonstrates the highly politicized, but non-civic and propagandist utilization of web 2.0 structures by established political parties in critical moments -such as national elections in a socio-politico-economic crisis period - and their polarizing effects on citizens through the mobilization of eschatological political passions. The analysis is organized according to three main themes of communicational frames produced by ND: these are the 'catastrophologic' frame, the 'Europeanist' frame and the 'slandering' frame. Critical literature, related to the 'post-democratic' thesis, is used to discuss these analytical categories and the ways they are dogmatically articulated to close the democratic contingency opened by the election process and their critical possibilities for deliberation and political change. The paper therefore problematizes the civic potential of web 2.0 both empirically and theoretically, by foregrounding issues of power, spatio-temporal context, connected to broader concerns related to the future of democracy in the late capitalist socio-cultural framework, where the exceptional becomes the norm in Agamben's terms, as the idea and the reality of 'crisis' assumes a rather permanent state of affairs.

Asimina Michailidou: The medium makes the public? Convergent EU audiences in divergent online spheres

Can online journalism broaden the scope of European political communication, facilitate interaction across the borders and reposition EU debates in a transnational context? Drawing on blog, news and Twitter data collected over a period of five years (2010-2015), this paper assesses the online news coverage and public debates of the Eurocrisis in several EU member states, on three levels: publicization; participation; and public opinion-making. The results show that despite the differences between the selected countries in terms of online communications' infrastructure and the maturity of the online public sphere, cross-national patterns of EU coverage emerge, which allow for reserved optimism regarding a) the role of online journalism and b) the role of social media and citizens in the building of a European public sphere. A European online public sphere is possible, but it remains a far cry from the uniform media space EU policy-makers often envisage.

Terje Rasmussen: Internet-based media and the crisis. A realist critique of the idea of a European public sphere

This paper addresses digital media as platforms for public debate in the context of a crisis-ridden EU. It argues for a 'realist' view on the public sphere generally, and the role of digital media in public opinion: They are not particularly democratic in their structure or in how they are applied, particularly not in a super-national context. The starting point is an argument about the development of digital media based on studies of technology and on a research project that evaluated the status of freedom of expression mediated in and through digital media. Digital media provide communication in part disconnected from politics, and in part dominated by political and corporate control. In a crisis-ridden Europe, these problems tend to deepen. Second, I argue for a conception of political public opinion as an historical concept, i.e. as a product of the growing need for legitimacy of the nation-state in between elections, rather than a post-Kantian concept that connects it to a normative understanding of the enlightenment. Attempts at applying the concept at a super-national level are likely to drain such a political space for its legitimating force. Instead, I argue for a further 'secularisation' of the notion of communicative rationality in the public opinion. This position leads to a non-ideal concept of communication that views political rationality as political reflection. Within this frame of reference, the role of digital media (blogs, micro-blogs, social media, comments on digital journalism) is not to enhance argumentative quality, but to provide opinionated expression and attachment to formal power. While this kind of political rationality works fairly well in a nation-state context, on a super-national level communication rationality loses power, and the European constellation of nation-states surrender to a constellation of empire.

Lina Dencik: The Advent of Surveillance Realism? Political Activism Post-Snowden

The publication of the documents first leaked by whistleblower Edward Snowden in June 2013 revealing the extent of digital forms of governance, surveillance and control have significant implications for our understanding of political activism and dissent. In particular, the post-Snowden debate has raised questions regarding the extent to which mass surveillance has become entrenched and normalized in everyday practices as an inevitable part of contemporary society, what might be considered a state of 'surveillance realism' (borrowing from Mark Fisher's concept of capitalist realism), in which it is no longer possible to imagine a society without surveillance. For political activists, this might mean either a reluctance to engage with the issue of surveillance as something that cannot be overcome, or an acceptance of continuous surveillance that can have significant impact on the means and aims of activist groups and practices of dissent and protest. Based on research carried out for the ESRC-funded project 'Digital Citizenship and Surveillance Society: UK State-Media-Citizen relations after the Snowden leaks' hosted at Cardiff University, this paper will present findings on how the Snowden leaks, and subsequent media debate, have impacted on practices of prominent activist groups in the UK including trade unions, environmental groups, anti-war and human rights organisations. In particular, it will discuss attitudes to digital surveillance amongst activists, changes in online behavior and digital communication practices, and will examine the (lack of) responses to the Snowden leaks amongst political activists. As part of this, the paper will explore manifestations of self-regulating behaviour online and a possible 'chilling effect' on dissent and will assess the place of digital surveillance in the context of broader political and social justice agendas. Based on interviews with activists and prominent civil society groups, it will consider the nature, possibilities and challenges for political activism in light of the Snowden leaks, and will seek to question the extent to which knowledge of surveillance has become an integrated part of activist practices post-Snowden.

**Jacob Ohme, Claes de Vreese, Kim Andersen, Camilla Jensen and Erik Albæk:
Dimensionality of civic participation in a convergent media environment**

With the digitalization of information, subsequently leading to a fragmentation of audiences (Benett & Iyengar, 2008) and a change in the prevailing media logic (Schulz, 2014), a convergent media environment has developed. Nowadays, social media offer a platform for converging streams of information, altering the media diet for a growing share of the population. In addition, social networks like Facebook or Twitter offer emerging ways of participation, mostly with less effort than traditional forms (Rotman et al, 2011). Yet, the role social media play in the political media diet was not fully assessed by prior research. Furthermore, a broadened approach is needed when measuring participatory behavior. Emerging forms of participation on social media platforms but also engagement among the public, not closely connected to the political system, are necessary to include, to see the full picture of civic participation.

For this purpose, a nationwide study in Denmark was conducted (N=4460), measuring the political media exposure of the citizens with a smartphone-based media diary over the course of 15 days in February 2015. Civic participation was measured with 32 items, including activities within the ranges of online and offline, active and passive as well as traditional and unconventional forms of participation. Subsequently, the influence of exposure to political information on social media on these different types of participation was tested.

Considering a change in citizenship (Bennett, 2008), especially among the young (Thorson, 2014), the concept of public orientation (Ekström, Olsson & Shehata, 2014) was used to detect underlying dimensions of participation, reflecting a trend towards a more individualized understanding of citizenship. Finally, using factor- and cluster analysis, a typology of participation in a convergent media environment was developed.

Jayson Harsin: Citizen Participation, Popular Epistemologies, and Theories of Post-democracy/Post-Politics

For over a decade, political theories of post-democracy and post-politics have emerged, ranging on a spectrum from mainstream to radical (for example, Crouch 2004; Ranciere 2004; Mouffe 2005; Ronsvallon 2006; Agamben 2007; Dean 2010; Wolin 2012; Swyngedouw 2014). While they differ in their analyses of current political conditions for citizen participation and political action that may produce social or political change locally, nationally, and transnationally, they all recognize a system or apparatus that has emerged via political marketing and public relations, even algorithmic manipulations, favoring elite closure of spaces, contents, even perceptions of what counts as political. Terms such as “administered politics” and “political management” also apply. Less often have these theorists engaged critical journalism, media, and communication studies that demonstrate a professionalization of political communication that has overlapped with a historical development of “participatory culture” or new, more open conditions of communication production enabled by post-web 2.0 culture, as well as the breakdown of cultural authorities that distinguish fact from fiction, true from false (news media, political and/or religious opinion leaders, education apparatuses, etc.) in “information overload” conditions.

In addition, empirical analyses that demonstrate the often-disconnected analytical application of these theories are few. This paper first integrates this disconnected work in political, social and communication theory/studies. Second, it documents political action that transgresses post-political apparatuses. Third, it introduces a case study focusing on the French “manif pour tous” movement against gay marriage, in particular its Internet and mobile/SMS aspects that have organized and mobilized political actors to force political and media elites to respond publicly about contested claims/facts. These movements and events have been demonstrated in public opinion, as well as official political and media agendas. Implications for democracy are raised around conflicting popular epistemologies, since these movements are not necessarily progressive, democratic or leftist.

Can Kutay: Occupation and Online Visibility - CANCELLED

The events that have inspired the main propositions of this paper had taken place between 30th of May and roughly around the end of August of 2013. These incidents, later entitled as the “Gezi Movement” or “Gezi Resistance” that spread all over Turkey in matter of hours, had been ignited by the heavy police intervention to a group of activists who were protesting the sanctioned demolition of Gezi Park (a green area in the middle of Taksim, located in Istanbul) by occupying the park.

Similar with other occupy movements around the World, protestors have quickly established a strong linkage between online and offline platforms during the Gezi Park. The protestors were occupying the social media with same methods they had occupied offline public places; anonymously, without any apparent leadership, and with individuals who were familiar with the habitat they were occupying, such as social media platforms in which protestors were already subscribed to before the protests.

As Pro-Gezi users were utilizing Twitter for their own ends, another group of users were also emerging. These users were condemning the Gezi protestors and claimed that these protests were organized by external power-holding institutions such as governments or corporations to weaken the nation. Since day one, these two opposing groups were lunged in a state of constant conflict for gaining online visibility. Whereas the Gezi Sympathizers seemingly had the upper hand in raising their voice in Twitter with hashtags such as #Occupy Gezi, the pro-government users caught up with their rivals in a matter of weeks, especially after influential government figures encouraged their followers to show their presence in social media. This paper will attempt to demonstrate how both parties solidified their resolve and sustained/ constructed their collective identity/solidarity through constant conflict and comparison with their rivals in online platforms such as Twitter.

Mark Carrigan: Distracted People and Fragile Movements: a relational realist theory of social movement in a digital age

It is clear that the emergence and normalisation of social media entail affordances for mobilisation that have important implications for social movements. However there is little agreement upon precisely what these implications are and whether they can or should be evaluated in general terms. I argue that much of the problem with the emerging debate stems from a lack of clarity about the social ontology of social movements, suggesting that digital technology should invite us to reconsider ontological questions in light of the empirically observable changes in mobilisation dynamics that have been the impetus for popular and academic debate.

Using the relational realist theory developed by Margaret Archer and Pierpaolo Donati, I offer a novel account of the constitution of social movements that invites us to ask questions about the emergence and durability of new movements that are obscured by alternative theoretical approaches which fail to recognise both the emergent and relational constitution of collectives. In doing so, I begin to develop an account of what I suggested are the 'fragile movements' being constituted through the collective endeavour of 'distracted people' under digital capitalism.

Mireille Lalancette, Vincent Raynauld and Sofia Tourigny-Kone: Taking It to the Twitterverse: Characterizing Uses of Microblogging for Advocacy and Political Engagement during the 2012 Quebec Student Protest

This paper examines the relationship between media elites, activists, and ordinary citizens during the 2012 Quebec student strike. Also known as “Maple Spring,” this protest movement began in a fairly conventional manner. On February 13, 2012, students from two large universities voting massively in favour of a strike against the augmentation of university tuition. Over the following weeks, this mobilization initiative morphed into a grassroots-intensive protest movement mobilizing different segments of Quebec civil society. This paper takes a look at uses of social media by Maple Spring activists, whether they support or oppose the movement, for information dispersion, advocacy, and mobilization. We examine how and to what extent #ggi tweeters used and, to some extent, spectacularized and dramatized media content produced by legacy media and reporters in their discourse. In order to do so, we conduct a hybrid qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis of a sample of 66,282 #ggi tweets (including hyperlinks and their content) that appeared on Twitter’s public timeline between April 22 and July 31, 2012. Contrary to our expectations, Twitter was seldom used to generate controversy about the strike. In fact, #ggi users relied heavily on legacy media and journalists’ content for sharing information, supporting their views on strike-related issues and events, and for expressing themselves on other matters. As traditional media offered an often sensationalistic coverage of the Maple Spring, the activity on social media was geared more towards analysing and legitimizing protest as well as offering opinions and counter narratives as events unfolded. From a broader perspective, the findings of our study are discussed in light of the “protest paradigm,” which enables us to characterize legacy media and reporters’ role in shaping the Maple Spring narrative on Twitter. More generally, our study provides a renewed look at politicking in the social mediascape and contributes to the growing body of academic literature on grassroots protest and activists’ uses of Web 2.0 for political action and advocacy.

Oana Albu and Michael Etter: “Post it, Inch’Allah”: The agency of social media technologies for the organizing of political activist groups

Social media technologies such as Facebook or Twitter are usually discussed from an instrumental perspective: i.e., social media facilitates information transmission that drives transparency and democratization (Johnson & Regan, 2014). An emerging stream of critical research indicates, however, that communication through social media does not simply represent reality but has both enabling and constraining properties. In this view, social media has the potential to enable and constrain how organizing is accomplished because these very dynamics that constitute social organizing can be both supported or disrupted by the material features of technologies (Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield, 2013). This paper adds to such critical discussions by exploring how social media (Facebook and Twitter) communicative interactions impact actors’ coordination of freedom of speech campaigns.

The paper’s empirical focus is on the case of a non-governmental activist organization (NGO) in operating in Gafsa and Tunis, Tunisia. The paper investigates an environment which is characterized by political instability such as Tunisia as here actors use social media for daily organizing activities that support freedom of speech such as making decisions, discussing topics, increasing the size of gatherings, and sharing information. By drawing on ethnographic interviews with activists and content analysis of their social media posts, the paper provides insight into how social media interactions function as agents who act on the activists’ behalf and thus have both an enabling or constraining role for their social organizing activities.

Ariadna Fernandez-Planells: Offline and online spaces of protests: A case study of news information habits among the 15M Movement activists in Spain and the Umbrella Movement activists in Hong Kong.

The economic and political crisis, the use of digital media and the rise of social movements have led to a new online and offline sphere of political self-expression. Information search among citizens (activists) has become a political act. Recent social movements worldwide have introduced innovations in social movements practices and in their communication methods. The 15M Movement in Spain, the Occupy Movement in USA, YoSoy132 in Mexico or, more recently, the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong have shown this new-style communication in action. This conference paper presents a longitudinal study of the communication practices of the new wave of networked social movements. Specifically, the study investigates how activists have used both 'old' and 'new' media to get informed about the 15M Movement in Spain and about the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. What were the media practices at the 15M protests in 2011 in Spain? Has the appearance of the 15M Movement influenced or modified the information routines of Spanish activists? How has social media use evolved in the 15M Movement? Are the communication trends detected there similar to those of the recent Umbrella Movement? The study of these movements can help us understand technological development, communication trends and the influence of these movements as political actors. The research results demonstrate the importance of social media as information channels. The emergence of mobile devices as information screens is also detected, especially among young people. However they also show that traditional media continue to play a role, and that both types of media coexist and complement each other.

The study was carried out through two surveys conducted in 2011 (n=339) and 2013 (n=6167) among 15M Movement activists and a last survey conducted on 2014 (n=419) among Umbrella Movement activists.

Jakob Svensson: Social Media and Protest Participation in a Middle-Class Activist Demand Connective Individualism, Expressive Issue-Engagement and Disciplined Updating

This paper departs from a study of a middle-class activist demand engaging on social media in tandem with more traditional offline activist participation to organise and mobilise participation around saving a bathhouse. The aim of the paper is to analyse intersections of social media uses with traditional protest activities and to discuss the type of participation that this brought forth.

The paper will discuss the importance of other users/ participants for how individuals reflexively explored themselves as activists. To negotiate yourself as a politically interested individual was intertwined with connecting yourself to larger political groups and collectives. Through the concept of connective individualism the paper highlights such reflexive aspects and also underlines the mutuality between connectivity, individualism and protest participation.

The above is intertwined with a kind of expressive issue-engagement that was observed among the activists. Engagement around saving the bathhouse was expressive since this issue often was reflexively chosen. With the idea of expressive issue-engagement I want to underline that issues are not only motivated by activists' political convictions, but also important for expressing and sustaining activists identities.

This is also intertwined with practices of disciplined updating. Activists needed both to be updated on what was going in their social media networks and to update their social media networks on what was going on in their lives and hence also self-biographies. Activists having connected themselves to the bathhouse demand on social media platforms, started to get information/updates flowing towards them. Some of this information also pushed some of them to act in offline protests. Connecting yourself to an activist demand seemed, if not to control, so to at least push people to stay "true" to their displayed identity and act accordingly.

Ahmad Kamal: Views on social media in the twilight of Morsi

This paper presents data from interviews with thirty politically-engaged citizens amidst Egypt's turbulent transitional period, over two years after the vaunted "Facebook Revolution"/"Twitter Revolution" in 2011 that brought down President Hosni Mubarak and immediately prior to the popularly-backed coup that ousted the newly elected Mohamed Morsi.

There is an ongoing debate among scholars over whether social media challenges or entrenches dominant interest groups. Some, like Andrew Feenberg and Clay Shirky, claim that online technologies emancipate citizens by undermining the media narratives imposed by top-down capitalist, technocratic, or authoritarian regimes; others, such as Jodi Dean, Christian Fuchs, Malcolm Gladwell, and Evgeny Morozov, claim these same technologies only increase people's vulnerability to manipulation and demobilization by said regimes. The findings from Egypt demonstrate the ambivalent role of social media, variously exerting positive and negative influences (e.g., supplementing mainstream narratives, spreading misinformation, permitting fact-checking, exacerbating partisanship) over the domestic circulation of political discourse, making any definitive judgement of social media's efficacy impossible.

After illustrating this point, the paper goes on to argue that the ambivalent roles of social media ought to be explored in their own right for their sociological significance, setting aside the binary evaluation entirely. I offer three findings regarding Egypt's post-Mubarak society that are revealed in such an approach to social media: first, the fundamental convergence and interdependence of traditional and new media in the contemporary information landscape; second, the culture of distrust and contention shaping how citizens interpret and process information; and, third, the ways social media becomes constitutive of perceived social, economic, and political distinctions among the population (e.g., the plebeian Facebook versus the elitist Twitter, or savvy social media users versus gullible broadcast media consumers).

The paper concludes that social media are meaningful artifacts within a political anthropology, around which the formation of contemporary institutions, actions, identities, and cultures can be observed—observed but not presupposed. Rather than ask what social media does to society, I instead explore what it reveals about a society; in the case of Egypt, social media reveals on the eve of Morsi's removal from office a political transition hijacked by intense contention, polarization, and suspicion.

Panayiota Tsatsou and Yupei Zhao: Online Communication and Civic Activism: Testing the 'Two-level Social Capital Analysis' model in the study of the Sunflower Movement

In this paper we propose a 'two-level social capital analysis' model for the study of the role of online communication in civic activism.

At the first-level, the proposed model suggests a dialectical conceptualisation of social capital in online communication that embraces the key facets and often antithetical dimensions of social capital and enables an assessment of how these facets and dimensions are operationalised and employed in key online communication processes, for example in online social media spaces (e.g., Facebook, blogs, YouTube etc.).

At the second level, the proposed model embraces indicators that situate social capital not only within a social media/online communication context but also within the broader communication process (e.g., face-to-face communication) as well as within the socio-economic and political context in which activism and movements of civic appeal take place. This creates a 'concentric circles' framework that can provide the required tools and variables for measuring the impact of social capital processes and mechanisms of micro, macro, bonding or bridging/linking nature (if any) in online communication on the offline activity of online media users.

We argue that this model will help researchers explore the nuances, mechanisms, drivers and complexities of the role of online communication in new, contemporary forms of civic mobilisation and activism, and thus we test its applicability via case-study empirical research. Specifically, we apply the model to a qualitative interview study of the role of Facebook in the 'Sunflower Movement' in Taiwan. The paper reflects on the lessons from testing the proposed model in the study of the 'Sunflower movement' and acknowledges the traps and conceptual tricks one must be aware of when studying the role of online communication in civic activism.

**Dean Lockwood, Dave Boothroyd, Martyn Thayne and Rob Coley:
Participatory mediations of the political**

At a time when social capital is produced, accumulated and exchanged around user-generated content circulated via social networks of various kinds, there is an apparent failure to effectively transform social into political capital. This gives rise to a popular perception of a generalized disenchantment with politics and a lack of active citizenship. This perception, however, ignores or disregards emergent, innovative forms of engagement and activism centered around, or emanating from, online communities and networks. One of the challenges that arises for all those concerned with the transformative political potential of (inter)networks of various kinds, is to resolve the theory/praxis dichotomy at the level of participatory contribution, co-creation and the 'sharing economy' - for example, in relation to knowledge, services, know-how or 'help', as well as with regard to such things as 'energy', empathy and desire. How can we better understand and exploit the scope for new forms of resistance, intervention and mobilization afforded by new technologies of connectedness?

This panel will explore a number of theoretical issues relating to the contemporary situation of 'networked culture' and critically reflect on the 'network model' per se, in view of a variety of the phenomena of mediated life.

Dean Lockwood: Beyond the rhizome: Modelling political agency for twenty-first century media networks

Modes of mediation provide conditions of (im)possibility for political engagement and activism. Do today's digital networks hinder or facilitate collective resistance? Hardt and Negri (2005) claim that the emergent organizational form of struggle is precisely the distributed network, in the form of the 'multitude'. Digital networks are perfectly congruent with the multitude's 'swarm intelligence' ('collective and distributed techniques of problem solving without centralized control'). Jodi Dean (2005), on the other hand, argues that digital networks foreclose the possibility of antagonism upon which political agency depends because of their fluid, absorptive character, the sheer noisiness and immersivity of great flows of content mitigating against the effective organization of collectivities. This paper, with Galloway and Thacker (2007), suggests that both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces have, in fact, converged upon the rhizomatic structure of the distributed network, with the consequence that the assumption that 'rhizomes' necessarily undermine the citadels of hegemonic authority is today unwarranted. Participatory digital culture compels and captures expressivity, increasingly comprising a new constituent 'ontopower' (Massumi, 2015) which capitalizes upon the potentials of the network for the benefit of a neo-liberal agenda. Networks, in short, no longer afford the necessary asymmetry with centralized power for effective organization and resistance. The challenge of resisting ontopower is to find 'new models for political action...asymmetrical in relationship to distributed networks' (Galloway and Thacker). Within the web, an 'anti-Web' must be found. Further, such an 'anti-Web' must be understood in terms of media ecologies in which human intentions may not always be to the fore. Hansen commends a theorization of human agency 'in relation to the elemental, indeed as part of the elemental'. To grasp the place of the human within today's media networks, and to appreciate how these networks actualize a properly elemental conception of the human, we must adopt a radically environmental perspective encompassing human activity as one element among others'. What would such a perspective imply for rethinking political agency in the digital age?

Dave Boothroyd: The one, the two and the many: the ethico-politics of individuation and encounter in participatory digital milieu

In the last decade and half, as the technologies of communication have become increasingly embedded in everyday life practices (by way of the adoption of ubiquitous, always-on, mobile, integrated devices and the internet-of-things, and so forth) the dominant theorization of mediated social encounters has decisively appropriated a variety of 'new materialist' perspectives to account for the production of the Subject, or subjectivation (Foucault) under such conditions. At the same time the political potentials of such 'wired' social milieux have predominantly been conceptualized in terms of open networks and their emergent properties. Against this background, the processes of individuation/ disindividuation/ trans-individuation (Simondon, Stiegler) in the context of techno-communicative environments have been identified as key to questions concerning the transformation of the political, and especially the prospects for collective action – and, indeed, how this expression should be conceptualized in the contemporary situation. This paper will explore and discuss the implications of this discourse for rethinking the ethico-political (rather than the purely political) dimension of mediated life, characterized, for example, in terms of the oneself, the relation to another and to society (Levinas, Derrida, Nancy).

Martyn Thayne: 'Twitter storms' in a teacup: Digital activism and collective political agency

This paper presents an analysis of innovative forms of digital activism and political engagement within online communities and mediated networks. It aims to demonstrate how the social media site Twitter functions as an organisational space for forms of digital citizenship that emerge at the intersection of traditional politics, public debate and social campaigning. It will examine, for instance, how 'twitter storms' can be viewed as expressions of collective political agency and mobilized resistance. Drawing on Tony D. Sampson's (2012) social contagion theory, the paper will argue that virality within networked communications and the wider ecology of media, can be harnessed by political activists for projects of collective action. On the basis of analyses of three case studies related to issues in UK politics (#RoadToRuin, #StopSocialCleansing, #MiliFandom), the paper will evaluate the potential of twitter storms to 1) challenge traditional biases and forms of 'gatekeeping' in corporate media reportage; 2) build momentum and support for social movements; 3) hold government policy to account; and 4) potentially interact with and influence higher order, and otherwise hegemonic, powers of governance.

Rob Coley: The Terminal City: Topological Politics and Mediated Urbanism

In announcing government support for the new city of Dholera, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, observed that unlike cities of the past, which have been constructed on riverbanks and along highways, cities of the future will be built around digital infrastructure. Topography gives way to topology, to technological relations that mediate the whole of social and political life (Lury, Parisi & Terranova, 2012). When complete, Dholera will join other 'smart cities', like Songdo in South Korea and Masdar near Abu Dhabi. These are programmable spaces, with digital sensors embedded in the entire urban environment, enabling a form of civic management based on real-time data processing. Here, in a cybernetic acceleration of Britain's garden city movement, and Le Corbusier's Ville Radieuse, the city becomes a network of sustainability and equilibrium. Naturally, this utopian rhetoric is not exclusive to 'developing' nations – European governments are also eager to 'reboot' inefficient industrial cities with smart technology. Yet the smart city is not a governmental space – it is intensely neoliberal, a space in which power is a matter of 'extrastatecraft' (Easterling, 2014), and where the real potential of data unconsciously generated by the population is secured and exploited by global corporations. In Richard Grusin's (2010) terms, smart cities will be 'premediated' zones, post-political ghettos in which future citizenship is controlled and managed invisibly in the present. This paper will argue that speculations about how we might live in smart cities alert us to broader dangers concerning emergent forms of power. Specifically, these issues return us to Fredric Jameson's (1988) aesthetic of 'cognitive mapping' and its basis in urban experience, where the inability of individuals and collectives to figure their place in a capitalist system is understood to be politically neutralizing. The threat of smart power demands that we explore a form of topological politics that, in contrast to Jameson, does not strive to figure or represent a system, but attunes itself affectively to the various agencies and relations immanent to such a system, and to the instability of these relations.