Colin Agur. Mobile Chat Apps, Digital Activism, and Surveillance: A Case Study of the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong

Abstract: This paper probes the communicative features of mobile chat applications as tools of digital activism in Hong Kong’s 2014 protests, and critically assesses the significance of mobile chat apps in contexts of mass surveillance. The paper makes use of in-depth interviews with 40 activists on different sides of the debates, as well as journalists who used chat apps to report on the protests. Focusing on Hong Kong as a context in which free speech is protected by law but social media content is subject to widespread surveillance, the paper conceptualizes digital activism in terms of mobilization, organization, and persuasion. It finds that the velocity and scale of social media have strengthened protesters’ ability to mobilize and organize, both on the internet and in the streets, but that these advantages have not carried over into persuasion. Protesters have encountered two main obstacles to persuasion via social media in Hong Kong: the multitude of messages enabled by social media and the age segmentation of media. As a result, the Umbrella Movement’s social media efforts generated new attention but did not persuade a durable majority of Hong Kongers of the movement’s legitimacy. This paper examines WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, WeChat, and other chat apps in wide usage across East Asia. By focusing on the emerging and understudied role of mobile chat apps, this paper offers a useful perspective on emerging forms of digital activism, new possibilities for surveillance, and questions (for practice and for theory) about platforms that are neither wide open nor fully private.
Abstract: In December 2013, Turkish government ordered the dismissal of judges, prosecutors and police chiefs upon receiving the indictments of political corruption. The evidence was gathered by the judiciary and police force through illegal surveillance that was used to defame politicians the government did not like in the past. Having experienced the surveillance defamation tactics they used first had, the AKP government began creating its own surveillance and big data control. The total control of all online media, all data flow and tools of surveillance is the ultimate Manifestation of Turkish government’s fear of democratic accountability. Coupled with the fear of being overthrown after Gezi Park protests and its use of social networks, AKP government began utilizing several data control and surveillance tactics. These include the utilization of AKtrolls, a group of social media experts on payroll that hunt track dissenting users on social media and harasses them. Another tactic is the manipulation of electoral data. Since 2007 in every election, AKP plays the voting system via manipulating the release of poll data from east to west to mislead voters, creating an electoral bias that they are winning. At the social media level, all big social media companies are ordered to share their data with the government or they are banned or locked out. Facebook, twitter, and YouTube were banned for several years until they consented to give data on Turkish users who criticized the government. Those sites that do not reveal the user data or do not delete criticism of Turkish government are still blocked like Wikipedia. This paper will look at how internet users and ordinary citizens in turkey do to counter surveillance and pre-emptive policing of the government. Aliasing, citizen journalism, electoral networking and off-lining are the three tactics that will be discussed.

Abstract: India is the largest democracy in the world. Since Independence from Great Britain in 1947, political democracy has taken deep roots thanks to the visionary leaders of the immediate post-independent India. The Indian General Elections involving more than 815 million voters is seen as the greatest democratic exercise in the world. The Indian media have been playing a great role in stabilizing the democratic ethos of the country. In the recent years India too has been a witness to the digital media – 500 million is the number of internet users in 2017. There has been the general assumption that a society drenched in information in a digital age is inherently a democratic one. It was thought that the internet will be an unprecedented democratizing force, a place where all can be heard and everyone can participate equally. This has been the big hope for Indian democracy too. This paper would like to argue that the hope of an emerging digital democracy in India has been belied due to the following factors, among many others: 1) the digital divide is too great to even speak of a digital democracy in India; the internet in fact reflects and amplifies real-world inequalities; 2) a medium with the capacity to empower people has been turned in to a tool of social control; the internet has reinforced the power structures of the real world – not empowered them; 3) capitalism’s colonization of the internet has made the internet an unparalleled apparatus for government and corporate surveillance; a handful of giants – Airtel, Amazon, Google, Facebook, Jio, Reliance, Vodafone, often in collusion with the powers that be, remain the gatekeepers.
Ana Azurmendi. Future citizens and Big Data: to what extent children’s’ traceability in the Internet determines a future lack of opportunities

Abstract: The impact of Big Data technologies in children’s data protection is very relevant. First of all due to their higher vulnerability, their lack of maturity and their innocence respect to the risks involved in an inadequate data management (think for example of the ease in obtaining all kinds of data from them). Secondly, because of the immense capacity of prediction over a child or a group of children, when a long period of traceability has been set upon them. As a consequence, the possibilities of future discrimination in terms of their political and social participation, their employability and their obtaining-consuming services will be higher than in other cases.

Taking into account the common principles of the UN Convention of Children’s Rights, of 1989, the Unicef Ethical Code for Media and the Ethical Code for Electronic Commerce and Interactive Advertising ( approved by the Spanish Data Protection Agency and similar to codes of others European Data Protection agencies), it will examine to what extent the 2016 European Law on Data Protection (UE2016/679) offers legal protection that is coherent to these ethical criteria for the protection of children. A comparison has been done among The European Law and the proposals of the European Working Group art. 29 on The Protection of Children’s Personal Data, 2009, plus the US Children’s Online Personal Data Protection Act, 2013.

Stefan Baack and Tamara Witschge. Data and democracy: How journalists and civil society actors imagine the affordances of data

Abstract: With datafication there are a growing number of actors who are working to make data and information accessible, working with digital tools to mine, make accessible, interpret and tell stories with data. This has created new entanglements between journalism and civil society. In this paper we show how a variety of actors --open data activists, data journalists and entrepreneurial journalists-- increasingly exchange, collaborate and complement each other: They have transferrable skills in dealing with data, and share similar ambitions. We see that they all refer to democracy at large when describing what they do. In this paper, we critically examine the links made between data and democracy by different actors within journalism and civil society groups.

Acknowledging that ‘the political and democratic possibilities of data’ (Milan and Velden 2016, 8) cannot be determined in an abstract way, we provide an in-depth investigation into the practices and understandings of these actors, based on our qualitative interviews we conducted in the period 2015-2017. Looking across organisational backgrounds and institutional settings, our research shows that these flexible data professionals complement each other, but also differ in both their practices of data work, and the way in which they imagine the affordances of data for democracy.

Our findings show that we can identify different types of data workers: Facilitators, Experimenters, Translators and Normalisers. We discuss how they not only relate to data in particular ways, but also conceptualise the relation between data and democracy in different ways, whether it is empowering citizens, performing watchdog roles or providing a basis for debates. Using the concept of ‘imagined affordances’ (Nagy and Neff 2015), we ultimately aim to provide insight into how data actors respond to the progressive datafication of social life (van Dijck 2014) and envisage the role of knowledge in the public interest.
Abstract: The impact of Big Data technologies in children's data protection is very relevant. First of all due to their higher vulnerability, their lack of maturity and their innocence respect to the risks involved in an inadequate data management (think for example of the ease in obtaining all kinds of data from them). Secondly, because of the immense capacity of prediction over a child or a group of children, when a long period of traceability has been set upon them. As a consequence, the possibilities of future discrimination in terms of their political and social participation, their employability and their obtaining-consuming services will be higher than in other cases.

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Abstract: We are currently witnessing a profound transformation of journalism (Deuze and Witschge 2017), affecting not only news production practices (by citizen journalists, think tanks, digital influencers, etc.), but also news consumption practices (from temporally scheduled to constant news flow, consumed on the go, etc.), and new kinds of news distribution (social media platforms as news distributors, enhancing the importance of friends, acquaintances, and algorithms).

These transformations have sparked intense discussions about the democratic role of news in current digital media landscapes.

Much less attention, however, has been paid to user conceptualisations of news in this new digital media landscape although there are few attempts to do so (Armstrong et al 2015, Costera Meijer & Kormelink 2015, Medierådet 2016). We argue it is likely that algorithmically governed, digital culture transforms the way particularly young users understand what news actually is. This question is crucial in order to meet the challenges of digital culture faced by current democracies and we urgently need to further explore what the concept of news actually means to citizens today. In order to do so we propose an open approach to the phenomenology of news experienced by media users in contemporary digital culture. In this paper, we outline a theoretical framework to gain knowledge of this democratically essential and crucial question.

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“Ungar och nyheter: en kvalitativ studie kring barns och ungas uppfattning av nyheter” (2016), Statens medieråd. Available at: https://statensmedierad.se/download/
Göran Bolin. Wage labour and ‘free labour’ in dataified media industries

Abstract: Algorithmic data-mining technologies and data-base marketing affect increasingly larger areas of contemporary media use. Through personal media (smartphones, tablets), individuals produce massive amounts of data that is the base for data mining and ultimately the construction of the media user commodity. This data production extends temporally (around the clock) as well as spatially (through geo-local functions), and incorporates increasingly more of our life-worlds into the productions-consumptions circuits of the media industries. Thus media users become involved in productive consumption, producing social, aesthetic and cultural value – which then becomes expropriated by the media industries and transformed into economic value. In recent research, this role of media users has been theorized as e.g. free labour, exploitation, control and surveillance.

The debate about ‘free labour’ in the media industries that started with Smythe and others in the 1970s has been revived in the light of the new business models of the media industries, where the media user has been theorised in terms of ‘free labour’, or as raw material in the production process. The consumption side in the circuit is, however, less empirically studied, especially from the vantage point of media users themselves. Based in a series of focus group and individual interviews, this paper discusses how media users relate to the fact of being extracted value from, when acting in digital space: e.g. what are their contributions to the productions-consumption circuit; the negotiations between the opportunities offered by social media platforms and their privacy concerns; the avoidance strategies they sometimes develop; and how it more generally feels to be part of the large-scale machinery of the media and culture industries. For this paper is especially discussed the relation between the waged labour market and the ‘free labour’ that users engage in.

Michael Bossetta. Digital Architectures and Social Media Campaigning in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Primaries: Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat Compared

Abstract: The physical design of an environment – its architecture – intimately affects human behavior (Zifferblatt, 1972). Similarly, the technological design of a virtual environment – its “digital architecture” – influences how users engage with political content online (Bossetta, Dutceac Segesten, & Trenz, 2017). The proposed paper examines how the digital architectures of social media influence political campaigning by both politicians and citizens (Gibson, 2015) in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Primaries. The research question is: How do the digital architectures of social media platforms influence the campaigning activity of politicians and citizens in an electoral context?

Theoretically, the paper makes a contribution to the burgeoning literature on online campaigning by providing a theoretical framework for cross-platform social media analysis through refining the concept of digital architecture into four component parts: network structure, functionality, algorithmic filtering, and datification. Empirically, the study applies a mixed-methods approach of firstly, using qualitative interviews with the digital directors of three Republican primary campaigns (Marco Rubio, Scott Walker, and Rand Paul) on the topic of how the campaigns used social media platforms for political marketing (Newman, 1999).

The interviews inform three ‘tests’ using quantitative, publically available social media data from Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. The tests examine the campaigning activity of politicians and citizens longitudinally across two points in time: a pre-primary phase (July 15th – September 15th,
2015) and a primary phase (January 15th – March 15th, 2016). The first test examines political actors’ cross-platform message integration across Facebook and Instagram. The second test investigates citizens’ engagement with politicians’ posts on Facebook and Instagram and uncovers which politician had the most active audience influencing the respective platforms’ algorithms. The third test focuses on new social media platform adoption by focusing on the Snapchat activity in the Democratic primary competition between Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton.

Lidiane Castro. The significance of the hate speech from Jair Bolsonaro’s Facebook page in Brazil and its cultural, social and political implications.

Abstract: Social media is an enabler of citizen participation and has many positive aspects addressed by researchers but also a “dark side” to it: providing a platform in which tensions between different groups are exacerbated, being used as a platform for promoting right wing nationalist mobilizations and hate speech. Jair Bolsonaro is an ultraconservative brazilian politician nicknamed as the “Brazilian Trump” who is in favor of military intervention, dictatorship and made polemic comments regarding sexuality, gender, race and religion. Therefore, during this investigation, the “extreme speech” on Bolsonaro’s page is looked into considering intolerance in a digital culture that is able to reinforce differences and hatred between groups based on gender, sexuality, religion, race and political ideology with an institutionalization of hatred. This research explores what this rise of volatile speech means in relation to the democratic dialogue and participation in the country by presenting and discussing messages collected during the first semester of 2017 from publications and comments on his page.

Aline Clauss and Regula Hänggli. How to act in the digital age

Abstract: The initial euphoria surrounding opportunities for democracy which the digital world was supposed to bring us is increasingly fading. The possibilities provided by the Internet and the promises associated with it, such as access for everyone to all information, new possibilities for participation and communication without interference from the “discussion police”, are offset by several disadvantages: commercialisation, surveillance, depoliticisation, quantification, waste of time, distraction, loss of deep attention, shared loneliness and phenomena-like the filter bubble. The unimaginably large amount of data generated and how it is used also give rise to questions of an ethical nature, not just in relation to privacy but also associated with manipulation and discrimination.

The question arises as to what effects the above-mentioned factors have on every single one of us and on democratic processes in general, because reflexivity is considered a prerequisite for a functioning opinion-forming process in any democracy. The fear is that reflective actions could be undermined, both through manipulation resulting from Web-based algorithms and in general terms through information and communication conditions which the digital age has brought with it.

This paper aims to explore the ways in which decision-makers generally perceive digitisation in their role and how they assess algorithmisation. It should also provide information about the extent to which the informational and communication conditions of the digital world can have a beneficial or detrimental effect where the reflective actions of the stakeholders are concerned. To this end, I will hold discussions with 33 Swiss decision-makers from the fields of politics, business, public administration and science as well as with representatives from the media industry and IT specialists.
Lina Dencik. Approaches to data justice: Examining datafication from the perspective of social justice

Abstract: As more and more social activity and human behaviour is being turned into data points that can be tracked, collected and analysed, we are seeing the advancement of new forms of decision-making and governance. This speaks to a significant transformation in how our society is organized and the ways in which we are able to participate in it. Whilst much debate on this datafication of society has focused on the need for efficient and supposedly more objective responses to social problems on the one hand and a concern with individual privacy and the protection of personal data on the other, it is becoming increasingly clear that we need a broader framework for understanding these developments. This is one that can account for the disparities in how different people might be implicated and that recognizes that the shift to data-driven economies is not merely technical. In this presentation I will advance a research framework for studying datafication that is rooted in a broader concern for social justice. Such a framework, referred to here as ‘data justice’, pays particular attention to the ways in which data processes are uneven, can and do discriminate, create new social stratifications of ‘have’ and ‘have nots’, and advance a particular politics based on a logic of prediction and preemption that caters to certain interests over others. I outline a number of different ways in which such a framework can be operationalized, looking across questions of political theory, policy interventions, civil society activity, and developments in design and infrastructure. In doing so, I will advance an alternative approach to understanding and examining the societal implications of datafication than what has been the dominant approach so far.

Tim de Winkel and Maranke Wieringa. The politician as editor-in-chief: News distribution on social media by candidates for the 2017 election for the Dutch house of representatives

Abstract: Months after the Brexit referendum and the presidential elections of the USA, with claims about fake news and the self-affirming effect of filter bubbles mainstream, an awareness of the dangers of using social media as news media has forced its way in the public and academic debate. The Dutch Association of Editors-in-chief commissioned a research that was to determine if the traditional media were still relevant in the democratic process. The research focuses on the dispersion of news by politicians to their constituents while they were campaigning for the Dutch 2017 election of the House of Representatives. With both quantitative and qualitative methods we analyzed how aspiring politicians referred to media (content). In doing so, we investigated if the traditional media maintains their Fourth Estate role online.

Our first conclusion was that media references and retweet networks showed that traditional media play a central role in the election context. They were referred to by candidates from the entire political spectrum. While retweet cartels were found, filter bubbles were not present, although we did find a separate media sphere shared by ‘new right’ parties. Second, within the various media referred to by the politicians, we saw a ‘long tail effect’. A small number of titles was very popular, but most of these were small brands limited to a specific region or interest. Thirdly, this implicates that content of traditional media is placed next to content from a media platform which does not necessarily uphold journalistic values. The content is taken from its context, and inserted into a new one: the politician’s social media profile/page. Finally, we saw that this decontextualisation combined with ‘cherry picking’ leads to framing that leaves the traditional media vulnerable online. Traditionally the media were gatekeepers of news, today politicians seem to be gatekeepers of the media.
Mark Dunford. The democratic deficit in Digital Storytelling

Abstract: This presentation explores the commissioning, production and distribution of Digital Storytelling made as collaborations between academics, practitioners and community groups. Digital Storytelling is defined as a workshop based process where participants gain the skills and knowledge needed to tell a personal story using their own words and imagery.

The development of new forms of media activity enabled by digitalization led directly to new modes of community-based media which, in turn, created spaces for practitioners that emphasized the importance of production and empowered the voice of the participant. This presentation draws on Couldry’s (2010) concepts of voice to argue that the opportunity for new voices to speak and be heard through Digital Storytelling has not necessarily led to an increased mutual awareness so the new intensities of production is yet to be matched by a comparable listening experience.

Scant attention has been paid to the growing mass of individual Digital Stories that remain little more than unconnected dots of digital data rather than an archival resource. Stories are too often treated as isolated discrete events and are rarely collated so they can be seen as qualitative data capable of providing insights into issues beyond the immediate. This can suit practitioners who are able to avoid confronting complex ethical issues around the commissioning and subsequent repurposing of data in a way that might address questions that may be far removed from the original workshop. Democratic potential is lost.

The relatively modest ambitions of many Digital Storytelling practitioners mean these complex issues around distribution are too often resolved on a localized basis so the work remains small scale. Processes of institutional mediation in Digital Storytelling favour the small-scale fleet of foot facilitator moving from one well-intentioned civic engagement to the next, which too often condemns Digital Storytelling to modest outcomes.

Anamaria Dutceac Segesten and Michael Bossetta. Civic deliberation and public contestation on Facebook: The case of Brexit

Abstract: Political actors increasingly turn to Facebook for campaigning, thus opening up this digital platform as a public space for deliberation and contestation around issues of public concern. Using digital trace data from the 2016 “Brexit” referendum, we assess the deliberative patterns of citizens’ communication in Facebook comments throughout the campaign. In doing so, we reappraise traditional understandings of deliberative democracy, adapting it to digital public spheres. We conceptualize deliberation as non-coercive, factual, and respectful dialogue, whereas contestation refers to critical, deceitful, and aggressive charges against someone supporting an opposite point of view.

Using the specially developed Vox Populi application, we collect Facebook comments during the period September 2015 – September 2016 from the public pages of the three largest campaigns in the British referendum. The two official campaigns, as declared by the UK electoral commission, were Stronger In and Vote Leave, with the third, unofficial one being Leave EU. Notably, preliminary data about Leave EU shows that, although not an official campaign, it generated the highest Facebook engagement and therefore represents a challenge to officially sanctioned campaign practices. Our research questions are: What explains the deliberation and contestation patterns within citizens’ Facebook comments across the three campaigns? Which of the three campaigns is the most deliberative?
We design a measure of deliberation that combines quantitative behavioral data (such as the frequency of comments by users, the intensity of reply exchanges, and the length of comments) and content analysis via machine learning (distinguishing between deliberative and contesting comments). We expect to find that the officially designated campaigns will be more deliberative than the unofficial challenger campaign, which will be more similar to an echo chamber and characterized by homophily. We also expect that the highly active Leave EU supporters will affect the deliberation patterns of comments to two official campaigns.

Maria Eriksson. In search of musical identities - The history and politics of audio fingerprints

Abstract: This paper outlines the historical and political development of audio fingerprints; an algorithmic solution to the problem of making computers 'sense', 'identify', and 'listen to' music. Audio fingerprint technologies provide fast methods for identifying and tracing digital sound recordings and are currently implemented on major platforms like Facebook and YouTube as tools for digital rights management. But despite their ubiquity, the history of audio fingerprint technologies largely remains to be written. What cultural and political ideas have supported the development of the audio fingerprints and shaped their affordances? How does audio fingerprints help sort, evaluate and monitor the distribution of media content? And in what ways are audio fingerprints mobilized as tools of categorization and control?

In answering these questions, I suggest that audio fingerprints can be explored in relation to the deployment of human fingerprint technologies within the criminal justice system, since both appeared as technologies that separated good from evil, rendered unstable and uncertain identities stable, and offered an objective, mechanic, efficient, and scalable method for curbing mobility (the identity and mobility of migrants and colonial subjects in one case, and digital music files in other). In this paper I outline these relationships and reflect on the role of audio fingerprint technologies as an example of algorithmically aided surveillance and data processing. I also briefly discuss how audio fingerprint technologies have migrated beyond the sphere of music and into U.S. police departments (and their implementation of urban ‘gun aware devices’), as well as European migrant offices (and their efforts to determine the ‘true’ origins of asylum seekers); two examples that show how software technologies developed in the sphere of mainstream media may morph and have crucial impacts on democratic rights.

Sarah Eskens, Natali Helberger and Judith Möller. Challenged by news personalization: Five perspectives on the right to receive information

Abstract: Since the introduction of digital recommender technologies and the increasing importance of social media for news, news consumers more and more receive personalized news (Thurman and Schifferes, 2012). News personalization relies on data collected about news consumers, who are profiled while they read and engage with online news.

This change in the way people receive news challenges their right to receive information, guaranteed by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. European media law and policy presumes that protecting the media’s freedom to impart information suffices to ensure the public’s right to receive information. But with personalized news, algorithms that focus on simplistic accounts of people’s interests and on increasing engagement determine what news people receive,
instead of editors that uphold journalistic values and are dedicated to the public sphere. Next to that, social media and other third parties increasingly shape the environment in which people receive the news.

The question becomes how news personalization affects news consumers’ right to receive information. However, this fundamental right is undertheorized, in so far it is not understood as a right to receive state-held information or personal information. Therefore, this paper develops five perspectives on the right to receive information. The paper analyses case law of the European Court of Human Rights and media policy from the Council of Europe, which leads to the perspectives of political participation, truth finding, social cohesion, avoidance of censorship, and self-development. Using these perspectives, the paper then thinks through the positive and negative effects of news personalization on the right to receive information. The research also demonstrates that the right to receive information covers multiple valuable goals of news reception, beyond mere political goals.

Raul Ferrer Conill. The metricated news media: Journalistic intuition meets informed decisions

Abstract: Journalistic intuition or “nose for news” is often credited as one of the characteristics that allow journalists to conduct their work. The tradition of legitimizing newswork and practice through a set of skills helped develop the professionalization of the journalistic profession. The digitization of news, in terms of both practice and output, have resulted in the quantification of journalistic reception via metrics, which in turn also quantifies production. Current literature suggests that such a development is partly responsible for the creation of filter bubbles and the increasing polarization of political ideologies in Western democracies.

This paper aims to explicate the process by which metrics have gained an important role in the newsroom and how journalists negotiate their editorial decisions between their journalistic intuition and the metrics and analytics that quantify and visualize readers’ behavior. Methodologically, the paper draws its data from a set of 60 in-depth interviews with various newsworkers in four different publication: The Guardian, Al Jazeera, Times of India, and Bleacher/Report. The results show two major findings. First, metrics have become central to the newsroom operation, generating a “metricated mindset” and a “desire for numbers” among journalists. Second, journalists negotiate internally between the information obtained by their metrics and their journalistic intuition in order to make editorial decisions. This has potential implications for the way in which citizens inform themselves and the processes that shape political engagement.

The paper contributes to a growing literature that concerns itself with the pervasiveness of metrics and quantification of journalistic processes, by conceptualizing metrics of reader engagement as an extension of metrics of journalistic practice.

Inaki Garcia-Blanco and Lucy Bennett. Crushing the Saboteurs?: Letters to the editor and citizens’ understanding of the 2017 General Election

Abstract: On the 18th April 2017, Theresa May called a General Election to be held on the 8th June. This election constitutes yet another episode in the most convulsive year in British recent history. Instead of settling the European question for once and all, the EU referendum and its cutthroat, divisive campaign opened a period of political uncertainty which is still ongoing. In addition to the leadership crises in the country's two major parties, the issues of immigration, economic stability, access to markets, sovereignty, and security have been intensely debated by citizens and their representatives, and no political consensus has been reached yet. Presented by the PM as a necessary move to unite Westminster around Brexit, the General Election 2017 has been constructed as an attempt to ‘crush the saboteurs’ (Daily Mail, 19 May 2017), or to give Theresa May the mandate she needs to negotiate Brexit in her own terms.

It could be argued that citizens should play a central role during electoral campaigns. Through a content analysis of relevant letters to the editor in the British national press, this project examines citizens’ views about the election, the political context in the country, the main policy issues, as well as their views on the process of exiting the EU. The project specifically focuses on the relevant letters published since the election was called in April until polling day.
Niko Hatakka. Expose, debunk, ridicule, resist! Networked civic surveillance and monitoring of nationalist-populist and far-right online action in Finland and Sweden

Abstract: The study analyzes networked civic resistance targeting the rise of right-wing populist online action in Finland and Sweden. In both countries, online environments have provided vital counterpublics for the emancipation of anti-immigration rhetoric and electorally successful political movements striving to limit immigration. Especially the Finns Party and the Sweden Democrats have extensively utilized online platforms and emergent networked anti-immigration movements’ resources for their electoral benefit. Simultaneously, we’ve been able to witness the organization of both Swedish and Finnish online communities and networks of concerned citizens dedicated to opposing these parties’ and affiliated partners’ rhetoric and policies. This study focuses on two largest anti-racist online communities in the two countries, the Swedish Expo and the Finnish RASMUS. Based on qualitative textual analyses of the discussion on the Expo and Rasmus Facebook pages and quantitative content analyses of the pages’ metadata, the study first aims to reveal what kind of online manifestations of xenophobia do these anti-racist networked communities try oppose, and what kind of means of action and discursive strategies are they using in doing so. Secondly, the study provides an analysis of how these online anti-racist activities are perceived within nationalist-populist (and far-right) online communities. This is done by analyzing discussions pertaining to online anti-racist action from the Facebook-pages of the largest “immigration-critical” alternative media and anti-immigration civic movements in both countries. Preliminary results suggest that online anti-racist communities have potential in monitoring far-right online action especially by laying-ground for further journalistic investigation. Even though the inherent visibility of controversial online action has made far-right action susceptible to scrutiny, it is unclear whether this diminishes the appeal of far-right online actors or provides them with visibility and discursive fuel for identity-building.

Jockum Hildén. Bursting filter bubbles: Content recommender systems and public service goals

Abstract: Netflix has left a permanent mark on European commercial and public service media. News reports on the advanced data mining practices surrounding the creation of the hit series “House of Cards” and Netflix’s outspoken goal of creating the most accurate predictions of what people want to see have created so much buzz that virtually all media companies are racing to create personalized recommender systems. For public service media, the question is not only about increasing ratings and user engagement, but about fulfilling the public service mission. Concerns have been raised over how recommender systems are contributing to the polarization of society and the creation of informational echo chambers, the opposite of what public service media sets out to achieve.

This paper presents the results from interviews with representatives at seven European Public Service Media companies who have employed various recommender systems as part of their online offering. The results indicate that the digital management and data scientists employed at the PSM companies are highly aware of their public service mission and are using recommender systems to create more diversity, not less. In contrast to more theoretical accounts on the concept of exposure diversity, this study presents how diversity goals are accomplished in practice using different types of algorithms and configurations. There are still, however, some unanswered questions regarding how diversity can be measured in terms of online analytics and the ethics of nudging users towards more diverse content.
Arne Hintz and Lina Dencik. From Digital to Datafied Citizenship

Abstract: With the emergence of digital technologies, early reflections on new forms of digital citizenship emphasized its empowering nature and suggested a shift towards enhanced agency by citizens and a democratizing trend in state-citizen relations. However, in the era of ‘datafication’, we can observe an opposing trend that complicates this understanding of citizenship.

As advancements in the Internet of Things, smart devices and the platform economy have become centred on the ability to generate, collect and analyse massive amounts of data, the exploitation of the new resource of ‘big data’ has become a key factor for both economic success and political control. The processing of data and data-driven decision-making – from predictive policing to social data scores – is now central to contemporary forms of governance. In this presentation we will trace this shift and consider its implications. We ask:

- How can we understand citizenship in an age defined by data collection and processing?
- What are challenges for digital citizenship and what concepts and strategies are needed to address these challenges?

We conceptualise the shift from digital to datafied citizenship as one in which enactments of citizenship are simultaneously monitored, profiled, categorised and scored, and in which the data collectors, rather than the data producers, are empowered. In this, our data traces define our citizenship, position us in society, and grant identities on terms we may not recognise or even know about. We argue that the techno-legal focus of established responses to datafication is insufficient and outline an agenda for social justice in the era of datafication.

The paper is based on findings from a 2-year research project on infrastructures, policies, and public understandings of digital citizenship in a post-Snowden era, and on emerging research on data scores at Cardiff University’s ‘Data Justice Lab’.

Elena Johansson. Swedish government communication in social media: a press-secretary mediated channel?

Abstract: Technological development has led to the emergence of plenty (new) media channels, raised their capacities, increased media content, and reshaped the nature of communication. All of this has accordingly transformed media systems toward hybridization. In the modern hybrid media systems, older and newer media forms interact, interweave and compete with each other. Thus, government communication has also undergone changes. Effective responses to this revolution could be branding, a strategy based on increased control, simplicity and consistency.

This case study concerns Swedish government communication strategies in social media (Facebook and Twitter). The analysis of Swedish ministers’ representation in the social media demonstrates that they usually have comparable communicative styles for Facebook and Twitter with certain specificities. Their communication is mostly top-down and restricts feedback options. However, this restriction takes different forms for Facebook and for Twitter. This paper looks on both regularities and specificities.

Branding is one of the most obvious purposes of this communicative strategy. Following the branding strategy, the ministers try to split private and work-related matters in social media. However, Twitter appears more personal while Facebook is more “formal” and channel and suggests an idea to centralized management system regarding social media. There is a clear evidence that some ministers prefer to charge their social media profiles to the staffers.

This result shows a role of press secretaries in government communication in social media: Face-
book appears to be a press-secretary mediated channel while Twitter can be defined as press-secretary promoted channel. This finding has implications for existing research on communicative practices in social media relating to government and political communications.

**Wen Jiayuan. Differential modes of political information seeking: a cluster analysis of online political participation in China**

**Abstract:** In an authoritarian society such as China, there are few means available for young people to participate in politics. The advent of the Internet gives them the access to acquire political information that makes this kind of behavior the most widely form of citizen online political participation in China. This paper is trying to answer this question: facing Chinese governments’ strict control of political information, under the circumstance of numerous political information that is hard to distinguish true from false spread in a variety of media, such as Sina Weibo, Wechat, how do Chinese young people use Internet to seek for political information. It addresses the question with data from the questionnaire survey conducted in a university in a well-developed coastal city in China. Through a cluster analysis, this paper differentiates three types of young people using Internet seeking for political information: inside the wall mode; outside the wall mode; mixed mode. Then it uses multinomial logistic regression to examine the “political trust” and “political discussion intention” of participants in each mode and compare among the modes. The study shows that young people whose political information seeking behavior belong to the “outside the wall” mode have the lowest level of political trust and the highest intention of political discussion.

**Ekaterina Kalinina. Memory in the age of Big Data**

**Abstract:** While some believe that memory only preserves knowledge but doesn’t produce it, others insist that human knowledge depends on and resides within memory, making the process of remembering the first step to the new knowledge production. However, memory is imperfect and does not always stand on historical fact-based critique, being subject to the conditions of the present moment. Data-driven approach might radically change our understanding of memory as a faculty and sphere of knowledge-production since what we remember is conditioned by data, which in turn is often outside of our control. Is this data that we not only have limited control of but to which we are also the last ones to get access to, forms our cultural and social memory Abbey Smith Rumsey (2016) writes that data storage is not memory, because memory requires selecting what is important and forgetting the rest, while importance and value are conditioned by social, emotional and political contexts. In this case in the age of the big data, what can we account as memory if everything that we do is tracked, recorded and stored? Who has the right to value what should be remembered and what should be forgotten? How and who determines the value of data that is to become memory? If the preservation of memory is outsourced and located in the hands of commercial corporations, how can we ensure that what is preserved is determined by what we value and not entirely motivated by economic and political reasoning of the corporate and political actors?

Against this background, the text explores whether it is possible to talk about changes of memory paradigm that goes beyond discussions of digitisation of memory and digital memory and raises the question of knowledge production by exploring epistemology of memory through analysis of digital archives.
Anne Kaun and Julia Velkova. Opening the black box: challenging algorithms

Abstract: In recent years we have witnessed an escalation of fears related to the rise of algorithmic governmentality in highly digitalised societies. Some of the major concerns lauded by scholars, journalists, and citizens alike revolve around the isolation of the digital public spheres through social fragmentation generated by algorithmic logics; the reproduction of biases against race, gender and class in machine learning; and the suppression of ethics in favour of commercial logics based on politics of satisfaction and normalisation of the average. Most of these concerns emanate from an assumption of algorithms as “black boxes” (Pasquale) that causes a crisis of knowing of and acting on the all-more pervasive algorithmic logics of control.

This paper sees a need to reframe the scholarly and public debate around these issues and to reassert the agential and political capacities of media users, demystifying the black box and with it reducing the sense of fear of algorithmic governmentality. It formulates three propositions for how to do so.

First, following Bucher (2016), the paper argues for an epistemological reframing based on destabilising the focus on the technicality of algorithms and shifting attention on their embeddedness in practice. Second, when moving to practice, it prompts the need to re-emphasise the capacities of everyday media users for changing and challenging the algorithms, and offers an empirical example of how this can be done through media practice, not through code. Third, theoretical work on repair and algorithmic labor (Jackson 2014; Bilić 2016) is further helpful to consider the instability and impermanence of machine learning and algorithmically constructed governance by highlighting the processes of human maintenance, disruption, decay and decommissioning of algorithms. Altogether, these three propositions aim to create a renewed framework for theoretical and empirical enquiry that proposes more hopeful paths of managing the machinic.

Sule Karatas Ozaydin and Mutlu Binark. Data Ethics Policy in Social Science Research in Turkey: Gathering Data from Social Media

Abstract: In Turkey, recently the research on social media, which falls into the scope of social science, has been conducted primarily by collecting data produced by users in the interface. In this research project, it is assumed that there are some problems about data gathering from social media for the social science research. These problems can be listed as not getting users’ consent, not anonymizing users and using their personal data, using and sharing data for purposes out of context, not being sure about the real owner of data, transparency problems in the use of data, data matching and surveillance etc. This study aims to reveal whether there is a data ethics policy in social science research in Turkey and whether such a policy is applied to data gathering from social media. This study covers two stages. First stage is in-depth interview with experts to discuss the themes and problems obtained from literature review. Secondly, based on literature review and the findings obtained from the in-depth interviews, the current situation, the problems and the suggestions are presented. As a result of this research project, these ethical problems found in social media researches conducted in Turkey; the lack of policy about personal data protection, the lack of ethical regulation about social media researches, not using informed consent form while gathering personal data from social media, reutilizing of data, data ownership. In the last instance this study emphasizes the importance of self-reflexivity of researcher in obtaining research ethics.
**Abstract:** Data science is the study and application of data to inform decision-making, often in the belief that it can improve outcomes. However, data is not neutral and outcomes depend on what data is being used, how it is gathered, who is making the decision, why they are making the decision, who the decision is being made about and who else may be affected, issues which lie at the core of big data and algorithmic culture debates (Kitchin, 2014).

Despite a visible increase in discourses about applied ethics in media and in data science, the public discourse has tended to focus on the legal and policy implications, especially around privacy and security (Kosinski et al., 2013.). Recent public surveys of attitudes to data science reflect these concerns (e.g. Royal Society 2016). Furthermore, industry surveys note that data science can also introduce new digital, social and political inequalities (Rainie & Andersen, 2017).

To date there has been little exploration of the practices of data science workers and how they negotiate ethical challenges in the day-to-day work of prototyping, design, collection, storage, processing/cleaning, analysis and use of data. Existing research highlights the contextual nature of the ethical concerns raised in practice (Kennedy, 2016, Turow, 2012). Other studies show that data ethics are a concern for workers who are not traditionally classed as data scientists, for example user experience designers (Dove et al, 2017).

This paper explores public discourses on ethics and data science and asks who is expressing concern about which issues. The analysis then draws upon case studies in digital games and mHealth to explore ethical tensions in practice and the agency of data science workers to act in the complex production and consumption contexts of digital services. It concludes with a reflection in light of applied and media ethics (Couldry, 2012).
(1992) terminology. Third, the study highlights the role of affect, as a potential means for users’ (counter)action. Lastly, several repertoires of user agency are discussed, ranging from the use of built-in tools for expressing discontent (e.g. “reporting” ads) to acts of “data obfuscation” and even attempts to “reverse engineer” the algorithmic logic in order to understand and control it.

Oguz Kus. Exploring Refugee Crisis and Hate-speech with Social Media Data: An Analysis via Text Mining on RT Facebook Fan Page

Abstract: Movement of refugees across the continents mostly was defined as a crisis by media organizations and politicians. Consequently, an increase can be observed in anti-refugee attitudes and hate speech on social networks. Especially, news which is distributed on social networks by news organizations has been a platform for circulation of hate speech since social network platforms allow users to write comments under posts. Within the scope of this study, background information on ‘refugee crisis’ and hate speech literature is reviewed and digital hate speech issue is discussed. Research phase follows the literature review. The data for the study is collected from the Facebook fan page of the news site called RT (fb.com/pg/rtnews). Because, similar research was conducted on Al Jazeera English’s Facebook fan page and BBC World Service’s Facebook fan page previously and it is highly desired for us to compare results from the different news sites from different countries.

All posts shared on RT Facebook fan page between 26.12.2015-26.12.2016 is collected. Posts which includes the term “refugee” “migrant” “immigrant” in their caption is chosen and categorized thematically (e.g.politic decisions on refugees, personal refugee stories). After this process, all numeric data (e.g.share count, like count) about news is fetched and the most disseminated news themes are identified based on numeric data. Soonafter, all user comments which are written under these posts are fetched and evaluated as positive/negative via sentiment analysis algorithm. This research adopts content analysis approach and integrating text mining algorithms with this process.

In addition, this study aims to contribute to digital communication studies with its interdisciplinary perspective by using new analysis methods such as text mining.

Salla-Maaria Laaksonen. Totems of data: performativity and social power of data in analytics companies

Abstract: Data, in its many forms, has become a central feature of our everyday from personal life to organizations. This paper conceptualizes data as part of the technological unconscious (Thrift, 2005) and argues that data does not only represent and abstract (social) action, but also plays a performative role in social situations within organizations and in the process of organizing. Theoretically, this study bridges STS studies, actor-network theory in particular, with organization studies, by looking at the ways how material/technological factors interact with the human/social factors in an organizational setting.

Empirically, this paper builds on ethnographic field notes and thematic interviews, collected during intensive participatory observation periods in two small organizations working with social media data analytics, a business area enabled by datafication (cf. Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier 2013; Van Dijck, 2014). This setting allowed for observing and tracing how social media data travels through the organization.
The economic leveraging of the proceeds of datafication are well-known realisations of today's capitalism in the digital. According to critics (e.g. Zuboff 2015), decisions on data are made unilaterally by companies that are well-positioned to amass data and have the resources and capabilities to monetize them through behavioral prediction and modification, while citizens lack meaningful possibilities to participate.

Based on data collected in a recent conference (MyData 2016), we investigate a social movement around 'human centric personal data', which draws together technology initiatives aiming to provide people control to data. This appears to resonate with critical analyses on datafication, promoting alternatives for the established rules and practices of the digital economy. Due to the work-in-progress stage of technological development, we approach ‘human centric personal data’ as a watershed utopia (Flichy 2007): an understanding of a preferred state of the world that accommodates potentially contradictory technological projects.

To investigate the movement forming under this utopia, we employ the concept of emerging strategic action field (Fligstein & McAdam 2012), the purpose of which is loosely defined, rules open to interpretation, and positions up for grabs. We expect actors to act strategically, shaping the field to serve their ends by creating shared meanings and inducing cooperation. Empirically, we analyze presentations given in the conference to identify the collective action frames (Benford & Snow 2011) that actors use to diagnose problems, propose solutions, and motivate action.

Our results show the movement shares an understanding of providing citizens agency towards data through technological interventions, coupled with moral justification built on individual rights. The urgency to exhibit viable business models evidenced data subjectivities were also means for new economic opportunities. Major tensions concerned the nature of individual rights: economic or fundamental; and the movement’s relationship to dominant actors of digital economy: cooperation or resistance.
João Carlos Magalhães. The ambiguous consequences of perceiving algorithmic bubbles to political subjectivity: Evidence from the Brazilian political crisis

Abstract: While much has been said about whether social media platforms create or not “algorithmic bubbles”, allegedly eroding diversity of expression and boosting polarisation, there is little evidence on how the perception of these bubbles affect the construction of citizens’ political subjectivity. This paper addresses this problem by analysing 48 interviews with Brazilian “ordinary” individuals (i.e., neither politicians nor professional activists) who started, or intensified, their political activity on Facebook during the current political crisis in that country, initiated in 2013. Data analysis indicates that the perception of ideological bubbles is rather common and has an ambiguous effect on their feeling of political recognition, a key element of their political subjectivity. Using Axel Honneth’s theory on recognition as an analytical framework, I demonstrate that while many people think that their political voice is not respected because they feel unable to reach and convince people that are outside of their bubbles, others think of their bubbles as networks of political solidarity and love in an environment full of hatred towards political “others”. Not rarely, these ambivalent feelings are reported by the same individual. My findings at the same time contradict and enrich what is known about algorithmic bubbles. First, they point to how these bubbles might produce normatively positive political effects. Second, they indicate that people might have relatively solid ideas about algorithmic bubbles – and then resent the limitations imposed by them. Third, and fundamentally, they demonstrate that these bubbles’ “objective” existence (the main object of contention in the present literature) accounts for only one dimension of their political significance. Individuals’ perceptions of them also play a key, but so far under-researched, role.

Vincent Manzerolle and Leslie Meier. The Music Industries, Data Capture, and Digital Infrastructure: Emerging Commercial, Promotional, and Ecological Logics

Abstract: The music industries’ digital transformation has given rise to a series of new dependencies. Record companies and music publishers have become increasingly reliant on information technology (IT) companies to provide digital platforms for distributing music, and on promotional partnerships with consumer brands as a means of generating licensing revenue and marketing exposure for recording artists. More broadly, the popularization of music downloads and streaming has entrenched companies’ and users’ dependence on fossil fuels and energy companies, due to the resource intensiveness of powering cloud computing, data centres, and mobile technology. Under new music distribution and monetization strategies, access is funneled through digital platforms/interfaces and consumer data is positioned as the new currency. Thus, the circulation and consumption of music is placing considerable emphasis on a relatively new digital infrastructure, including data servers, software applications, and algorithmic personalization.

In this paper, we discuss four cases that illustrate key commercial, promotional, and ecological logics at work in the digital music industries. By critically examining business partnerships and associated album releases engineered by Samsung and Jay Z in 2013, Apple iTunes and U2 in 2014, Tidal and Kanye West in 2016, and Apple Music and Drake in 2017, we unpack the ways that promotional ‘data events’ were used to enable data capture. We see changes in the music industries as symptomatic of wider shifts across the cultural industries: digital platforms are becoming key gatekeepers for controlling access to content, and an attendant form of ‘platform capitalism’ is deepening the power of a ‘big tech’ oligopoly (Apple, Amazon, and Google). Through analysis of trade press, media commentary, and environmental reports released by corporations, industry associations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), we shed light on the concerning infrastructural demands and ecological implications of the restructuring of the music industries along the logic of platform capitalism.
Tim Markham. Big data and political subjectivity: in defence of subjective discontinuity and ambivalence

Abstract: Interpellation (Butler, 1996) refers to the calling forth or incitement of individuals to enact prescribed performances of selfhood that are judged according to criteria over which that individual has no say. Recently (Van Zoonen, 2013) this perspective has been applied to the colonising logic underpinning consumerism – that while you’re presented with endless choices, you’ve no choice but to present as a consumer. In the age of big data it is argued that the sheer proliferation of coercive subjectivation is democratically damaging insofar as, first, it obviates the possibility of meaningful consent and, second, it comprises so many incited performances as to render the notion of a stable, autonomous self unviable (Gunkel, 2016). But as with demography, categorisation through datafication matters politically because it establishes norms against which you will come to be judged (and judge yourself) in a way that feels increasingly natural (Foucault, 1980). It doesn’t follow that the demographer is interested in controlling you individually. Algorithms too operate at the level of populations, and this means that their relation to political subjectivity cannot be seen as one of simple threat. This paper begins from the proposition that political subjectivity does not consist in the expression of one’s core identity in an established public space, and nor is it clinched in decisive moments like elections or arrests. Instead it consists in discontinuous, inconsistent and ambivalent practices of thinking, talking and acting that for the most part do not look obviously political at all. The upshot is that big data cannot call one forth fully formed and deeply implicated in its reductive logics, and nor does it threaten an otherwise inviolate self. There are specific risks of datafication encroaching on different aspects of our lives, but there's more to political subjectivation than can be condensed by cultures of datafication.


Abstract: Big Data influence on our lives has become undeniable, but the question is: are we aware of it? One interesting sociological approach is to question the consequences of Big Data on digital activists committed to the transmission of information on a daily life basis. Are they impacted by such phenomenons? How do they manage to get in touch with the mainstream and have people aware of the actual scale of Big Data?

This proposal aims at putting forward an ongoing empirical research dealing with this issue from a particular angle: the influence of Edward Snowden’s message upon a corpus of French digital activist organizations acting within the subcultural fields of cyber-alternatives and popular education. Snowden revealed what they suspected. He triggered a global indignation – regarding the scale of Internet data collection and its hidden purposes – that resulted in hundreds of local initiatives all around the world. Although the French organizations studied in the corpus feared mass-surveillance, they could hardly share their concern with non-activist Internet users. Then, as Snowden pointed at the power of Big Data as a tool in favor of mass-surveillance, their former isolated suspicions suddenly became awareness. Their subcultural struggles could finally rely on facts that might ring the bell thanks to mass-media coverage and meet the mainstream.

We are currently leading an investigation on the field among the French digital activism network – sticking to comprehensive and qualitative sociological frameworks. The current partial results have put forward precise information and activism processes that are meant to put into perspective the notion of digital democracy through particular forms of political commitment related to the Big Data phenomenon, and thus to enlighten the following hypothesis: the notion of awareness, relying on Snowden’s mass covered warnings, have redefined digital activism’s communication strategies among the mainstream Internet sphere.
**Johanna Möller and Bjoern von Rimscha. (De)Centralization of the Global Informational Ecosystem**

**Abstract:** Centralization and decentralization are key notions in debates on the (anti)democratic character of digital societies. Centralization is understood as the control over communication and data flows, decentralization as giving it (back) to the users (Mathew, 2015). Communication and media research focuses on centralization put forward by digital media giants Facebook and Google and governments as well as on decentralization potentials in civil society, in particular privacy lobbyism, hacktivism, (encryption) technologies or grass-root technology movements. Based on qualitative interviews with leading media managers, we intend to broaden this perspective by investigating (de)centralization strategies applied by traditional media companies.

Traditional media companies, meaning those corporations whose business models are not built on technology in the first place, have “frenemy” relationships with Facebook and Google. Digital media giants provide them with various opportunities to increase visibility of their media products. To a considerable extent, they are also role models regarding economies of scale. Yet, delegating distribution can have negative implication, i.e. regarding control over income through advertisement. As the formerly nationally oriented companies now compete with global media giants, they share some interests with civil society decentralization agents. Amongst others, their interest is in the development of alternative digital infrastructures, making sure that users will access their media products via their platforms.

Theoretically, this perspective on traditional media companies as “agents of (de)centralization” expands (de)centralization research beyond digital infrastructures. As content distribution is implied, we speak of the (de)centralization of the “global informational ecosystem” (Birkinbine et al., 2017). We provide a three-dimensional framework to empirically investigate (de)centralization. From digital society research we borrow the (de)centralization of data as well as the (de)centralization of formats. From media business research, we lend the (de)centralization of content distribution. These three dimensions are applied in a qualitative analysis of the business strategies of 27 traditional media companies.

**Nahema Nascimento. Secrecy in Simmel: revisiting a classic as a possibility of resistance against total information awareness**

**Abstract:** This work proposes revisiting, in exploratory terms, the notion of secrecy as developed by the German sociologist Georg Simmel in “The Secret and The Secret Society”, originally published in English in 1906. The proposed reinterpretation of Simmel’s contribution to the sociology of information aims at understanding issues related to the notion of privacy and provoking a debate on the emergence and development of digital information and communication technologies (such as the Internet). In addition, this work intends to describe the available practices of resistance against the deepening of surveillance in Latin America, which has characterized the passage from “disciplinary society” to the “society of control”. For this purpose, it is assumed that confidentiality is the basis of reciprocal social relations and is therefore closely related to the process of forming of the modern individual. The social interaction between individuals is based on information exchange, and that entails a minimal knowledge of the other individual in order to establish a relationship. However, the secrecy notion changed throughout history, with the process of modernization. If there is no such thing as 100% security or confidentiality on the Internet, then in turn social life would become unviable in a 100% transparent society. Therefore, this work intends to explore how certain personal privacy and/or data protection can be configured as arrangements of social measures against the power of surveillance in the possession of capitalism or governments. Last but not least, it is also necessary to clarify which social groups or classes are benefited or harmed by privacy or transparency, respectively.
Christina Neumayer and Luca Rossi. Can computers see riots? The algorithmic
detection of violence in images of protest

Abstract: This research provides insights into the detection of violence in protest through image
recognition technologies and discusses the resulting challenges for activist communication in social
media. The proposed paper presents the third phase of an analysis of Twitter data collected during
the Blockupy Frankfurt action on 15 March 2015. Through a social network analysis of Twitter
communication, the first phase confirmed the relevance of (violent) visual content and observed
the central role of the Frankfurt am Main police account. The second phase identified the
conflictual narratives of police and activists in the most retweeted 1% images tweets (images,
videos). This third phase will compare the results of image recognition technologies (Google vision)
to a manual quantitative coding of the larger sample (n=1119) of image-Tweets in the Blockupy
Frankfurt actions and discuss the results. Google vision incorporates the detection of entities to
filter inappropriate content. Violence is identified as: “[…] pictures depicting killing, shooting, or
blood and gore” (Google 2016). Our research shows that (based on this definition of violence)
images depicting a violent confrontation between activists and police are categorized as “stunt
performance”. Although the algorithm could detect the entity “riot” in these images, it does not
categorize it as protest. That algorithms render protest invisible in a sea of stunt performers, might
create challenges for activists who use social media images tactically for bringing about social
change. Comparing the algorithmic coding to human coding makes visible what is systematically or
unsystematically underrepresented or less likely to be recognized by these techniques. As
algorithmic filtering of images increasingly structures our daily news consumption in social media,
this might have consequences for activists who try to produce public visibility for social change.

Kaarina Nikunen, Jenni Hokka and Reeta Pöyhtäri. Building on inequalities?
Digital data and racialization of social media platforms

Abstract: While advocates of big data research argue that access to large data sets and new quan-
tified methods provide us with more objective and accurate understanding of society, critical re-
search has drawn attention to the discriminatory effects of datafication (Leurs & Shepperd 2017;
Gangadharan 2012). Critical research reminds that large data sets are often biased or inaccurate in
representation of minorities and based on categorizations echoing existing power structures (Ash-
the current economy, however “old forms of prejudice and injustice can be grafted onto these new
tools.”

This paper investigates the discriminatory dimensions of digital data in social media context. It fo-
cuses on the ways in which different social media designs, business models and policies may am-
plify discrimination and racism, described by Ariadna Matamoros-Fernández (2017) as ‘platformed
racism’. The dimensions that are considered to feed racialization include segmentation and sorting
audiences in ways that draw on existing prejudice. In addition the circulation and distribution of
controversial, racist and sexist contents, feeding the ‘liveliness’, often serve the commercial ends of
platforms. While increasing demands are voiced to more effective policy of social media contents,
the companies seem reluctant to apply policies that question the assumed universalist ideals of
free speech and tend to rely more on vague and often arbitrary implementation of policies. The
paper, based on research conducted in a project on racism in the hybrid media system (HYBRA),
discusses the challenges to understand the complexity of discriminatory structures of datafication.
The paper asks how this affects the relevance of social media as a space for deliberation and social
debate. It furthermore introduces different ways in which research and activism have strived to
tackle these challenges of inequality.
Jakub Nowak. Discourse of post-truth in algorithmic culture

Abstract: My paper aims to conceptualize the phenomenon of post-truth as one of the main logics of digital media nowadays and, also, as strictly connected to online visibility, the latter perceived as the essential political resource that is controlled and regulated to a large extent by digital intermediaries.

In particular, my starting point is Michel Foucault’s notion of truth as strongly related to power and subjectivity. By this theoretical approach, I critically analyze post-truth as the key discourse of the institutional apparatus of digital media: Foucault’s concept of institutional apparatus helps to conceptualize digital media as highly complicated, heterogeneous, and irreducible entity comprising discourses, institutions, market agents, practices, architecture forms (here: hardware + software), regulations, and disciplining statements.

Within this theoretical approach, discourse can be conceptualized as institutionalized ‘way of speaking’ about objects that produces the world as it understands it. Then, discourse of post-truth – being the effect of algorithmic culture of digital media – produces the world although it does not understand it. Market-based mechanisms of regulating online visibility may legitimize lies and/or half-truths, when 1) the truth is being voted upon; and 2) we do not know precise rules of these acts of voting as they are an inherent part of market strategies of digital intermediaries. In other words, datafication of online public debate(s) drastically reconfigures ‘the political’ and, on the normative level, democracy in general, begging the question about social responsibility of digital intermediaries in the process.

On the methodological level, I follow Foucault’s idea of discourse analysis understood as investigating particular series of interconnected events, seeking to capture discourse’s regularity, disciplinary power, and limits.

Jean-Louis P. Ntang-Beb. End-to-end encryption: The Death of Preemptive Policing

Abstract: The issue of privacy has been a consistent topic in the United States since the war on terror began in the early 2000s. The government through policies has pushed for more access to communication to track potential terrorist activities and engage in preemptive policing. Today, the discussion around terrorism and hacking have heightened and government agencies need to access more data about citizens and their potential connection to terrorism. The Internet through the usage of smartphones and their mobile applications has taken center stage in people’s lives. Through their Application Programming Interface (API), apps can continuously store and collect data on users including pictures, location information, calls, messaging (SMS) history, and credit card payment info. The purpose of this study is to investigate how policy makers and politicians in the USA are framing WhatsApp end-to-end encryption (E2E) as a threat to national security. This study will provide a comprehensive timeline of the public opinion on digital privacy from the adoption of the US Patriot act to the recent Apple-FBI standoff leading up to WhatsApp E2E. With people creating unprecedented volume of content on a daily basis, who gets to decide what is private and secure? Is it the people, the government or the company itself? In a world where there’s no clear distinction anymore between digital and analog artifacts, the conversation around privacy in the digital space comes down to who owns the data and how they’re using it. The more civilians push for privacy, the more policy makers and civil servants push for more access in the name of security. This is the new dialectic of our era, as we are entering a period where governments will have to explicitly define privacy and security, and how invading one to ensure the other could have the adverse effect.
Abstract: The traumatic event has this peculiar faculty to activate a strong memory experience. The people can exactly know what they did a day when a terror attack happened. There is a collective memory process which is not limited to witnesses nor bystanders. The aim of the project is to analyze live memories on Web 2.0 and study how social links are built under these circumstances. If the traditional media base their work on digital live experiences, it can be worth analyzing how these pieces of memory are reintegrated into a collective storytelling process. The mediatic echo is prevailing in the collection of these pieces of memory. The use of images (iconic forms) / symbols / texts is important to deal with collective trauma. The authorities elaborated specific codes of conduct with an attention to the victims, which includes categories of people more or less concerned by the attacks. Evaluating the traumatic impact is the most difficult task of official authorities. We would like to analyze the collective integration of digital pieces of memory by medias around the terror attacks in Nice. The acceleration of violence, the overflow of images created a feeling of brutality. This is why it is all the more important to question how the authorities react by producing a form of digital resilience. We would like to know whether an official discourse on victims reactivates feelings of solidarity and an identification to the core values of society or if it encourages a form of disruption of the social link (hatred, creation of scapegoat). The social networks will be the main references as you can have an exploration of different connections and transfers of data, information, fake news, feelings of fears. A database constituted of accounts explicitly expressing a feeling or a reaction will be built.

Abstract: This paper examines the dynamics of creative, grassroots responses to right wing populism, and the resurgence of openly xenophobic discourses about migration (Kriesi and Pappas, 2015; Vieten and Poynting, 2016), in a European context. For instance, narratives about the refugee crisis arising from the war in Syria; discourses of national sovereignty; and criticisms of freedom of movement in the EU have become intertwined and muddied in mass media contexts (Miller et al, 2016), resulting in a rise in hate speech (Demos, 2016). However, prominent counter-narratives have also emerged that have contested anti-immigration rhetoric at a grassroots level. Downey and Fenton (2003) have (after Habermas, 1996) described how counter publics can mobilise politically to gain influence in the mass media public sphere, particularly at times of crisis. Online counter-narratives are frequently framed as an instance of this form of mobilisation (Jackson 2016; Rambukanna 2015), what Jackson and Foucault-Wells (2016) have described as hijacking – an attempt to contribute to and correct discursive frames. Despite digital media platforms being criticised for their political limitations – due to economic (e.g. Dean, 2009, 2010) and structural (e.g. Cammaerts 2008) factors – they have nonetheless been seen as a site for the formation of counter-publics and counter-narratives (Cammerts, Mattoni and McCurdy, 2012; Dencik and Leistert, 2015).

This paper examines a key instance of counter-narrative creation, drawing on (big) data from the #StopIslam campaign on Twitter, which gained prominence after the Brussels terror attacks of March 2016. Through identifying the main actors, the networks and the allegiances being forged in these counter narratives, we explore whether these narratives can themselves be appropriated by experts and advocates who claim to speak for Muslims, in ways that reinforce representational inequalities.
Abstract: People increasingly rely on social media for communication purposes and accessing information and news. In the UK, 98% of 16-34 year olds are online of whom 66% use social media, with 96% of those having an account with Facebook. Filtering and recommendation algorithms select and order the messages and news presented to the users to fit what they “like”. Internet services like Facebook and Google do not recognise editorial responsibility arising from this personalisation. However, previous results indicate that young people want to understand algorithmic practices and increase their digital agency.

The aim of this work is to find out young people’s views, experiences and recommendations when interacting with online services that manage users’ taste and shape their online experiences, as online web-media industries do.

We conducted a feasibility study using a methodology called the “UnBias” youth juries, designed to promote civic engagement and provide a democratic and safe space for young people to express their views and concerns about the digital world they want. When analyzing the deliberation process and discussions that took place during the juries, results showed that young people care about their personal data, but were not fully aware of the nature and scale of data sharing (e.g., social media trading with users’ personal data). Algorithms were seen as neutral tools, but concerns were raised about the algorithm purpose and it’s outcome. Preferences about neutrality and personalisation through algorithms were divided depending on the use (e.g., entertainment vs. news). Jurors demand to own their personal data, they want more transparency and more choices and control about the way online industry manage users’ data.

We’ve used these recommendations to feed UK parliamentary inquiries and other governmental consultations that aim to improve national guidelines for Internet service providers.

Abstract: This thesis studies citizen identity in the context of convergence festivals. It investigates how the latent mediation of civic cultures may transform into mediated citizenship. Convergence festivals are hybrids of eventified conferences and transformational festivals that cultivate technology, innovation and knowledge circulation through the design of extraordinary environments. Curated as meetings between formats, genres and disciplines, convergence festivals materialize the knowledge economy including a participatory discourse. As media constitute subjective reality, citizenship is negotiated in and through them. The tension between technology and democratization represents a joint axis. The citizen is perceived as a transforming social category, articulated through a variety of practices that correlate to the contingencies of everyday life. Citizenship is conceptualized as a subjective reality of sense-making agents, negotiated beyond formal politics through competing agencies in everyday life. The employed theory of civic cultures suggests six interrelated dimensions through which citizenship evolves. It frames the study of prompts that provide users with opportunities to identify as citizens. The Swedish festival Gather serves as a case example. By employing a social semiotic multimodal discourse analysis, two published texts designed by Gather are studied as the interface between performativity of text and performance of citizenship. The findings advocate for a widened understanding of citizenship as a cultural practice performed in and through mediated communication. It concludes that convergence festival
are productive junctions of discourse, intertwining democratic values with the cultivation of novelty. Civic discourses converge with such of connectivity and productivity, naturalizing growth and technology as means for social change. Citizen identity is foremost found in prompts for private agency.

**Javier Ruiz-Soler. Twitter as the new Coffee House? The mapping of the European Political Twittersphere and its significance.**

**Abstract:** One of the reasons underpinning the proverbial distance between European Union institutions and European citizens has been attributed by scholars to a communication gap: the lack of a common and public space, where the European demos is able to talk and deliberate common concerns over European affairs.

This article is an explorative approach to Twitter networks of European topics, named as European Political Twittersphere, as a study case of the role of users for active participation and interaction. The purpose of this article is to discern the main characteristics of these networks by using Social Network Analysis and the theoretical framework of Networked Public Sphere.

The paper follows the same approach of previous research mapping online public spheres. However, it is the first time genuine European topics have been taken as a case study extensively. I make use of DMI-TCAT software to gather the data, iGraph in R for the analysis, and Gephi for the visualisation of the networks.

The main conclusions of the research show that topics of European relevance such as #schengen and #ttip although have characteristics of networked public sphere, can be considered more as a public arena. Nevertheless, is easier for civil society and citizens to interact and get attention at the same level than media, institutions and politicians.

The outcomes of this paper are important to understand how a platform such Twitter contributes to a transnational dialogue about relevant European topics inside a European Public Sphere. In addition the paper shows empirical evidence of the normative concept of Networked Public Spheres by Benkler, where individual users play an important role filtering and transmitting information. A role that until now was dominated by big news corporations and political institutions.

**Johan Sandén. Swedish local public servants’ relation to media and their own organization**

**Abstract:** The public service motivation (PSM) and public ethos literature strongly supports that public servants have special values (Perry and Wise 1990). In short, they work for the public good and what’s best for the citizens. It has been made clear that processes of mediatization can result in changes of public servants’ working conditions (Thorbjørnsrud et al 2014), and thereby threat the values of public servants (Salminen and Mäntysalo 2013). One risk is for example that mediatization will make public servants prioritize their own organization and their managements’ concerns, pushing out the public ethos and PSM (Schillemans 2012,). which would be a problem for the democratic system.

The literature on mediatization of public organizations has mainly focused central government administration. However, much of Swedish public services are provided by the local government
level, which provides an argument for studying whether local government public servants values are
related to mediatization. This paper therefore seeks to address if there is a general relation between
mediatizaton and local government public servants’ priorities.

Mediatization is, as readers of this abstract knows, difficult to operationalize and measure, which
may explain the lack of systematic data and knowledge about general patterns. Despite the
difficulties, I use quantitative methods to analyze some measures from a survey that can be used
for operationalizing signs of mediatization and organizational values. Empirically, this paper draw
on data from a survey performed in 2016 among Swedish local government public servants in 50
municipalities.

It seems like individual experiences and attitudes regarding, mediatization, has almost no relation
to public servants attitudes on prioritizing their own organization. Mediatization effects on values of
local public servants are followingly either intangible or non-existing. The challenges with
operationalization and unclear relation between mediatization and public servants values means
that there are reasons to further research this area.

Christian Schwarzenegger. The young, the old, and the data. Generation specific
communication repertoires, critical media use and civic engagement today

Abstract: Brexit, Trump and the alleged wizadry of corporations like Camdbridge Analytica ignited
rampant speculations about social media’s impact on contemporary political processes. A strong
public narrative linked the outcome of said elections to hostility towards the political establishment,
mistrust against traditional media outlets and the influence of Big Data and new media technol-
ogies. Apparently an algorithmic world of alternative facts provided on platforms of an alternative
mainstream, comprising media outlets from Breitbart or Sputnik News, Russia Today and countless
websites in particular national settings had infiltrated the realm of public discourse; allegedly am-
plifying the discontent of older generations while numbing the will to participate and become active
among the younger ones: This narrative suggests a robust link between generational belonging, the
composition of personal communication repertoires, the proliferation of alternative facts providers
and the will for civic engagement and political participation. However, little is known about how the
allegedly “grumpy old” and the “indifferent young” actually make use of (the information provided
on) such alternative fact platforms.

Drawing from 45 media-biographical interviews and ethnographic observation interviews with
people from three different generations we aim to debunk above narrative and investigate in how
far different media and communication repertoires connect to different publics or link to compa-
rable public discourses by different means. Special emphasis in our findings lies on the question
how people from different generations try to critically assess quality and credibility to information
they are confronted with on various platforms, how they define evidence, truth and how they reflect
about the role of algorithms and big data for the information they are confronted with. Based on
these analyses we aim for a better and more nuanced understanding of communication repertoires
and their roles in public connection and political participation in an “age of alternative facts”.
Pernilla Severson. Searching for voice as democratic values in contemporary Swedish web archive initiatives

Abstract: This paper presents initial results from a study of various contemporary web archive initiatives in Sweden. Archives are subjective rather than objective, as well as methods for archiving and tracking and searching and documenting for digital material research (MacNeil & Eastwood, 2017). The purpose of the study is to analyse and distinguish what voices are made present in the web archive initiatives, how digitization matter in this voice-making and how this can be understood in relation to democratic values.

The method is a qualitative content analysis of the web archive initiatives online presence (the archive web site), including both self-decriptions and the site’s affordances. Empirically the material for the analysis consist of the following Swedish national archive initiatives:
1. Kungliga Biblioteket, Sweden’s national library, a national initiative to preserve the cultural heritage of the aftermath;
2. Rättviseförmedlingen, NGO, uses inquiries and dissemination of lists using social media to broaden the selection of competencies;
3. The Center for Business History, a non-profit association with companies as primary members, works to preserve and tell business history;
4. Platsr, Riksantikvarieämbetets site for stories and memories where anyone can contribute;
5. Kringla, collects heritage archives.

These archive initiatives have different aims, different initiators with different interaction and contributing actors, and use different (and more or less visible) archiving methods.

The analysis focuses on voice in the archive, based on Carpentier’s analysis model (2011) for participant-oriented processes. Analysis show variations of values linked to voice where technology directs attention and power to certain “voices” (themes, categories etc). These variations, this diversity, is discussed in relation to resistance and the perspective of how the archive is part of larger public (public voice). The paper concludes with a discussion of these various public voice’s implications in relation to democratic values as universal service, participation and agency.

Lauren Smith, Nik Williams and David McMenemy. Ubiquitous surveillance, the IP Act and implications for freedom of expression in Scotland

Abstract: This paper illustrates how the explosive growth and use of surveillance technologies has implications for intellectual freedom and civic discourse. Reporting on the findings of a study of Scottish writers conducted by the University of Strathclyde and writers’ association Scottish PEN, we discuss the implications of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 and emerging practices of researchers and corporate agencies on freedom of expression.

Our findings indicate that writers are not only worried about surveillance, but actively engage in self-censorship as a result. There is widespread concern about government and corporate surveillance. The majority of participants reported that they were very or somewhat concerned about the UK government’s new law (the IP Act) to collect and analyse data and metadata on e-mails, browsing and other online activity. The majority feel the government’s internet surveillance is an invasion of privacy. Writers reported that increased government surveillance would make them use the internet differently to communicate, research and work. In many cases writers are engaging in self-protective behaviour that limits their freedom to research and write freely.
The majority of participants reported that they are not adequately informed or skilled to protect themselves online and know little or nothing about encryption. This lack of digital and information agency has implications for citizens’ ability to exercise their civic rights. Through discussion of key issues through a critical theoretical lens, drawing on concepts including panopticism (Foucault 1975), communicative action (Habermas 1981) and agency in digital spaces (Loader 1998), this paper explores the implications of surveillance on intellectual freedom. We make recommendations for policy and practice, including the need for widespread digital and information literacy support for writers and the general public, to mitigate against the chilling effects of surveillance. We make policy and practice recommendations for researchers and organisations using big data and algorithmic governance.
conform to the binary gender norm of male/man-female/woman. The mining of biometric data and tracked preferences suggests that in our age of information and algorithms gender is not only a matter of a stable, confessable interiority. This study extends trans studies’ theories that gender is an exterior process assembled of architecture and law to include how gender is also technocultural assemblages of digital data and environments. Therefore, it is crucial to understand both how digital cultures force compliance with gender norms and to locate sites of gender self-determination that challenge a binary ‘choice’ predetermined by categories of administered difference.

This project’s feminist digital humanities approach will evaluate the digital regulatory systems underpinning seemingly individual acts of sovereignty in online environments by investigating the organization of gender through software, databases, mediatized news, and activism as well as social norms functioning on and off-line. For this presentation, my potential PhD candidate and I will discuss our sub-projects within this 5 year grant proposal: 1) a foundational study of cybergovernmentality that regulates transgender media production and visibility campaigns emerging from multinational corporations like Netflix and transnational social movements such as # TransVisibilityDay, and 2) a dissertation on Dutch tolerance-driven policy towards transgender privacy rights in medical, educational, and governmental spaces as represented in (online) media that examines the precondition of openness of a trans subject to outside scrutiny for social inclusion.


Abstract: Thinking within the field of digital media and communication has recently taken an “algorithmic turn”. Scholars argue that algorithms are becoming increasingly important – to the degree that they start to replace many things, from production to consumption of media, from editors to journalists, and might even influence election results. We connect this to our recent attempts to grasp the logics of social media platforms (so-called network media logic). We ask whether it is at all possible to make an argument about media logic if we accept that autonomous algorithms increasingly shape the functions and experiences of social media platforms. The paper addresses the issue of algorithms’ assumed non-neutrality, as well as the influence and importance of humans (programmers and designers), norms, and values for the working of algorithms.

Following a tripartite delineation of human agency into iteration (linking action to the past), projectivity (linking action to the future), and practical evaluation (linking action to the present), we argue that human agency is present in all elements of network media logic that cannot be replaced by algorithms. Algorithms cannot (yet) account for all elements of agency, especially reflexivity and practical evaluation. Thus our conclusion becomes that algorithms are an outcome rather than a replacement of media logics. Furthermore we conclude that arguments that technology is neutral and has agency on its own hide the individuals in power and thus serve their interests, interests that become increasingly blurred in the opaque mist of human and technological interdependence in our Global Age. To argue that algorithms have agency on their own, agency that is independent of human activity, not only denies the role of media logics but occludes the power inscribed in the algorithm as a structure.
Ekaterina Tarasova and Ola Svenonius. Surveillance technologies in (post) modernity: the case of Central and Eastern Europe

Abstract: Surveillance technologies in their present form contribute to understanding of historical development of contemporary societies. Modernity is closely connected to technological development (Misa 2003:12). A kind of modernity that has been unfolding in the world is made possible through specific technological development. Other ways of modernization could occur (Schot 2003). Lyon argues that distinctive features of surveillance technologies in postmodernity are computerization and consumerism (2003:173). This paper aims to empirically test the argument of Lyon about distinctive features of surveillance technologies in postmodernity in order to see whether present-day surveillance technologies shape transition from modernity to postmodernity.

The case of Central and Eastern Europe is studied because this region experienced surveillance in the past and the difference between surveillance technologies of the past and present can occur. The interviews of Data Protection Authorities (DPAs) were conducted in the 14 countries.

The preliminary findings demonstrate that two kinds of narrative are present. The first narrative suggests that there is no resemblance between surveillance in the previous and present political regimes. The second narrative emphasizes that surveillance in principle is the same while the role of private companies has significantly grown.

It cannot be said that rise of consumer identities comes at expense of citizen identities though since the interviewees also mention a number of times that with the rule of law, regulations of data protection and media as watchdogs present-day surveillance technologies can be controlled. The ideas about certainty (of possibility to control how technologies are used) come together with uncertainty (the scale of surveillance technologies does not allow to totally control the usage of surveillance technologies). This narrative shows that Lyon’s argumentation about distinctive features of surveillance technologies in postmodernity are present in the studied case, while uncertainty could be another distinctive feature of surveillance technologies in postmodernity.

Emiliano Treré, Carina Guyard and Anne Kaun. SLOW DATA: A roundtable discussing more sustainable ways of dealing with the speed imperative in our data saturated societies

Abstract: Datafication refers to the process of rendering into data aspects of the world not previously quantified. We live in a world where every aspect of our existences is increasingly being datafied: from our sport activities, to our jobs; from our social relationships, to our medical records. As Couldry and Hepp (2016) put it “data are changing social ontology, and as a result the role of ‘media’ within the constitution of the social”. Datafication has been both praised for the incredible possibilities it promises, and criticized for the dangers that it is bringing. Yet, both celebrators and critics often conceives increasing datafication – and the consequent data overload it brings with it – as an inevitable process, framing attempts to disconnect and slow down the pace of this progression as a deviation. At the same time, the notion of slow has been already incorporated into and made part of an industry that furthers and capitalizes on datafication as a process. This growing industry sells us digital detox and disconnection as a product, while encouraging is to datatfy ourselves more rather than less.

The aim of this roundtable is to shed light on conceptual understandings and experiences that deconstruct the inevitability of increasing datafication and the temporality it encompasses, by showing how slower, more sustainable, and less saturated alternatives might look like.
Abstract: Social media has been instrumental in engineering new forms of social organisation. Just as bureaucracy enabled the modern state machinery, New Public Management its conversion into economic rationality, social media has carried a promise of a new form of social organisation. This paper argues that the very interactive form of social media necessitates a fundamental rethinking of what is understood as organising, its assumed form in organisation and the underlying principles how this form came about. Starting from Niklas Luhmann’s argument that organisation is based on a decision, this paper argues that social media has introduced something that is best characterised as a “partial decision”, an organisational moment that consists of the fusion of two or more different social media posts. This in turn means that what constitutes the communication of decisions is nothing but an ever evolving chain of new posts that each “hooks onto” previous posts at least at two different chronological levels: the immediate post-reaction sequence and the whole conversation-thread. Applying this in practice, empirically this paper tells the story of two different Facebook-engineered groups that took part in helping refugees arriving in Sweden in autumn 2015. Refugees Welcome to Malmö developed a politically antagonistic stance towards the Swedish state whilst We Who Welcome Refugees at the [Stockholm] Central Station developed a symbiotic relation with the state. The paper traces these differences not only to the content of their organisation talk but above to the mode in which posts “hooked onto” each other.

Abstract: The “refugee crisis” in 2015 caused different challenges in European destination countries. In different ways, governments took measures to restrict the entry of refugees. As a response, locals volunteered to assist incoming refugees. In doing so, citizen volunteers drew on corporate support and commercial social media to organise refugee support. This presentation investigates major volunteer initiatives in Sweden. We develop an analytical approach that pays attention to the technological, structural, discursive and practice-oriented dimensions of civic engagement and social media. We show how organisational forms of volunteering and civic-corporate collaborations use and are influenced by social media, paying special attention to the material infrastructures of social media platforms. Theoretically, our analytical approach draws on notions of platforms (van Dijck and Poell, 2013), media practice (e.g. Couldry, 2012), and discourse and power (e.g. Chouliarakis and Georgiou, 2017). Methodologically, we examine four major volunteer initiatives in Sweden to illustrate the application of our framework and our argument that capturing the role of social media platforms to the organisation of civic engagement. Specifically, we combine in-depth interviews with central organizers of volunteer initiatives and an analysis of their Facebook pages and Facebook groups.
Lies van Roessel. Working in the datafied free-to-play games industry

Abstract: The free-to-play (F2P) monetization model is increasingly prevalent in the digital games sector, especially in the mobile realm. F2P games can be downloaded for free, however, the game will try to generate revenue during playing by offering in-app-purchases, e.g. to speed up processes, to buy additional moves or for avatar cosmetics.

Kerr (2017) describes free-to-play game development as one ‘production logic’, in which the monetization has major consequences for the game’s design and typically involves processing large numbers of player data. The current study aims at further analyzing this production logic: what does game design entail in the case of F2P game development? What are the key roles in the team? How are player data used throughout the process? Do developers experience friction due to the controversy of the monetization model, especially in its early days?

Using a grounded theory approach, we conducted qualitative interviews with German free-to-play game developers. First findings of this ongoing research show that analyzing other successful games in the same genre is important especially early in the design process, for orientation on the monetization techniques and pricing. After the game goes in so-called soft-launch, i.e. it is released in the app store in one geographical market segment, player data become highly important. The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are monitored on a weekly or even daily basis to optimize monetization.

Furthermore, potential ethical concerns with the business model voiced in early days of free-to-play are not present with most F2P game designers, as nowadays job applicants at F2P game studios know what to expect. However, monetizing too aggressively is believed to cause negative reviews and consequently a shrinking player base.

Mariëlle Wijermars. The Complexities of Open Government Adoption in Hybrid Regimes: Aleksei Navalny and Data Activism in Russia

Abstract: Following the 2011-2012 protest movement, mobilized in part through blogs and social media, the Russian government initiated a dramatic expansion of internet regulation in an attempt to control political dissent, negatively affecting online freedom of speech. At the same time, however, the Russian government continued to follow along in the global trend of implementing principles of open government to increase government transparency and improve the provision of citizen services. Leading the way by example was Dmitrii Medvedev, under whose presidency e-government started to gain ground. Medvedev was also an early adopter of social media, e.g. maintaining a LiveJournal blog and Instagram account.

For hybrid regimes, however, open government is inherently paradoxical: while it can support a regime’s legitimacy by lending it a much-needed image of democratic accountability, providing access to governmental data and sharing information through, e.g., politicians’ social media profiles simultaneously creates new opportunities for political opposition. Recent research has suggested that open government adoption strengthens rather than weakens authoritarian and hybrid regimes. This paper asks whether there are limits to this effect in the age of rapidly expanding (transnational) practices of data activism.

The paper analyses recent examples of data activism in Russia, diverting particular attention to Aleksei Navalny’s Anti-Corruption Foundation’s investigation into Medvedev’s assets. The investiga-
tion, which served as the impetus for large-scale anti-corruption protests across Russia in March 2017, was conducted using, e.g., Medvedev's Instagram posts. The paper examines to what extent, in the case of Russia, the adoption of open government principles may have backfired. While the regime increasingly relies on big data analysis to monitor discontent among its population, publicly available data is equally (and successfully) used for political mobilisation against it.

**Norbert Wildermuth. Mining Citizen Feedback Data: The Promises and Perils of Big Data Analysis in Transitional Societies**

**Abstract:** Big data has become ubiquitous. Sensors and software are digitising and storing all kind of social, economic, political and environmental patterns and processes. As the size of these datasets has increased exponentially, many focus on how “big data” harvested from online sources can allow potentially unprecedented insights into our world that may facilitate efforts to enhance human development. Yet relatively little is known about how best to harness “big data” in ways that could effectively inform development processes, particularly for the most disadvantaged, and whether those at the margins who produce the least amount of data risk becoming even more invisible. While new expertise is emerging, it remains unclear whether, and how, ordinary citizens will be able to seize these opportunities, individually and collectively and use them to their advantage. The United Nations Independent Expert Advisory Group’s (IEAG) report “A World that Counts: Mobilising the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development” (2014) and “The Africa Data Consensus” (2015) have spelled out key recommendations regarding the potential of big data for sustainable development in Africa. This policy formation goes hand in hand with a number of pilot projects and initiatives, including efforts to harness crowdsourced and harvested big data analysis as a tool for local activism, advocacy, empowerment and social accountability. Based on field work in Eastern Africa, I will explore the Uchaguzi participatory election monitoring initiative, as studied on occasion of Kenyan general elections in 2013 and 2017. The crowd-sourced data collection and mapping platform, initiated by data activists at the Nairobi iHub, Ushahidi, CRECO (a network of 23 Kenyan CSOs) and the social application of technology initiative INFONET, constitutes a fascinating example of deliberate, extensive data generation. In contrast to the ‘clandestine’ practices of data harvesting, Uchaguzi initiative exemplifies a citizen-driven, accountable and empowering big data practice, I will argue.

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Ida Willig. “There is no public”: How media agencies shape the media infrastructure and how they understand news media and audiences

Abstract: In the past two decades, media agencies have grown to become key actors in the media industry (Turow 2011, Pratt 2005, Green and Trevarsis 2002) translating big data translated into social data (Bolin & Schwartz 2015) and advising clients on where to place their advertisement and marketing budgets. As such, media agencies have a strong impact on the shaping of media markets and thus the media landscape all over the western world. However, there is limited research on who the media agencies are, how they understand news media and audiences and what implications this has for democracy. This study documents the strategies of ten global media agencies through document analysis and interviews with strategic managers in the Copenhagen offices. The findings show how the global media agencies work with notions of ‘public’, ‘audience’ and ‘media’ as data algorithms independent of the national context such as political system, democratic system or media system in general (Hallin & Mancini 2014). An implication of the study is an increased awareness that the economic crisis of newspapers in different media systems is not only a question of business model or reluctance to pay for news as it has been put forward for many years but also the result of a structural development driven by a new global player in the field: the media agencies.

Brita Ytre-Arne and Hallvard Moe. Approximately informed, occasionally monitorial? Reconsidering Citizenship Ideals in the Age of Big Data

Abstract: This paper problematizes normative foundations for understanding citizens as news users in the age of Big Data. Based on rich empirical insights into contemporary practices of cross-media use, we ask what constitutes a “good enough” citizen in terms of being informed.

Our theoretical starting points are the highly influential ideals of the informed citizen, found in normative democratic theories (e.g. Ferree et al 2002), and Michael Schudson’s reconceptualization of the monitorial citizen of the 1900s, “informed enough and alert enough to identify danger to their personal good and danger to the public good” (Schudson 1999, 21). We argue that these unrealistic ideals must be reconsidered in order to formulate new conceptualizations for citizenship in the age of Big Data. In order to do so, we draw on empirical data from a large-scale qualitative study of media use and public connection in Norway, where 50 informants spread across social space participated in-depth interviews and media diaries.

A key finding is that the smart phone has become the key platform for, and an emblematic symbol of, news consumption that at first glance appears monitorial. Yet, with the vast amounts of available information, and the complexities of evaluating trustworthiness and contextualizing events, people
are neither fully informed nor able to control what they might be missing. We therefore describe news users as approximately informed, occasionally monitorial, a description that challenges normative ideas. How do citizens make decisions with the approximate and thereby shifting and partial figurations of societal information they obtain? How do monitorial ideals function when citizens are only occasionally on guard? Building on our findings, our paper attempts new conceptualizations of practices of news use for citizens in the age of Big Data.

Esra Ince özer and Eda özcan Yılmaz. Does Social Media Provide Democracy? The Example of Turkey

Abstract: On the contrary to the liberal assumption claiming that appearance of social media parallel with the technological developments, created a free, participatory and democratic sphere; critical approach asserts that social media shapes a sphere of exploitation, surveillance and oppression. Around these approaches, whether social media creates a sphere of democracy or not, is being subjected to different discussions. This study aims to examine the liberal assertion as social media conveys a potential of democracy and freedom via focusing on the Turkish case. In this direction, the question of whether social media creates a sphere of democracy and freedom will tried to determined through users’ perceptions and experience via a field research conducted at the first quarter of 2017.

Conducted study aims to identify participants’ demographic traits, social media user practices, following/follower preferences and content sharing behaviors. Survey consists of 35 questions and 300 respondents and conducted online with full anonymity. Obtained findings are analyzed in accordance with the theoretical assumptions and research objective of the study. In this context, whether social media creates a sphere of democracy and freedom for Turkish users will be evaluated.