LUND UNIVERSITY

Digital participation

An exploration of how video conferencing impacts on criminal trials

Flower, Lisa

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ABSTRACTS

DEMOCRACY & DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP CONFERENCE

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CENTRE FOR
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PHD WORKS IN PROGRESS

GROUP A

Title
Social Actor-Network Systems & News Avoidance

Presenter(s)
Rasmus W. Schmøkel (University of Southern Denmark)

Abstract
Social media networking sites work inherently different from legacy media as it is possible to personalise the experience. Furthermore, news is more fragmented, and the platforms' content is filtered and curated by algorithms to give the best user experience (Kümpel, 2022; Thorson & Wells, 2016). This project aims at investigating mechanisms of news avoidance and selection in the context of social media platforms by doing a literature review and proposing a new framework for further research. It highlights the significance of platform owners' responsibility in the democratic institutions and processes but also the role and responsibility of news outlets and corporations engaging in social media activities.

The concept of news avoidance can be split into two subtypes; intentional and unintentional (Skovsgaard & Andersen 2020), which serves to analyse it systematically. This conceptualisation supports the idea that incidental exposure and news avoidance are not as easily separated as earlier studies have suggested (Thorson, 2020). The algorithm is relevant to the concept of unintentional avoidance and how users' news consumption habits might attract the news, making unintentional exposure less unintentional than first thought (Thorson, 2020). Even though some studies indicate that the effects of the algorithm on news avoidance have been exaggerated (Boczkowski et al., 2018; Bode, 2016; Fletcher & Nielsen, 2018; Valeriani & Vaccari, 2016), less attention has been given to the interplay between a diverse set of non-cooperative actors and the algorithm in the adaptive, nondeterministic and dynamic environment of social media platforms. Although it has been acknowledged that preferences and networks play a role in what type of content news consumers are exposed to, the conceptualisation of the algorithms is understood either as a product of software engineers' design choice or seen as a linear passive construct (e.g. Bartley et al. 2021; Bozdag 2013; Thorson and Wells 2016). The influence of other actors and the unique characteristics of social networks on news consumption has not been sufficiently addressed in the literature, and the unawareness of these mechanisms bears the risk of overseeing algorithmic effects on news avoidance and selection.

The study will address this need in the literature by first reviewing the literature on news avoidance on social networking sites. The literature review will consist of related but different concepts of incidental exposure and news avoidance. Based on this review, I propose a theoretical framework of the algorithms. Inspired by computer science when understanding the system and actor-network theory when understanding actors, thus a social actor-network system, allows understanding of actors' internal relations and derived hereof how their interplay affects political outcomes such as mechanisms of news selection and avoidance. Therefore, the framework's scholarly contribution is to theorise on the distinct system structure that characterises social media platforms that are hitherto unseen in the analogous world and how each actor operates in this environment and influences each other.

The expected result is to take a first step to investigate whether news consumption cannot be explained based solely on the individual user's characteristics and behaviour or algorithmic curation but must be understood in the context of the adaptive, nondeterministic and dynamic algorithmic social media platforms with diverse interacting actors. The study's findings will be important for the understanding of news avoidance and selection on social media in terms of the role of the algorithm and, more importantly, its interplay with both users and content producers.

Title
Silent but opinionated: Implicit policing of public political expression on social media

Presenter(s)
Liz Solverson (Nord University)

Abstract
Since the emergence of social media, much digital communication research has focused on the ways young adults use platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to express their political views and identities. Alternative models of 21st century citizenship present self-expression as a key injunctive civic norm among young adults (Bennett, Wells, & Freelon, 2011; Dalton, 2008). However, this normative expectation does not capture the lived-reality of youth today. Most young adults do not express their political views in socially visible online spaces. Even among those who are politically-interested, most prefer to silently observe or 'listen' (Crawford, 2009; Lacey, 2013) to others' political expression in public, limiting their own interpersonal political talk to private and semi-public channels of social media and offline interactions. While we now have extensive knowledge on the modes and effects of digital political participation, and an ever-increasing body of literature on acts of political expression specifically (see Lane, Do, & Molina-Rogers, 2021), understanding of how this political expression is perceived by the silent majority remains limited.

Building on the work of Thorson, Vraga, and Kligler-Vilenchik (2014) and Marwick, Fontaine, and boyd (2017), this qualitative study considers the ways young citizens interpret and evaluate acts of public political expression on social media. Topics explored include: Which platforms and modes of communication are perceived as appropriate for political expression? How are different forms of political expression perceived? What factors are considered when one evaluates and interprets instances of political expression? What kinds of users are perceived as authoritative political voices? Through exploration of these themes, the study explores norms of interpersonal political communication among young citizens today.

The data presented in this study is drawn from 7 mini-focus group interviews including a total of 20 participants aged 18-25. The participants represent a broad range of political interest level, from those who describe themselves as not-at-all interested, to active party members. The research has been conducted in Norway. The interviews included both semi structured and photo-elicitation based discussion. The qualitative data is being analysed using stepwise-deductive induction method (Tjora, 2018). The findings from this qualitative study will be used to develop a quantitative survey to be carried out in autumn 2022.

Preliminary findings indicate that though the participants rarely or never engage in digital public political expression themselves, they hold strong, largely shared opinions about such practices. These shared opinions suggest that there exist tacit rules which guides, for example, which platforms political expression is perceived favourably on, which users are viewed as worth listening to, and what actions or forms of expression are respected and appreciated and which others are seen as "cringe," self-aggrandizing, or otherwise unwelcome. Collectively, the findings from this study suggest that norms of political communication on social media are complex and acutely felt by the silent majority of young adults today.

Title
Design Recommendations for Safer Election Campaigning Online

Presenter(s)
Marie-Therese Sekwenz & Ben Wagner (Technical University Delft)

Abstract
The internet is a place where the political opinion of voters is ever more formed on platforms and their user-generated content globally. A sphere in which the right to free- dom of expression, information and free and fair election are core human rights normative safeguards for our democracy. Securing this process for whoever is not an easy task, as examples like the 2016 US election, the Brexit campaign or the events of the 6th of Jan- uary 2021 illustrate. The European Union has taken regulatory action to secure the digital manifestations of elections, by issuing legislation like the General Data Protection Regu- lation, the Artificial Intelligence Act, the Digital Services Act (DSA)or the Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the European council on the transparency and targeting of political advertising. The aim is to make platforms more transparent, regarding their algorithms deciding on recommendations, price of the ad, or to standardize content moderation to a certain degree. Platforms on the other hand use their Terms of Service (ToS) to implement their Community Standards – a selection of law-like clauses allowing for deletion or blocking of content – to set quasi-norms to safeguard democracy on- line. The ToS used by very large platforms (VLOP) according to Art 25 DSA however does not include granular clauses for European campaigning. The more recent design solutions on platforms include advertising repositories, or warning labels attached to problematic content to better inform the public. However, moderation of content addressing the heart of democracy and the democratic process per se is crucial for the status of human rights in Europe. The first decision taken on a piece of content – if it should be uploaded on the platform or not – is usually automated and controlled by machine learning algorithms. The system in place selects the pieces of content that will be decided upon in the next process step by a human. The moderation of political speech, however, is not solely text-based but does include a fine line of sarcastic elements, emojis or visual content to express itself which is another obstacle to moderating in an electoral context. This article, therefore, asks the question about how to better safeguard the right to fair elections, the right to freedom of expression and information in online campaigning and elections adhering to the recent European legislation, such as the GDPR, the DSA and the AIA and the proposal on the transparency and targeting of political advertising? The article answers the question by taking a closer look at the publicly available data published by platforms on behalf of their transparency reports. Furthermore, the ToS and Community Standards should be analyzed and compared. The process and architecture of content moderation for the selected online platforms are described and modelled according to the publicly available information. Only by providing a more concrete look at content moderation design and practice better solutions for the digital future of democracy can be crafted.

Title
"Discursive spaces in the EU's regulatory internet governance – The impact of interest groups on the policy norm production"

Presenter(s)
Simona Stockreiter (Hertie School, Berlin)

Abstract
The EU's regulatory internet governance is characterised by a shift of norms that has taken place over the last 20 years. It is accompanied by increasing battles for power of various interest groups, seeking to influence the outcome of policy decisions at EU level. More concretely, it can be observed that policy norms changed from 1. a neo-liberal orientation, where policymakers aimed to create and secure a "free" and unregulated internet; to 2. a growing caution against the power of data economy and the violation of individual rights to privacy; to 3. an additional focus on "European common public interests", carried by a strong rhetoric relying on notions such as "European shared values", "EU fundamentals", "common goods". This shift in normative paradigms seemingly goes hand in hand with two observations: 1. The lobby strategies of business interest groups aiming to impose their visions on the policy output is increasing. However, various studies have concluded that their efforts have only little success. 2. The recently growing discourse on fundamental European digital values and public interests has led to a "participatory turn" in the EU's digital regulatory governance, introducing balanced stakeholder engagement mechanisms. These assumptions hint at the general evolution of the involved multiple stakeholders' power and influence within this policy field. I will present in this chapter a methodological and theoretical toolbox to study how, why and which stakeholders have an impact on the norm production in the field of internet governance and how the dynamics have changed over time. I argue that the theory of discursive institutionalism by V. Schmidt is most convenient to offer conceptual instruments to grasp what goes on inside the "black box" of multistakeholder internet governance. However, I will criticize certain weak points and offer a revision of the theory. I will show that policy norms are developed in the course of discourses between different policy actors. With a specific focus on the involvement of interest groups in the policy making processes I will argue that, depending on the institutional contexts, such discourses can be differentiated into five discursive spaces: "arenas", "private spaces", "epistemic forums", "functional participatory spaces" and "fora". This differentiation of discourses is generally useful for comparisons of different forms of discursive spaces across time and between policy issues. I will then apply the analytical toolbox to theories on democratic legitimacy in the field of the EU's regulatory internet governance. I will show that more concretely, this revised discursive institutionalism will serve to answer the following research questions, which lie at the heart of my research project: In which sense are tech companies involved in the relevant decision-making procedures in the field of EU internet governance? Does the current focus on "European public digital goods" lead to the proclaimed "participatory turn" and to the creation of a "European public sphere"? My normative argument claims that "how our future EU digital society looks like" must be decided in deliberative discursive spaces.

Title
A happy helper or a hidden hazard? A systematic literature review on how AI can affect professional journalism

Presenter(s)
Selma Marthedal (University of Southern Denmark)

Abstract
AI journalism has received great academic attention the latest years, especially by scholars investigating whether these new non-human tools are compatible with the traditional job market and values of professional journalism. This literature review seeks to nuance the existing field on literature of journalists' _view on AI. To do so, the different AI-tools investigated in the literature were mapped together with the attitudes of the journalists. This study finds that the attitudes of journalists towards AI largely depend on the purpose of the AI-tool (news gathering, news production or news distribution). Especially, AI used for news production is seen as compatible with professional journalism by journalists. The findings emphasize the need for nuance in the investigation of AI in newsrooms in future studies. Lastly, the findings also emphasize deficiency in the literature on news distribution.

PHD WORKS IN PROGRESS
GROUP B

Title
Centralization and convergence in the news media ecosystem: from 'harm- less' micro-level production strategies to democratic consequences

Presenter(s)
Emil Bakkensen Johansen (University of Southern Denmark)

Abstract
Much literature covers how polarization, niche news outlets, and mis-/disinformation are outcomes of digitalization and the move to digital news distribution. However, we know less about if the digital- ization of news distribution subtly affects the diversity in traditional news media coverage and if seemingly 'harmless' local organizational adaptations to the digitalization entail democratic conse- quences.

In this theoretical paper, I argue that digitalization has altered the competitive dynamics in the Danish news media ecosystem, shifting the focus from accruing information to attracting attention. These new demands force news companies to adapt their production strategies at the micro-level, e.g., opting to cite and copy-paste competitors' news content to 'steal' attention. I hypothesize that a rise in the use of these production strategies could result in a news ecosystem characterized by an in- crease in dependency on a few central high-status organizations and an increase in the similarity of what is covered in Danish news. In other words, I suggest that we might see increasing centralization of status around a few organizations, and by extension, a movement toward convergence in news coverage over time. These trajectories are the result of the citation/copy-pasting micro-level produc- tion strategies gaining traction over time, why they aggregate to the macro-level and resemble eco- system-wide structures that influence which organizations are central and peripheral. This could be a detriment to the public democratic conversation, of which the news ecosystem is an integral part, as it becomes characterized by a less diverse representation of attitudes, opinions, and topics. Therefore, I call for an empirical investigation on whether 1) a move toward centralization in the news ecosystem takes place and 2) if it leads to a more convergent news coverage over time. For this purpose, I develop empirically testable hypotheses on the link between news media ecosystem cen- tralization and convergence in news coverage.

Through a literature review I find that the literature on political communication and news media stud- ies could benefit from concepts found in organizational literature to help explain the processes taking place in the news ecosystem following digitalization. Therefore, to develop testable hypotheses, I draw on theoretical concepts from three domains: 1) firm strategy (journalist production strategies, 'co-opetition', and 'churnalism'), 2) business ecosystems (industry structure, interdependence, and status networks), and 3) political communication (public sphere, attention economy, and content diversity). By synthesizing these different strands, I develop a novel theoretical conception of the link between micro-level production strategies, aggregation, and democratic consequences. In doing so, I contribute with a view on the implications of the digitalization of news distribution, which is currently absent in the literature: that adaptations of micro-level production strategies might over time aggre- gate to resemble structures at the news media ecosystem level that result in increasing centralization around few high-status organizations and increasing convergence in news coverage. As such, poli- cymakers could consider regulating big mergers and acquisitions in the news media industry or dis- incentivizing the re-distribution of a competitor's news content to maintain a diverse and healthy democratic conversation in the public sphere.

Title
'Democratic' use of digital authoritarian technologies and public trust

Presenter(s)
Seher Kurt (University of Glasgow)

Abstract
The neutrality of technology ends in political terms when employed by authoritarian powers. For instance, Iran's 'halal' internet is limited by Islamic values (censorship), China's national Social Credit System (active surveillance), or Russia's spreading of heroic news and advertisements (targeting and manipulating information). With the help of dual-usage technologies, authoritarian governments have found ways to monitor, control, access, and even shape the opinions of their citizens online.

My doctoral research challenges the Western-centric notion that digital authoritarians are non-democracies and shifts the focus on the use of dual-use technologies in democracies. Recent years have shown that active surveillance, information censorship, content control, targeted advertisement, etc., are not mysterious to democracies. Building on this critical observation, my doctoral research seeks to explore digital authoritarianism in democratic countries through social media management. Since dual-use technologies can be used for civilian and military purposes, my research focuses on those whose democracies are affected, individuals, rather than the state, which controls the civilian and military capability of dual-use technologies.

The research requires an in-depth study of social, political, and legal actions and controls practised in democracies to understand how individuals are influenced. My research is a sequential comparative mixed-method case study, which helps to adopt data-driven decision-making. It is limited to two countries, India and the United Kingdom, and two popular social media platforms, Twitter and Meta (Facebook). Methods of data collection for the research follow three stages: a) secondary quantitative analysis of social media transparency reports and the Freedom on the Net reports, b) semi-structured interviews with civic people, including digital rights activists, lawyers, journalists, advocates, members of non-governmental organisations, etc., c) socio-legal analysis of individual rights and freedoms and other laws that limit or restrict individuals' social media activities.

The PhD work in progress paper will contribute to 'the public trust in technology' discussions of Digital Democracy & Citizenship by critically examining the use and effect of dual-use technologies on individuals. It will present three main themes from the secondary data analysis - internet disruption, content control, and -veillance – and discuss how public trust is influenced. The research is currently at its second stage of data collection, interviews.

Title
Making meaning of news: how children develop news literacy in formal and informal learning spaces

Presenter(s)
Denise Mensonides (University of Groningen)

Abstract
In this paper, we show how children between the ages of eight and twelve engage with news in the different (formal and informal) contexts of their everyday lives. While previous research mostly focuses on how children learn about news in the formal context of the school, we argue that this knowledge is further processed through various, more playful, practices in informal contexts, including joking about political figures and integrating news events in (digital) play. Building on Tully et al.'s (2021) conceptualization of news literacy as knowledge of the personal and social processes through which news is produced and the skills to control these processes, we explore how different social contexts and social actors including parents, childcare employees and primary school teachers effect the practices children employ when engaging with news.

In an increasingly difficult media landscape, navigating news content has become an ever more complicated task. While developing the skills and knowledge to do this in fruitful ways is important for citizens of all ages, it is all the more essential for children. They are exposed to news content though a variety of channels, including TV news programs aimed at children, social media accounts and educational programs. While children under the age of 15 years old remain understudied (Marchi, 2012), they are 'most susceptible to increasing their political and social interest' (Russo and Stattin, 2017). Children are constantly engaging with news in the different social contexts of their everyday lives and develop crucial skills for news literacy through these activities. For example, children learn to distinguish fact from fiction from the age of five, are able to recognize advertisement discourse around the ages of five to nine and are able to understand each other's point of view and start learning about news making processes from the age of seven (Potter, 2011; Campos, 2018). The limited number of scholars who have included this age group in research often focus on one specific context (Vraga & Tully, 2015) and conceptualize news socialization with a focus on parent-child relationships (Edgerly et al., 2018).

Further exploring this gap in research, this paper includes children between the ages of eight and twelve in various social contexts including primary schools, the home and the out-of-school daycare. To explore how children develop news literacy through different social contexts, we carried out participant observations at four out-of-school daycares and schools in neighborhoods in a large Dutch city that differ in socioeconomic status. Furthermore, we interviewed key actors such as parents, teachers and childcare employees, and employed creative methods to carry out semi-structured interviews with the children. Building on this data, we found that while children often learn about news in the formal context of the school, playful practices in informal contexts, including joking about political figures and integrating news events in digital play, are even more important for processing news. Our results show that through these differing practices, children develop a broad understanding of news literacy by integrating these experiences in all aspects of everyday life.

Title
The consumption of hope and trust: Potential stem cell patient's information-seeking journeys into the promised lands of hope, trust and unknowns

Presenter(s)
Anders Grundtvig (Copenhagen University)

Abstract
Biomedical research has a long tradition for bold promises. Stem cell science, perhaps more than any other branch, has been thriving in a state of prolonged hope – for decades claiming to be on the brink of a revolution. It was the grand promises about stem cell technology that became the basis for STS (Science and Technology Studies) work known as 'the Sociology of Expectations'. The author has recently become involved in a 340,000,000 USD big project aimed at stem cell trials, that allows an analytic and positional move in the field of Sociology of Expectations from a critical distance to a critical proximity (Latour, 2005).

Currently, research on how to apply stem cell technology in the health care sector is undergoing clinical trials while private clinics are offering stem cell treatments to patients next door (Aly, 2020). Governmental driven efforts e.g., in Europe1 and Australia2 are attempting to mobilize trustworthy oficial information about stem cell treatment, but a quick web search reveals large quantities of opinions and guidance from articles on private stem cell clinic websites and on the social web.

These disagreements and disharmonies between the scientific community, government bodies and the broader public, complicates where and how to find information about stem cell treatment for potential patients. So, where do different potential patients go to acquire information? How does the infrastructure of online stem cell treatment information impact trust to the established health care system? And how does it impact the decision making of whether to enroll for stem cell treatment?

From a digital humanities perspective I am interested in what I frame as "potential stem cell patient's information-seeking journeys into the promised lands of hope, trust and unknowns". I am especially curious about when and where on these journeys' "hope" and "trust" and their counterparts "despair" and "mistrust" emerge and are mobilized, and how they affect the decision-making process.

Which role can digital humanities play in identifying stakeholders and understanding the social life of hopes and concerns, as well as building new ways of imagining a future worth living? Which publics are we to engage?

With the computational humanities focus on *public debates, and opinion makers, and controversy mapping* I am utilizing social media platforms to zoom out and obtain broader perspectives of the field of stem cell treatment. Through computational text analysis and network mapping I am categorizing online discussions and opinions into thematic clusters.
With this study I am interested in mapping the actors in the debate to locate how (and if) different "types" of involved actors are communicating. This study further intends to create a measurement for quantifying the "quality" of public debates. This measurement can be used to locate interesting debates for more qualitative analysis and to understand which thematic clusters that have the most "interesting" and "fruitful" debates.

I present reflections on these questions and semantic maps for potential stem cell patients information seeking journey.

PARALLEL SESSION 1

Socially mediated public spheres

Title

Public sphere or echo-chamber? The case of Spanish politicians and Spanish Media Directors on Twitter

Presenter(s)
Veronica Israel Turim (Observatorio Blanquerna de Comunicación, Religión y Cultura)

Abstract
Political communication and agenda setting has been transformed since the arrival of digital social networks (Alonso-Muñoz, Marcos-García, & Casero-Ripollés, 2016). These platforms have affected people´s interaction, generating influence flows among members of power elites and in relation to the citizenship (Chadwick, 2017; Jenkins, 2008; Wallace, 2018). Previous research has aimed to comprehend if social media support the development of a democratic, diverse and inclusive public sphere (Ausserhofer & Maireder, 2013; Colleoni, Rozza, & Arvidsson, 2014a), as that they offer the technological capabilities than can promote civic political activism (Feenstra & Casero-Ripollés, 2014), enabling new political actors and voices (McGregor & Mourão, 2016). In the same line, many authors postulate that the digital sphere supports the promotion of interactivity and transparency (Deuze, 2011; Feenstra & Casero-Ripollés, 2014; Shirky, 2008), removing physical barriers (Ausserhofer & Maireder, 2013) and traditional gatekeepers (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Meraz, 2009; Vargo, 2018).
But do these changes promote interactivity and a public sphere with a more democratic political debate? Or do the politicians use digital media as echo chambers of the elites?
In this research, we compare the accounts that the Spanish politicians and Spanish Media Directors and Journalists started following on Twitter from 2017 to 2020, with the aim of understanding how they use social networks, Twitter in particular, as it is considered the informational and political tool and network par excellence (Pérez-Curiel & Limón Naharro, 2019; Redek & Godnov, 2018). We seek to observe, through the analysis of the accounts they started to follow, whether they use Twitter to interact with the citizenry and give space to new voices, or if on the contrary they use this network as an echo chamber of the elites by following and interacting with similar accounts in a homophilic way.
With this objective, we selected a sample of Deputies and Media Directors and through a big data and machine learning software, we identified the accounts they started following as groups and categorized them into account types (political, media and citizenship). We also classified them by location, trying to understand if the accounts followed by politicians belong exclusively to the Global North, since this would mean, in addition to proximity, the reproduction of the political and economic hierarchy established between the Global North over the Global South (Medie & Kang, 2018; Vu, Do, Seo, & Liu, 2020). The accounts were also categorized in individuals or institutions, number of followers and gender (women, men and non-binary).
To conduct the data analysis we combined manual and computational methods and used data visualization techniques to look for patterns and trends. The results suggest that both elites exhibit homophilic behaviors in terms of account types and geographic proximity and present a balance between female and male accounts. In this study we were also able to observe a different behavior by the political elite during 2018, which was an electoral period, where an intensification of the homophilic patterns is observed.

Title

Not a challenge anymore: An investigation of non-democratic regimes' tactics in turning Twitter into a non-threatening platform

Presenter(s)

Hossein Kermani (University of Vienna)

Abstract

In recent years, Iranian pro-regime users have joined Twitter on a large scale. While different camps on Twitter are no surprise in democratic societies, the high number of regime supporters on this social platform where it is blocked and banned by the regime is of high significance. As social media become a critical conduit in shaping counter-narratives and discourses by dissident citizens, authoritarian regimes tried to dominate social media by operating and managing their supporters on these platforms. Nonetheless, we do not know much about the strategies and mechanisms taken by the authoritarian regimes and their supporters on Twitter to reinstate the hegemonic discourses and challenge the counter-discourses developed by dissident users. Drawing on the theories of the hybrid media system (Chadwick et al., 2016) and counter-public networks (Jackson & Foucault Welles, 2016), this research is an attempt to give a better understanding of the implications and consequences of occupying Twitter in Iran by pro-regime users. This inquiry investigates how the presence of pro-regime users benefits the non-democratic regimes to stabilize their positions and neutralize threats posed to them by social media.

The research team has monitored Twitter, Telegram, and the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) for a year starting from January 1, 2020. The focus of this observation was on a) the activity of elite pro-regime users on Twitter, b) the implanted content of Twitter in Telegram's top channels, which share a selection of trendy and high popular tweets regularly, and c) the ways that a selection of programs of IRIB selected and aired some tweets. The research team took notes of these vibrancies and discussed them in the regular team meetings.

Based on the findings of this systematic and longitude observation, we make three conclusions: pro-regime presence on Twitter is a tactic so that state media could argue that the regime even has the real power and popularity on social media despite the claims raised by anti-regime groups. There were examples of airing pro-regime tweets on IRIB, mentioning that they represent the dominant flow of info on Twitter. Indeed, it is a counter tactic to marginalize and minimize the presence and importance of anti-regime users on Twitter. Next, pro-regime users also tried to poach the flow of information in disputed times to discredit and disparage dissident figures in covert and indirect ways. To this extent, regime supporters produced fun and sarcastic tweets which do not engage in politics directly. But, these tweets were designed to defame several anti-regime individuals and groups in deeper layers. Results show that even several anti-regime Telegram channels reshared such tweets, emphasizing the success of this tactic. Finally, pro-regime users tried to deflect the anti-regime discussions by raising and dominating diverse and non-challenging issues. Regime supporters engaged in conversations with dissident users in an attempt to stop them from putting their total energy and attention into criticizing the regime. This paper contributes to the existing literature on social media activism in non-democratic contexts by shedding some light on the authoritarian efforts to dismantle social media protests.

Title

Politicians' communication and audience engagement on Facebook: Is engagement with political content in politicians' Facebook posts contingent on negative sentiment?

Presenter(s)
Lene Aarøe, Morten Brænde & Matt Loftis (Aarhus University)

Abstract
Politicians widely use social media to connect with the electorate. Yet, when it comes to explaining which type of politicians' communications that most effectively triggers audience engagement on social media, extant research is still limited. In this paper, we investigate how political hard-news content (conveying political initiatives and encouragements for political action) relative to non-political soft-news content (focusing on personal and entertainment-oriented content) in politicians' Facebook posts elicits shares, comments, and likes and how this relationship is moderated by negative post sentiment. We do so by analyzing a unique dataset consisting of real-world Facebook posts (n = 127,833) and associated engagement metrics from public Facebook pages of Danish members of Parliament (n = 155). We find that political hard news content predicts more engagement than non-political soft news content. Importantly, we find that this relationship is much stronger for posts with a negative sentiment and that this is particularly the case for engagement in the form of comments and shares. The results suggest that politician-audience linkages on Facebook, even in consensus democracies, contribute to political polarization and to spreading partisan animosity.

Title
Facebook groups as forums for digital citizenship

Presenter(s)
Mikkeline Thomsen (Analyse & Tal)

Abstract
Some researchers increasingly perceive the digital public sphere of modern societies to be in poor shape due to the opaque logics of algorithms that structure the online public space (Gillespie 2014) in the bleak service of surveillance capitalism (Zuboff 2019). This is said to render the citizens passive, feeble or belligerent, manipulated and steered by the power of social media and disheartened by trolling, hate speech and other so-called "dark" forms of online participation (Quandt 2018). While critical data scholars rightly question how datafication shapes human agency, we also need sound empirical research on what citizens actually do with media within datafied publics (Mathieu & Pruulmann Vengerfeldt 2020). To provide such scrutiny, we've spent the past three years mapping and analysing "the digital community centers" of Denmark – namely 5249 citizen-led Facebook groups. The group format of Facebook represents the most pervasive digital infrastructure for establishing vernacular membership-based (as opposed to follower-based) digital communities. To investigate the affordances and practices of de digital community centers we have applied a multi method framework including quantitative scraping and mapping of Danish Facebook groups and pages, ai-based rhetorical analysis of verbal attacks and verbal recognition within public groups and pages, and in-depth netnographic field analysis (Kozinets 1998) of a wide selection of groups and pages. This multi method work zooms in on the potential of Facebook groups as forums for digital citizenship. We introduce the metaphor of "digital community centers" to capture the dynamics and activities within these digital communities. Drawing on the cultural history of the movement of the physical community centers (medborgerhuse), that sprang up nationwide during the beginning of the 20th century, we argue that the group infrastructure and it's affordances has enabled continuous participation in the public conversation through independent and somewhat self-governed communities. The analysis suggests that the activities in the groups, tend to attract a broad range of citizens across demographic groups, that the groups contain both homogenous and heterogenous conversations (Schudson 1997), and that the groups maintain the simmering political potential of civil society by providing a training ground (Dahlgren 2006) for democratic conversation. The project is thus a deep dive into one particular form of large scale engagement, which shows how people publicly connect, share and discuss in places somewhat ignored by the scholarly community.

Title

The fringe infrastructures of the platformized public sphere

Presenter(s)
Tim de Winkel (Utrecht University)

Abstract
Platformization, or 'the interpenetration of the digital infrastructures, economic processes, and governmental frameworks of platforms in different economic sectors and spheres of life' (Poell et al., 2019: 6), has reshaped our spaces for information and deliberation. The Web - once a decentralized and public infrastructure - has been appropriated by major tech companies, while the government has largely retreated as a governing institution. Moreover, the Fourth Estate's role as primary gatekeepers and curators of the news and mediated political discourse by citizens, is being challenged. Media scholars grapple with the question what the rise of the platform as the dominant infrastructural and economic model – platformization - (Gerlitz and Helmond 2013) of the online public sphere, means for democratic ideals of political participation and decision making.

In my project I study platformization by analysing the response of major information technology companies to the disruptive presence of the radical right and fringe technologies. Because Alt-Right radicalism seeps from the abdomen of the social Web into the mainstream spaces, Big-Tech is forced to intervene. By studying the contention between major mainstream platforms and fringe platforms, I can unearth and show the power relations on the platformized Web, that are normally more implicit or opaque. In previous work (Van Dijck et al, forthcomming) we showed how Big-tech uses its ownership of - or partnerships with - CDNs (Content delivery networks) and other infrastructural services as an implied governance strategy. Radical platform Gab.com – the primary case study of my project - was denied the infrastructures it needed to function online, effectively pushing it off the platform ecology, a process called deplatformization (Van Dijck et al, 2020). This exposes Big-tech as a governing institution, not just of its own spaces, but also of the Web as a whole. Even an independent service can be governed by the giant tech companies, that have amassed an almost hegemonic control of the Web through platformization.

In this new contribution I will follow up on my previous research by mapping the ecosystem of services and partnerships Gab has construed in response to its deplatformization. It shows Gab's move away from mainstream and Big-tech services, and towards two tech communities, namely the Alt-Tech sphere and the Decentral-technology and/or the Open-source sphere. Fringe platforms appropriate such alternative technology to build separate online infrastructures that are immune to mainstream tech's governance. I will analyze both the ideology and technology underpinning Gab's new infrastructures, in order to determine whether these constitute - the potential of - a parallel Web. Subsequently, I will theorize these Alt-Tech infrastructures for (online) participation and dissemination through a framework of platformization, consociationalism (Lijphart 1969), and the public sphere, in order to understand what ideological and technological segmentation of a radical fringe means for the platformized public sphere. Preliminary conclusions show that consociational models are inadequate descriptors of a fragmented public sphere. Additionally, a pluralist platform ecology seems unattainable without the reintroduction of the Web as a public utility.

PARALLEL SESSION 2

Online political communication and digital democracy

Title

Conceptualizing issues on digital election campaigning and the future of online political communication

Presenter(s)

Georgios Lappas & Amalia Triantafillidou (University of Western Macedonia/Hellenic Open University)

Abstract

Political actors on the past decades tried to use cutting-edge technology in their Political Campaigning to gain any margin of votes for the new and modern that technology campaigning might appear attractive to their voters. Since the born of the web in the 1990's, web campaigning become an important vehicle for political campaign activities from the first use of websites in the 1996 US Elections, followed by blogs usage as important part of political campaigning in 2003. The successful use of social media platforms by Barack Obama in 2008 US elections, established social media accounts as an integral and important part of political campaigning that still holds on today. Holograms and avatar campaigning has also been experimentally used by politicians around the world, trying to gain from the benefit of an innovative campaign and to gain from the benefit of the political actor to be simultaneously life in many places and diverse audiences. France's Melenchon, Turkey's Erdogan and India's Modi holograms, are examples of political actors that tried to use cutting-edge technology in their political rallies. Artificial Intelligence creating deep fake videos has also been seen in political campaigning as a cutting-edge technology used in 2017 by researchers at the University of Washington, where a photorealistic former US President Barack Obama seem to insult Donald Trump by using AI in a synthetic Obama's mouth to precisely move his mouth when he speaks and allowed them to put any words into this synthetic mouth. Political campaigning in Metaverse has already started being experimented, as Andrew Yang a front-runner in the New York City Democratic mayoral race, as he incorporated immersive technology and the metaverse in his first metaverse press conference in 2021. In February 2022 during South Korean presidential election, People Power Party candidate Yoon Suk-yeol combined AI and avatar technology creating candidate's avatar to appear younger, cool, humorous, and satirical by using hours of recorded videos to provide enough data for artificially generating deep fake videos to answer to their voters and raising new research issues of deepfake democracy. It seems unavoidable that emerging technologies like AI, IoT, VR and AR are going to reshape the way of political campaigning and studies to shed light on the digital transformation of political campaigning is needed. At the same time the EU through calls on Horizon Europe programs calls for research on the future of democracy, research on ways to increase trust in democratic governance, ways to enhance digital citizenship and research to study social media as platforms that are double-sword platforms for democracy as in one hand they are supposed to open new avenues to political engagement and democratic participation and at the same time have created anxieties about their capacity to protect citizens from various issues such as the spread of disinformation, the creation of ideological "echo-chambers" , the capacity to foster polarisation, radicalisation, depoliticisation, thus eroding the space for public dialogue and threatening democracy by manipulating or influencing the political choices of citizens. In this context we aim in this study to conceptualize research agenda for digital election campaigning according to the issues raised above.

Title
Digital political campaigns: Toward a pragmatic approach

Presenter(s)
Peter Aagaard & Selma Marthedal (Roskilde University/University of Southern Denmark)

Abstract
It has become increasingly popular for scholars to investigate the field of digital political campaigning and its consequences for democracy, voter behavior, and electoral success. We argue that, considered together, these studies constitute of a field of research that can be grouped along a continuum between two different positions: a critical position, expressing strong concerns for democracy and voter manipulation, and a descriptive position, viewing digitalization as a supplement to the traditional elements of political campaigns. Our findings show that there are differences in the methodological approach between these two positions. The descriptive approach contains slightly more empirical research than the critical one, which contains a high number of philosophical and theoretical essays. Our review generally reveals a need for collaboration across the aisle between the more theoretical essays raising concerns for the public, and the more empirical, demarcated studies that can confirm or dismiss concerns regarding voter manipulation and democracy. We argue that these two positions must be mixed thoughtfully in a pragmatic approach that addresses public concerns on highly empirical grounds to avoid technological myths. Our review also reveals that the digital campaigning research field contains several gaps for future research to explore, especially pertaining to comparative research and automation effects.

Title
Internet shutdowns and democratic citizenship in Zimbabwe: When state security supersede citizen interests

Presenter(s)
Tendai Chari (University of Venda)

Abstract
Research on Internet shutdowns on the African continent is scant. This is surprising given that incidences of Internet shutdowns and other modes of disconnecting people from their democratic citizenship are increasing are increasing, particularly on the African continent. In Zimbabwe, the state has instituted Internet shutdowns, masked under the guise of 'protecting national security interests' and 'curbing misinformation', thus bringing to a standstill lives of citizens who rely on the Internet for information alternative to state propaganda. Grounded on the concept of 'digital rights', this qualitative exploratory study examines citizen experiences of Internet shutdowns in Zimbabwe in order to shed insights into how a fragile and undemocratic African state controls information flow on the Internet and how citizens try to claim their democratic citizenship through digital technologies. Meanings that citizens attach to Internet shutdowns, constructions of their enforcement mechanisms, motives and timing, and their effects on everyday lives of citizens are issues germane to this chapter. Data were gathered using virtual interviews and an open-ended electronic questionnaire emailed to purposively selected twenty-three members of the public, who had experienced an Internet shutdown in the country. Among them were ordinary citizens, journalists, experts, and civil society activists. The paper reveals that Zimbabwean citizens predominantly perceive Internet shutdowns as a blunt political instrument and are an extension of the broader censorship strategies aimed at denying them their democratic citizenship but are masked as legitimate national state security interests. Internet shutdowns in Zimbabwe, thus, reflect contours of the predatory instincts of a weak state in an age of growing consciousness of citizens' digital rights. The paper contributes an African, particularly Zimbabwean perspective, on the way in which citizens utilise digital technologies to negotiate their democratic citizenship in an authoritarian state.

Title

Digital technologies, the world order and nature of change: The case of global rise of right-wing populism

Presenter(s)

Sagheer Ahmad Khan (Bahauddin Zakariya University)

Abstract

Change is a complex phenomenon involving multiple factors. The crucial factors are innovation and new technologies. However the interaction between new technologies and nature of change is an elusive phenomenon. New technologies accelerate the economic progress however these new technologies can also cause human and environmental destruction; both capitalism as well as communism can succeed because of new technologies; similarly, these new technologies may lead towards democratization as well authoritarianism and; new technologies may work as facilitator for pluralism but can also arouse the public sentiments of exclusion and hatred. In recent past, New Information Communication Technologies (NICTs) generated the expectations that these technologies will promote rational-democratic public sphere. Initially it appeared that NICTs are going to help materialise the dream of rational-democratic global public sphere as NICTs facilitated democratic and anti-corruption movements in many parts of the world. However, contrary to expectations, now scholars have found linkages between NICTs and global rise of right-wing (exclusionary) populism. From this backdrop, this study is an attempt to develop an understanding of factors which in combination with new technologies bring about change of a particular nature…in this case global spread of right-wing populism. The phenomenon (rise of right-wing populism) is global in its character---affecting societies throughout the globe--- however, most of the scholarship in this area is devoid of global context. Hence, it has been studied in relation to determining effects of changes in nature of global order and ensuing policies of super power(s). So, it is argued that limitation on choices for citizens---politics of the third way---set by global order and nature of global engagement (prolonged global war against terror) of the super power facilitated a discourse of exclusive nationalism; technological changes gave the discourse a populist touch and generated demands for its assertive expression (authoritarianism) finally; the discourse gained momentum with changes in power relations at global level (declining role of USA in global affairs).

Title

Standing up to hate(rs): Exploring the motivations of online counter speakers

Presenter(s)
Tanja Marie Hansen & Lasse Lindekilde (Aarhus University)

Abstract
The internet and social media sites have long been heralded for their ability to create connections across time and space. While this fosters a dynamic forum for deliberation, the increased reach has a downside. It allows hateful content to travel faster and wider than previously. Whereas an offline incident of hate speech is naturally restricted in impact by the number of bystanders present, online hate speech has the potential to reach thousands of users in no time. This enables hateful content to 'poison the well' of online discourse more than for its offline counterpart. To remedy this, efforts by social media sites and government bodies, have centered on content and account take-downs. Currently, users are mainly included in the moderation efforts through flagging efforts, to alert platform monitors of rule violations. This approach, however, is cumbersome, as hateful content is created at much higher rates than amendable by hasty take-downs. An alternative approach involves user creation of counter-content (counterspeech) showing disapproval of hateful online posts or showing support for victims of hate speech. Unlike the removal of unwelcome content, this strategy relies on the ability to mitigate the negative impacts of hate speech. By standing up to the haters, while also signaling disapproval to fellow online bystanders, counter speakers are theorized to lessen the severity of harm caused by hateful content, whether to the victim or to the general discourse online. If this positive attribute of counterspeech holds true, it begs the question "who speaks up, and how do we motivate more users to do so"? To answer this question, we must first learn more about the users who already engage in online counterspeech, to learn what initially motivated them and what drives continuous engagement. In this paper, we therefore identify and interview 15 Danish individuals who have partaken in various forms of counterspeech on Facebook during the Spring of 2022. Their testimonies form the basis of our exploration of what drives online bystanders on social media to speak up when faced with hateful content.

PARALLEL SESSION 3

Opportunities and challenges of digital participation

Title
Digital participation: An exploration of how video conferencing impacts on criminal trials

Presenter(s)
Lisa Flower (Lund University)

Abstract
We are at the international precipice of change in how people typically participate in criminal
trials. From the traditional copresence of legal professionals, defendants, plaintiffs and witnesses in physical courtrooms, we are rapidly moving towards digital participation becoming more routine as reflected in the expeditious increase in the use of video conferencing in trials in Sweden and many other countries. However, whilst technological advances and legal rulings are enabling this digital shift, academic attention has failed to keep abreast of how participating in criminal trials by video conference is experienced by those taking part, or how this format of participation changes how they are perceived. Relatedly, the shift from participating in a physical legal setting to taking part via video link also has repercussions for conveying and upholding the legitimacy of legal proceedings. There is a risk the COVID-19 pandemic rushed the courtrooms into a digital world without appropriate investigation.
This paper will discuss the extant research and present a project proposal that is centred around three research questions: How does participation by video conference change the experience of a legal trial? How is the ceremonial setting of a trial conveyed in video conferences? How does video conferencing impact on judicial evaluations of credibility and guilt?
A combined qualitative and quantitative approach will be used. The empirical focus will be on criminal trials at district court concerning crimes against persons where credibility is of particular importance. The findings will produce new knowledge regarding the interpretations and practices of digital participation in legal trials and will also have important implications for the execution of justice beyond the site of study.

Title

Pro-social bystander reactions to online political hostility among Danish social media users

Presenter(s)

Simon Tobias Karg, Lasse Lindekilde, Stig Hebbelstrup Rye Rasmussen & Michael Bang Petersen (Aarhus University)

Abstract

Emerging research highlights the importance of 'bystanders' to online political hostility in mitigating the negative effects of hateful content on representative and deliberative democracy. By showing disapproval of online political hostility (e.g. through comments or by reporting content) bystanders may curb motivations to withdraw from online political discussions. However, our knowledge of such pro-social bystander reactions to online political hostility is limited. In this pre-registered study, we utilize data from a large-scale, electronic survey among Danish social media users (N= ~20.000) to investigate the self-reported prevalence of pro-social bystander reactions to online hostility across different social media platforms and test hypotheses regarding the shape of the relationship between exposure to online political hostility and pro-social bystander reactions and potential moderators of this relationship. Furthermore, we test if exposure to online political hostility leads to increased motivation to withdraw from online discussion and if this relationship is moderated by pro-social bystander reactions.

We find that across different social media platforms, bystanders to online hostility are more likely to report hateful content than engaging in commenting on or sharing of such content. As expected, we find that the relationship between exposure to hostility and pro-social bystander reactions approach an inverted u-shape: Overall exposure to political hostile content correlates positively with overall pro-social bystander reactions, but there is a drop-off at high levels of exposure. Respondents who are older, high on negative emotional reaction and negative perceptions of debate climate and low on benevolence, universalism and neuroticism are less likely to react pro-socially as bystanders in face of high levels of online hostility. While we find that exposure to online hostility correlates positively with motivations for withdrawing from online discussions, this correlation is weaker for bystanders who often engage in pro-social reactions, suggesting a democratic potential in boosting such online behavior.

Title

Subjectivities of search vs. Agencies of anonymity: Reimagining Google's organisational theology through Tor's recursive public

Presenter(s)
Renee Ridgway (Copenhagen Business School)

Abstract

Collected by devices 24/7, the current 'informal actions' of users such as search queries reflect the 'unceasing flow' of information—what was before not commensurable became 'textualised', or codified as data, with 'signals' revealing human behaviour (Zuboff 1988, 2015). With 5,6 billion requests per day, 'ubiquitous googling' (Ridgway 2021) has been grafted as a paradigm for the way users find information as they 'voluntarily provide' data in exchange for free services. Value resides not only in the primary applications of data gathering techniques but rather in the innovative, secondary purposes that were not even imagined when it was first collated (Mayer-Schöneberger & Cukier 2013). The past years as Google became more arcane about its 'logic of accumulation' (Zuboff 2015) and data (re)usage, citizens have become increasingly 'unboxed' through algorithmic filtering processes that instantiate 'In Google We Trust' as an 'organizational theology' (Beyes and Pias 2019).

In this visual presentation I show results from Re:search – the Personalised Subject vs. the Anonymous User, which compares Google's personalisation to anonymity searching with the Tor (The Onion Router) browser. With a 'critical ethnography of the self', I designed an 'experiment in living' (Marres 2012), gathering data on myself and imaging the results with my method, 'data visualisation as transcription'. Departing from Alexander Galloway's Black Box, Black Bloc text (2011), I demonstrate how Google's black box effects shape not only the web (Introna & Nissenbaum 2000) but organise (us)ers through their online habit of querying (Ridgway 2021), with the capturing of their IP (internet protocol) address. Instead of just 'organising the world's information', advertising companies (Google) simultaneously construct subjectivities of search

through 'cyberorganization' (Parker & Cooper 2016)— where Google's proprietary algorithms assign users into collectives of others 'like them' (Chun 2016; 2019).

In contrast to Google's 'behavioural surplus' of user data creating prediction products facilitated by surveillance capitalism (Zuboff 2015), Tor provides users with obfuscation (Brunton & Nissenbaum 2015) by hiding their IP address. Other 'black bloc' effects range from pseudonymity or degrees of 'unreachability' (Nissenbaum 2015), to programming bots that imitate human interaction. The key difference is that I choose to be in the 'anonymous Tor collective', trusting my privacy to unknown human actors instead of putting trust in Google that assigns me to particular groups through their non-transparent process of collaborative filtering, without human agency. I argue that aside from its other merits in terms of circumventing surveillance by state and corporate actors, trusting the Tor p2p network can be a strategy to organise democratic political agency as a 'recursive public' (Kelty 2008). As one of the few alternatives to subjectivities of search, not only do 'platforms intervene' (Gillespie 2015) but also citizens with various agencies of anonymity.

Title

Can political microtargeting change our political attitudes? An experimental study of how personal profiling algorithms affect voting behavior

Presenter(s)

Selma Marthedal (University of Southern Denmark)

Abstract

Advanced online political marketing techniques have made it possible for politicians to tailor voters with ads based on analysis of their online data. Innovation in marketing techniques now allows politicians to target voters based on their personality traits. This study seeks to accommodate needed empirical research on political microtargeting and has two main purposes: Firstly, it seeks to investigate the persuasion effects of personality-congruent political advertising from various political parties. The personality of the participants was determined by the personality-profiling algorithm, TextGain. Secondly, the effects of an informational disclaimer about microtargeting prior to exposure of the ad were tested. This study is based on a representative survey-experiment conducted on 1200 Danish respondents. The results show that introverted people were more persuaded by personality congruent ads compared to in-congruent ads. There were found no effects of the exposure of the disclaimer. The results found in this study suggest that political microtargeting based on extraversion increase voter persuasion across political attitudes but solely for introverted people.

PARALLEL SESSION 4

Digital developments in news and journalism

Title
Digitally native online news sites' prospects for supporting democracy by facilitating citizen engagement

Presenter(s)
Jack Rosenberry (St. John Fisher College)

Abstract
Digitally native online local news sites have become a significant part of local news
ecosystems in recent years across many countries. Academic and industry research has evaluated the operations, often called "hyperlocal" news organizations, from a few main perspectives, including:
● Impact on democratic efficacy
● Construction of local social capital and cultural identity through community engagement
● Business models and fiscal sustainability.
These characteristics can be seen as dynamic and mutually reinforcing, as illustrated in
this model [**Image removed**]:
Research has focused on each of these dimensions individually, such as hyperlocals and sustainability (e.g. Harte et al., 2016); hyperlocals and democratic efficacy (e.g. Barnett & Townend, 2015; Firmstone, 2016); or hyperlocals and community capital/engagement (e.g. Hess & Waller, 2016). Some projects also have looked at the dynamics between these constructs, such as how efforts to create community engagement can help with fiscal sustainability (e.g. Posetti, 2018; Ciobanu et al. 2019), or how that sustainability is related to support for democracy (e.g. Leckner et al., 2017).
An area that has not drawn much attention, however, is how online hyperlocal news sites support the dynamic interplay of community engagement work and democratic efficacy to help facilitate citizen actions that enhance democracy. (As indicated on the right side of the triangle.) The connections between engaged communities and local democracy have been explored in some depth by scholars working under the auspices of the US-based Kettering Foundation. From Kettering's perspective, democracy consists of citizens coming together to collaborate on solving problems in their communities (Kettering Foundation, n.d.). Digitally native local newssites have potential for encouraging such interactions.
This project, then, will examine prospects for a research agenda around whether and how digitally native local news organizations seek to inform and engage their communities in ways that foster and facilitate such localized action in service of democracy. This will be accomplished through a scoping review, an approach that was pioneered in health science fields to provide systematic reporting on topics such as the effectiveness of treatments and procedures (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). The approach has since expanded to other disciplines, including social sciences (Logan et al., 2021). Two key purposes of such reviews are to identify gaps in the existing research (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Rumrill, 2010) and to suggest new directions for future research (Peters et al. 2015). As one guide to the technique puts it, "A scoping review maps what researchers know and do not know (scope and coverage) about a topic area to identify new directions for further research" (Lorenzetti et al., n.d.).These characteristics make such a review a highly appropriate tool for examining the existing body of research about hyperlocal news organizations and engagement, democratic efficacy, and principles of community engagement as they relate to enhancing democracy. The ultimate purpose will be to develop key questions for a research agenda about how hyperlocal news coverage can contribute to citizen-driven democracy.

Title
Fake news and metajournalistic discourse: "There is now work for us to do again"

Presenter(s)
Johan Farkas (Malmö University)

Abstract
This article examines metajournalistic discourse around fake news, i.e., "public talk that seeks to define what journalism is and how it ought to work" (Carlson, 2020: 377). The study focuses on the 2019 Danish elections for the European Parliament and Danish national parliament, drawing on 34 qualitative interviews with journalists, media experts (i.e., professionals cited as experts on fake news), government officials, and social media company representatives as well as 42 editorials from nine national news outlets. Building on discourse theory (Laclau, 2005; Laclau and Mouffe, 2014), the article maps how fake news is mobilised to support conflicting visions for the future of journalism in times of rapid digitisation and decline of traditional journalistic business models.

As argued by Tandoc et al. (2019), public debate about fake news has come to constitute a "critical incident" for journalism that forces journalists to "reflect on their values and norms by reasserting the normative boundaries of their profession" (677). This raises key questions about the role of journalism in contemporary democracies and whether it "should be cast as a villain or victim of post-truth" (Farkas and Schou, 2019: 60).

The study finds that Danish media actors mobilise fake news to support opposing discursive positions on the role of journalism in mitigating falsehoods. While some voices articulate established journalism as the antithesis to fake news, others blame contemporary journalistic practices for potentially contributing to misinformation, calling for change and reform. The ideal of journalistic objectivity is central to these conflicting visions, as some call for strengthened objectivity in journalism, while others argue for abandoning this ideal. These contrasts are particularly notable between editors-in-chief, on the one hand, and news reporters and media experts, on the other.

Based on the findings, the article argues that fake news acts as a floating signifier in metajournalistic discourse in Denmark, a concept "whose meaning is 'suspended'" (Laclau, 2005: 131) between different, antagonistic, hegemonic projects (see also Farkas and Schou, 2018). Fake news is thus not only mobilised to attack or defend journalism, but also to present conflicting visions for what journalism is and ought to be.

Title

The dissemination of russian backed content in European alternative media environments on social media

Presenter(s)

Frederik Møller Henriksen, Jakob Bæk Kristensen, Tim Gottenborg Bruun Ramsland & Eva Mayerhöffer (Roskilde University)

Abstract

Shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, EU banned the two state-affiliated media RT (Formerly Russia Today) and Sputnik News from social media platforms in order to stop manipulative information and propaganda reaching European audiences. Previous research has shown how media outlets such as Russia Today are popular among western audiences that oppose the mainstream media (Benkler et al. 2018). Additionally, Elswah and Howard (2020) find that RT systematically seeks to introduce destabilising narratives and topics such as conspiracy theories or manipulative content into domestic discourse in foreign countries, while Miazhevich (2018) find that RT systemically draws a positive image of the Russian state and the government. The complexity with which Russian backed content becomes visible in media environments in western countries is yet to be fully grasped.

In this study, we investigate the links between news content of RT and Sputnik News and alternative news media environments on social media to determine the degree to which Russian backed content reaches wider audiences outside of Russia. We focus on social media posts (5 million posts) with links to RT and Sputnik News and language patterns that can be extracted from those posts between January 2019 – March 2022. Drawing on a combined network analytical and topic modelling approach, we track and analyse the dissemination of Russian-backed narratives across a range of social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Telegram, VKontakte, Gab, Instagram, Reddit, 4chan, Youtube). We classify types of social media accounts that act as primary bridge builders between Russian state affiliated media and alternative news environments in Denmark, Sweden, Germany and Austria by sharing URLs that link to Russian backed content. Furthermore, we map and compare topics and narratives with a strong penetration into the alternative news environments in each of the four countries.

Title

The infrastructuring of publics: Datafied platform dependencies in news organizations

Presenter(s)
Lisa Merete Kristensen & Jannie Møller Hartley (Roskilde University)

Abstract

As news organizations increasingly rely on technical solutions and software provided by both small and big tech, these solutions profoundly change the infrastructures of news distribution.

The platformization of news has already in the literature triggered widespread public and scholarly concerns about the impact of platforms on the news industry and, more pointedly, platforms' potential threat to journalistic ideals of autonomy and economic independence (Nielsen & Ganter 2021;Van Dijck et al. 2018). Prompted by these concerns, considerable research has explored how news organizations deploy platform metrics (Cherubini & Nielsen 2016; Hanusch 2017; Petre 2021), develop distribution and marketing strategies in relation to platform algorithms (Caplan &boyd 2018; Nechushtai 2017; Smyrnaios & Rebillard2019), and (fail to) generate revenue through platform monetization ventures (Bell et al.2017; Myllylahti 2018). Despite the ongoing debate of the influence of platforms on the production and distribution of news, the backend influence of platforms as infrastructuring data flows in news organizations remains understudied. Conceptualising these tech solutions such as cloud services, databases, measuring systems and reccommender systems as 'data infrastructures', this paper examines the platform dependencies inherent in these infrastructures. We argue that these dependencies have profound effect on public formation as dataflows changes the ability of journalistic news organization to cultivate publics and that this cultivation of publics is in turn increasingly datafied and calculated (ref Gillespie) Empirically the analysis is grounded in case studies and ethnographic fieldwork in Danish news organisations and 12 qualitative interviews with digital editors from large news organisations in US and Europe (Among them NYT, Guardian, Almedia, MitMedia, JP/Politiken and JFM).

We develop the analytical framework from the perspective of the two fields of platform studies (cf. Bogost & Montfort 2009; Gillespie 2010; Helmond 2015) and infrastructure studies (cf. Hughes 1983; Star & Bowker 2002; Star & Ruhleder 1996), which are increasingly crossing paths in digital media research (Plantin & Punathambekar 2019). From an infrastructural approach we show how news and public formation is shaped via shared systems and services (tech stacks) and regulatory policies. Here the paper shows both how small tech are providing an increasing and often overlooked part of the infrastructural solutions for news organisations, and further how big tech are dominant in many back-end levels. This we discuss by looking into large language model (LLMs) and the role play in the political economy of AI as infrastructural components for AI research and development.

From a platform studies approach the paper shows how platform infrastructures are built into the logics of news production though standards and classifications for example Google Search standardisations and values inherent in personalised recommender systems. The two perspectives shed light on the monopolization and dependencies in the datafied news distribution and the paper discusses how publics are imagined and constructed in these infrastructures and dependencies with profound importance for public formation in datafied democracies.

Title

Mapping a decade of news and publications about AI, algorithms and machine learning

Presenter(s)
Torben Elgaard Jensen, Anders Kristian Munk & Mathieu Jacomy (Aalborg University-Copenhagen)

Abstract
Algorithms, AI and Machine learning are some of the topics that have recently come into intense focus as matters of public controversy, political regulation and techno-scientific visions about the future. Arguably, these topics are currently some of the hotbeds of the wider discussions on the digitalization of contemporary societies. Several major research projects are focusing on these issues including the Danish *Algorithms, Data and Democracy project*, the multinational *Shaping AI project*, and the French A*lgoGlitch project*.

In this paper, we present a data-intensive analysis developed as a part of the Danish ADD project. The analysis takes its point of departure in two datasets that mention algorithms, machine learning or AI (or Danish equivalents) in the last 10 years. The first dataset consists om 34K news articles from InfoMedia, the second dataset consists of +1 mio abstracts from Scopus. We use a variety of quali-quantitative strategies to identify key issues in the material, we discuss possible interpretations of these issues, and we draw comparisons to international research projects engaged in similar mapping exercises.

PARALLEL SESSION 5

Visions of digital relations

Title
Anticipating the future of AI: Practitioners' visions, stories and imaginaries

Presenter(s)
Emma Christensen, Martina S. Mahnke & Ib T. Gulbrandsen (Roskilde University)

Abstract
In the aftermath of scandals such as Cambridge Analytica's misuse of Facebook data, revelations of surveillance and misuse of social media data continue to emerge. For many users it remains unclear exactly what kinds of data collection digital platforms afford, and how data is accessed, analysed and used. As a result of such uncertainties, what we think, say and feel about digital media, what I term digital imaginaries, have become imbued with distrust. This presentation focuses on digital imaginaries in relations between social movement organisations (SMOs) and multinational companies MNCs). Theoretically, it draws on the notion of social imaginaries, which has been used to capture people's implicit understandings of and expectations about society (Taylor, 2002) and the internet (Mansell, 2012). Empirically, it examines how SMOs and MNCs make sense of digital media, including smartphones, tablets, computers, social media platforms and predictive analytics software, and perceive their own agency in society and in relation to each other, that is, how imaginaries are embedded in and shape power relations. More specifically, it draws on interviews with media and communication mangers from multinational companies such as Nestlé and Coca-Cola and from NGOs such as Greenpeace and WWF. It argues that we need to pay attention to digital media power. I conceptualise this power in terms of Foucault's notion of panoptic power, which has helped capture dynamics of visibility, surveillance and self-discipline among a wide range of digital media users, including SMOs (Lyon, 2018). At the same time, it is important to look at the power of common sense, which can be captured by Gramsci's notion of hegemony (Cammaerts, 2015). In this conceptualisation, the notion of common sense comes close to that of the social imaginary, while also sensitises it to the power of taken for granted understandings of how the world works and the privileged possibilities of power elites for influencing social imaginaries. From this vantage point, this presentation points to digital imaginaries of distrust and what I term soundbite CSR, which risks diluting the potential of corporate citizenship.

Title

Imagining digital power and the power of digital imaginaries

Presenter(s)

Julie Uldam (Copenhagen Business School)

Abstract

In the aftermath of scandals such as Cambridge Analytica's misuse of Facebook data, revelations of surveillance and misuse of social media data continue to emerge. For many users it remains unclear exactly what kinds of data collection digital platforms afford, and how data is accessed, analysed and used. As a result of such uncertainties, what we think, say and feel about digital media, what I term digital imaginaries, have become imbued with distrust. This presentation focuses on digital imaginaries in relations between social movement organisations (SMOs) and multinational companies MNCs). Theoretically, it draws on the notion of social imaginaries, which has been used to capture people's implicit understandings of and expectations about society (Taylor, 2002) and the internet (Mansell, 2012). Empirically, it examines how SMOs and MNCs make sense of digital media, including smartphones, tablets, computers, social media platforms and predictive analytics software, and perceive their own agency in society and in relation to each other, that is, how imaginaries are embedded in and shape power relations. More specifically, it draws on interviews with media and communication mangers from multinational companies such as Nestlé and Coca-Cola and from NGOs such as Greenpeace and WWF. It argues that we need to pay attention to digital media power. I conceptualise this power in terms of Foucault's notion of panoptic power, which has helped capture dynamics of visibility, surveillance and self-discipline among a wide range of digital media users, including SMOs (Lyon, 2018). At the same time, it is important to look at the power of common sense, which can be captured by Gramsci's notion of hegemony (Cammaerts, 2015). In this conceptualisation, the notion of common sense comes close to that of the social imaginary, while also sensitises it to the power of taken for granted understandings of how the world works and the privileged possibilities of power elites for influencing social imaginaries. From this vantage point, this presentation points to digital imaginaries of distrust and what I term soundbite CSR, which risks diluting the potential of corporate citizenship.

Title

A phenomenology of trust in datafication: How users perceive datafication in everyday use of digital media

Presenter(s)
Sander Andreas Schwartz and David Mathieu (Roskilde University)

Abstract

In this paper we explore how users perceive trust in datafied media in relation to everyday media use. Building on Giddens' concept of trust in abstract systems (1990) and Schutz' phenomenological framework of zones of relevance (1946), we analyse how users relate to trust and risks of datafied media from a phenomenological perspective building on users' perception of relevant risks in everyday life.

We conducted four focus group interviews with Danish citizens recruited in the municipality of Roskilde, Denmark. Groups were mixed male and female and divided according to age (18-35 and 35-60) and education level (short/long) into four groups of 4-9 participants. These groups were separated according to age and education in order to increase homogeny and productivity in group discussions, while allowing for comparison across groups.

Inspired by Schutz, we find that users assess risks primarily through the perceptual zone of control, meaning that they relate most closely to risks they have the power to control and manipulate. Risks that are out of their reach both in terms of control and understanding tend to be pushed towards zones of decreasing relevance and ultimately in the perceptual zone of complete irrelevance. Users exhibit some concern for issues that are outside of their own control, but, as we argue in this paper, these perceived risks are in danger of becoming less relevant over time. We call this process 'distanciation' when issues are pushed into zones of lesser relevance over time. Individuals do this to ensure internal ontological security and to be able to go about their everyday life.

The findings of this paper lead to a discussion of the potential benefits of data literacy versus policy in relation to datafication threats for the individual media users. We argue that some data literacy initiatives, especially those pertaining to critical awareness alone, might have the opposite effect if agency does not follow. A critical mindset without agency may lead users to become apathetic if they do not feel they have any control over the risks of datafied media. We also find that slow and incremental threats from datafication located on societal level appear far removed to the individual user, who has an easier time understanding immediate risk on a personal or social level.

We conclude that users delegate risks primarily according to things they can manipulate, control, and mitigatee in everyday life. Consequently, issues that individuals have no direct control over, might be better addressed through policy work instead of trying to increase citizen literacy. The phenomenological framework developed in this paper presents a pragmatic approach to datafication threats that allows to apprehend what risks we can expect individual users to understand and handle, and what issues are best delegated to policy-making.

Title
Gamifying university research

Presenter(s)
Fatima Sabir & Patrick Blackburn (Technical University of Denmark/Roskilde University)

Abstract
In this talk we argue that research metrics are gamifying university research and transforming the identity of the players (academics and universities) in democratically problematic ways. Traditional university research activity can be regarded as a game emerging from the collaboration (or conflict) between players (universities, academics, and students) and facilitators (governments, ministries, and administrations). Today a new facilitator has joined in and transformed the playing field. With the adoption of research metric technology, the academic imperative has morphed from "publish or perish" to "impact or perish" (Biagiolu & Lippman 2020). A publication list no longer suffices; impact is everything. To document (and monitor) impact, firms such as *Clarivate*, *Elsevier*, *Google*, and the newest entrant, *Digital Science*, all offer big data services that promise to unveil the patterns underpinning research careers and future prospects. However, such firms do not merely provide these (typically expensive) services, they have also changed the underlying game ecology – by *gamifying* it.

Game designers "tell us who to be and what to care about during the game. Game designers sculpt alternative agencies, and game players submerge themselves in those alternative agencies" (Nguyen 2020). Nguyen goes on to draw a distinction between traditional activities (such as learning a language) from their gamifications (for example, playing *Duolingo*). When firms design systems like *Web of Science*, *Scopus*, *Google Scholar*, and *Dimensions*, their models for measuring research impacts do not simply report traditional "raw data", they also set new rules for playing (and gaming) the metrics in the all-new-online-university research game.

This is potentially problematic in a number of ways. First, it introduces and enforces what has been called the "Tyranny of Metrics" (Muller 2018). Second, while the university is ultimately regulated by ministries and governments, who in liberal democracies are regulated by the citizens, game designers like *Clarivate* and *Elsevier* are regulated not by democratic processes, but by monetary concerns. Moreover, gamification also transforms both institutional and individual research identities. The university becomes less of a researcher-driven site of intellectual exploration and more of a player in the university ranking contest; individual academic identities shift from that of researcher/teacher to producer of fashionable output with quantifiable impact. And here we again touch on the distinction between gamified activities and games that Nguyen insists upon. Just as *Duolingo* shifts the goal of learning languages to topping the Diamond League and *Twitter* transforms the goal of debate to amassing retweets, so have research metrics transformed university research activities into something seemingly familiar, yet clearly distinct.

Title

Lost in digitalization: On algorithms and alternative organizing

Presenter(s)
Sara Dahlman, Emil Hustd & Erik Mygind du Plessis (Roskilde University/Copenhagen Business School)

Abstract
Alternative organizing is the "systemic investigation of alternative principles of organizing" (Parker, 2002, p. 217) that is set to challenge the principles of the current social order. Currently, the social order is dominated by capitalism, which pervades seemingly every aspect of society (Lagoarde-Segot & Paranque, 2018). Accordingly, alternative organizing often implies ways of organizing that are alternatives to capitalism (Parker et al., 2014; Cruz et al., 2017). The current literature often understands alternativity to be rooted in alternative principles (Parker et al., 2014; Pal, 2016, Daskalaki et al., 2019) or alternative practices (Land and King, 2014; Janssens and Zanoni, 2014; Bryer, 2020). However, this paper follows (Dahlman et al., 2021a), and understands alternative organizing as a process of breaking free from dominant societal norms, which provides a more dynamic understanding of alternative organizing than approaches where alternativity is grounded in certain principles or practices. Although a bourgeoning literature on alternative organizing, there is, considering the increasing digitalization, very little written on alternative organizing and digital technologies (Ossewarde & Reijers (2017) being an exemption). This paper will address this lack, by exploring how an attempt to use artificial intelligence to mainstream sustainable investing, ended up limiting the scope of sustainability and distorting the organization's alternativity.

The mainstream literature on digitalization, tends to hail digital technologies for their capacity to make working and organizing more efficient, to develop new products and services, and to facilitate social interaction (e.g., Brynjolfsson and McAfee, 2014; Constantiou and Kallinikos, 2015; Mount and Garcia Martinez, 2014; Varian, 2014; Yoo et al., 2012). However, a growing academic interest in the darker and unexpected sides of digital technology (Trittin-Ulbrich et al., 2020) is emerging, focusing on the (un)intended consequences of digitalization. Through implementing digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, organizations can no longer be framed as separate from its technology (Alaimo and Kallinikos, 2021). The inseparability of digital technology and organizations indicates that the algorithm has agency over the organization, just as the organization has agency over the algorithm (Dahlman et al., 2021b). Thus, understanding the lgorithm's organizing role becomes even more pertinent in alternative organizations, as algorithms' inherent capitalist logic is conceived to increase efficiency and effectiveness (Trittin-Ulbrich et al., 2020). Thus, there is an imminent risk that digital technologies will co-opt or distort alternativity (Dahlman, 2021).

The paper takes a starting point in an in-depth ethnographic study of SusPens. During the period of empirical engagement, SusPens developed a machine learning algorithm that uses name-matching to screen investment portfolios. The screening tool is based on—and enables—a simple investment strategy: Exclude any portfolio containing companies engaged in fossil fuels, weapons, or tobacco. By introducing sustainability as a guiding principle for the organization's investments, SusPens adopts an alternative way to organize within financial markets. Employing the concept immutable mobiles (Latour, 1986), this paper develops an understanding of the implications on SusPens alternativity, as the organization delegates (Latour, 1992) the task of 'doing' sustainability to its algorithm. We find, that while the algorithm makes SusPens endurable in its search for freedom, the algorithm also ossifies the organization which limits its alternativity.

PARALLEL SESSION 6

Digital inclusion, digital citizenship (becoming digital citizens)

Title
The inclusion office

Presenter(s)
Irina Papazu, Thorben Peter Simonsen & Lara Reime (IT University of Copenhagen)

Abstract
The 'digital citizen' is a central figure in policy developments and contemporary digitalization efforts in Denmark. Critical discourse analyses of policy reports and strategies have shown the underlying assumptions and expectations of the Danish citizen as being digital 'by default', and have illustrated how the citizen has been cast as a neoliberal subject, self-sufficient and capable of navigating the digital universe of the public sector. However, in a report on digital inclusion published by KL and the Agency for Digitisation in April last year, less capable figures of the citizen appear, as the report states that a large proportion of the Danish population will in fact always be 'digitally marginalized'. This report, we argue, disrupts the dominant imaginaries of frictionless public digitalization, and creates new conditions of possibility for public governance, making digital inclusion a central concern for the state. In this paper, we consider the implications of this report in terms of the spaces of action it opens for a small unit within the Agency for Digitisation: The Inclusion Office. In a departure from the critical, mostly discourse study-based literature on public sector digitalization and its political implications, we seek to acknowledge and understand the efforts made by actors within the state to re-invent their politics vis-à-vis the digitally marginalized citizens. Based on interviews and participant-observation at three conferences where the Office figured centrally, we describe the forms of politics (Gomart & Hajer 2003) practiced by the employees and managers of the Office in relation to digital inclusion. By identifying three such forms of politics – understanding the non-digital citizen, networking with the citizen organizations, and acting on concrete requests from the citizens – we ask how digital inclusion efforts shape public governance in the enactment of the digital state: what form(s) of politics are practiced? Are such practices good? And what capacities to act are distributed and how? In pursuing these questions, we engage in a more generative form of critique, suspending judgement about how the digital ought to be entangled with citizenship and public governance and, instead, we attempt to trace how institutional actors represent and shape the digital state in practice.

Title
What is and why is understandings of technology important in the Danish educational system?

Presenter(s)
Mikala Hansbøl & Roland Hachman (UC Lillebælt/University of Southern Denmark)

Abstract
During the last decade, different understandings of technology and it's role in human life and education have increasingly become acknowledged and discussed as important aspects of democratic education (across the lifespan) in a world with digitalization (e.g. Dakers et al., 2014; Eriksen et al., 2015). Understandings of technology and relationships between science, technology and society can be approached from many different angles (e.g. Danholt & Gad, 2021; Bruun Jensen; Lauritsen and Olesen 2007; Edgerton, 2008).
In Denmark the aim of teacher education is tightly connected with the overall aim of the Danish Public School [Folkeskolen] which focusses on pupils´'s bildung (Klafki, 2013; Uljens & Kullenberg, 2021) through conducting activities "in a spirit of intellectual freedom, equality and democracy" (UVM). Since 2018 "technology comprehension" ("teknologiforståelse") has emerged as a new experimental subject(-field) in the Danish Public School (K-9). Also, Danish teacher education is focusing on technology comprehension (Andersen et al. 2021).
The "what", "how" and "why" of technology education in primary schools and teacher education can be approached in manifold ways (e.g. Wallace, 2011; Dakers, 2014; Balsamo 2011; Smith, Sejer Iversen & Hjorth et al, 2018; Danholt, 2021; DiSessa, 2001). Fundamentally, however, there is a lack of literature that address the foundations of understanding technology and technology education viewed from different disciplinary perspectives. David Edgerton (2008), for example, has from a technology history approach criticized approaches to technology in history as innovation-centric, Danholt (2021) drawing on Science and Technology Studies has criticized the experimental subject "technology comprehension" for being instrumental.

Basballe et al. (2021) have in their gap-analysis of mapping "technology comprehension" in Denmark, reduced technology education and understandings of technology to either being a matter of pedagogy, informatics or the experimental subject developed for school. They focus on "it" as a knowledge domain and as supportive technology. As a knowledge domain, "informatics" is highlighted as *the* "new area of formation and a new basic competence, which everyone should be equipped with from childhood. Positioning informatics, however, as a primer for the what, how and why technology education and understandings of technology is important, is a very narrow and monodisciplinary approach.

This paper builds on a broad qualitative and descriptive mapping project, where we have investigated how research and development (R&D) is conducted in Danish University Colleges and Universities - according to the homepages, In the mapping we focus broadly on (digital) technology and understandings of technology. The paper presents our first empirical results and we discuss the field of technology education, viewed from an inter-, cross-, multi-disciplinary approach, when looking through the lenses of R&D activities in Danish Higher Education institutions.

Title

Enhancing digital citizenship or increasing governmental efficiency? How digital inclusion policies clash with people's lived experiences

Presenter(s)
Maud Rebergen, Lucy Frowijn, Joëlle Swart & Marcel Broersma (University of Groningen)

Abstract
This paper analyzes the clash between digital inclusion policies and people's lived experiences with support for ICT use. Governments are increasingly digitizing societal processes and government services. Driven by neoliberal, instrumentalist ideas, they often place the responsibility for acquiring and maintaining competences to digitally participate in society on the individual. However, large groups of citizens are unable to do so without help. In the Netherlands, for example, 2.5 to 4 out of 17 million citizens are estimated to lack digital literacy. Policymakers and government agencies are therefore taking various initiatives to help citizens to become digital literate. Based on extensive ethnographic research on one of such support programs in the Netherlands, we argue that these policies are based on restricted and transactional understandings of digital citizenship. While governments aim to benefit from the digitalization of efficient digital government services and increase their usage, citizens expect such initiatives to enable them to participate independently in society through digital media beyond an e-government context, having a much broader perspective of what it means to be a digital citizen.

This study explores this conflict between the policymakers' visions of digital citizenship versus the experiences of citizens by focusing on the case study of the Dutch 'Digital Inclusion' program, initiated by The National Library of the Netherlands and eight governmental organizations in 2019. As part of this program, fifteen libraries introduced Digital Government Information Points ("IDOs") to support citizens with digital questions. Taking a user-centric approach, we studied the motivations, experiences, and expectations of citizens and library staff concerning digital inclusion. From October 2020 to December 2020, we conducted weekly ethnographic observations of the IDO walk-in consultation hours at three cities across the Netherlands: a major city, a regional hub, and a small town in a rural area. Additionally, we conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews (N=32) with library staff and digitally illiterate citizens, and a systematic walk-through of online training courses for IDO employees.

Our results indicate three main discrepancies between policy around and lived experiences of digital citizenship, in terms of approach, framework, and resources. First, the IDOs are designed to help citizens with short-term, practical questions. Their need to improve digital skills beyond these questions is not addressed. Thus, citizens do not acquire the agency needed to participate independently. Second, the IDOs only offer support in the use of digital government services. In practice, however, digital queries are broader and more complex, and thus remain unanswered. Also, other issues that relate to digital illiteracy, like low literacy or language, social and financial problems, are overlooked. Third, the IDOs are based on an indication of the resources available to libraries and the digital expertise of library staff. In reality, these are overestimated. The IDOs are not designed to account for issues around trust and agency. These results contribute to a better understanding of how citizens experience digital citizenship, and how policymakers can translate these experiences into effective initiatives that benefit digital citizenship for all.

Title

Young citizens in digital society: Opportunities and challenges of democratic self-confidence

Presenter(s)

Gitte Stald & Mette Løye Balle (IT University of Copenhagen/ Zealand Academy of Technologies and Business)

Abstract

Denmark is a digital society by law and most Danes use digital media extensively, but, we have not yet developed profound innovative strategies for digital information and participation. This paper focuses on the intersecting challenges of being a young citizen in digital society, trusting one's own ability to be informed, and developing fundamental democratic self-confidence. This is framed by a set of equally intersecting conditions based on narratives about the values of digital society, the norms and forms of informed citizenship, and democratic values. An essential question is not solely if young people are motivated to seek information and debate, but also if traditional definitions of informed citizenship and participation in digital society are discouraging for young citizens (Hartley & Pedersen, 2019)?

The paper draws on 16 interviews and a non-representative questionnaire with 256 respondents, both with 15-24-year-old Danes. Informants were selected strategically, and the results from the questionnaire serve as a test board for the interview findings. The study was conducted in spring 2021 in relation to the project *Youth, Trust, Information, and Democracy.* The findings are supported by results from a representative survey (DECIDIS 2017).

The discrepancy between ideals and practices appears to influence discourses about young people as uninformed and uncritical citizens, about the information fatigued youth, and about social media as providers of fragmented and un-curated information (Cammaerts et al., 2014; Amnå and Ekman, 2014; Vromen & Collin, 2010). These discourses are reproduced in youth cultural contexts (Bennett, 2008; Bastedo, 2014), as expressed by a 16-year-old girl who otherwise, during the interview, demonstrates her knowledge about society, democracy, and participation:

In some areas, I feel informed. I do not at all … _you know, I really do not know anything about politics. (Female, 16)

The study shows that our participants are quite knowledgeable and equipped for participating in democratic processes. Young Danes generally obtain information, ad hoc, via online channels and they prefer and trust traditional news organizations' _online channels, even more so from a post-pandemic perspective (UTID, 2021; Schrøder et al, 2021). They are personally engaged in various subjects and have strong opinions, which was also found by Cammaerts et al. (2014) and Mascheroni & Murru (2017), and they are aware of the importance of source critique:

You must consider critical source evaluation. If you get a lot of your information from Facebook, you really must be aware of the sources or what kind of people are sharing. (Male, 22)

Our participants tend to moderate their democratic participation based on a self-perceived information level and their democratic self-confidence is connected to their perception of being informed. One of the consequences of negative discourses about online information access is a lack of confidence in their own abilities to gain and understand what they consider enough information to be able to participate. It is compelling to ask if this paradox could be one of the reasons why young people with relatively good levels of democratic literacy have such poor democratic self-confidence.

Title

Enacting human-machine collaborations and scientific citizenship: An analysis of epistemic exclusion in citizen science

Presenter(s)

Niels Jørgen Gommesen (University of Southern Denmark)

Abstract

Citizen science is often praised for its innovative contributions to scientific knowledge production and its ability to support and advance citizens' engagement in scientific knowledge production. *Despite this, few studies have addressed how human-machine collaborations in a citizen science project and its technoscientific structures participate in enacting, enabling and constraining the epistemic agencies of volunteer contributors, and reconfigures science-citizen relations, including the very process of citizens' engagement in scientific knowledge production.* This paper will address this gap by analysing citizens material and discursive engagements with the citizen science project The Sound of Denmark. It contributes to new knowledge on the importance of designing more responsible and sustainable forms of citizen-science engagement that advance civic agencies. Key findings demonstrate that digital citizen science development can benefit drawing from diverse fields such as participatory design research and science and technology studies. Finally, the paper contributes to a broader debate on the formation of epistemic subjects, scientific citizenship, andresponsible designing in a citizen science context.

PARALLEL SESSION 7

User perspectives on digital (news) media and political engagement

Title
Visual features on news exposure: What counts the most?

Presenter(s)
Marília Gehrke (University of Southern Denmark)

Abstract
Scrolling unpretentiousness or absentminded through social media (Lupinacci 2021) might generate what has been called *incidental news exposure* (INE) – when individuals do not actively seek news but still encounter it. Although there are expectations that such phenomena could increase news consumption and even improve participation in democracy, it does not ensure the existence of audience engagement. Previous studies (e.g., Karnowski *et al* 2017) have addressed motivations for consuming news accidentally found, but less attention was given to its visual attributes. The present qualitative study is part of the *Trust and News Authenticity* project[1] at the *Digital Democracy Center* (DDC), where a digital signature to assess the authenticity of the news is under development.

In this abstract, I describe my first steps in developing a research protocol that will help me to answer the following research question: *what visual aspects count the most to turn news exposure into news consumption?* The starting point is *The Messaging App Diary Approach* (Kümpel 2021), which stands in the realm of digital methodologies to explore the audience's perceptions regarding news. Visual features play a significant role in catching someone's attention and their response to it (Von Sikorski 2021). Therefore, I argue that the features of images may be decisive for one to consume or not to consume certain material. Fabricated or misled content (Lazer *et al* 2018) sometimes thrives precisely due to its visual appeal, either by imitating the structure of news or by representing 'evidence' for false claims (Brennen, Simon and Nielsen 2021).

In the first part of Kümpel's approach, called the *documentation phase*, social media users observe their routine and report the journalistic content they come across. The gathered material (e.g., screenshots) is shared individually with the researcher through messaging, and it is usually followed by text or audio that helps the user to explain the reporting process. In the second portion, called the *discussion phase*, follow-up interviews are conducted to understand the audience's experiences and perceptions.

Accordingly, from what I have developed so far in terms of protocol, recruited participants[2] will register all the news (understood as journalistic content about public affairs) they came across on social media and messaging apps. For each unity of information they encounter, they are expected to report: 1) the name of the social media platform; 2) type of content (text, audio, photo, video or more than one); 3) hyperlink to the original content; and 4) answer for the question: a) Did you read this unit of news? If yes: *I just read the short text on social media*; *I clicked on the hyperlink to read the whole article*; or *other reasons that should be described*. If not: *I was not interested in the topic*; *I did not have the time to read it*; and *the news source was not trustworthy*. The analytical categories of the results still need to be defined.

By analyzing the materials of the first phase and conducting the interviews afterward – in this part, topics such as algorithm recommendation systems will be discussed –, I expect to find similarities among the visual features of news that the audience accidentally came across and decides to select to read. Arguing

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[1] The *Trust and News Authenticity* develops a digital signature to be attached to journalistic content and a recognizable label for users to see if the content is authentic and verified.

[2] To preserve a certain degree of homogeneity in dealing with platforms, democracy, and news, around 20 Danes between the ages of 25 to 40 will be recruited. The participants will report to the researcher twice a day (at 12:00 and 19:00) for three days working days a week (Monday - Wednesday - Friday).

that visual elements are paramount to someone's choice on one specific news over another, my goal is to obtain insights and patterns about which visual aspects are predominant to support that decision. On this account, the findings will be considered in the development of the digital signature of the *Trust and News Authenticity,* and it may also contribute to the creation of a safer and lesser deceptive online environment to benefit journalism and democracy.

Title

Nordic digital media welfare states: A comparative audience perspective

Presenter(s)
Kim Christian Schrøder, Mark Ørsten & Mads Kæmsgaard Eberholst (Roskilde University)

Abstract
This paper discusses how citizens inform themselves, or not, in a news media landscape increasingly immersed in digital technologies. It does so by analyzing the recent historical development and contemporary state of the Nordic media model from an audience and democracy perspective. Media use is a crucial dimension of the Nordic media systems, as the ideal of 'an enlightened public with equal access to information has been a key ideal of the Nordic welfare states' (Syvertsen et al. 2014: 24). In 2014 when Syvertsen et al. published their book, two central concerns were raised as to the future of this ideal (p. 38-39). One was the possible future fragmentation of media use, specifically that in the years to come users would increasingly only consume media controlled by algorithmic dynamics, a concern which in 2022 takes the form of personalization and in some cases increasing polarization (Blach-Ørsten & Mayerhöffer, 2021; Arguedas et al. 2022). The other concern was increasing digital divides in media use in regards to age, socioeconomic status etc.

In this paper we offer a comparative longitudinal perspective on how these concerns, as well as an additional number of audience-related challenges, have played out in the Nordic countries from 2016-2022. We do so using data from the four Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden), which participate in the Reuters Digital News report, for which the authors form the Danish research team.

Our retrospective and contemporary analytical gaze will illuminate tendencies and transformations in audience behaviors and patterns of media consumption, focusing on the following topics: Preferred sources of news and pathways to news; fragmentation and polarization; audience perceptions of misinformation; the role of public service media; paying for news; news avoidance and trust in the news. As regards trust, we expect to find that in general trust in the news media is higher in the Nordic countries than in many other countries. However we also expect that users who position themselves at the political extremes in general trust news media less, though this tendency towards polarization is probably much less salient than in other countries.

In offering a cross-Nordic comparative analysis of the national audiences' consumption of news, our study will fill a gap in the news research landscape, because "there exists no common study of media habits in the Nordic countries, <as> the fairly extensive national data that exist are rarely statistically compatible. (…) Questions asked of respondents often share a number of features, but samples, survey implementation, wording of questions, and response options vary, thus preventing analytical comparisons" (Nordicom Media trends 3-2021). Because identical questionnaires are implemented across all participating countries, data from the Reuters Digital News Report can remedy this situation and, in this Nordic case study, illuminate how digital technologies shape information flows in the democratically crucial area of news and information.

Title

The model of the stratified citizen: Civic capital in digitally saturated democracies

Presenter(s)

Morten Fischer Sivertsen (Roskilde University)

Abstract

Modern media have undoubtedly changed the framework of social interactions and communicative practices in the public sphere of democratic societies, as most people can choose to be politically active about anything at any moment in time. Thus, there is a rich and expanding body of literature on what constitutes legitimate citizenship practices in different models of democracy in both the online and the offline world. But while we have a variety of ways to understand citizenship in terms of what constituents (should) do, think, feel or say, there is a felt absence of a model that factors in the social reasons for how people enact citizenship and the role of the media in enacting such forms of citizenship. Inspired by the work of Pierre Bourdieu, this presentation will present the model of the stratified citizen and the concept of civic capital.

We position our main argument by reviewing two predominant approaches within the literature. The first approach, primarily emerging from political science research, emphasises a strict repertoire of civic activities (such as voting or being informed via the so-called hard news) as the only valid ways one can aspire to be a respectable citizen, which tends to ignore the multitudes and messiness of everyday life. The second approach, which is especially prevalent within audience research of mediated citizenship, emphasises the everyday perspective, but runs a certain risk; if almost everything can be seen as an expression of citizenship, this has serious consequences for the analytical explanatory power of one's hard work. Thus, we argue that the model of the stratified citizen reconciles these opposing approaches by placing them in a relational nexus and emphasizing how both can be observed across patterns of inequality. It enables researchers to principally and analytically recognise the many forms of citizenships while simultaneously paying close empirical attention to how the symbolic order and vertical power asymmetries of society does not. In this way, our model facilitates a critical view on dominance relations in the mediated social space.

Title

Norms of digital citizenship: How citizens think they should engage politically online

Presenter(s)
Laura Leißner, Emilija Gagrčin, Katharina Heger, Christian Strippel & Martin Emmer
(Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society)

Abstract

Over the past two decades, digital media, and social media in particular, have changed and expanded the repertoire of how citizens engage politically and enact their citizenship. Much research has since focused on how citizens use these new media for political engagement. Our research group "Digital Citizenship" at the *Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society* has shifted the focus to citizens' beliefs and expectations connected to online participation. Taking up the concept of citizenship norms, we try to understand better not only what citizens *do* online, but also what they think they *should do* in order to learn more about the normative rationales behind their engagement in the digital environment.

Generally understood as a set of shared expectations of citizens' role in society (Dalton, 2008), citizenship norms shape the meaning that citizens assign to participation (Bolzendahl & Coffé, 2013). Although citizenship norms are typically conceptualized as either dutiful or engaged (Dalton, 2008), they are dynamic and undergo constant transformation under the impact of the social context in which they are negotiated, communicated, and practiced. As a main arena of political communication, social media contributed to a substantial change in how citizens experience politics, how they inform themselves about politics, and how they discuss them (Klinger & Svensson, 2015). Against this backdrop, we examine how citizenship norms emerge and evolve in the socio-technical environments of social media and how they guide participation within these environments.

In the context of the *1st Democracy & Digital Citizenship Conference*, we would like to present our research on citizenship norms in social media environments, using qualitative and quantitative data from several studies conducted over the last three years. In an interview study, we found that new, so-called *discursive citizenship norms* emerge in response to citizens' experiences in social media. For example, the norm *information care* manifests preoccupation with proper ways of informing oneself, the norm *discourse care* refers to taking ownership over the quality of the public discourse by, for example, intervening against hate speech. (Gagrčin et al., 2022).

Regarding these norms, data from our panel survey show that 77 percent of the German population consider it "very important" to actively counter hate speech online. However, such norms do not always translate immediately into subsequent action, as shown by another finding: Among the Internet users who have seen hate speech online in the previous year, only 33 percent have reported it to the platform providers and 41 percent have performed counter speech at least once (Emmer et al., 2021). In our presentation, we will discuss the theoretical and empirical implications of these findings. We are convinced that observing the development of citizenship norms in the digital realm and analyzing their impact on political behavior enables us to gain a more nuanced understanding of the transformation of citizenship in the process of digitalization.

PARALLEL SESSION 8

Trust and legitimacy in digital democracy

Title
Competing versions of trust in the making of democracy

Presenter(s)
Christopher Gad (IT University of Copenhagen)

Abstract
It is, perhaps, a truism that trust in democratic processes is crucial for their legitimacy. But how trust is made, established or maintained is a rather contested topic, both in the public discourse and in academia. In this paper, I discuss select ideas about trust and trust-generation, which I encountered as part of a larger interdisciplinary research project called *Democratic Technologies (2022-2017)*. The project's hypothesis was that it was possible to "modernize" (ie. :digitalize) the election process without losing the trust of the people and investigated the potential consequences of digitalizing casting and tallying ballots.

Research agendas in DEMTECH spanned from social theory -- ethnographic engagements with the electoral process in Copenhagen municipality --- to Computer Science research in formal logics, cryptography, security and software engineering. Computer scientists envisioned trust to be produced by specialized experts putting voting processes, systems and laws 'on trial', through e.g. white-hack hacking, the application of formal methods and security testing to voting procedures.

From the social theory perspective trust seemed rather to be continually produced and maintained in voting processes themselves -- through the cultural rituals and practices enacted by citizens as voters and election officials, and in how the process was organized. In this perspective the computer science version of trust looked primarily like the systematic application of distrust and figured as an issue which estimates maybe too much, transparency and knowledge.

My aim is to characterize and juxtapose versions of trust in order to enable reflection and discussion on how computer science thinking increasingly influence how we may think about the world and a range of social issues, including trust.

Title
Civic legitimacy and accountability in digital governance

Presenter(s)
Peter Aagaard & Birgit Jæger (Roskilde University)

Abstract
It has, for many years, been the ambition of shifting Danish governments to maintain a role as a digital frontrunner (Jæger, 2020). The impact of these efforts is a completely changed public administration and makes it reasonable to talk about a digital transformation of the Danish public sector.

However, without the citizenry's acceptance of the digital transformation of the state, the digital state will lose its legitimacy and the everyday work of the public administration will be difficult to execute.

In this paper we investigate how the Danish state act to secure civic legitimacy of the digital transformation of the state in relations to citizens by asking: Which organizations and instruments are used to build up legitimacy among citizens and to provide accountability? How is the citizens' role as digital citizens understood and described? How do citizens participate in the digital transformation?

While previous studies have focused on, among other themes, the role of technology, the political strategies (Jæger 2003, Jæger & Löfgreen 2010, Hjelholt & Schou 2017), the organizational implications (Pors 2015), or the efficiency of the digitalization (Aagaard & Pedersen 2020) this paper focuses on the legitimacy of the digital transformation in relation to the citizenry.

Legitimacy is "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman 1995, p. 574). There are many different ideas of legitimacy and accountability to consider in transformation of digital governance. That means that public policy makers experience an institutionally complicated environment of shifting demands and pressures (Black, 2008; Schillemans, 2015, 2016; Benjamin, 2010; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Schillemans & Twist, 2016).

In this paper we will consider one of the fundamental approaches to legitimacy in liberal, democratic administrative systems: The ideas of how to include citizens in accountability relations that creates civic legitimacy in transformation of digital governance. We define civic legitimacy as the kind of legitimacy citizens ascribe to governance – in this case digital governance.

To capture the changes of civic legitimacy over time, this investigation takes its point of departure in a historical perspective. In the literature of digitalization of the public administration, the development is often described as models of different stages (Lee 2010), in which the usage of technologies moves from a simple information dissemination to a digital transformation. However, in a historical perspective it is useful to construct different historical periods based on the role of citizens instead of the above-mentioned models based on the capability of technology (See Jæger 2003, Jæger & Löfgren 2010, Hjelholt & Schou 2017, Aagaard & Pedersen 2022). Here we identify distinct periods, in which citizens and the notion of civic legitimacy play different roles.

Title
The intrusion of the digital?

Presenter(s)
Peter Danholt (Aarhus University)

Abstract
We are on a daily basis met with the consequences of data and the digital. Digitization has changed the world at large and especially contemporary western societies substantially and continues to do so in a manner and pace that very few, if any, are able to fully grasp (Edwards, 2013; Hintz et al., 2019; Kitchin, 2014). We thus partake more or less willingly and consciously in the unfolding of a present and a future in which we in various ways are both subject to and active participants in the increasing digitalization and datafication of society. Consequently, and for good reasons, the digital has become a 'matter of concern' and a debated issue (Latour, 2008, Marres, 2007). An issue ripe with scandals, mishaps, crooks, vigilantes and heroes (Eubanks, 2019; O'Neil, 2016; Schäfer & Es, van, 2017). This is also implicated in different regimes of governance. We have the ethically concerned and democratic and citizen-centered politics of the old world (Europe), the libertarian and market driven (US) and the state governed totalitarian (China, Russia, etc.) and obviously hybrid versions in between. Furthermore, the digital is not 'one thing', one 'tendency' although articulated as such at the beginning of the 2000 (Castells, 2003). The digital comes in many shapes and sizes and with hugely different effects. Therefore, by inspiration of the work of Isabelle Stengers and her notion of the 'intrusion of Gaia' (the fact that we today due to climate changes are faced with a situation in which humankind is dwarfed by planetary forces), I want to propose the notion of the 'intrusion of the digital' and in a similar way, suggest that we are faced with a condition where we are dwarfed by 'the digital' (Stengers, 2015). The intrusion of the digital implies other ways of thinking and acting than those implied in both political, tech. developers and critical/deconstructive approaches to the digital. In short it entails that the digital is not always and only thought of as an instrument of (some) human will, designed by and for (some) humans and accordingly something supposedly controlled by (some) human agency. I do not mean to suggest that to think in terms of the intrusion of the digital overcomes the trouble of the digital, nor that it is 'better', but simply that we should *cultivate different ways of engaging the digital alongside one another* if we are to cope and 'live better' with the digital.

Title
Social media's influence on relations of trust between civil servants and citizens and increased permeable private and professional roles

Presenter(s)
Esther Oluffa Pedersen (Roskilde University)

Abstract
In 2021 a court case against a prominent Danish politician for fraud with EU funds was given great attention in the media. August 13, 2021 the politician was ruled guilty of fraud and appealed the ruling immediately. The next day, however, the media buzz was turned towards the judge because he had pressed the like button on Facebook as a reaction to a post from a friend who claimed that "honor has ceased to play a role in contemporary politics" exemplifying this with the fact that the convicted politician continued to be vice chairman of his political party after the verdict. The following days the politician and his team scrutinized the social media profile of the judge, found more posts with content that could be interpreted as expressing political disparagement towards the politician and his party and filed a complaint against the judge's qualification to rule impartially.
The judge deleted his profile on Facebook but the indicting posts had already been copied. In December 2021 the court of appeal ruled the judge disqualified and the court case to be repeated with an impartial judge.

The example illustrates how private use of social media can – and sometimes does – influence the professional persona. While similar use of social media content often has been practiced by social workers to detect whether specific citizens commit fraud with social welfare benefits it is novel that the professional role of civil servants are challenged by citizens who have gathered information on social media. The case illustrates how ambiguous actions on social media such as pushing the like button on Facebook can be interpreted as direct expressions of opinion. While conversations face to face or over the phone are kept in a sphere of privacy, conversations via posts and comments on social media and pushing 'like' to posts from friends take place in a semi-private space. As user one might think of one's profile on Facebook as part of one's private life. But as the case above exemplifies it can easily be turned into a public show room.

With ubiquitous social media interactions our private personas are becoming more and more exposed as semi-public. Such semi-public private profiles change the conditions for meetings between citizens and civil servants. In the presentation I will discuss how trust relations between civil servants and citizens potentially change with the option to search the private content on social
media platforms.

Title

Tides of trust and transparency: The Danish Health Authority as a case of radically transparent risk communication

Presenter(s)

Alexander Gamerdinger, Prins Marcus Valiant Lantz & Sine Nørholm Just (Copenhagen Business School/Roskilde University)

Abstract

The relative success of Danish Health Authority in encouraging vaccinations and responding efficiently to the pandemic without drastic lockdown measures has often been attributed to the high levels of institutional trust among the Danish population. However, in a crisis setting, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, high trust levels might also be eroded if national policymakers did not take immediate action. The growing literature on public authorities' ability to respond appropriately to the covid-19 pandemic connects policy measures and communicative strategies, arguing that citizens' compliance is not ensured by the prudence of a measure alone but also relies on how the measure is communicated. Focusing on the communicative dimension of pandemic response strategies, this paper explores the interrelations between the source credibility (or trust-worthiness) of public communicators, on the one hand, and citizens' trust in public authorities, on the other, positing that message transparency mediates between the two. Preparing for this exploration we, first, define the three central terms, source credibility (or ethos), audience trust, and message transparency, situating our study within existing work on their empirical articulation in the context of the covid-19 pandemic. Second, we discuss the relationship between the three concepts, generally, and as pertaining to public pandemic response strategies, more specifically.

Based on this conceptual discussion, we explore the trust-transparency dynamics in the case of the Danish Health Authority's pandemic response, investigating how this public actor used transparent communication to amplify institutional trust among different socioeconomic groups of citizens. We zoom in on the role of the Danish Health Authority's ongoing communication strategy and execution in maintaining high institutional trust among the Danish population. To do so, we employ a mixed-methods design and ask the following research questions: Does transparency lead to increasing levels of trust (quantitative)? How can communicative transparency mediate source credibility and audience trust (qualitative)?

Empirically, we have access to all Covid-19 related online communication from the Danish Health Authority during the first 100 weeks (March 2020-November 2021) as well as several national population surveys that were commissioned by the government to support their evidence-based COVID-19 decision-making. Therefore, we establish a quanti-qualitative research design that aims to contribute to the understanding of the role of transparent communication in maintaining/building trust in democratic institutions in situations of crisis and under conditions of digital mediation.

PARALLEL SESSION 9

Public governance of/with digital technologies

Title
Dark sides of data transparency: Organized immaturity after GDPR?

Presenter(s)
Frederik Schade (Copenhagen Business School)

Abstract
Organized immaturity refers to the capacity of widely institutionalized socio-technical systems to challenge qualities of human enlightenment, autonomy, and self-determination. In the context of surveillance capitalism where these qualities are continuously put at risk, data transparency is increasingly proposed as a means of restoring human maturity by allowing individuals insight and choice vis-à-vis corporate data processing. In this article, however, I draw on research on GDPR-mandated data transparency practices to argue that transparency – while potentially fostering maturity – itself risks producing new forms of organized immaturity by facilitating user ignorance, manipulation, and loss of control of personal data. Considering data transparency's relative "successes" and "failures" regarding the cultivation of maturity, I outline a set of possible remedies while arguing for a general need to develop more sophisticated ethical appreciations of transparency's complex and potentially problematic implications for organized (im)maturity in the digital age.

Title

Styles of ethicizing AI: Responsibility, controversy, and ethics in AI systems for Danish child protection

Presenter(s)

Helene Ratner and Ida Schrøder (Aarhus University)

Abstract

In this paper, we offer to rethink "responsible AI" by exploring ethical principles of responsibility as processual and continuously changing. Within the AI ethics literature, the question of whether AI is developed and used responsibly is often answered by putting a certain AI system to the test of abstract and generalized principles. While the ethical principles have their merits in offering a general language and program that can travel across different organizational contexts, it has been problematized that they teach us little about how organizations conceptualize and engage with AI ethics in organizational practices. To substantiate our move towards ethics as processual, we propose to analyze an emerging and changing ethical field through the concept of 'ethical plateau'. This concept highlights the instability of an ethical terrain with moving boundaries of what is ethically possible at a given situated time and place. We further draw on Science and Technology Studies (STS) to pinpoint how organizations – in response to various forms of critique – engage in various valuation processes of 'ethicizing', in their attempts to enact their algorithmic decisions system as ethically good. These concepts offer useful sensibilities for the analysis of how organizations' ethical considerations develop and change in a context of highly contested algorithmic decision-support systems.

Our ongoing longitudinal study of algorithmic decision support systems in child protection in Denmark illustrates how three distinct styles of ethicizing developed across the three cases and finalized the AI systems by devaluing them as unethical – i.e., as irresponsible AI systems. Whereas the present ethical plateau for AI systems in Danish child protection emerged as the first case became controversial, the ethical plateau continuous to change, create, and terminate anticipated and unanticipated possibilities for the ethically "good" AI system.

Title

Introducing a model for (the future) Data Welfare State: Critical approaches to the datafication in the Nordic welfare states

Presenter(s)

Rikke Andreassen, Anne Kaun & Kaarina Nikunen (Roskilde University/Södertörn University/Tampere University)

Abstract

During the previous years – and intensified by the covid pandemic – digital tools have increasingly been employed to facilitate everything from health to education. This rapid digitalisation enhances the already ongoing process of datafication, namely turning ever increasing aspects of our identities, practices and societal structures into data.

In this paper, we focus on the Nordic welfare states and the consequences for implementation of digitalisation in welfare systems. Similar to the rest of the world, vast amounts of Nordic data are gathered automatically from our everyday activities, including shopping, travel, media consumption, and engagement with social media. We are living in an age of 'infoglut' and 'datafication' (Andrejevic, 2013; van Dijck, 2014), in which our feelings, identities, and affiliations are tracked and analysed. In the Nordic setting, this is combined with high degree of public trust in Nordic institutions, underscoring citizens' general acceptance of a very high level of public data registration. In the Nordic countries, a great amount of data is available on all citizens; information on health, education, employment, tax, crime, and other matters are linked to individuals via their CPR number (Denmark), personal number (Sweden), and social security number (Finland), registering and documenting their engagement with both public and private sectors (Ustek-Spilda & Alastalo, 2020). This vast and growing mass of data holds promise for large-scale digitalisation; and, most importantly, Nordic governments are currently experimenting with implementing various AI tools to support what they believe will be a faster and more efficient handling of welfare cases and welfare provisions. In this paper, we explore how the ideology of dataism (van Dijck 2014) is appropriated in different areas of the Nordic welfare states.

Through an analysis of empirical examples of datafication in three important areas of the welfare state – social benefits, public service media and corrections – we draw attention to possibilities and inherent problems of datafication in the Nordic welfare states.
In doing so, we question the Nordic governments' belief (ideology) that data can provide accurate and nuanced information about human behaviour, and therefore fairly define and predict future welfare needs and provisions. I.e. our analysis throws critical light on automated decision-making processes and illustrates how the ideology of 'dataism' has become entangled with ideas of fairness, efficiency and objective welfare provision.

The paper enquires into the specificities of the Nordic welfare states, highlighting the legal frameworks and historical trajectories of institutional trust that must be considered in any exploration of datafication. In order to do so, we draw on previous work on 'Media welfare state (Syvertsen et al 2014) and develop the notion of, and future model for, *the data welfare state*. We introduce four pillars needed to foster democracy and trust in datafied era: 1) justice and non-bias in processes of datafication; 2) decommodification, that is, freedom from commercial logic; 3) data diversity acknowledging different needs of citizens and residents; and 4) transparency on the datafication process providing sustainable and meaningful information for citizens and residents.

Title

Internet and democratic participation in Morocco: A case study

Presenter(s)

Reda El Fellah (Ibn Zohr University)

Abstract

The euphoria triggered by the "internet miracle" and the promise of a world of abundant and transparent information has led to disillusionment. In fact, online accessibility to political debate and e-participation opportunities in the public affairs has not been converted to effective participation. The political use of the Internet has shown that internet cannot profoundly change the exercise of citizenship. Recent studies have demonstrated that the network tends to reproduce the same balance of power and to strengthen the position of leaders.

Can the use of Internet positively impact the participatory democracy and contribute to the reinforcement of citizenship? the issue is sharply debated to the extent that the internet has become a subject of political science.

The new digital era is marked by an overload in the available information, increase of misinformation and manipulation of public opinion. Also, the political use of internet may deepen the "civic divide" between those involved in the political debate and those the least politicized leading ultimately to reproduce the same scheme of influence on decision-making. Furthermore, the operating mode of internet and its applications constitute a real threat to the private sphere.

In Morocco, the political reforms introduced by the 2011 Constitution have reinforced the principles of citizenship and participatory democracy, while emphasizing the increased role of citizen's participation in public affairs. In this respect, the Internet, by its decentralized and egalitarian nature could be potentially an effective tool to encourage more involvement of social actors and citizens in the elaboration, the implementation and the evaluation of public policies. The present paper aims to investigate the opportunities for civic and political use of the Internet in Morocco in order to reinforce the civic and participatory democracy. The question of research is related to the pertinence of digital means with regard to citizens and civil society's participation in the public policy phases.

The method of induction in addition to quantitative and qualitative methods will be applied in order to draw results and conclusions linked to the question of research

PARALLEL SESSION 10

Data bodies/digital panopticon

Title

The bio-citizen: changing notions of citizenship in the aftermath of the pandemic

Presenter(s)
Jakob Linaa Jensen (Aarhus University)

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the entire world full force in 2020. Governments across the world responded with lockdowns, closing of borders, regulations of movements and regimes of tests and later vaccinations. Where strict population regulations are commonly found in countries like China and to a certain degree in the rest of Asia, it has been the exception in Europe and North America for a better part of a century. Politicians argued that the pandemic and threat of major disturbances of the health system called for swift response and a state of emergency.

Although the degree and duration of regulations varied across countries, measures taken were often at the edge of constitutional rights. In Denmark, for instance, experts in the Constitution still discuss whether restrictions on associations and closing of the courts were breaches of the constitution. The pandemic regulations with restrictions, monitoring, registration and limits to movement resembles the regime described by Michel Foucault in his famous description of the regulations of a plague-ridden city in late Medieval France:

"The plague-stricken town, traversed throughout with hierarchy, surveillance, observation, writing; the town immobilized by the functioning of an extensive power that bears in a distinct way over all individual bodies – this is the utopia of the perfectly governed city" (Foucault, 1978: 198).

The pandemic regime, however, is only the most visible example of a bio-political order on the rise in Western societies, where increased surveillance based on digital and networked technologies is legitimized by reasons of order, security and safety (Andrejevic, 2019). For instance, the former Danish minister of justice Nick Hækkerup has outright claimed that "surveillance leads to more freedom" (Folketinget, 2020). This and similar claims challenge traditional concepts of democracy and citizenship where freedom is seen as an intrinsic value closely connected to agency, autonomy and personal sovereignty. Thus, the expanding biopolitical regime in the aftermath of the pandemic challenges both liberal concepts of citizenship based on civil rights and republican and liberal concepts of citizenship based on autonomy and personal development.

This paper is a conceptual discussion of the post-pandemic challenges to traditional concepts of citizenship. It is supported by an analysis of regulatory digital practices during the pandemic, for instance systems of testing, vaccination and mutual surveillance, and a critical discussion of the related societal debate. In the end it is discussed whether digital bio-politics might be integrated with liberal and republican notions of citizenship without challenging values of freedom and autonomy.

Title

Datafied female health experiences: The emergence and development of femtech as a topic of concern in Danish public debate

Presenter(s)
Sara Dahlman, Sine Nørholm Just, Nanna Würtz Kristiansen & Prins Marcus Valiant Lantz
(Roskilde University)

Abstract

men and boys (Perez, 2019). Women are underrepresented in medical trials (Geller et al., 2006; Geller et al., 2011) and in medical school curriculums (Perez, 2019), which installs the male body and its reactions to medicine and treatment as the norm. Simultaneously, health issues related to the female body are understudied, rendering issues like PMS, endometriosis, autoimmune diseases, and complications after pregnancy and childbirth intrinsic to womanhood.

Against this background, it has been suggested that femtech, technologies that address women's health, could be a solution to the gender inequality in health care (Agarwal, 2021). Femtech is a broad category of innovative products and services that includes, among others, technologies for fertility self-tracking, digital pregnancy and nursing counseling, online menopause health platforms, pelvic health technologies, and ovarian-, breast-, and cervical cancer diagnosis (Tonti, 2019). By collecting data on women's health, femtech ostensibly empowers individuals to make better informed choices, contributes to dismantling taboos linked to the female body, and furthers the understanding of and ability to resolve women's health issues (Weiss, 2018; Agarwal, 2021). Thus, there are strong indications of a discourse that posits femtech as an "unquestionably positive process, devoid of dangers and beneficial to all" (Kuntsman et al., 2019, p. 2) – what Lupton (2014) names the techno-utopia of digital health solutions.

While femtech is gaining momentum within the industry, the academic interest in the topic has been rather narrowly focused on self-tracking; investigating, for example, women's experiences of fertility self-tracking (Grenfell et al., 2020; Hamper, 2020; De la Busso et al., 2021), self-tracking as a form for biopower (Sanders, 2017), menstrual tracking as body politics (Della Bianco, 2021), and femtech apps as enablers of participatory surveillance (Lupton, 2015; Barassi, 2017). In this article,

we will shift the emphasis from personal experiences of self-tracking to the interrelations of everyday practices and public discourses. Situating discourses of individual empowerment/surveillance within the conceptual context of what Castoriadis (1987) terms social imaginaries, we ask: how are issues of datafied female health experiences articulated in Danish public discourse? Empirically, we work with a large dataset of Danish media coverage of algorithmic technologies in the past 10 years (2011-2021). Methodologically, we locate coverage of femtech within this dataset and analyze the resulting subset, beginning with a datasprint workshop (Jensen et al., 2017), which enables a descriptive analysis of the emergence and development of femtech as a topic of concern. On this basis, we critically examine currently dominant imaginaries of femtech and discuss the resulting entanglements of media and health in Danish female citizens' everyday experiences.

Title
Constructing the biometric citizen through facial recognition and visual open-source material

Presenter(s)

Mette Mortensen (University of Copenhagen)

Abstract

Facial recognition technologies draw on the intricate relationship between face, identity and identification, which has been used for centuries for purposes of control, surveillance and criminal investigation (e.g. Caplan & Torpey, 2018). These technologies contribute to construing citizenship by establishing the identity of individuals and tracking their actions, presence at events, movements, etc (Bragias et al., 2021; Norval & Prasopoulou, 2017). They enable the identification and surveillance of citizens and are used in combination with publicly available images from different media, contexts and domains of life. For example, the police uses facial recognition technologies as real time surveillance and compares the biometrics of an individual with existing records from driver's licenses and other official records as well as with social media images (Bradford et al., 2020). Facial recognition technologies are easily available, and also used by non-state actors such as private citizens, social media, news media and others with a social, political or commercial interest in identifying citizens.

The deployment of facial recognition technologies has raised human rights concerns. For example, Amnesty International has called for this instrument of "mass surveillance" to be banned because it "..turns our identities against us and undermines human rights" (Amnesty International, 2021). Facial recognition, on par with other identification technologies, is susceptible to human error and abuse of power that tend to disproportionately effect people who are already vulnerable, e.g., facial recognition technologies developed in Western countries might have the racial bias of being less accurate for non-Caucasian groups (Bragias et al., 2021, p. 1640).

As an empirical example of the far-reaching ramifications of facial recognition technologies used by state- and non-state actors, this paper studies the large-scale production and dissemination of identificatory evidence in relation to the riots on the U.S. Capitol Hill on January 6, 2021, to overturn the defeat of sitting president Donald Trump. Image sharing on social media profoundly impacted the course and documentation of this event, and facial recognition technologies were used extensively in subsequent legal, journalistic and citizen-led investigations to identify perpetrators and hold them responsible for their actions.

Title
The myth of "dataism" and the construction of citizen-centered cities

Presenter(s)
Bárbara da Rosa Lazarotto (VU Brussels)

Abstract
For the last decade, there has been a rise in the idea that data might be the solution for a more objective and effective public sector, based on it, cities have become "smart" increasing dramatically the control, classification, and prediction of citizens' actions. In order to create improved machine learning systems, there has been an increase in public-private partnerships, generating new power relations.

Data accumulation does not equal citizen participation or citizen-centered cities. It only means that every single action in a city can be transformed into data and stored, so eventually, it can be used for the purposes of the public administration. This per se causes a series of consequences that affect constitutional rights, social rights, and data privacy rights, since individuals are constantly being surveilled and every single act is "datafied" and transformed into a number.

In this context, when the public sector aims to deliver better services, they often regard citizens as consumers that demand better solutions to old problems, yet governments do not consider citizens as stakeholders when implementing smart technologies in cities. At an initial stage, frequently citizens are not taken into consideration, instead of politicians and public servants "step into their shoes".

Consequently, the participation of citizens happens at a later stage of the implementation of smart cities, usually after the idea of a device is already developed and the solution is also presented to them. This, late participation does not embody the diversity of society and the different opinions, ideas, and solutions that might come from them. Instead, it reflects the perception of a few of what society wants and needs, causing a gap between the public sector and society, transforming citizens into disempowered data generators.

Thus, this proposal aims to discuss "the myth of dataism" and how this disempowers individuals by transforming them into data generators at the same time it aims to point out some solutions to increase citizen participation when implementing smart city solutions. These solutions may start with how public policy is designed and goes into data minimization as a tool for individual control of data and privacy solutions.