



--- Call for Papers and Panels ---

*Annual conference of the Institute for Social Movement Studies
in co-operation with the Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society*

*15./16.11.2019, Weizenbaum-Institut
Hardenbergstraße 32, 10623 Berlin*

Today, protest and counter-protest, rule and resistance can only be thought of in the context of a digitized society, its particular opportunities, dynamics and challenges.

Digital communication determines our everyday life and the ways we inform, argue and express ourselves. Hashtags, Instagram Stories and YouTube videos are not only used today for self-portrayal, they are also central to collective action and political commitment. Protests at least have the potential to become globally visible through digital communication through images, tweets and streams. There are increasing numbers of digital movement entrepreneurs combining financial and political interests, who have a head start in the competition for attention on the Internet.

Digital interactions change our social relationships and thus also the form and functioning of social movements and protests. The digital context allows mobilizations to be initiated with less organizational effort; to participate is sometimes just a click away. Movements, only become visible and responsive through their digital work: as mass movements, they require digital co-ordination. This can turn power relations upside down. Thus, movements and marginalized groups have new opportunities to articulate their ideas and interests. And yet, the question arises which concerns and organizational methods benefit most from the digital sphere – and which lose the struggle for attention.

Recently, we have become aware of other downsides of digital organization: digital hate cultures. They use commercial platforms to disguise supremacist ideologies and set up their own forums where they co-ordinate political campaigns and attacks on political opponents. There is more surveillance and automation is increasing. Thus, the digital constellation harbors dangers such as isolation, repression, stigmatization, slander and censorship as well as an opportunity structure for right-wing actors – and for resistance from progressive civil society. In all cases, social networks create transregional public spheres that are indispensable and that influence politics and its cultural foundations.

This year's annual conference of the Institute for Social Movement Studies is dedicated to the challenges and opportunities for protest and movements in the digital age.

Together, we ask: How do we understand protest in the digital context? How do organization and mobilization differ and complement one another online and offline? Does the structure of digital platforms have benefits for particularly reactionary movements? How can digital spaces strengthen emancipatory policy approaches? What methodological and empirical challenges are associated with research into movements and protest on the Internet? Possible contributions include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Online-offline interactions: mechanisms and processes
- Mobilization via platforms (messaging, image boards, video platforms, deep web)
- Movement entrepreneurship in the Internet
- Visual strategies (memes, GIFs, videos)
- Internet movements and 'digital (movement) parties'
- Online subcultures and their influence on the political mainstream
- Digital repression and surveillance by state actors
- Spatial production and spatial understanding in a digital context
- Hate speech, filter bubbles, echo chamber, algorithms and their anti-democratic dangers
- Civil Society 2.0: Digital street work, solidarity and counter hegemony
- Practices that explicitly reject the digital and their challenges
- Methodological challenges, ethical research questions and approaches to research
- Transnational community building via digital platforms (movements and diaspora activism)
- Targeted manipulation of political discourses and opinions
- New forms of organization, digital repertoires and campaigns
- Theoretical contributions to protest, digitalization and surveillance capitalism

The **conference languages are German and English**. The conference invites **alternative forms of presentation**, such as performances or exhibitions, and activist contributions. We encourage especially young researchers and women to register.

The aim is to publish selected contributions in German and English. Abstracts for individual contributions (max. 250 words) or panel proposals with up to four paper abstracts must be submitted by **26 July 2019** at: konferenz2019@protestinstitut.eu.

