

Call for Papers for Workshop Participation:

Taking Sides – Theories, Practices, Cultures of Participation in Dissent (Konstanz, GER, June 28-30, 2018)

The research group “Media and Participation” invites participants, especially early career researchers (PhD, Post Doc, MA), to join us for the conference “Taking Sides – Theories, Practices, Cultures of Participation in Dissent” and the adjoining workshops. Please find a description of the event, the guidelines for contributions and accommodation funding below.

Description

The Conference “Taking Sides” will explore different perspectives on dissent, while understanding practices, cultures and theories of resistance, dispute and opposition as inherently participative. The concept of side-taking will hence be investigated in different facets. Firstly, as assuming a position/opinion in opposition to another or even the affiliation with a cause or unpopular standpoint. Secondly, in a play on words, thinking about side-taking also includes the taking of sites as a manner of protest, occupation, appropriation or acquisition. Thirdly, taking a side implies an active decision, rather than a circumstantial factor, that involves subjects’ positions as well as their subjectification as such.

Under these preliminary considerations, questions arise, of how dissent can be feasible as well as thinkable. Is there an option to oppose without automatically being part of the opposed? It could be argued that any ‘contra’ inevitably reiterates or even reinforces its ‘pro’. The affirmative aspect of practices of dissent, when they are inscribed or want to be visible in their respective discourse, also demands attention. Additionally, historic and contemporary moments in which dissent becomes resistance or in which dissent is dissolved are compelling. Are self-proclaimed ‘alternatives’ really distinct, or are they merely substitutes that automatically turn into standards and become normative over time? When does objection to something further close an issue, when does it become open, when renitence builds up an all sides? It is also debatable, who or which processes mark something as being the antipode of an issue, which automatically is then made the norm. How can we describe the processes of inclusion and exclusion that take place when “being against” by itself draws a line?

By focusing on four different fields of dissent, the conference participants will put different modes of resistance up for discussion: Queer Thinking, Decolonizing Knowledge, Media Activism and Critique. “Queer Thinking” includes aspects of the body as a political instance, the problematizing of identity and subjectivity building of individuals and groups by gender hierarchies, two-gender hegemony or heteronormativity. Decolonizing Knowledge problematizes different aspects of knowledge making. Next to the pivotal aspect of coloniality and the related cultural, racial, sexual and geographical dichotomies we are focusing on aesthetical and activist practices of knowledge making. “Media Activism” will discuss (micro-)practices of dissent which can also focus on the importance of the (social) media and practices within social media communities, which are directed against industry standards as well as tactics that are positioned to oppose a participation by default. “Critique” will ask about the (im)possibilities to take up an external position, and highlights a critique from within that reflects its situation, ‘ecologies of practices’ and partiality. The discussion will therefore touch upon contemporary issues, recent protests and movements, artistic subversion and dissent, online activism as well as historic developments and elemental theories of dissent.



Papers & Workshops

In order to facilitate a fruitful debate, the mode of the conference itself will include four main papers by leading researchers in their respective fields: Queer Thinking (Athena Athanasiou, Athens), Decolonizing Knowledge (Emma Perez, Texas (inquired)), Media Activism (Gabiella Coleman, Montreal) and Critique (Judith Revel, Paris). These four experts will then be joined by the workshop participants and their preliminary contributions, which will be brought forth in a workshop environment.

The four workshops will run parallel and be a half-day event, following the 4 corner stone presentations. Please note: there will be no presentations in a classical sense within the workshops. Accepted papers will be distributed to all other participants and integrated into the workshop layout. We hope to thus encourage all attendants to debate each area further and in depth.

Through the contribution of additional “agents of dissent” the results or focal points of the workshops will be drawn together in a final session, so that the conference can close with an assembly of open questions and issues while highlighting common theories, practices and cultures of participation and dissent.

Contribution Formats & Funding

All participants are asked to submit

1. Impulse paper (1 page) focusing on how the conference/specific workshop/speakers relate to your research interests or work. Please indicate which workshop suits you best.
2. Short Biography.
3. Indication on whether you want to apply for founded accommodation.

The “Media and Participation” Research Group will be able to fund rooms for 16 workshop participants (4 for each topic) during the conference in Konstanz. The selection will be based on the submitted “Impulse Paper”. There will be not travel reimbursement for workshop participants.* Participants who do not need this funding are kindly asked to indicate that accordingly (see above). If you are planning to attend in any case, please let us know beforehand as well.

Papers must be written in English. Submissions will be reviewed by at least two members of the “Media and Participation” research group. Accepted papers will be distributed to all other participants and integrated into the workshop layout.

Deadlines & Dates

Paper Submission Deadline: April 30 2018

Notification of acceptance: May 15 2018

Date of Conference & Workshops: June 28-30 2018

Organizers

“Media and Participation” Research Group: Subprojects 3 “Smartphone-Communities: Participation as Promise and Imposition” (Konstanz University, GER) and 5 “Micropractices: Forms of Resistance and Engagement” (ZHDK Zurich, CH).

please direct your papers and questions to: anne.ganzert@uni.kn

*The closest airport is Zurich, so please make sure you can travel to Switzerland and Germany, if you are traveling from abroad.