Dis/connection
Conflicts, Activism and Reciprocity
Online and Beyond
27–28 September 2018
Uppsala University

* Cultural Matters Group

democracy, peace & justice
Dear Colleagues,

It is our pleasure to welcome all of you to the Symposium Dis / Connection: Conflicts, Activism and Reciprocity Online and Beyond organized by the Cultural Matters Group based here at Department of Sociology, Uppsala University. The goal of this two-day event is to gather researchers, stimulate discussion and scholarly exchange about one of the fundamental aspects of social relationships, namely connection. For over the past two decades or so digital networks became increasingly embedded in the everyday life and subsequently transformed many aspects of social living – from intimate and private relations through collective action to industries and social structures. At the same time, the goal of this event is to tackle the idea and question of disconnection – a multifaceted concept which has gained public and scholarly attention in recent years. As already noted in our call for abstracts, the purpose of this symposium is to stimulate the discussion on the gains, costs and possibilities of ethical life in the culture of hyperconnectivity. The aim is thus also to address both positive and negative aspects of dis/connected living and to better understand how it can possibly give rise to and facilitate social inclusion and meaningful societal exchange.

The symposium programme consists of international and local researchers and promises intellectually stimulating time and great opportunity for networking, new partnerships and friendships. This event will take place at Campus Engelska Parken (The English Campus) and the University Main Building (Universitetshuset) and is arranged by the Cultural Matters Group with support from Uppsala Forum on Democracy, Peace and Justice at Uppsala University.

We warmly welcome you in Uppsala and hope that you will enjoy your stay in here. And if you’re on social media, use #disconnectionUU.

The Organizing Committee
David Redmalm
Magdalena Kania Lundholm
Greti-Iulia Ivana
disconnection@soc.uu.se

The event is supported by Uppsala Forum on Democracy, Peace and Justice at Uppsala University. Uppsala University has a longstanding tradition of conducting leading research in the fields of democracy, peace and justice. Uppsala Forum facilitates cooperation, coordination and mutual exchange among the departments, centres and faculties conducting research within the aforementioned fields of study.
The Cultural Matters Group

Pinging the Self: Echolocation as a Theory of Connection and Disconnection

Hacker States: Four Arguments Why State Hacking is Bad

Symposium schedule

Conference venues

Getting from the train station to the venue

Info for presenters, room equipment and Wi-Fi

Travelling to Uppsala

10 places to visit in Uppsala

List of abstracts

[Session 1] Dis/Connection: A new way of life in the 21st century?

[Session 2] Dis/connection: Social media and critique

[Session 3] Theorizing dis/connected social ties

[Session 4] Connected capitalist futures: Hope, optimism and death

[Session 5] Normative dis/connections

[Session 6] Connection, engagement and activism

[Session 7] Dis/connected love and intimacy

List of paper presenters
The Cultural Matters Group

Cultural sociology is a broad international field firmly rooted in classical sociology. Investigating what holds people, groups and societies together – or apart – has kept sociologists going from the early start and the ubiquitous role of culture in all human interaction has been thoroughly investigated. As sociality is produced and ordered culturally, culture matters to all social interaction, structuring and reproduction. Culture can be defined as a system of meaning, materiality and practice, a sphere and a force that should be studied in its own right. Investigations within the field of cultural sociology often deal with group specific manifestations or with cultural production within media, art or science. But the approach may be applied to almost any social phenomenon; markets, infrastructures, climate change or militarism. Understanding how culture works in these and other arenas is critical to any sociological investigation of power relations, inequalities, identities and politics. Thus, meaning making, materiality and practice are at the very heart of cultural sociological research, and provides the focus for the Cultural Matters group.

The research group Cultural Matters was established 2014 and aims at empirical investigations, methodological exploration and conceptual generation within cultural sociology. First, we seek to enrich and further the field by transgressing the – internationally established – boundaries within the field of cultural sociology (eg. American vs French traditions, New York vs Chicago, psychoanalysis vs pragmatism, sociology of culture and arts vs. general cultural sociology). Enriching cultural sociological research, the transgressive strategy also includes creating connections with sociological sub-fields such as for example sociology of culture, symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology. The strategy also moves beyond sociology and involves synergetic couplings with other disciplines such as economics, gender studies, history, ethnology, biology, etc. Second, we also seek to advance cultural sociological research through collaborations outside of academia. In order to enrich the methodological approach (sociology as art, social science fiction, new participatory methods), we learn from practitioners within fields of cultural production, such as film makers, authors and actors. The benefits with such transgressive undertakings are both theoretical – furthering cultural sociological theory - and empirical: exploring social phenomena and sociological problems in new ways.

The Cultural Matters group thus invest in a diversity of empirical focus and theoretical perspectives. Through specific and innovative empirical studies and collaborations within and beyond the research group, we demonstrate how cultural sociological approaches to meaning, practice and materiality, push the understanding and explanation of social phenomena and sociological problems.
Pinging the Self: Echolocation as a Theory of Connection and Disconnection

Annette Markham, keynote lecture 1, September 27, 13:15 in the Humanities Theatre. Essay reprinted with permission from annettemarkham.com.

I think, therefore I am;  
I speak, therefore I am;  
I am perceived, therefore I am;  
I am responded to, therefore I am.

(paraphrased from my essay on the politics, methods, and ethics of representation in online ethnography, 2005)

In early days of the Internet, Richard McKinnon remarked that it is no longer adequate to say “I think, therefore I am” (invoking Descartes) or even “I speak, therefore I am” (invoking the linguistic turn, generally). In the internet age, he said, the more appropriate phrase is “I am perceived, therefore I am.” The symbolic interactionist in me pushed further to say that if we take the dialogic process seriously, the phrase should actually be: “I am responded to, therefore I am,” whereby we give full attention to the continual dynamic of the relational self. The social negotiation of self is made more visible by the traces of texts, tweets, and emojis that evidence this dynamic. The computational aspect of this social construction process is highlighted—but perhaps made more mysterious—through the appearance of advertisements that are well targeted to our interests.

Vulnerability in this epoch is being disconnected. Disconnecting from what is perceived as a steady stream of identity pings leaves us bereft of the continual marking of boundaries that mark the edges of the Self. This ontology of echo-locating the Self through constant “call and response” can be summarized in the quote above. When we have no response, and our self is identified through the flow of responses, we can feel bereft, vulnerable, non-existent.

Let me back up to summarize a bit of how I come to focus on disconnection as a way of getting closer to a key characteristic of digital existence.

In 1997, I finished an ethnographic study of users who described themselves as ‘heavy users’ of the internet. Based on my analysis of their everyday discourses, I developed a framework for thinking about everyday relations between humans and their (digital)(internet) technologies, which included three main categories of tool, place, and way of being. In 1996, it was easy to understand how people interpreted the internet as a “tool”, extending the senses or limbs in prosthetic fashion. The conceptualization of the internet as “place” was likewise common, fostered not least by popular depictions of ‘cyberspace’ in fiction and the use of architectural sensibilities to design community interactions. One could enter distinctive places of the internet and experience a “sense
of presence.” In my 1994-1997 study, very few experienced the internet as a “way of being,” a term I chose to describe:

> a transparent state wherein the self, information technology, everyday life, and other are vitally connected, co-existent. Technology does not hold a position as object outside the agency of the human. Rather, the categories are collapsed, to varying degrees. (Markham, 2003, p. 11)

It is now well understood that because digital technologies have become somewhat ubiquitous and banal, they have become both less visible and more influential. And as we rely more and more on them, they become a way of being. But what does this mean, separate from its categorization along some sort of spectrum from tool or place (externalized) to a way of being (naturalized)? How does the technical or digital function in the continual construction and negotiation of identity and selfhood?

We could say that the body (or the traditional (western) site of authenticity or reality) which is seen as separate from technology in both the tool and place frames, becomes seamlessly interwoven with the digital. At any and all points thereafter, the technological infrastructure must break down, be removed, or shift radically in order for it to be noticed. This could bring us to Haraway, Hayles, or other posthumanist/technofeminists, whose work over the years insists we have always been cyborgs.

But for me, the question is how the self in a digitally saturated society is negotiated through the processes and elements of connectivity. For me, the seemingly seamless ‘always on’ state of connectivity is, at the more granular level, a process of continual echolocation, in the way we might think of radar, whereby the outline of an object in space is determined by sending a steady stream of sound signals and listening to the quality of the echo.

At the micro-interactional level, we can see this constant radar pinging to find the self. As I have found in five years of ethnographic and phenomenological study of around 1,500 youth regarding their everyday digital media, this is not seen not, as expected, through the process of being connected (or swimming in water), but being disconnected. We know that disrupting the flow of affirmation and reaffirmation creates what in psychological terms we might label anxiety and cognitive dissonance, especially for youth. The fear of disconnection is sometimes simplified as FOMO, or fear of missing out. But in their poignant narratives, the vulnerability is more meaningful and disruptive³.

“I keep reaching for my phone, even though I know it’s not connected. I don’t know why.”

“I just want people to know I’m out there, that I exist.”

“I’m so mad at myself. Why am I so obsessed with getting instant responses?”
Being disconnected doesn’t just cut off communication from others, it puts the body in doubt. This is not like removing one of our senses or having a limb ripped off. Rather, the body suddenly appears as a discrete, separate, and isolated object. Disconnecting can bring on a state of extreme vulnerability, then, since there’s no continual Other with whom you’re bouncing off continual information pings. Of course, one retains physical self/other interactions, but the core ontological delineation of Self is predicated on a continual differentiation through the continual call and response of echolocation.

These are early thoughts. I’m interested in pursuing this idea that in an era of constant connectivity and ‘always on’ or more importantly, ‘always available’ internet, mapping the body occurs as we receive feedback from continual flows of information. I’m also interested in whether or not the metaphor of ultrasound or radar might resonate.

Notes:
1. I use this declarative phrase for provocation purposes only. I am aware and troubled by my focus here on vulnerability in what is essentially a privileged cycle of connectivity.
2. Sorry for all the glossing, I can provide sources on request.
3. The quotes are representative of a common pattern, but hardly evocative in this limited space, in hundreds of stories from youth, I get a sense of intense cognitive dissonance and profound anxiety around disconnecting.

Annette Markham is Professor of Information Studies at Aarhus University, Denmark & Affiliate Professor of Digital Ethics in the School of Communication at Loyola University, Chicago. Markham studies digital identities, relationships and cultures, and has published extensively on the methodology and ethics of digital research. Among her publications are the groundbreaking Life Online (1998, AltaMira) and Internet Inquiry (2009, Sage) written together with Nancy K. Baym.
Hacker States: Four Arguments Why State Hacking is Bad

Adam Fish, keynote lecture 2, September 27, 15:15, in the Humanities Theatre

In the recent past, rogue hacktivists captured our imagination with their bravado, success, and political values. Recently, however, a new hacker has gained prominence, one that is also motivated by politics but financially supported by the state.

Based on several years of fieldwork with hackers in court rooms, ethical hacking workshops, and elsewhere, I examine why both authoritarian and democratic state hacking is deleterious to the legitimacy of the state, the legal system, “ethical” capitalism, and the democratic process itself.

I argue that state hacking is detrimental to democratic elections, the integrity of the security services, transparency in government, privacy for the individual, the separation of public and private militaries, the judicial system, and the development of ethical cyber-security practices.

State hacking is harmful because it provides unparalleled advantage to rulemakers who exist in the shadows of government while delegitimizing citizen-led government.

The state’s monopoly on violence now extends online.

Protest, refusal, obfuscation, disconnection, and regulation are legitimate responses. Yet, despite the prosecutorial purges, the draconian sentences, and the terrifying abilities of the state to find, interrogate, turn, and incarcerate hacktivists, our best collective option is the creation of alternative infrastructure, mesh utopias, and pirate webs. Brief moments of encrypted openness and openness may follow. The hackers who create tools for espionage and destruction can also engineer technologies for collaboration and creativity.

We must ask ourselves what comes after this internet—highly commodified, surveilled, manipulated. This internet kludge is us, our rhizomatic senses extend through light and electrons. Another internet is possible.

Adam Fish is cultural anthropologist, video producer, and senior lecturer in the Sociology Department at Lancaster University who investigates cultures of media production and digital engineering. He employs ethnographic, participatory, and creative methods to explore how political values are created, revisited, revised, rejected, or confirmed in relationship to labour with digital technologies: video, the internet, and newer platforms such as drones. His book Technoliberalism (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) describes his ethnographic research on the politics of internet video in Hollywood and Silicon Valley. His co-authored book After the Internet (Polity, 2017) reimagines the internet from the perspective of grassroots activists, citizens, and hackers on the margins of political and economic power. His co-authored book Hacker States (MIT Press, 2019) is about how state hacking and hacktivist prosecution impacts democracy.
### Symposium schedule

#### Thursday 27 at the Humanities Theatre, English Park Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13:15</td>
<td>[Keynote lecture 1] Annette Markham: Pinging the Self: Echolocation as a Theory of Connection and Disconnection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:45</td>
<td>Coffee and something sweet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:15</td>
<td>[Keynote lecture 2] Adam Fish: Anthropology/Atmosphere/Anthropocene: Drones, Disruptive Justice, and the Disruption of the Earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:30</td>
<td>Coffee and a vitamin boost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:00</td>
<td>[Session 1] Dis/connection: A new way of life in the 21st century?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:30</td>
<td>A dinner buffet is served outside of the Humanities Theatre. Performances by Kalle Landegren and World of Dog.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Friday 28 at the University Main Building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:15</td>
<td>[Session 2] Dis/connection: Social media and critique Room VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Session 3] Theorizing dis/connected social ties Room VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>Coffee and sandwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15</td>
<td>[Session 4] Connected capitalist futures: Hope, optimism and death Room VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Session 5] Normative dis/connections Room XI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45</td>
<td>Lunch (at own expense)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00</td>
<td>[Session 6] Connection, engagement and activism Room XI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Session 7] Dis/connected love and intimacy Room XI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30</td>
<td>Farewell words in room VIII</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conference venues

Route from the Humanities theatre (Humanistiska teatern) to the University Main Building (Universitetshuset). "Uppsala domkyrka", the big cathedral in the centre of the city, can be used as a landmark – it’s seen from virtually wherever you are.
Getting from the train station to the venue
Info for presenters, room equipment and Wi-Fi

All rooms are equipped with audio-visual devices: projectors, speakers and PC computers. Presenters are encouraged to familiarize with the equipment in advance. Presenters who want to use their own computers need to bring their own adapters (such as power adapters and Mac VGA adapters). If you have questions about your specific session, get in touch with your session chair. If you have general questions, send an email to david.redmalm@soc.uu.se or disconnection@soc.uu.se.

Parallel sessions consist of three to four presentations of no more than 15 minutes each, followed by either 5 minutes of questions after each presentation, or a joint discussion at the end of the session. Chairs will introduce the session and presenters, manage the time and moderate the discussion.

The campus has Eduroam. If you don’t have an Eduroam account, use this step-by-step guide to get a 24-hour guest account.

1. Connect to the WiFi network UU-Guest
2. The following log in box appears automatically when you connect to the wireless network. If the log in window does not appear, open a new browser window.
3. Click Create new account to get a 24-hour account.
4. Enter your first and last name and your mobile phone number. Enter International number with +CC. Click Register.
5. You will receive a text message with username and password.
6. Enter these in the window that appears and click Sign in.
7. Accept Guest User Policy.
8. You now have access to the Internet for 24 hours.
Travelling to Uppsala

Travelling to Uppsala by air
Stockholm Arlanda International Airport is the airport closest to Uppsala. It is located between Uppsala and Stockholm, 35 km south of Uppsala. From Arlanda Airport, you can comfortably continue to Uppsala with either the airport buses or direct trains.

The airport bus 801 leaves every 30 minutes (bus fare approx. SEK 100). The ride takes 30 minutes and stops at Uppsala Railway Station. Information about bus tickets. You can also take the train from Arlanda (Sky City) to Uppsala. The trip takes 18 minutes and costs around SEK 150.

Going by taxi costs approx. SEK 600 and takes about 30 minutes. Always use taxis with signs on top of the car. Tips are included in the fare. Ask for a fixed price. Payment with credit card is allowed.

Stockholm Skavsta Airport and Bromma Stockholm Airport are other airports located one to two hours from Uppsala.

Travelling to Uppsala by train
A number of trains from the continent have Stockholm as their final destination. In Stockholm you can change to the local train to Uppsala (SJ Regional), which departs every 30 minutes (05:41–23:11). You can check train timetables and book tickets through SJ.

Local Uppsala County buses
You can plan your trip and get updated information on bus cards and tickets at Upplands lokaltrafik.

NOTE: Cash is not accepted on the bus, you can only pay with credit card. Bus tickets are also sold at the travel center at the railway station.
The World of Dog
World of dog is a duo that plays a jazz-influenced electronica built with samples, drum machines and live instruments; Nordic jazz meets drum ’n’ bass and krautrock with focused melodies and eclectic beats. For live shows they perform together with Erik Wallin on drums and Joel Öhlund on guitar, and give more space to improvisation and groove. The band will perform during dinner on September 27.

Kalle Landegren
… is an Uppsala-based artist, working at the intersection of street art, comic book aesthetics and graphic design. Landegren’s work has been published in a number of anthologies and publications, among them Galago, Sweden’s oldest and most prominent magazine for alternative comics and graphic storytelling. See his performance during the afternoon of September 27 in the Humanities Theatre. See more of his work at https://lakkel.wordpress.com/

Anna Redmalm
… is a graphic designer, artist and photographer especially interested in zine culture and other aesthetic expressions at the border between highbrow and lowbrow culture, and between connective communication and disconnective miscommunication. If you are interested in ordering fine art prints of the photos in the catalogue she can be reached at anna.redmalm@gmail.com
10 places to visit in Uppsala

**Uppsala Castle / Uppsala Art Museum.** The castle is located on a hill with a view over the whole city, and it’s only a 10 minute walk from the venue. The castle hosts the city art museum, always with an interesting contemporary art exhibition. [http://uppsalakonstmuseum.se/english/](http://uppsalakonstmuseum.se/english/)

**Uppsala Cathedral** was finished in 1435 and is probably the most visited tourist attraction in Uppsala. Here, a bunch of kings and other important people lie buried, among them also Linnaeus. Uppsala has very few tall buildings – big projects have been stopped in the past to save the city horizon line, so the castle and the cathedral can be seen from basically anywhere. [https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/uppsala/welcome-to-uppsala-cathedral](https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/uppsala/welcome-to-uppsala-cathedral)

**Köttinspektionen** is an exhibition and performance space for contemporary art. Address: Strandbodgatan 3. On the Wednesday before the conference you can attend a performance for free, more info here: [http://www.kottinspektionen.org/throat-flesh-past-prologue-arbetstitel](http://www.kottinspektionen.org/throat-flesh-past-prologue-arbetstitel)

**The Botanical Garden** is right next to the venue and is divided in two parts. Here you find plants from the Nordic flora, a tropical greenhouse and other things. If you tell the staff that you’re a visiting scholar with the Department of Sociology you can enter the greenhouse for free. In the garden you’ll also find The Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study that has hosted guests such as Mary Douglas, Steven Fuller and Nigel Thrift, and the collegium holds some of Linnaeus’ collections. The Gender Department is also located in the garden, with past guests such as Donna Haraway, Jack Halberstam and Sandra Harding. [http://www.botan.uu.se/our-gardens/the-botanical-garden/](http://www.botan.uu.se/our-gardens/the-botanical-garden/)

**Gustavianum** is the oldest now standing building of the university and hosts a fascinating historical exhibition. Make sure to visit the Gustavianum’s anatomical theatre where bodies were dissected in front of an audience during the 17th century. Address: Akademigatan 3. [https://www.gustavianum.uu.se/?languageId=1](https://www.gustavianum.uu.se/?languageId=1)

**Upplandsmuseét** has an archaeological exhibition with objects from Uppsala’s long history. Address: S:t Eriks torg 10. [https://www.upplandsmuseet.se/in-other-languages/information-in-english/](https://www.upplandsmuseet.se/in-other-languages/information-in-english/)

**Gamla Uppsala Museum** has a Viking exhibition and is located right next to three hills, which are old Viking graves. It’s a bit outside of the city, and you need to take a taxi or bus to get there. Address: Disavägen. [https://www.raa.se/evenemang-och-upplevelser/upplev-kulturarvet/gamla-uppsala-museum/](https://www.raa.se/evenemang-och-upplevelser/upplev-kulturarvet/gamla-uppsala-museum/)

**Michel Foucault** was based in Uppsala for a few years in the 1950s. He was going to present his thesis, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, at the university, but was advised not to by professor Sten Lindroth, as the professor thought it contained too many speculative generalizations. The apartment that foucault lived in is in the old
building at S:t Johannesgatan 3A, a brief walk from the venue. There is no memorial plaque on the wall though.

**Slottsbiografen** is the cinema where **Ingmar Bergman** saw his first movies as a child together with his Grandmother. At several occasions they were allowed to see films from the control room in the back. Unfortunately, the cinema is not open daily for visitors, but it’s regularly used for film festivals and silent film screenings with a live pianist. Address: Nedre Slottsgatan 6B. [http://www.slottsbio.se/](http://www.slottsbio.se/)

Author, playwright, artist and alchemist **August Strindberg** lived above the **Ofvandahls Café** as a student, under much sparser conditions than Foucault. The building still hosts students. Rooms are very small, and toilets, showers and kitchens are shared – but the rooms are beautiful, with a tiled stove from the 19th century in each one of them. Ofvandahls is one of Uppsala’s oldest cafés and was founded in 1878. Visiting the café, it seems like not much has changed since then, for better or worse… Anyway, they serve delicious and classic Swedish pastries. Address: Sysslomansgatan 5.
List of abstracts

[Session 1] Dis/Connection: A new way of life in the 21st century?
Chair: Magdalena Kania Lundholm, magdalena.kania@soc.uu.se
Room: The Humanist Theater / Humanistiska teatern

Medium control, maximum empowerment: Strategies for Amish living in the digital age
Lindsay Ems, College of Communication, Butler University

My book, tentatively titled Medium Control, Maximum Empowerment: Strategies for Amish Living in the Digital Age articulates Amish strategies for the calculated (non-) adoption of ICTs in a rapidly modernizing social world. It draws on ethnographic fieldwork conducted from 2011-2014 in Indiana, home to the 3rd largest population of Amish in North America. In-depth interviews with Amish church and business leaders illustrate that adoption strategies are aimed at maintaining control over information flows in Amish communities. These strategies are intended to protect the spiritual, social and physical well-being of community members from negative corporate and governmental influences. Leaders encourage “appropriate” usage of ICTs in Amish communities. This strategy is intended to empower Amish communities over the long term by protecting a simple, slow-paced, spiritual and in tune with nature way of life where members feel they have purpose.

The book is particularly notable for its articulation of a philosophy of technology use that privileges community, spirituality and the psycho-social well-being of individuals. Amish opinion leaders increasingly feel that ICTs are important tools for 21st century work, which has multi-faceted implications for their venerated and slow-changing way of life. Thus, in contrast to work tools of the past, like pneumatic power tools, ICTs require special treatment. The book shows, contrary to popular thought, the Amish are not entirely against technology. Instead, they are currently working through a complex negotiation with modern tools collectively by gauging the current social context and employing a value-based calculation that guides the adoption of new technology.

Disconnect Inc.: The digital distraction industry
Anne Kaun and Carina Guyard, School of Culture and Education, Södertörn University
The presentation explores an emerging industry that is selling disconnection to further health and efficiency of users in the work context. Drawing on a case study of the Workfulness programme developed by the Scandinavian Telecommunications company Telenor, we investigate the scientific background and explanation that is offered by the industry on why we are increasingly distracted by our digital devices and have a hard-time to disconnect. Drawing on textual materials and interviews, the analysis shows that Workfulness manages digital distractions in the workplace by establishing a form of stimulus-control rather than appealing to rational self-control. Workfulness alludes to the necessity of making choices, but it considers unconscious behavior, which is explained with reference to preconscious workings of the brain. The human brain becomes a battleground between rational and impulsive decisions, and it is the disobedient brain that needs to be governed in order to become an efficient employee. We situate the Workfulness program as part of and at the same time extending the biopolitical economy by incorporating advances in neurosciences into modes of governance.

Repression, resistance and lifestyle: Charting disconnection activism in times of accelerated capitalism
Anne Kaun, Södertörn University, and Emiliano Treré, Cardiff University

Studying the nexus of media and social movements is a growing subfield in both media and social movement studies. Although there is an increasing number of studies that criticize the overemphasis of importance of media technologies for social movements, questions of non-use, technology push-back and media refusal as explicit political practice have received comparatively little attention. The presentation charts a typology of disconnection as political practice bringing emerging literatures on disconnection, i.e. forms of media technology non-use to the field of social movement studies and studies of civic engagement. Based on a theoretical matrix combining questions of power, collectivity and temporality, we distinguish between disconnection as repression, disconnection as resistance and disconnection as performance and life-style politics. The article discusses the three types of disconnection using current examples of protest and social movements that engage with practices of disconnection.

Every bit in its Place: The biopolitics of decluttering in digital minimalism
Aleena L. Chia, Centre of Excellence in Game Culture Studies, University of Jyväskylä

In 1995, cyberutopian Nicholas Negroponte proselytized about how digitizing our lives and selves could replace atoms with the weightlessness of bits. Two decades later, many feel crushed by the profusion of these bits in the form of apps, accounts, feeds, and notifications cluttering their home screens and headspace. Responding to intensifying mediatised narratives about distraction, addiction, and anxiety that pathologize cultures of online connection, some are adopting practices of mindful non-use known as “digital minimalism” or “wellness.” Differing from spatiotemporal restrictions such as unplugging or detoxing, these individualizing practices are exercised through curatorial choices guided by the quest for negative space, which extends from online activities into a whole way of life. What practices and principles differentiate digital decluttering from detoxing, and how do these spatial and biological metaphors structure possibilities for expanding mindfulness from the anatomo-politics of human bodies to the biopolitics of populations? This study is a critical discourse analysis of metaphors in print and online writings about digital wellness. Insulated by the digital habitus, minimalism individualizes the concerns of platform society into a technique of the self. Prosaic
rituals of unsubscribing, unfriending, and deleting atomizes users within self-disciplinary in addition to surveillant enclosures. Confronting digital wellness’s structuring metaphors offers discursive resources for channelling lifestyle philosophies into a shared politics. This politics is crucial for the regulation of attention engineering in technology companies, data protection rights in platform ecologies, and discourse in algorithmic public spheres.

[Session 2] Dis/connection: Social media and critique
Chair: David Redmalm, david.redmalm@soc.uu.se
The University Main Building, room VIII

Instagram: interface and digital disengagement
Alexandr Zhigaylov, CEO of Roque Consulting Group, Moscow, and Sofya Nikiforova, London School of Economics & Higher School of Economics

The paper examines the behavior of Instagram users based on the usage of interface for the purpose of limiting personal presence in social networking sites. The research is conducted based on a combination of several methodological tools in order to make it more comprehensive and representative. Precisely, deep one-to-one interviews, societal surveys and digital ethnography were used. Finally, a number of certain concepts from urban sociology of mega-cities were also applied. One of the major outcomes of the research seems to be a creation of sophisticated typology of Instagram accounts. The work considers different mechanisms of limiting the presence. Moreover, it breaks the definition of digital disengagement into three distinct notions: integral disengagement, internal disengagement and external disengagement. Consequently, the proposed approach appears to follow the reasoning of Ben Light in his work «Disconnecting with Social Networking Sites» and his idea of individual restriction of the presence of users on the social network space. Furthermore, it seems to be essential to note that the research proposes a distinction between the concepts of digital suicide, absence and digital disengagement. Additionally, the continuum of user’s engagement in the social networking is suggested and deeply reflected upon.

Making criticism visible: Ethnography of the visibilisation and credibilisation in the public space of a technocritical group
Celia de Pietro and Manon Monnier, University of Lausanne (UNIL)

Our research focuses on problems that disconnection, more specifically technocritics, can pose in an increasingly connected world. Technocritics have existed for several centuries (Jarrige, 2014) but today it seems more difficult than ever to get out of a "technical" society or, at least, to be able to take a critical look at it in the public space. We would like to show how some actors see in the ideology of Progress (Ibid) promulgated by society a form of end to human connection. Methodologically, we have been following, for several months now, a technocritic group in the area of Lausanne (French speaking part of Switzerland) through carefully conducting participatives ethnographies. Their coffee-discussions, general assemblies and various appearances (physical or material) in the public space are our main sources for data collection. The data we collected relate to the internal and external communication’s sociotechnological network of the group in question (Latour, 2005; Akrich, 2010). We show the strategies
of visibilisation and credibilisation (including digital communication) adopted by the group, although aware of the risks of isolation and exclusion by society. As part of the theme of « voluntary disconnection », we will then be able to discuss the effects produced by the visibilisation of technocriticism, the internal and external conflicts encountered by the actors as well as the relationship of the members of the group toward the question of anonymity. Finally we aim to show the consequences of the members of society’s participation in a voluntary struggle for disconnection (reconnection?).

Voluntary online disconnection and its critique: Why they matter in the age of distraction?
Magdalena Kania-Lundholm, Cultural Matters Group, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University

Some argue that we live in the age of social acceleration, ubiquitous computing, hyperconnectivity and post-Internet. What those concepts have in common is that people are increasingly overwhelmed by the number of tasks, stimuli and information. This state of constant distraction asks for refuge, sometimes even for a while. In some cases, it means going away, turning off the phone, shutting down the Internet. This paper discusses the currently existing body of research on voluntary online disconnection (VOD), also often referred to as voluntary non-use of technology or media refusal. It provides a mapping over this rapidly growing field of research based on scholarly sources across disciplines. In the paper, I argue that we need to explore and understand the contexts, meanings and conditions under which disconnection becomes relevant. I discuss three main reasons why research on online voluntary disconnection is worth developing further. First, because it challenges the hegemonic ideas about connectivity, participation and the primacy of usage and points to disconnection as socially embedded and flexible over time. Second, it points towards various forms of media resistance, which include both individual and collective acts. Third, research on disconnection goes beyond the rhetoric of novelty, progress, self-control and self-empowerment and by emphasizing the materiality of the digital it has the potential to address the politics of social media. I suggest a typology of different types of disconnective practice, ranging from individual to collective ones on the one hand and from non-political and non-transformative to political and transformative on the other. Finally, I argue for an expanded critical research agenda on this topic.

Social media, interrupted: Users recounting disconnection on social media
Ana Jorge, Carla Ganito and Cátia Ferreira, Human Sciences Faculty, Catholic University of Portugal

In a postdigital and hyperconnected age (Thorén et al. 2017), the non-use of digital media has been increasingly researched (Kaun et al. 2016). Particularly disconnection has been analysed in relation to social networking sites, in the context of accounting for audience’s relationship with the technological functioning of those digital platforms (Van Dijck & Poell 2013, Burgess et al. 2016). People avoid and quit specific social media platforms, content and technologies (Portwood-Stacer 2012; Light & Cassidy 2014; Ofcom 2016), actively chose not to participate online (Kaun & Schwarzenegger 2014), seek ‘digital detox’ and abstain from using digital media in search of human presence (Woodstock 2016; Karlsen & Syvertsen 2016), and manage their on- and offline presence (Syvertsen 2017).
This paper looks at the discourses of social media users practising periods of disconnection, particularly on Instagram. Initially we sought hashtags such as #disconnect, #digitaldetox, #offline, #unplug, then through snowball we retrieved other hashtags used by users, such as #disconnectoreconnect, #nowifigreatconnection or #slowdown. Through the analysis of images (settings as outdoors, relatives, food, books, mottos) and captions (announcing before or telling after the disconnecting; some mentioning the duration), we explore how disconnection is constructed and the emotions associated with it: the use of time (mostly for leisure, but also to efficient work), escaping the pressure to be online and gaining control over one’s time. Users seem to share their disconnection experiences as a way to commit themselves to staying offline, and while some campaign for this, others reincorporate them in their attention economy efforts.

[Session 3] Theorizing dis/connected social ties
Chair: Phil Creswell, philip.creswell@soc.uu.se
The University Main Building, room VIII

The upside down of digital citizenship
*Lina Rahm, Division of Education and Adult Learning, Linköping University*

Our everyday use of digital technologies, platforms and infrastructures is often portrayed as an autonomous technical development, guided by clever and independent innovations rather than parliamentary support and governance. This presentation will turn the light to the, often overlooked, structural and societal efforts that have historically shaped the digital citizen of today. For the past 70 years or so, non-formal adult education about computers and computing has been a key effort in political ambitions to create a desirable future. Over time, digital technologies have also become a precondition for the enactment of citizenship. That is, ’digital citizenship’ is increasingly positioned as a fundamental requirement for democratic participation. Access to technologies, together with computer skills, are presented as something both necessary and desirable, that each and every citizen must have. Accordingly, it also becomes a “societal problem” if some part of the population is not in possession of said skills. The purpose of this presentation is to trace how the digital citizen have been construed over time: what problems is the digital citizen a solution to? *Who* has been presented as problematic, and who, subsequently, has become the primary target for educational solutions? *What skills* have been described as indispensable for the digital citizen during different periods in history? In focus for the study are discourses concerning non-formal adult education, in the form of awareness campaigns, social programs and adult liberal education about computers aimed towards the general citizenry, and concerning computers, during three periods in time: the 1950s, the 1980s, and today.

“Like adamantium”: The digital cooption of strong tie networks, and the limits of disconnection
*Roger Patulny and Kai Soh, Faculty Law Humanities and Arts, University of Wollongong, Australia*
While social media platforms support late-modern lifestyles by facilitating large, weak-tie networks and opportunities, high immersion can also provoke FOMO-related anxiety; inauthentic, strategic ‘liking’ and ‘swiping’; and stigmatized emotions related to ‘negative comparison’ such as envy, shame and depression. These feelings are emotionally managed rather than displayed (as they do not fit the ‘happy/successful’ tone of social media), which can further undermine authentic, meaningful, and supportive social interaction. This negative spiral is escapable if we have the privilege of disconnecting and relying on smaller, strong-tie, face-to-face networks. However, social media now bonds to even the strong-tie ‘skeletal’ cores of our closest networks. Social media is obligatory for long-distance contact with close family and friends; for organizing face-to-face social events; and for continuously meeting new (weak-tie) connections to compensate for the drift in (increasingly rare) old, close connections. This poses a quandary. Disconnecting from social media risks serious social isolation and loneliness, as one misses out on social events and supportive interaction with even strong tie networks, and is also cut off from the (only) potential way of meeting compensatory (weak-tie) contacts. Alternatively, the immersion implicit in embracing social media normalises and magnifies the late-modern bases of disconnection (i.e. rendering fragmentary work, socializing and intimacy acceptable, because there are communicative and weak-tie alternatives), and heightens the risk (and inescapability) of ‘negative comparison.’ This paper reviews literature on the digitization of weak and strong ties through social media, as well as the impact and this has on negative comparison and social isolation.

**Media consumption and the lived experience of other people’s narratives**

*Greti-Iulia Ivana, Cultural Matters Group, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University*

This paper focuses on the experience of passively receiving already crystallized narratives through the media. The specific instances I insist upon are: news, reality television, movies and non-interactional surveillance of peers online. The starting point is Schütz’s work on the spatio-temporal conditioning of social interactions and on contemporaries (as opposed to consociates) becoming part of one’s stock of knowledge without being part of their world within reach. Drawing upon these ideas, I argue that, through mediatized narratives, the absent or fictional character enters our stock of knowledge not as immediately typified, but as a subject of an imagined experience in a different here and now. Furthermore, the construction of this imaginary is strongly interrelated with the characteristics of the medium through which the narrative reaches the subject, the interpretative frames provided within the narrative and the previous experience with situations that are read as similar.

**Emotion in networks: Emotional processes of dis/connection**

*Max Persson, PhD Candidate, Cultural Matters Group, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University*

In *Manifesto for a Relational Sociology*, Emirbayer argues that by moving beyond emotions as entities ‘inside’ individuals have opened “for mapping the structure of emotional flows across broader social psychological environment” (1997:302). In this presentation I take this quite opaque statement as starting point for thinking through how sociological emotion theory and network theory can be linked in a fruitful way. First, I show that sociological emotion theory have been successful in challenging the view of emotions as private, internal states of individuals. However, I argue that face-to-face interaction in shared situations has been privileged as unit of analysis in this line
of research. A challenge for emotion theory is to move from dyadic relationships between ‘self’ and ‘other(s)’ to networks. Second, I review research on emotions in online social networking sites which put the term ‘emotional contagion’ to the fore. While this research is empirically interesting, it tend to be quite instrumental, ethically problematic, and undertheorized both from a sociology of emotions and social network perspective. Third, I look for possible pathways in order to connect emotion theory and network theory more closely. One path leads to the emotional exchange in social networks which draws attention to how the configuration of ties and the actor’s network position pattern emotional flows. The other path regards the question of what emotions do. Which emotions and emotional processes are conducive for initiating, establishing, and cutting off social ties? The latter draws attention to the role of emotions in processes of connection/disconnection in a general relational sense.

[Session 4] Connected capitalist futures: Hope, optimism and death
Chair: Magdalena Kania Lundholm, magdalena.kania@soc.uu.se
The University Main Building, room VIII

Crusaders of market hope: Disconnecting the other from her own experiences
Karin Berglund and Anna Wettermark, Stockholm Business School, Stockholm University

Stories of social entrepreneurship are thriving on the internet. “Trades of Hope” is an American example of how social entrepreneurs, via a market logic, claim to make the world better. In our research we focus on how relations between social entrepreneurs and beneficiary ‘others’ are reproduced according to a postcolonial template.

In this paper we study stories provided at www.tradesofhope.com, focusing how social entrepreneurs portray themselves (‘our story’) and how they describe their beneficiaries (‘artisans’). From these stories we can see how the other is created as subordinate, trapped in ‘poverty’, ‘sex slavery’ or ‘AIDS/HIV’. This opens a space for social entrepreneurs to act upon the other’s difficulties, and offers an opportunity to manifest their care for others. The other is thereby ‘interpellated’ (Bhabha, 2012) to participate in a neoliberal logic, expected to liberate herself and express gratitude, optimism and hope, making it possible for social entrepreneurs to ‘feel good about themselves’ (Andreoni, 1990). The expression of feelings play a crucial role in stories told of social entrepreneurs and beneficiary others; the other’s feelings of despair can be seen as appropriated by selves and turned into attributes of the enlightened, compassionate self (Ahmed, 2013).

The story of the empowered other is however conditioned on Western terms; the other is included in the entrepreneurial tale, but is exposed to a double disconnection; firstly, from herself and her own experiences, through the telling of a westernized story, and, secondly, from social entrepreneurs. The crusaders of market hope, striving to empower others through selling their products, never need to meet these others, and connectivity thus protects selves, while disconnecting others from themselves and their ‘benefactors’.
Imagining and Acting on the Digital Futures of the Publishing Industry
Henrik Fürst, Cultural Matters Group, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University

This presentation is about how professionals in trade publishing view and respond to imaginaries of digital futures in trade publishing. The argument in this presentation is that the social imaginary of “the great digital transformation” has shaped the expectational structures of the publishing industry. What happens when actors assume this imaginary and how do they envision their own position in this (future) industry? The presentation draws on interviews with 119 individuals in the publishing industry (authors, publishers, digital strategists, literary critics, literary agents, retailers, writing course teachers etc.), who have been asked about their professional relationship to the digital developments in trade publishing. How expectational frameworks shape the industry is presented and how, for example, a culture of “compulsory digital connectivity” fits within this framework. The presentation shows that uncertainty in trade publishing is reduced and order maintained by the creation of shared narratives and expectations of the future, a future that is associated with the great digital transformation.

The materiality of connectivity, or What happens before I can post something on Facebook?
Joanna Österblom, Department of Language and Communication Studies, University of Jyväskylä

This paper addresses the infrastructure and materiality of connectivity. It works from the notion that the seemingly immaterial world online is anchored in different tangible material infrastructures like data centers, fiber cables and signal towers. Already just one computer or a mobile phone consist of various minerals out of which some are illegally acquired and the whole manufacturing process happens under problematic labor conditions. Furthermore, the media technology used for digital activism all the way to so called Twitter revolutions is a growing ecological factor, partly as toxic e-waste dumped a few years after being sold.

All of the above plays a part in order to understand the role of media in relation to digital activism, to look into the material aspects and consequences of connectivity is needed to better grasp the complexity of the phenomenon. This media materiality can be approached from geological, ecological, economic, political, social and juridical points of views. Infrastructure, waste and the material aftermath of capitalist strategies for growth all play a role in what, how and why social media and related media technology looks and functions the way they do. I argue that as digital media technologies not only shape established ways of communication but are integral to how new ways of communication are constituted, it is necessary to take seriously and look more closely into these technologies and infrastructures themselves to get a more nuanced picture.

The Global Challenges of Post-Mortal Society
Carl Öhman, Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford

The web is increasingly inhabited by the remains of its departed users. Only between 2020 and 2050, more than 2.7 billion people will die, many of whom will be internet users and will subsequently leave a vast volume of data behind when passing. Managing these data in a fair and ethical manner is a challenge of great significance for society. Yet, current research focuses predominantly on the individual and cultural aspects of
online death and grief, leaving macroscopic and critical perspectives largely unexplored. The goal of the current paper is to address this lacuna by examining the power dynamics involved in posthumous data management. The goal is pursued in three steps: Firstly, we consider the economic ramifications of data preservation, and analyze the financial qualities of digital remains by drawing on previous work on the Digital Afterlife Industry (DAI). Secondly, we examine how the digital afterlife phenomenon is geographically distributed, using a custom-made dataset on projected mortality rates acquired from the UN Office of Social and Economic Affairs. Finally, we synthesise the economic and geographical perspectives into a critique of the “politics of deletion”. In doing so, we mobilize the Floridian concept of hyper-history, arguing that (1) deletion – as opposed to preservation – of data records, has become the central force shaping history. And (2) that decisions on data deletion are made to serve corporate interests, which risks to amplify asymmetries in geographical power relations. In sum, the paper brings a critical, and political perspective into the discourse on online death.

[Session 5] Normative dis/connections
Chair: David Redmalm, david.redmalm@soc.uu.se
The University Main Building, room XI

Commitment, authenticity and incommensurability: Online boundary-making of vegetarianism and veganism
Nicklas Neuman, PhD, Department of Food Studies, Nutrition and Dietetics, Uppsala University

In this paper, I show how participants on the online Q&A platform Yahoo! Answers draw up boundaries of what to be, or not to be, considered a vegetarian or a vegan eating pattern. While such terms might intuitively seem commonsensical (it is simply about not eating animal flesh and not eating any animal products at all, right?) empirical research, both qualitative and quantitative, document a range of interpretations of the terms, as well as inconsistencies between peoples’ identification and self-reported behaviour. With this data, consisting of 100 threads (transferred into approximately 1060 A4 pages of text), I manage to demonstrate debates about the concepts between people, anonymous to each other, in contrast to the lion’s share of literature building on single respondents. For example, the symbolic boundaries drawn up are about the willingness to really commit oneself, as a distinction between the vegetarians and the vegans, to be inauthentic, such as fish eaters identifying as vegetarians “just for the label”, and to be flat out wrong, with no room for any conceptual negotiation whatsoever (e.g. that a vegetarian do not eat fish). The last point, the unequivocal claim that a certain understanding of a given concept is incorrect – end of story – provides a strong contrast to the literature suggesting that the concepts are ambiguous and greatly open to interpretation. This has theoretical implications for our understanding of cultural boundaries and identity, but also methodological implications for food-survey design.
Desire as a right: Negotiating matrimonial norms and consumption in an online community

Alev P. Kuruoglu, Syddansk Universitet, Institut for Marketing og Management and Gulay Taltekin Guzel, York University, Schulich School of Business

Consumer researchers have drawn attention to the social character of desire: Goods and services are desired for their capacity to serve as conduits to establishing relationships and communalities (Belk, Ger, and Askegaard 2003). Moreover, desire is fueled by a consumer’s gaze on the other (Dupuy 1979; Girard 1977; Belk et al. 2003). Recent research has illuminated the role of social media in emboldening and accentuating the desire to consume (Kozinets et al. 2017). Morals and ethics are often cited as the forces that curtail desires. Yet, self-control, as Belk and colleagues (2003) also note, “need not only involve reigning in desires; it can also involve nurturing desires” (331) and in constituting an ethical self (Foucault 1984). In this research, we observe a facebook group dedicated to consumption practices and discussions related to weddings amongst lower-middle class women in Turkey. We interrogate the role of social media and online communications in both intensifying desires towards consumption objects, but also accentuating the diversity of norms and moral orientations that circumscribe these objects. We also attend to the role of such communications in accentuating the divide between competing moral orientations. We find that there is a unity in terms of the willingness to perform within the confines of a respectable and appropriate femininity. As such, a desiring subject is constituted as one that is willing to be circumscribed by normative gendered and gendering performative scripts (Butler 1990; Thompson and Ustuner 2015), but also as one that is also willful (Ahmed 2004) in pursuing her objects of desire. Online media affords a platform where the performative scripts pertaining to such a desiring subjectivity is learned, taught, contested and negotiated.

Female sexualities in digital spaces

Gry Høngsmark Knudsen, Department of Marketing and Management, University of Southern Denmark

This paper approaches womens’ sexual desires and asks the question how women manage, share and induce sexual experiences based on consumption of textual resources in digital spaces. The study is inspired by research into Internet porn and sexual romance novels. The aim is to understand the ways women negotiate the stigma of consuming porn or other materials for sexual enjoyment. The paper demonstrates the affective and ambivalent nature of female sexuality and the different ways women in more or less anonymity online can negotiate sexuality through textual means. Thereby the paper advances current research by demonstrating how consumption of texts is an active part in female sexuality and that women’s consumption communities can be liberating for individual women. The study builds on a longitudinal study of female consumers of the trilogy Fifty Shades both as blog, books, fanfiction, and movies. The empirical foundation for this paper, therefore consists of systematically collected online data from 2013-2018 and comprises both of online news, Goodread forum discussions of Fifty Shades, Fan-fiction such as trailers on YouTube and narratives on Fanfiction.net. On social media, the practices of expressing sexual desires takes the form of female banter and sharing of fantasies tailored by the individual women, but shared and reproduced in a number of ways for example in reproductions of fan-made trailers. Through these shared fantasies, women allow themselves and each other to take an active part in their sexual imaginary and thereby their sexual lives and identities.
**Whore! Affect and sexualization in young social media users’ interactions**  
Kim R Sylwander and Lucas Gottzén, Department of Child and Youth Studies, Stockholm University

Drawing on data from a cyberethnographic study on a popular social media platform in Sweden, this study details the affective encounters and flows of young people’s use of terms such as ‘whore’ and ‘slut’. The study contributes to research on gender, sexualization and social media by exploring young people’s online interaction. The study focuses is on the affectivity of the sexualized insults ‘whore’ and ‘slut’. We see affect as both the encounters between different human and non-human bodies, as well as the emotional states that may be the result of such encounters. Following a Deleuzian perspective, we argue that affect is filled with potentiality and that ‘anything could happen’ in an encounter between bodies (Deleuze 1978). But every affective assemblage, all temporary encounters, may have positive and negative outcomes (Massumi 2003). From such perspective, to call someone a whore is not simply an emotionally saturated labelling but also an affective encounter between, for instance, technology, discourses, bodies and visual representations that may result in new becomings and assemblages. The analysis shows how whore works to regulate and impinge the affective possibilities of girls in this online space, and how this regulation leaks into other online spaces, as well as offline spaces. The analysis also shows the affective force of sexualised insults such as whore and the intensity of affective responses from those injured by it but also by peers. These acts together amalgate into collective acts of resistance, producing various affective outcome. This includes increased levels of retaliatory aggression; lovebombing of victims; rejection and reappropriation of the meaning of the term whore; as well as exchanges that reinforces the regulation of girls’ bodies and actions in accordance with heterosexual norms.

**[Session 6] Connection, engagement and activism**  
Chair: Phil Creswell, philip.creswell@soc.uu.se
The University Main Building, room XI

**Lost in Translation: Common Images, Contesting Narratives in Ukraine’s (Euro-)Maidan, 2014**  
Grišinas, Arvydas, Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania, and Uppsala University

We live in a different epoch than five years ago, as the recent techtonic shifts and ruptures at many layers of public life in the West began with a seemingly marginal and local episode of social unrest in Ukraine. It was during the Maidan protests in Kyiv and their aftermath that the media popularised the image of para-military far-right activists. In addition, it was due to the consecutive occupation of Crimea and parts of Donbas that the prie-eminent disconnection between Russia and the West became publically acknowledged and evident. Finally, it was this pivotal moment, together with the Syrian Civil War that encouraged the upsurge of radical nationalist movements across Europe and the US, including Brexit, and the election of Donald Trump. The paper argues that the roots of these processes can be traced via the political imagery used during
Ukraine’s Maidan, to three post-Cold War narratives that came clashing together in Kyiv, 2014.

**Vietnamese NGOs: Local activism in a global era**  
_Yên Mai, Cultural Matters Group, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University_

The formation and expansion of local non-profit organizations (NGOs) in developing countries can be seen as a process connected to neoliberal globalization. In Vietnam, the creation of local NGOs brings in alternative values and ideologies on equality, rights and identities while challenging the dominant knowledge and discourses produced and enacted by the state. NGOs, therefore, can be seen as a crucial actor in the expansion and strengthening of civil society through activities and approaches that strengthen the democratic process. However, there have been several studies that critically examine whether NGOs truly represent civil society. For instance, NGOs are believed to often reproduce, rather than resist or challenge, the hegemonic practices that serve elite economic and political interests. It has been said that despite their claim to represent community’s needs and demands, NGOs are ultimately linked to the economic elites, given that their practices share an ideological bond with neoliberalism and forcing local communities into a state of economic dependency on external donors.

This contribution comes from my PhD project, in which I look at the process of knowledge diffusion in the context of activism in Vietnam. My interest is in the work of local NGOs that aims to bring about social change and new knowledge into the Vietnamese society through their activities and programs for youth. Worth noting is that these NGOs constantly face the pressure of acquiring funding and meeting donor demands, which raises the question to which extent the knowledge and values that they produce through their activities is shaped by agendas of international funding agencies. This contribution will give a literature review to address both the promises and consequences of activism led by NGOs in Vietnam and in similar developing countries.

**Remaining Close at a distance: Negotiating support and service provision at housing with special services**  
_ Richard Gäddman Johansson and Marie Sépulchre, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University_

This paper aims to get a finer understanding of the social interactions between staff members and resident service-users living in housing with special services in Sweden, by looking at the ways they communicate using mobile phones or the Internet. Previous research on disability and technology has focused mainly on issues pertaining to barriers relative to the accessibility of telecommunication technology or to the way disabled people make use of such technology. However, this research has paid little attention to the type of social relationships that are created and facilitated by means of such mediated interactions.

In this paper, we attempt to tackle this issue by answering the Symposium’s invitation to investigate “how connectivity and disconnectivity can give rise to and facilitate social inclusion and democratic processes, as well as exclusion, isolation and conflict.” Drawing upon ethnographical data, we analyse three different situations. First, a situation of (dis)connection initiated by a resident service-user. Second, a situation of (dis)connection initiated by a staff member. Third, the use of e-mail correspondence as both an alternative and a complementary form of communication initiated by a resident.
service-user. In doing so, we call attention to the fact that interactions imply (dis)connections between various parties and that telecommunication technology adds a layer of complexity to the already blurred lines between private and public spheres in housing with special services.

Who are the WhastAppers? New forms of Connective Action
Sérgio Barbosa, CES (Centre for Social Studies), University of Coimbra, Portugal
Yasodara Cordova, the Digital Kennedy School at Harvard and affiliated to the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard

The general objective of this paper is to investigate how the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT’s), in particular the WhatsApp, has been presented as a central element for the convening and mobilization of WhastAppers in contemporary forms of political participation. To that end, it will be focused on how the WhastAppers use the app beyond their private life and what are the similarities and differences with another social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, You Tube and Telegram. In parallel, this paper will reflect a comparison with the protocols used in each type of technology. The research method is the "netnography" of WhastApp groups using analytical procedures of a qualitative nature. We will ensure the processing of WhastAppers personal data and privacy rules. The comprehension over the convening role of the WhastApp as online platform for civil mobilization has three main contributions. First, it will enable to understand its own emergence, as a signal of identifying the necessity of developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions, at the same time it encourages and has its main motivation in ensure responsible, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels, with a focus on local voices. Besides this, using WhatsApp and other message systems can serve as a tool to expand and strengthen the participation of developing countries in global governance institutions while share common interests through the necessity of a public access to information in protect fundamental freedoms worldwide. The framework adopted in this analysis is the Emancipatory Communication Practice of the italian sociologist Stefania Milan

[Session 7] Dis/connected love and intimacy
Greti-Iulia Ivana, greti-iulia.ivana@soc.uu.se
The University Main Building, room XI

Pattern matching and attunement in young people's emoji use in online dating
Louise Anker Nexø Nielsen, University of Copenhagen and Jacob Strandell, Cultural Matters Group, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University

Online dating and digital interaction have been intensely studied within multiple fields within the last two decades. This paper adds to this growing literature by showing how young people use emojis in online dating as socio-psychological feedback mechanism based on pattern attunement. Focus group data indicate that the degree of synchronization of quantitative and qualitative patterns of emoji use in digital interactions between two individuals contributes significantly to experiences of connection and the identification of a potential ‘match’. The paper furthermore develops a novel framework for understanding these processes of pattern attunement in online
interactions by combining Collin’s model of interaction rituals and culture-cognition interaction frameworks from cognitive sociology. Both approaches highlight the importance of social patterns, but while one emphasizes interaction and emotion, the other focuses on culture and cognition. By merging these two perspectives, we end up with a comprehensive model of the process of pattern attunement through online interaction tools such as emoji use.

End Chat? Digital intimacies and new solitudes in Teller’s Exegesis and Jonze’s Her
Sindija Franzetti, Uppsala University

As the vocabulary for human ties and networked devices converges, contemporary scholars have pointed to the necessity to address the tension between communication in support of human connection and communication technologies abstracted from the human. In Alone Together, Sherry Turkle argues that, in an age of networked life, digital connections “may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of the friendship.” Indeed, Turkle claims that technology is no more than the space in which our “intimacies” play out. What then becomes of our interpersonal relations in the age of constant and instant, digital and networked connections? Examining Astro Teller’s novel Exegesis: Sex, Lies and Cyberlove in the Year 2000 (1997) and Spike Jonze’s film Her (2013) this paper argues that technology is no longer merely the means of connection to other persons when a software platform itself becomes the object and subject of human desire. In both Exegesis and Her the software achieves agency that modulates connections with its users for its own ends. This provokes the question, outside of these fictions; to what extent could disconnection on the part of users form the basis of more immediate human connection?

‘Girlfriends are Complicated, My Doll Never Complains’: Digisexuals of Mumbai
Swaminathan Ramanathan, Department of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnography, Uppsala University

Mumbai is home to a number of young people who are opting out of direct interactions as the first recourse for establishing an intimate relationship. They use digital platforms that eliminate ‘complexities of human beings’ and turn ‘expectations explicit’. These platforms are used in a hierarchical manner to depict the maturity of a relationship. There is, however, a tightly controlled and hidden sub-culture that’s emerging from within this group. The young people who are part of this sub-culture are convinced that intimacy can be achieved without human contact. They find ‘sense and meaning’ in the worlds of gaming and virtual reality and are experimenting with augmenting dolls for ‘sentience and intimacy’. This paper analyses this sub-culture using four pathways. First, combining the lens of gender, identity and urbanity, the paper will explain why a majority are men who describe themselves as ‘modern, scientific and rational’, but see gender as an ‘unnecessary complexity’. Second, the paper will analyse why many are engineers working in the field of artificial intelligence. Third, the paper will deploy frameworks of Lefebvre, Appadurai and Castells to unpack the ‘global information flows’ that reimagines Mumbai as an ‘urban mediascape’ to conceptually ground this sub-culture. Fourth, the paper will focus on in-between spaces that foster in equal measure ‘stealthy ideas’ and ‘hidden desires’. In particular, it will unpack how peer-to-peer technological infrastructure has patched up ‘a landscape of desires and fetishes’.
Dis/connection as a form of (digital) family work
Helga Sadowski and Lina Eklund, Informatics and Media/Human-Computer Interaction, Uppsala University

Within the research project “Social relationships in the networked society”, we analyze how digital forms of communication are intersecting and intertwine with contemporary family lives, and more specifically how these interventions confirm, challenge, and/or re-define intimate kinship bonds. Working with interview data of Swedish family members and kins of three generations, in this paper we give insights into the ways in which digital technologies are becoming both tools for doing family (Schier and Jurczyk 2008) and a form of kinwork (Di Leonardo 1987).

While many ICTs have been discussed as being able to help overcome certain distances between family members and therefore as helpful for family cohesion, little has been said about conscious strategies to disconnect from technologies in order to maintain family intimacy. In our data, interviewees discuss ways in which they disconnect in order to support family intimacy, such as trying to prevent the blending of work and private life, attempted control over children's ICT uses, and withdrawal and limitation of certain uses. In times of increasing confusion of the borders between the digital and non-digital, it is crucial to understand which disconnection strategies people use as part of intimate family work. What are the moments, situations, and contexts in which individuals feel the need to disengage for the sake of close relationships? How are different applications and media used, adjusted, or sidelined in order to maintain family bonds and balance between professional and private life? These are some of the questions we approach in our paper.
List of paper presenters

Anker Nexø Nielsen, Louise, University of Copenhagen, lann@soc.ku.dk

Barbosa, Sérgio, Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, sergio.barbosa30@gmail.com

Berglund, Karin, Stockholm Business School at Stockholm University, karin.berglund@sbs.su.se

Chia, Aleena L., Centre of Excellence in Game Culture Studies, University of Jyväskylä, aleena.chia@jyu.fi

Eklund, Lina, Uppsala University, Informatics and Media/Human-Computer Interaction, lina.eklund@im.uu.se

Ems, Lindsay, College of Communication, Butler University, lems@butler.edu

Franzetti, Sindija, Uppsala University, sindija.franzetti@engelska.uu.se

Fürst, Henrik, Cultural Matters Group, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University, henrik.furst@soc.uu.se

Gottzén, Lucas, Department of Child and Youth Studies, Stockholm University, lucas.gottzen@buv.su.se

Guyard, Carina, Södertörn University, carina.guyard@sh.se

Gäddman Johansson, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University, richard.johansson@soc.uu.se

Hønsgmark Knudsen, Gry, Department of Marketing and Management, University of Southern Denmark, gryh@sam.sdu.dk

Ivana, Greti-Iulia, Cultural Matters Group, Cultural Matters Group, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University, greti-iulia.ivana@soc.uu.se

Kania Lundholm, Magdalena, Cultural Matters Group, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University, magdalena.kania@soc.uu.se

Kaun, Anne, Media and Communication Studies, Södertörn University, anne.kaun@sh.se

Kuruoglu, Alev P., Syddansk Universitet, Institut for Marketing og Management, alev@sam.sdu.dk

Jorge, Ana, Catholic University of Portugal, anajorge@fch.lisboa.ucp.pt

Mai, Yến, Cultural Matters Group, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University, yen.mai@soc.uu.se

Monnier, Manon, University of Lausanne, manon.monnier@unil.ch
Neuman, Nicklas, Department of Food Studies, Nutrition and Dietetics, Uppsala University, nicklas.neuman@ikv.uu.se

Nikiforova, Sofya, London School of Economics and Higher School of Economics, sofinik1998@yandex.ru

Patulny, Roger, Faculty Law Humanities and Arts, University of Wollongong, Australia, rpatulny@uow.edu.au

Persson, Max, Cultural Matters Group, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University, max.persson@soc.uu.se

de Pietro, Célia, University of Lausanne, celia.depietro@unil.ch

Ringmar Sylwander, Kim, Department of Child and Youth Studies, Stockholm University, kim.ringmar.sylwander@buv.su.se

Sépulchre, Marie, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University, marie.sepulchre@soc.uu.se

Swaminathan Ramanathan, Department of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnography, Uppsala University, swaminathan.ramanathan@etnologi.uu.se

Sadowski, Helga, Uppsala University, Informatics and Media/Human-Computer Interaction, helga.sadowski@im.uu.se

Strandell, Jacob, Cultural Matters Group, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University, jacob.strandell@soc.uu.se

Wettermark, Anna, Stockholm Business School at Stockholm University, anna.wettermark@sbs.su.se

Zhigaylov, Alexandr, CEO of Roque Consulting Group, Moscow, Russia, azhigaylov1992@gmail.com

Österblom, Joanna, Media studies, Tampere University, joanna.osterblom@gmail.com