

DIGITAL MEDIA RESEARCH CENTRE

visitor seminar

with visiting fellow

DR. ANNETT HEFT

Free University of Berlin & Weizenbaum
Institute for the Networked Society, Berlin



TUESDAY

4 JUNE 2024



TIME

2:00PM – 3:00PM



VENUE

QUT KELVIN GROVE,
Z9-607

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Sharing the Hate: Right-wing networked public spheres online in comparative perspective

The rise of right-wing extremism and right-wing populism is a key challenge for modern democracies and social cohesion. This multi-causal development is driven by severe conflict lines and crises that can be politicized by right-wing extremists, populists, and anti-democratic actors to further their goals. In this process, the fundamental changes in public communication and opinion-forming under the conditions of digital platforms and networked media play a particular role. The talk highlights the particularities of digital, networked public spheres as alternative arenas for public discourse that offer new opportunities to become visible, spread these actors' ideology and reach the center of society. Against this background, it addresses the questions of how right-wing extremist, populist and anti-democratic actors use digital infrastructures for their purposes, what practices they use for political mobilization and opinion formation, and what dynamics can be observed in these discourses. It features selected research findings on far-right media and their practices in setting up digital infrastructures for communication and mobilization, the differential affordances of platforms for mobilization practices, and the dynamics and practices in right-wing parties' digital communication.

Biography | Dr. Annett Heft, Dr. Phil., was head of the research group Digitalization and the Transnational Public Sphere at the Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society in Berlin from 2017 to 2022. Since 2022, she has been the research group lead of the research group Dynamics of Digital Mobilization.

In her research, Annett Heft is interested in the comparative study of political communication and mobilization in Europe with a particular focus on the digital communication of right-wing populist and far-right media, movements, and parties, as well as on processes of political mobilization in anti-democratic movements. Her research is characterized by comparative designs and the combination of established procedures of empirical social research with research methods of computational social science. In addition to her work at the Weizenbaum Institute, Annett Heft has been Principal Investigator in the research consortium "NEOVEX - Patterns and Dynamics of Conspiracy Theories and Right-Wing Ideologies in Times of Crisis" at the Institute for Media and Communication Studies at the Free University of Berlin since 2022.



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