IRS Spring Academy 2018

Investigating Space(s): Current Theoretical and Methodological Approaches: Part 2 – Virtuality and Socio-Materiality

Call for Applications

Join us for the IRS Spring Academy for Doctoral Students and Junior Researchers
- **22–25 May 2018**
- **Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS) in Erkner, near Berlin**

In the past two decades the interdisciplinary field between spatial and social sciences has undergone an extraordinarily dynamic development with a high potential for innovation. On the one hand, many social-scientific disciplines performed a "spatial turn" and became more interested in integrating spatial concepts and terminology. On the other hand, disciplines like human geography or spatial planning, understand space less as an exclusive object of analysis and instead emphasize a "spatial perspective" as a shared ontological ground. This has opened up a broad "trading zone" within which novel conceptualizations of space and spatiality are negotiated in an inter-disciplinary field. Against this background, the Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS) together with different academic partners and supported by the Volkswagen Foundation organizes a series of three successive Spring Academies entitled "Investigating Space(s): Current Theoretical and Methodological Approaches".

Each event focuses on different aspects of the emergent thriving field. The opening event, on "Temporality and Procedurality", already took place in 2017. Part 2 on "Virtuality and Socio-Materiality" is addressed with this call for applications and will take place from 22 to 25 May 2018. Part 3 on "Topologies" will follow in 2019.

The IRS Spring Academy (Part 2) is organized with the participation of the collaborative project "Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society", funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

Part 2 on "Virtuality and Socio-Materiality"

This IRS Spring Academy focuses on the manifold impacts of digitalization and on related social scientific ways of conceiving space. Digitalization circumscribes a technological revolution, encompassing all kinds of rapidly developing information and communication technologies, but in particular the rise of the Internet. Online platform providers have ascended powerful positions and influence major parts of our lives. Under their influence, entire industries transform, decline or emerge. If initially the discourse on digital geographies was characterized by the spatially unequal access to the Internet ("digital divide") and on infrastructural topics and impacts on regional development, more recently the focus of the debate has shifted towards the ubiquity of online worlds. The main potential of this inter-disciplinary research strand lies less in sharply differentiating between qualities of "virtual" and "real" spaces, nor in the ongoing debates on the possibilities and restrictions to sub-

Locations
Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS)
Flakenstraße 29-31
15537 Erkner

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Wilhelmstraße 67
10117 Berlin

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stitute face-to-face interaction with mediated communication. Rather, the most tempting research questions address the manifold overlaps of socio-material and virtual spaces and the complex interactions between both spheres. The extended options for synchronous and asynchronous communication and unprecedented possibilities of matching interests across huge distances give rise to completely new social practices in diverse fields of society, like digital labor, crowdfunding, virtual collaborative laboratories, transnational publics, digital planning tools or online communities to mention only few. These practices induce novel spatial representations. Spatial dependencies, inequalities and identities have undergone fundamental changes.

These novel spaces of the digital era call for far-reaching innovations in the repertoire of empirical social research. With the help of "netnographic" methods, for example, it becomes possible to record content data created in online forums, blogs or on crowdsourcing platforms. Yet, while the online interaction becomes more accessible to the researcher, the related socio-material practices in front of the screens disappear from the radar. We can only indirectly infer to them by registering some explicit or implicit references to physical-material spaces in the online-generated data. Further, online platforms offer unprecedented ways of accessing huge amounts of data on social networks, on mechanisms of social inclusion and exclusion or on building reputation. At the same time, issues such as online-anonymity, multiple user identities or algorithms simulating human users ("social bots") obscure our observations of social behavior online.

Goal and Program

The overarching goal of the IRS Spring Academy is to enable junior researchers from the social sciences to identify relevant research gaps, to encourage them to use a spatial perspective in their analyses and to learn from leading experts in the field about theoretical approaches and innovative methods for empirical work. Participants will have the opportunity to present their projects in paper pitch formats and to access leading experts for one-on-one consultancies. We therefore cordially invite doctoral and early postdoctoral researchers in the social sciences, geography and history to join us for an interesting program to discuss their own research with internationally leading scholars and their peers.

The IRS Spring Academy combines well-tried and proven formats such as lectures and seminars with less common formats such as doing-research workshops, paper pitches, or academic speed networking. It offers various possibilities to exchange ideas, to discuss current concepts and methodological approaches, as well as to getting feedback on one's own research projects from leading scholars in the field.

Participation

In order to foster in-depth discussions and reflection as well as extensive opportunities for establishing and consolidating networks, both among each other and with leading international scholars, a maximum of 25 participants will be admitted to the IRS Spring Academy.

Thanks to funding by the Volkswagen Foundation we do not charge any tuition fees and are able to provide cost-free accommodation for all accepted participants. Additionally, travel expenses will be reimbursed (in accordance with the German Travel Expenses Act). Meals, snacks and drinks during the event are also included.

Keynote Speakers

▶ **Dr Samuel Kinsley |** University of Exeter, UK

Samuel Kinsley is a lecturer in Geography at the University of Exeter with a particular interest in how we understand spatial experience and how we understand "mediation" and technology. His teaching, research and associated writing explore geographies of technology by unpicking what "technologies" are and how they are involved in our understandings and experiences of space and place. He has presented his research in various disciplinary contexts and has published in journals within human geography and social theory.

▶ **Prof Dr Gertraud Koch |** Universität Hamburg, Germany

Gertraud Koch is professor at the Institute of European Ethnology/Cultural Anthropology at the University of Hamburg. She studied European ethnology and cultural anthropology, as well as political science, theatre, film, and television studies at the Universities of Frankfurt and Tübingen. In 1991, she received her master's degree from the University of Tübingen. In 1999, she received a PhD in European ethnology at Humboldt University in Berlin. After working in the field of IT related and gender sensitive adult education and at the center of excellence "Technology and Gender" at the Hochschule Furtwangen, in 2003 she was appointed professor of communication studies and anthropology of knowledge at Zeppelin University in Friedrichshafen. For ten years, Gertraud Koch contributed to the creation and development of the Department of Culture and Communication Studies and acted as spokesperson for the research cluster "Urban and Regional Diversities". In 2013, she was appointed as full professor (W3) at the University of Hamburg. Her research interests cover a broad spectrum of topics in the fields of regional and urban cultures, cultural and social diversity and spatial processes of knowledge production, the cultural history of education and vocational training and most recently digital cultures. Gertraud Koch is the editor of the volume "Digitisation. Theories and Concepts for Empirical Cultural Research" published by Routledge in July 2017.

▶ **Prof Matthew A. Zook, PhD |** University of Kentucky, USA

Matthew Zook is professor of Information and Economic Geography in the Department of Geography at the University of Kentucky where he directs the DOLLY project, a repository of billions of geolocated tweets. His research focuses on the production, practices and uses of big geodata. He studies how code, algorithms, space and place interact as people increasingly use of mobile, digital technologies to navigate through their everyday, lived geographies. Of special interest is the duplicitous manner that code and content can congeal and individualize our experiences in our digitally augmented cities. He has served as a Fulbright Fellow at the Mobility Lab at Tartu University, (2013-14), a visiting Fellow at the Oxford Internet Institute (2014), and a visiting scholar at the University of Auckland (2016-17). He is currently the managing editor of *Big Data & Society* and a co-editor of the AAG's new journal, *GeoHumanities*.

Guest Lecturers

▶ **Dr Annett Heft |** Freie Universität Berlin and
Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society, Germany

Annett Heft is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for Media and Communication Studies, Freie Universität Berlin, and lead researcher in the research group Digitalisation and Transnational Public Sphere at the Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society, Berlin.
Her research interests are the comparative study of political communication in Europe with a focus on digital public spheres, transnational communication and the European public sphere, and quantitative and digital research methods. She received her Doctor of Media and Communication Studies from Freie Universität Berlin with a thesis on the role of media and journalists in the making of a European public sphere. Recent publications study transnational journalism networks as drivers of Europeanization, national orientations as obstacles of transnational public spheres and digital communication networks.

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▶ **Brian J. Hracs, PhD** | University of Southhampton, UK

Brian J. Hracs is a lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Southampton, UK. Originally from Canada, he has held research fellowships at the Martin Prosperity Institute in Toronto and the Department of Social and Economic Geography at Uppsala University in Sweden. Brian is interested in how digital technologies and global competition are reshaping the marketplace for cultural products and the working lives and spatial dynamics of entrepreneurs and intermediaries in the creative economy. He has published articles about the contemporary music industry, aesthetic labour, cultural intermediaries, curation, the linkages between music and fashion and the factors that motivate "talent" to move within and between cities. Brian co-created the annual European Colloquium on Culture, Creativity and Economy and is currently researching the processes and spatial dynamics of curation through a study of record shops in Stockholm, London and Toronto.

▶ **Daniel Maier** | Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

Daniel Maier is a research associate and PhD candidate at the Institute for Media and Communication Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. He graduated in political science from the University of Passau in 2009 and received a master's degree in communication science from the Freie Universität Berlin in 2012. In 2016, he also received a master's degree in public health from Charité Berlin. His research focuses on network theory and methodology and computational social science.

▶ **Daniela Stoltenberg** | Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Germany

Daniela Stoltenberg is a research associate at the University of Münster's department of communication. She received her master's degree in Media and Political Communication from Freie Universität Berlin. Her research focuses on the role of geography in the formation of digital public spheres, particularly on Twitter.

Contributing IRS staff

▶ **Prof Dr Heiderose Kilper**

Heiderose Kilper is the director of the Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS) and holds a professorship in Urban and Regional Development at the Brandenburg University of Technology (BTU) Cottbus-Senftenberg. Her research focusses on conceptual approaches to crises and resilience, new vulnerabilities and resilience strategies, as well as forms and implications of spatial governance. She is a member of numerous advisory councils that provide expertise to political and administrative decision makers, such as the "Spatial Development Advisory Council of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure". Since 2010 she has been a member of the editorial board of the journal *Raumordnung und Raumforschung – Spatial Research and Planning.*

▶ **Prof Dr Oliver Ibert**

Oliver Ibert is head of the IRS research department "Dynamics of Economic Spaces" at the IRS and professor for Economic Geography at the Freie Universität Berlin. In summer 2014 Oliver Ibert was a visiting professor at the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Toronto. He is a member of the editorial board of Palgrave Communications and acts as a spokesperson of the project group "Experts in Crises" as a part of the Leibniz Research Alliance "Crises in a Globalized World".

▶ **Prof Dr Gabriela Christmann**

Gabriela Christmann is head of the IRS research department "Dynamics of Communication, Knowledge and Spatial Development" and deputy director at the IRS. She also is an adjunct professor at the department of Sociology at Technische Universität Berlin. In 2004, 2006, and 2009 she was a visiting professor at the Institute of Advanced Studies in Vienna, Austria. She acts as a section editor for the currently emerging world's largest Encyclopedia for Urban and Regional Studies which will be published by Wiley-Blackwell.

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▶ **Dr Matthias Bernt**

Matthias Bernt is a postdoctoral researcher at the IRS, in 2008 he joined the IRS research department "Regeneration of Cities and Towns". Previous positions were at the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research in Leipzig and, as a Visiting Scholar, at the Columbia University of New York City, the University College of London and the European University of St. Petersburg. With his background in political science, Bernt works in the broad field of interrelations between urban development and urban governance, with a strong focus on urban shrinkage and on processes of gentrification. He has extensively published on the two issues both in national and international journals. Bernt is a member of the Editorial Board of the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, as well as of the Board of the Research Committee 21 on Sociology of Urban and Regional Development of the International Sociological Association. Since 2016 he is Deputy Speaker of the Section Urban and Regional Sociology of the German Sociological Association.

▶ **Dr Verena Brinks**

Verena Brinks is a postdoctoral researcher at the IRS, she joined the IRS research department "Dynamics of Economic Spaces" in 2012. In 2016 she obtained a doctoral degree from the Freie Universität Berlin (dissertation entitled "On the shoulders of dwarfs. The geography of community-driven user innovation"). Her research foci comprise entrepreneurship studies, innovation research and communities of practice.

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Application

This call for applications addresses doctoral candidates and early post-doctoral researchers from the social sciences, human geography and history. The participants will be selected according to their academic qualification as well as the suitability of their current research project to the topic of the IRS Spring Academy 2018.

Applications must include:

▶ a motivational letter (1-2 pages)
▶ your CV
▶ a short description of your current research project, e.g. abstract of your dissertation incl. name and affiliation of your PhD advisor(s)

We can only accept applications in electronic form.
This call for applications closes on 3 March 2018.
Selected candidates will be informed by mid-March; enrolment for the IRS Spring Academy will take until the end of March 2018.

Please send your application via email to :: springacademy@leibniz-irs.de

About the IRS

The Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS) is an independent social science research institute based in Erkner, near Berlin (Germany). Our mission is to conduct problem-oriented and basic research on development capacity, versatility and adaptability of space and thus the spatial dimension of social action in local, national and international relations. The researchers and PhD students at the IRS have backgrounds in disciplines such as geography, political sciences, planning sciences, sociology and history. The IRS cooperates intensively with universities in Brandenburg and Berlin, as well as with different national and international partner institutions, to advance scholarly debates and to engage in knowledge transfer with stakeholders in politics, the economy, and society.

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	TUESDAY, 22.5.2018	WEDNESDAY, 23.5.2018	THURSDAY, 24.5.2018	FRIDAY, 25.5.2018
9:00		**Co-Teaching Seminar** **Using Social Media and Big Data in Urban Geography and Smart City research** (working title) *Matthew Zook	Oliver Ibert*	**Co-Teaching Seminar** **tba** *Samuel Kinsley	Oliver Ibert*	**Co-Teaching Seminar** **tba** *Gertraud Koch	Gabriela Christmann*
10:30		**Paper Pitch**	**Paper Pitch**	**Paper Pitch**
12:00		*Lunch (Brown Bag), Transfer to Berlin*	*Lunch*	*Lunch*
13:00	**Arrival and Registration**	**Welcome at Einstein Center Digital Future** **Research Agenda of the Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society** *Martin Emmer	Karin-Irene Eiermann* **PARELLEL SESSION** **Doing-Research Workshop I** (13:30) **Network Analysis of Digital Public Spheres** *Annett Heft	NN*	**PARELLEL SESSION** **Doing-Research Workshop IIIa** **Studying Communities with Netnography** *Verena Brinks* **Doing-Research Workshop IVa** **Ethics and Rigour in the Digital Age: Researching Blogs and Instagram** *Brian Hracs*	**PARELLEL SESSION** **Doing-Research Workshop IIIb** **Studying Communities with Netnography** *Verena Brinks* **Doing-Research Workshop IVb** **Ethics and Rigour in the Digital Age: Researching Blogs and Instagram** *Brian Hracs*
14:30	**Opening Welcome** *Heiderose Kilper*	**Doing-Research Workshop II** **Tracing Twitter** *Daniel Maier	Daniela Stoltenberg*	*Coffee Break*	*Coffee Break*
15:00	**Academic Speed Networking**	*Coffee Break*	**Individual Consultations I**	**Individual Consultations II**
15:30		**Public Keynote Lecture** **Worrying Realities: Spatial Theory and Digital Geographies**		
16:30	**Public Keynote Lecture** **Hacking Code/Space: Confounding the Code of Global Capitalism** *Matthew Zook*	*Samuel Kinsley*	**Public Keynote Lecture** **Materializing the Virtual – Ethnographic Perspectives on Digital Infrastructures as Media of Communication and Imagination** *Gertraud Koch*	**Closing Panel Discussion** **Observations and Implications** *Heiderose Kilper*
17:00		**Meet the Editors** *Matthias Bernt, Matthew Zook, Brian Hracs*		
18:00	*Reception at IRS*	*Dinner in Berlin*	*Free Time for Participants Faculty Dinner*	*Farewell*

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