

# The State of Digital Democratic Theory

Panel Chair:

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This Panel is part of the Section: "Digital Politics and Politics of the Digital" (S23), Panel 6

Abstract:

Digitalization is often said to pose a fundamental challenge to democracy. Diagnoses range from societal polarization to algorithmic decision-making, from sidelining the institutions of democratic will formation to undermining the capacity of sovereign nation states to act. While all these challenges are actively discussed in the public there has not been much of a theoretical debate about how to react to the structural changes that societies experience in the course of the digital transformation. Does the digital revolution affect democratic theory as such? While globalization has given rise to many new fields of engagement and novel questions in democratic theory, digitalization has often been interpreted as something more superficial, something that may reinforce problematic tendencies in our societies but does not in itself necessitate a paradigm shift or leads to a transformation of democracy. This panel will address, whether the disinterested attitude of most theorists still suffices, or whether, how and in what regards democratic theory has to adapt its premises and perspectives in order to inform our judgment on the fast-changing societal order.

Topics of abstracts might include but are not limited to

- Research that attempts to conceptualize the relationship between digitalization and democracy
- Research that analyzes how digitalization affects certain aspects or institutions of democracy and discusses whether these challenges are limited and context-specific or of a more general kind
- Research that unfolds and/or compares how different theories of democracy tackle issues arising from digitalization
- Research that analyzes discourses in academia or the wider public that connect the digital transformation and developments in modern democracies such as populism
- Research that picks up new frontiers of digitalization such as Machine Learning/Artificial Intelligence and i.e. ask how those developments change our views on the normative implications of digitalization for democracy

This Panel is part of Section: Digital Politics and Politics of the Digital (S23) - please do also consider sending in abstracts for one of the other Panels of the Section.

If you have a Paper you think might fit in this Panel, please contact the Panel Chair (thorsten.thiel@wzb.eu) before 13 February with the following information:

- Title of the paper (no more than 20 words)
- Abstract of the paper (no more than 250 words)
- Author's (and if applicable co-author's) email address as registered in their MyECPR account
- 3 – 5 keywords