

Images in Motion and Moving Images: Gender, Power & Mobility

Joint conference of the DGPuK Divisions of „Media, Public Sphere,
Gender“ and „Visual Communication“

19th – 21st of November 2025, University of Tübingen

From baby monitors to livestreams, from migrants crossing borders to digital navigation systems in our pockets; from Black Lives Matter demonstrations to COVID-19 tracking apps, and from *Woman, Life, Freedom* to influencers staging their journeys through social media – these examples demonstrate how people get and are set in motion with and through "their" media.

But who or what is actually mobile? How do people on the move become visible through mobile, networked media technologies, and who or what remains invisible? What role do gender and power relations play in this? How do mobilities and visualities shape each other? To what extent do different social categories and inequalities shape regimes of mobility and visibility from an intersectional perspective? In addition, the discussion of methodological challenges will be given space: How can mobile media use be analysed when both people and media are constantly moving? How can research methods be flexibilised to adequately capture the ephemerality of visual content and the processuality of media practices? This conference invites to engage with the topic of mobility from a media and communication studies perspective, both theoretically and methodologically.

The advent of mobile, networked media technologies has precipitated a shift in the manner in which the concepts of absence and presence are being negotiated. The communicative scope of action is shaped by different spatial ranges and media (multi-)modalities. Media content is now shared across a variety of platforms and technologies, including shared images, streaming in public spaces, and ephemeral social media content. This raises questions regarding norms and practices: in particular, the question of what content is considered appropriate in (semi-)public spaces. Furthermore, it is crucial to examine the manner in which mobile media usage impacts visual and multimodal communication, as well as the associated viewing and listening practices. Which media are employed, and in what contexts, and how are gender relations reproduced in the process?

Feminist and queer critiques particularly question (in)visibilities, (im)mobilities and power structures in media practices, discourses and infrastructures. The concepts of visibility and invisibility, mobility and immobility are not only subject to cultural and discursive regimes, but also to technical ones - through platform architectures, algorithms and the storage of digital traces. (Geo-)data economies are based on the collection, utilisation, and circulation of digital data, with unequal power relations determining their flow. Algorithms shape

visibility, prioritise content and reinforce social hierarchies. At the same time, transnational data flows enable pervasive surveillance that affects freedom of movement and privacy. Submissions that contribute to a critical reconsideration of the interplay between mobility and visibility, with a particular focus on gender and visibility, are invited. Theoretical, quantitative, qualitative, computational and mixed-methods contributions are welcome, for example on media effects, discourses, iconographies, narratives, image types, infrastructures and data economies. Contributions may fall within, but are not limited to, the following areas:

Care & Control

How do media create shared spaces, establish closeness, show care, or exert control and surveillance? Our everyday social interactions as well as media and communication practices (e.g. in couple relationships or in mediated care work) are characterised by visual communication and visual media content that circulate across platforms and technologies within economies of visibility. This content is often gender-coded and linked to the negotiation of social norms. Closeness and care can turn into control and surveillance, which are often understood as protection (e.g. baby monitors), but can also pose, promote, and create risks such as digital inequalities, stalking, or gender-based violence.

Placemaking and hybrid spaces

Digital media as an interface between digital and physical experiences and components expand spatial perception and appropriation practices (space and place making). How do people perceive (urban) spaces differently through digital media, and how do they shape them according to media possibilities and individual needs? How do digital maps and immersive AR navigation change spatial orientation and mobility? How do digital platforms influence the meaning and relevance of places, e.g. in the context of tourism? Digital media with spatial references – such as Twitch, e-sports, Pokémon GO, and geocaching – can also shape affiliations and spatial identities. Which actors move in which ways in online and offline spaces, what access do they have, and what differences – especially in visual representation and gender – emerge?

Mobilisation, activism and affect

How do media technologies and platforms mobilise, activate, unsettle, harden, and accelerate socio-political and ideological communication? Activists, autocrats, and democratically elected actors make intensive use of media and communication technologies to mobilise people – whether it's through street demonstrations, elections or participation in political discourse, both online and offline. Forms of political participation on social media are primarily visual, often easily accessible and emotional - such as criticism and satire in the form of memes or contributions to viral hashtags. Especially in the context of current political debates, reactionary tendencies and a consolidation of heteronormative gender roles can be observed (#tradwives). At the same time, the media enable minority communities to form and protest movements and counter-publics to emerge.

Migration, borders and inequalities

Migrations are also visually constructed and negotiated in political, economic, and ecological contexts: Which surveillance technologies are utilised for the purpose of controlling refugee movements (e.g. face scans)? Furthermore, what new forms of inequality are created by smart borders? How are mobile media used as a means of resistance against border regimes? Finally, it is crucial to examine how migrant workers are represented in visual communication, and to what extent these portrayals reflect gender-specific stereotypes and power relations.

Immobility and Media - Media That Does Not Move

Where is mobility prevented in relation to the media, and where is immobility desired? Not everything is fluid and changing rapidly. Even visual media and communication technologies can become immobile in certain contexts. This can be seen, for example, with analogue photography: although today's media innovations make it possible to take and carry pictures anywhere and anytime, analogue photography (e.g. in the form of photo books) remains important. Analogue images often increase in value over time and become special visual mementos. However, it is not only the content of media that can remain static – practices of use and access to media are also unevenly distributed. While older audiences often stick with traditional media formats, access to mobile and digital media remains limited for many. Digital divides thus shape the tension between mobile and immobile media: who can move flexibly in networked media environments, and for whom do certain technologies remain inaccessible or unused? These questions highlight the persistence of existing media practices and structural inequalities.

Notes on submission

Submissions are welcome in the following formats:

- 1.) Individual presentation (15 min)
- 2.) Panel (90 min with 4 to max. 5 presentations on the same main topic, discussed from different perspectives)
- 3.) Interactive format: Please contact the organisers if you are interested in this option.

Please note: The conference will be held bilingually in German and English. Submissions in both languages are warmly welcome. Individual panels will be conducted consistently in one language only (German or English). While we expect a larger number of submissions and panels in German, we warmly encourage English-speaking participants to join – with the awareness that not all sessions may be accessible to them without knowledge of German. Bilingual materials (e.g. slides or handouts) are welcome to support mutual understanding. A German version of this call can be accessed [\[here\]](#).

Procedure for submission

Individual presentations should be submitted as extended abstracts of no more than 800 words, excluding bibliography and appendices (e.g. figures, tables). Contributions should be

submitted in either English or German. For panels, please submit a panel description of no more than 600 words and an abstract of no more than 300 words for each paper within the panel, excluding bibliography and appendices (e.g. figures, tables). The language within the panel should be consistent (English or German). Please upload the anonymised abstract/panel submission and the separate cover page in PDF-format by 30 June. Supporting early career researchers is a central concern of both divisions, therefore we strongly encourage researchers at this stage of their career to submit their contributions!

Review process

All submissions will be reviewed anonymously. It is therefore essential that all abstracts are submitted in anonymised form. In addition to a summary of the content of the presentation, abstracts should clearly state the relevance to the conference theme and the relevance and originality of the research question. The following criteria will also serve as a basis for the reviewers' assessment: (1) contribution to the conference theme, (2) plausibility of the theoretical foundation, (3) appropriateness of the approach (and methodology), (4) clarity and conciseness of the presentation, (5) contribution to the field of research (relevance & originality/innovation).

Workshop for early-career researchers

As part of the conference, there will be workshops for early career researchers. These are aimed at doctoral and master's students whose projects touch on issues of media, publicity and gender, and/or visual communication and who would like to discuss their work with experts. Participation is explicitly open to all doctoral and master's students, regardless of their affiliation with the departments. A thematic connection to the conference theme is not required. The call for papers for the workshop will be published separately. The workshop will be organised by the pre-doc speakers of the two research groups.

For the Division „Visual Communication“: Lisa Plumeier, lisa.plumeier@filmuniversitaet.de,
Friederike Jage-D'Aprile, f.jage-daprire@filmuniversitaet.de

For the Division „Media, Public Sphere and Gender“: Victoria Kratel,
Victoria.Kratel@kristiania.no, Miriam Siemon, miriam.siemon@fu-berlin.de

Conference dates

The conference will take place at the Institute of Media Studies (Chair for Digitalization and Social Responsibility; Prof. Dr. Martina Thiele) at the University of Tübingen. The event will begin on 19 November 2025 with a get-together to provide an opportunity for initial exchange. The conference itself will last two days and will end in the early afternoon of 21 November 2025. Further information on accommodation and organisational details will be published on the [official conference website](#) in due course.

We are looking forward to your contribution!

Local organisation team

Dr. Helena Atteneder, Prof. Dr. Martina Thiele, Julia Fischer

For the Division „Media, Public Sphere and Gender“

Dr. Helena Atteneder, University of Tübingen, Germany,
helena.atteneder@uni-tuebingen.de,

Dr. Yener Bayramoglu, University of York, UK, yener.bayramoglu@york.ac.uk

For the Division „Visual Communication“

Dr. Seraina Tarnutzer, University of Fribourg/Université de Fribourg, Switzerland,
seraina.tarnutzer@unifr.ch,

Dr. Maria Schreiber, University of Salzburg, Austria, maria.schreiber@plus.ac.at