

Conference

Infrastructures of Autonomy

An international conference in Berlin, Germany

23-25 November 2022

Autonomy has been a multifaceted term for centuries that was and remains a key concept in discussions about individuals and societies alike. More recently, autonomy has gained a renewed relevance and additional meanings in the context of technical innovation, where it is ubiquitously employed in variations of “autonomous systems”. It is often associated with independently moving or self-controlling machines such as drones, vehicles or robots, or more generally with a wide range of automation processes. In this broad understanding, ‘autonomous’ becomes an attribute for (artificial) intelligence or (machine) learning and is used synonymously with self-determination or adaptability. At the same time, the term invokes (at least) one other meaning: a relational understanding of autonomy that denotes individual and collective processes that are embedded in infrastructures and conditioned by them. It is only in relation to and in the context of media, rules, norms, laws, practices, architectures, materialities or machines that the idea of autonomy acquires any meaning at all.

Against this backdrop the *Infrastructures of Autonomy* conference’s main objective is to address said conditions, structures and relations that constitute both human and machine autonomy. This also entails the various interpretations of the concept of autonomy.

AGENDA

Wednesday, 23 November 2022 · HIIG · Französische Straße 9, 10117 Berlin (Room: Casino)

18:00 Conference Opening: Keynote address by Beate Rössler (University of Amsterdam)

19:30 Reception

Thursday, 24 November 2022 · HIIG · Französische Straße 9, 10117 Berlin (Room: Capella)

08:15-08:45 Registration

08:45-09:00 **Welcome note & Introduction**
Thomas Christian Bächle (Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society, Berlin)

09:00-11:00 **Concepts, questions and structures of autonomy**

Jeanette Hofmann (Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society, Berlin):
Autonomy as a (side) effect

Rahma Khazam (Institut ACTE + ENSADLab, Paris): Reenvisioning autonomy: An exploration of theories of autonomisation in technology, contemporary philosophy and contemporary art

John MacWillie (retired, California State University): The dichotomies of autonomy

11:00–11:30 Coffee Break

11:30-13:00 **Autonomy, infrastructures and computing**

Jan Distelmeyer (Brandenburg Center for Media Studies ZeM, Potsdam): Programmatic autonomy. New conditions of automation

Mihaela Popescu (California State University, San Bernardino), Lemi Baruh (Koç University, Istanbul): Towards an autonomy of becoming: Rethinking autonomy for the algorithmic age

Florian Sprenger (Ruhr University Bochum): Autonomy and interaction – Infrastructures of in-/dependence

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-16:00 **Materialities and practices of autonomy**

Michael Friedman (Tel Aviv University): Dreams and nightmares of autonomous materials

Ana Pop Stefanija (Free University Brussels): Rage against the infrastructure – How to build infrastructures of autonomy

Tanja Knaus (University of Oslo): The automation of affective data – Infrastructure and database practices of speech recognition software systems

16:00-16:30 Coffee Break

16:30-18:00 **Automatisation and autonomy**

Bronwyn Miller (University of New South Wales, Sydney): What Google *should* recommend: An indigenous and queer approach to Google's AI/ML

Bernd Bösel (Brandenburg Center for Media Studies ZeM, Potsdam): Infrastructures of de-automatisation

Camille Roth, Jérémie Poiroux (Marc Bloch Centre, Berlin): Evolutionary construction of recommender systems

18:00-19:00 Wrap-up & Reception

08:30-09:00 Registration

09:00-11:00 **Autonomy and machine agency**

Marcus Burkhardt, Susanne Förster (University of Siegen): Frameworks as infrastructures of conversational AI

Sam Hind (University of Siegen), Max Kanderske (University of Siegen), Fernando van der Vlist (Utrecht University): Taking up the challenge: How machine vision 'challenges' structure AI work

Kate Tollenaar, Erika Ly (Australian National University, Canberra): Redefining value infrastructures for sustainable autonomy: A cybernetic approach

11:00-11:30 Coffee Break

11:30-13:00 **Cognition, perception and autonomy**

Giacomo Figà Talamanca (Radboud University, Nijmegen): Dimensions of autonomy, dimensions of cognition. A conceptual tool for analysing how scaffolds affect decision-making

Tereza Stejskalová (Academy of Performing Arts in Prague): The in/visible labour of the eye

Marta Pérez-Verdugo, Xabier E. Barandiaran (University of the Basque Country, San Sebastián): Cognitive and sensorimotor foundations of personal autonomy for the current and upcoming technologically mediated world

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-16:00 **Autonomy, care and labour**

Birte de Gruisbourne (Paderborn University): Autonomy as a mode of relating – On inclination, care, and its autonomising structure

Mathias Denecke (Ruhr University Bochum): Calculated autonomy. Data labour in ambient assisted living

Abdallah Zouhairi (University Hassan II, Casablanca, Morocco): Enhancing care autonomy among elderly in Morocco

16:00-16:30 Coffee Break

16:30-18:00 **Sovereignty, law and autonomy**

Joel Anderson (Utrecht University): Questions of social justice regarding scaffolding for volitional autonomy

Gijs van Maanen, Nadya Purtova (Utrecht University): Data commons: Commonswashing, digital sovereignty, and data ownership

18:00-19:00 Closing Discussion

19:00 Conference Closing
