

ECREA - COMMUNICATION AND DEMOCRACY SECTION

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

The work of the section during this year has mainly focused on the off-year conference on the topic of 'Political Agency in the Digital Age', which was held in Copenhagen on 9-10 October 2015. The conference had an unprecedented number of submissions, resulting in a rejection rate of 40 per cent. The very successful event hosted 160 participants, and included more than 100 presentations, three popular keynote speeches, and three special events. The section would like to thank the 14 reviewers who took part in the reviewing process, providing valuable help to the organization of the conference.

The public call for papers was first circulated in February 2015. Presentations covered issues such as digital activism and social movements, digital citizenship and civic engagement, protest spaces and popular culture. The programme also included three invited key note speakers, namely Nick Couldry, who discussed 'The Changing Topology of Public Engagement', Anastasia Kavada who addressed the 'Rethinking of the Collective in the Digital Age' and Guobin Yang, who talked on 'Activism: An Ambiguous Word for an Ambivalent Age'.

Tina Askanius, as a representative of the Young Scholars Network, organised a workshop on 'Politics in Academia: On the (Im)Possibility of Activist Scholarship and Scholarly Activism', which addressed the difficulties and possibilities of combining academia with activism. The very popular workshop featured Anastasia Kavada, Tobias Linné and Vasilis Galis, who presented their takes on activism in academia and academia in activism.

The conference included two more events, a closed workshop on 'Digital Activism in China, Scandinavia and the US' and the launch of the book 'Civic Engagement and Social Media'. A section business meeting was held, where the goals and activities for 2016 were discussed. Several conference participants expressed their interest in the section's streams at the Prague conference. Many also expressed an interest in joining the section (and ECREA), but found ECREA's online platform difficult to navigate.

The section is currently preparing a special issue on the basis of the conference with the open access journal *Media and Communication*. The issue, to be completed by the end of May of 2015, will include six peer-reviewed articles based on papers presented at the conference and three shorter commentaries written by the keynote speakers.

The section is also preparing for the 2016 ECREA conference to be held in Prague.

The Section Management Team remain Julie Uldam (Copenhagen Business School) as Chair, and Maria Kyriakidou (University of East Anglia) and Anne Kaun (Södertörn University) acting as Vice-Chairs. Tina Askanius (Lund University) continues to be the section's YECREA representative.

The section currently has 309 members and is one of the largest sections of ECREA.