


**Vortrag: Laurin Mackowitz spricht über Guidelines to Counter the Downsides of Video-Activism, 26. Mai 2021 18:15**



[Reel Politics: Film, Radical Politics, and Solidarity](#)  
A virtual conference on film, radical politics, and solidarity hosted by the University of Guelph  
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Laurin Mackowitz spricht am 26. Mai um 18.15 CEST im Rahmen der Konferenz “Reel Politics: A virtual conference on film, radical politics, and solidarity” am Department of Philosophy der University of Guelph, Canada.

**Laurin Mackowitz, Guidelines to Counter the Downsides of Video-Activism, 26. Mai 18:15**  
<https://zoom.us/j/94178556621?pwd=Z2JWNEJzM1IrZkc2Nm5YdHJrcGpTdz09>

**Abstract:**

Enthusiastic about the participatory opportunities free filesharing and cheap cameras offers to political video activism, their appropriation and colonization is often overlooked. After a decade long gap, during which these innovations gave rise to unexpected social, scientific, or political progress, the creative potential and cognitive productivity, unleashed by these technologies appear to be fused back into the logic of corporate capitalism.

In my presentation, I first describe the beginnings of participatory video-activism and its emancipatory intentions to promote change through information, education, and solidarity. Consequently, referring to reflections on the political impact of the press, the media, and of participatory media, I delineate the downsides of participatory media practices in their capacity to emotionalize discourses, construct stereotypes and bogeymen, stir the imagination of nationalist or religious collectives, and the reduction of complex realities to simplifying narratives of heroes and victims. Moreover, I show how these practices are subject to the intervention of political agents, keen on rendering the content as well as the conditions of production, distribution, and presentation, and following both agendas of concealment and the staging of power.

In turn, I argue that as a strategy for challenging the corporate and nationalist colonization of participatory media practices as well as the unintended employment of media activist as police informers, attacking the enemy is ultimately counterproductive, raising the consumer attention of competitive products, feeding data to surveillance algorithms, and enqueuing in the multiplication of hate, fear, and uncertainty, also mass media feeds on. Conversely, the emancipatory potential of participatory media practices might lie in their capacity for self-reflection and self-discipline. In conclusion, I outline guidelines to an ethics of video-activism that responds to the question, how videos can be made in a way, the emancipatory goals of video-activism are achieved and not sabotaged.

**Keywords:** Citizen-Journalism, Surveillance, Commodification;