<div align="center">**Panel Proposal**</div>

Title:
Social Media and the Transformation of Value, Values & Subjectivity

Abstract:
Social Media and their contiguous web devices are currently restructuring the ways in which people can create, assess, and engage with various forms of value – from moral and aesthetic values to economic and financial value. As a digital ecology of interconnected platforms, applications, and user cultures in which the adjudication and measurement of value(s) is a perpetual public concern, social media present us with a vibrant environment for the study of everyday practices of valuation, justification, aspiration, and subject formation. This panel brings together scholars whose work deals with activities and processes of valuation in social media, which are all constitutive of the common worlds created on social media platforms – and which consequently make these platforms so valuable to its many stakeholders. The panel will inquire into the tension between moral/ethical values and monetary value, asking questions about the relationship between economic rationales and collective affects, and between quantification, different modes of calculation, and public performances of evaluation. Furthermore, it will attend to the technicity of valuation and its inextricable connection to processes of data circulation, platform ecologies and politics of visualization. Are we witnessing the cultivation of new forms of neoliberal subjectivity, which equate a person's worth with their measurable economic value within increasingly competitive settings, or are we instead seeing the birth of new ways to create value – ways that are more ethical, collective, and just?

Participants:
Adam Arvidsson (University of Milan, IT): adam.arvidsson@unimi.it
Beverly Skeggs (Goldsmiths, UK): B.Skeggs@gold.ac.uk
Simon Yuill (Goldsmiths, UK): sos01sy@gold.ac.uk
Taina Bucher (University of Oslo, NO): wfg568@hum.ku.dk
Johannes Pasmann (University of Siegen, DE): johannes.passmann@uni-siegen.de
Niels van Doorn (University of Amsterdam, NL): nielsvandoorn@uva.nl

The panel will be moderated by Carolin Gerlitz (c.gerlitz@uva.nl) and Niels van Doorn.

Individual abstracts:

Adam Arvidsson – Collaborative Crowds. A Digital Ethnography of Adolescent Fan Cultures on Twitter.
In this study we have looked at the crowd dynamics of adolescent fandom by gathering a corpus of 110.000 tweets around the top ten trending teen-band tags on twitter during a week of May 2013. The result is an image of fan cultures as structured by cascades of imitation, with very little in terms of deliberation of information transfer. However, this dynamics differs from classic accounts of crowds in two ways. First, the directionality of crowding on twitter is given by the algocratic affordances of the platform itself: this way crowd behavior becomes directed towards the purposeful pursuit of individual visibility (defined as number of RT and @) and, at the collective level of turning a hashtag into a tending topic. Second, individual actors are reflexively aware of the power of the crowd in achieving celebrity and trend and frequently appeal to it in their attempt to pursue these aims. This gives rise to a collaborative ethic whereby individuals make affective appeals to the collective identity of the crowd in order to attract and mobilize its potential for the purpose at

hand. Looking at fan-culture on twitter form the point of view of crowd dynamics provides new insights on the nature of value and value creation on social media platforms.

Beverly Skeggs and Simon Yuill– A Sociology of Value and Values
We will draw on findings from an ESRC research project on 'A Sociology of Values and Value' which explores the relationship between values and value on Facebook. We ask if FB has had any impact on the re-organisation of relational values (friendship, attention, care) and a person's value through its technical structuring for extracting monetary value. Our previous research demonstrated how the public performance of one's value (incited on TV) was central to how we learn to recognize the legitimate and proper subject, with significant implications for the institutions of law, welfare and education. Is digital media generating similar incitements and what are the implications?

Taina Bucher – Putting protocols to work: On the politics of the Twitter APIs
Starting from the premise that application programming interfaces constitute a technology of government, this paper seeks to open up a line of inquiry into the specificity of APIs as protocological objects, asking not so much what APIs are, but of what they do. Exploring the particular case of the Twitter APIs, and drawing on interviews with Twitter third-party developers, this paper examines the power relations imbued in APIs and the kinds of practices that APIs allow for, and constrain. Whilst often portrayed as being representative of a broader 'turn towards openness', the empirical findings suggest that APIs are highly controlled gateways to data, strategically implemented to channel practices of creative coding and processes of subjectivation.

Johannes Passmann – Playing with value(s). Retweet and fav in the German *Favstar Sphere*
On German-speaking Twitter, largely two groups can be differentiated among different usage practices for the same button: Whereas one group rather uses the favorite-button as a bookmark to save tweets they want to come back to later, the other one made a kind of competition out of gathering as much favs as possible and comparing this over the third party platform favstar.fm. The talk tries to trace, how this attribution of value to this platform activity came about. The company Twitter presents it as a bottom-up development of alternative usage practices. Drawing on an online and offline participant observation of the group which developed around the valued fav-button, I will discuss in how far third party platforms such as Favstar and Software updates by the platform Twitter have to be considered the most important driver of this collective value attribution.

Niels van Doorn – The Neoliberal Subject of Value: Measuring Human Capital in Information Economies
In this paper, I explore the affective ambiguities of what Tiziana Terranova (2000) has termed "free labor", or the "voluntarily given and unwaged, enjoyed and exploited" activities that generate the digital data, content, and networks central to informational capitalism. If, as Terranova argued, free labor is characterized by exhaustion – due to the lack of means by which this labor can sustain itself – why are millions of people still sustaining a commitment to these pervasive modes of unremunerated work? To formulate an answer to this question I turn to the neoliberal theory of human capital, which effectively eviscerates the concept of labor by positing an entrepreneurial subject for whom work is a form of rational economic conduct. I subsequently discuss a case study of Klout, a digital device that scores and ranks users according to their perceived 'influence', which has become an important – if contentious – measure of human capital in information economies.

Participant Bios:

Adam Arvidsson teaches sociology at the University of Milano and directs the Center for Digital Ethnography in Milano (www.etnografiadigitale.it). Adam's research interests include the economic sociology of the information society, creative processes and new forms of innovation and digital methods for social research. He is author of Brands. Meaning and Value in Media Culture (London; Routledge 2006) and, more recently, co-author (with Nicolai Peitersen) of *The Ethical Economy. Rebuilding Value after the Crisis*, Columbia University Press, 2013.

Beverley Skeggs works in the department of Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her main publications include *The Media* (1992), *Feminist Cultural Theory* (1995), *Formations of Class and Gender* (1997), *Transformations: Thinking Through Feminism* (2000); *Class, Self, Culture* (2004), *Sexuality and the Politics of Violence and Safety* (2004) (with Les Moran, Paul Tyrer and Karen Corteen), *Feminism After Bourdieu* (2004 with Lisa Adkins), *Reality TV and Class* (2011) and *Reacting to Reality Television: Audience, Performance, Value* (2012) (both with Helen Wood). She is the co-editor of *The Sociological Review*. She is currently an ESRC Professorial fellow on a project on 'A Sociology of Value and Value'.

Simon Yuill is an artist, writer and programmer based in Glasgow. His work includes the use of interview and research processes, film, publishing, and custom software systems. He was the inaugural winner of the Vilém Flusser Theory Award (Berlin, 2008), has been a Research Resident at the Piet Zwart Institute (Rotterdam, 2005), an Honorary Visiting Research Fellow with the Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of Warwick (2013) and with the Digital Culture Unit at the Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths (London, 2011-2014). He is currently a Postdoctoral Researcher with the Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths.

Taina Bucher is an Assistant Professor at the Center for Communication and Computing, University of Copenhagen. Her current research interests include: Twitter bots, computational journalism, and the power of algorithms in social media.

Johannes Passmann is a Post-Doc researcher at the DFG-Graduiertenkolleg *Locating Media,*University of Siegen, Germany (post graduate program of the German research foundation). Prior to that, he has been working as a lecturer for Software Studies and Network Politics in the MA *New Media and Digital Culture* at Utrecht University. His PhD-dissertation is a media ethnography, that adresses the relationship between platforms and practices of Twitters *Favstar sphere* in Germany—a group of amateurs, that has developed specific practices rendering them the most influential non-professional Twitter users in Germany. His latest publication: "From Mind to Document and Back Again. Zur Reflexivität von Social-Media-Daten". In: Reichert, Ramón (ed.): *Big Data. Analysen zum digitalen Wandel von Wissen, Macht und Ökonomie.*

Niels van Doorn is Assistant Professor in New Media and Digital Culture at the University of Amsterdam. He received his doctorate from the same university in 2010, after which he spent two years at Johns Hopkins University as a postdoctoral

research fellow in the Department of Political Science. His work has appeared in journals such as *Cultural Studies*, *Environment & Planning B*, *Qualitative Inquiry*, and *Media, Culture & Society*.

Carolin Gerlitz is Assistant Professor in New Media and Digital Culture at the University of Amsterdam. Her research is concerned with the various intersections between new media and economic sociology, including social media, brands, topology, platform activities, issue mapping, numbers and digital sociology.