What brings us together?

May 31, 3-5 pm

1. **Heterogeneity, reflexivity, identity?**
    - How do activists on the left navigate their internal heterogeneity in the face of the populist right?
    - Tolerance towards heterogeneity requires reflexivity. Does this sit in tension with potential impact a movement can have in political terms?
    - Social media tear us apart and bring us together: how does the interplay between filter bubbles and affinity groups formation work?

(TBA)

2. **Infrastructures, architectures, standards?**
    - What is the role of algorithms in enhancing particular interaction patterns / issues / emotions?
    - What is the impact of protocols, standards and low-level layers of the Internet on social change?
    - How do movements deal with the tension between commercial infrastructures and sustainable networks & communities?

(TBA)

3. **Leadership, branding, network ties?**
    - How sustainable and legitimate are contemporary forms of activist leadership that take shape through digital platforms / infrastructures?
    - Weak versus strong ties: what kinds of leadership emerge in networks that revolve around weak ties? How the weak / strong ties complement each others, and what role leadership plays in the transition?
    - What are the leadership strategies in a commercial platform environment? Do autonomous infrastructures generate other types of strategies? What role do marketing and branding play?

(TBA)

4. **Backlash, publics, polysemy?**
    - Various social actors tend to appropriate the digital placeholder (hashtags etc.), radically changing the nature of interaction organized through them. How to understand these placeholders in methodological terms in the face of the evolving character of online relations?

- The recent rise of right wing populism raises new questions in terms of online social relations. To what extent do trolling, (meta-)irony, misinformation, infiltration, hate speech complicate information exchange, coordination, and organization for social change? What can be done?
- To what extent are social media vehicles/agents (as bots) of backlash? And more generally, can we understand social media as instruments of reaction, rather than tools for emancipation?

(TBA)

5. Productive interventions, critical concept-making, alternative technologies?

- How can the process of critical concept-making be facilitated? What role has Amsterdam's critical community to play?
- There are interesting attempts to develop alternative social networks. So far, these efforts have not been overly successful. How can we develop more effective infrastructural interventions?
- The meme has become a key cultural form of online connection and antagonism. The right has made big strides in appropriating this form. Can it be appropriated for progressive social change?