

ICA 2025 Preconference

Activism Theory, Activist Practice: Bridging boundaries between researching and doing
activism (v4)

Date: 12 June 2025 (9:00-17:00)

*Location: Mineral E, The Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center (The
Third Floor)*

Registration link: <https://www.icaheadq.org/event/Activism>

(Registration fee: \$50, breaks and lunch will be included)

Organizers

Jun Liu, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Guobin Yang, University of Pennsylvania, the U.S.

Chris Chao Su, Boston University, the U.S.

Priyank Chandra, University of Toronto, Canada

Mads Skovgaard, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

In collaboration with the ICA Activism, Communication, and Social Justice Interest Group & the
ICA Global Communication and Social Change Division

Sponsors

College of Communication, Boston University

The Center on Digital Culture and Society, University of Pennsylvania

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Relational Approach to ICTs as Repertoire of Contention”

“There is a need,” wrote Pierre Bourdieu in *Acts of Resistance*, “to invent new forms of communication between researchers and activists, which means a new division of labour between them.” This articulates a long-standing yet increasingly pivotal issue in this time of social crisis and inequalities: in addition to providing analytical tools necessary to understand people and communities fighting against injustices in many realms, how can social science in general and communication research in particular not just produce knowledge on activism, but to what extent feedback and contribute to plausible forms of activism for changing the world? This preconference calls for consolidating connections between activism and social research, through which scholarly (re)interpretations could facilitate what Giddens (1979) suggested as “double hermeneutics”: by changing people’s interpretations of themselves and others, sometimes in fundamental ways and with long-term consequences, social research can become a powerful tool for societal transformation.

Such acknowledgement and connection, we believe, are unique and crucial for researching activism. There is a necessity for a more reflexive approach that advocates that we should not see activism purely as “objects” to be studied from the outside. Rather, activism should be analyzed from the standpoint of insiders’ knowledge, based on the (daily) struggles activist movements are engaged in, and, when possible, with knowledge produced from scholarly work to empower activists and communities. The wider implication of such a socially grounded, practice-oriented analysis of activists’ practices is to advocate that activism theory is conditioned by, and in turn could condition and shape, activist practice for changing the world. Integrating the practical-oriented dimension of doing activism fundamentally encourages us to reflect on what, why, and how we study activism. It also requires us to confront the ethics inherent in our work, particularly regarding how our involvement (or lack thereof) may affect ongoing movements.

AM Break is available from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. in the back of the room. If the hotel is not able to place it in the back of the room for some reason, then it will be located right outside in **the Mineral Hall foyer**. Please make note that this area will be shared with the other preconferences in that section.

Lunch is available from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in **Capitol Foyer North/South** on the fourth floor of the Hyatt Regency at Denver Hotel. You are welcome to go any time during that time frame; no ticket is required.

PM Break is available from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the back of the room. If the hotel is not able to place it in the back of the room for some reason, then it will be located right outside in **the Mineral Hall foyer**. Please make note that this area will be shared with the other preconferences in that section.

Instructions

Each panel consists of one moderator and four/five presentations. Each presentation should be no more than **12 mins**. And there will be Q&A section at the end of the panel.

The moderator will

- Confirm the presenters before the panel begins.
- Monitor the time during the presentations.
- Coordinate the presentations and the subsequent Q&A session.

The presenter will

- Prepare and set up the slides, if any, before the panel begins.
- Ensure the presentation does not exceed 12 minutes.

Schedule

9:00-9:15 **AM Break**

9:15-10:00 **Intro and Keynote Roundtable**
“Doing and Researching Activism in Tumultuous Times”

Jun Liu, University of Copenhagen
Badr Hanan, University of Salzburg
Guobin Yang, University of Pennsylvania
Chris Chao Su, Boston University
Priyank Chandra, University of Toronto

10:00-11:00 **Panel “Participatory Research, Collaboration, and Activist Praxis”**
(moderator: Chris Chao Su, Boston University)

Interpersonal Activism: What Does It Mean to Do Activist-Oriented Research
Related to Relationships and Families?
Jimmie Manning, University of Nevada
Reproductive Justice Mutual Aid Organizing: Rethinking Activism Outside the
Nonprofit System in Precarious Political Contexts
Morgan V. Gimblet & Hannah P. Luz, University of Colorado Boulder
Measuring Activism in Communication Scholarship: A Review of Research
and Roadmap for Greater Societal Impact
Cassandra Troy, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Nicholas Eng, University of Georgia
Towards Intergenerational and Sustainable Community Co-Design Research
and Activism Praxis
Sarah Nguyễn, University of Washington

11:00-11:15 **Break**

11:15-12:15 **Panel “Repression and Resistance under Surveillance” (moderator: XXX)**

ShotSpotter in Chicago: Activism, Surveillance, and the Politics of Resistance
through Activist Oral Histories
Sara M. Abdulla, Northwestern University
Ignacio F. Cruz, Northwestern University
Responding to Digital Repression: Researching Vulnerability and Resilience of
Female Dissidents in Myanmar’s Ongoing Civil War
Mai Van Tran, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Misinformation and Misogyny: Digital Repression of #PinarGultekin
Movement in Turkey
Berna Görgülü, University of Pittsburgh
Navigating Resistance: Gaza Creators, Digital Activism, and Researcher
Positionality
Tom Divon, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

12:15-13:00 **Lunch**

- 13:00-14:15 **Panel “Indigenous, Feminist, and Decolonial Activisms” (Moderator: Yu Sun, University of Glasgow)**
- “Not People from the Past”: Interviews with Indigenous Visual Artists in the U.S. about their Decolonial Feminist Activism on Instagram
L. Massiel Cauich Maldonado, Ohio University
- A Feminist Framing Analysis of Media Coverage of Consensual Non-Monogamy
Miglena Sternadori, Texas Tech University
- Voices of Resistance: Discursive Strategies Constructing Collective Identity in Senegal’s Digital Feminist Activism
Yue Zhang, Communication University of China
- Including Indigenous Ways of Communicating Social justice in Advocacy and Protest
Mal Green, Massey Business School
- Doing Coalitional Research: A Feminist, Decolonizing Approach
Henna Zamurd Butt, University of Chicago
- 14:15-14:30 **Break**
- 14:30-15:30 **Panel “Theoretical Innovations and Field-Crossing Activist Research” (moderator: Guobin Yang, University of Pennsylvania)**
- Bridging the Gap between Activism, Journalism, and Social Science
Randi Black, Texas Tech University
- Miglena Sternadori, Texas Tech University*
- Toward a Relational Social Theory of Participatory Movements
Marisa Holmes, Rutgers University
- Politicizing Instagram: Connective Witnessing in Visual Social Media
Yena Kang, University of Massachusetts Amherst
- Auditing the Kenyan Government and Institutions Through Social Media and Informal Parliamentary Sessions
Henry Njiru, Georgia State University
- 15:30-15:45 **Break**
- 15:45-16:45 **Panel “Evolving Forms of Digital Solidarity and Resistance” (moderator: XXX)**
- Mapping the Evolving Networks of the #StopAsianHate Movement on Twitter
Rong Wang, Vanderbilt University
- Weiyu Zhang, National University of Singapore*
- Jieun Shin, University of Florida*
- Digital Activism and Social Media: The Role of Negative emotions on connective action in the 2024 U.S. Campus Protests
Ran Wei, Hong Kong Baptist University
- Bohan Zhang, Hong Kong Baptist University*
- Xinzhi Zhang, City University of Hong Kong*
- Ven-hwei Lo, National Chengchi University*
- From a Global Protest to a Glocal Movement: The Obident Movement as a Continuum of Nigeria’s EndSARS Protest

Silas Udenze, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

Palestine on Campus: How Pro-Palestine Student Organizers Engage in
Decision-Making, Risk Assessment, and Evaluation for Campus Actions

Marwa Tahboub, Northwestern University

Hoda Fakhari, Northwestern University

Eden Melles, Northwestern University

Micol Bez, Northwestern University