

# PERIPHERIE

Politik • Ökonomie • Kultur

## Digitisation

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Everyone is talking about “digitalisation”, it is part of our everyday lives. Digitalisation is advancing all over the world, including in the Global South. When the internet took hold in the 1990s, it promised an egalitarian, participatory, productive and modern future. Access to the internet was understood as a human right. In addition, it was hoped that the use of digital technologies would facilitate environmental protection. The peripheries would be better connected to globalisation; this would give the Global South or rural regions better chances for economic growth and poverty reduction. Mobility would become more intelligent. Social media and networks promised a free exchange of information and even new possibilities for the (transnational) mobilisation of social movements.

However, ambivalences also became apparent quite quickly: Do digitalisation processes not create new inequality- and division effects? One debate therefore revolved and still revolves around the so-called “digital divide” – the different access to the internet and digital technologies between countries and within countries. How does digitalisation influence social coexistence when part of the population has a smartphone and gains access to the internet at least temporarily? Critically, the use of artificial intelligence, e.g. for predictive policing (control that makes people’s behaviour predictable), health checks, measurement of productivity and selection of the best for greater exploitation of labour, outsourcing and platform capitalism are changing labour relations. A global digital capitalism has emerged, especially financial market-driven capitalism – keyword “dotcom bubble”. It is therefore necessary to fend off the monitoring and influencing of purchasing and voting behaviour and the increase in the power of corporations through the collection of data. This poses a new challenge to data protection. At the same time, the advancing digitalisation with negative effects on the environment and climate protection – mostly in the Global South – is increasing the consumption of resources.

Digitisation is the subject of social, political and academic reflection. However, these often take place from the perspective of the technologically highly developed centres. We want to look at the global developments of digitalisation from the perspective of the Global South. Overall, a variety of questions arise that invite contributions:

- How is digitalisation changing people’s lives?
- Which areas does it really cover in the respective regions and countries? Does it permeate people’s lives in the same way everywhere?

- How much is social exchange changing through privatised or partly self-organised social networks or new trade relations mediated via the internet?
- To what extent is industry changing as a result of digitalisation? What does this mean for the concepts of catch-up industrialisation?
- What changes does digitalisation bring to the political economy?
- What impact does this have on the international balance of power? –Digital technologies can be used in new ways to pursue political interests at home and abroad. To what extent is this already being used, e.g. to obstruct unpopular or competing groups or to better implement one's own legitimate or illegitimate goals?
- Artificial intelligence has long since arrived on the mass market with chatbots and assistance systems. The calculations behind them often appear to be black boxes, even to the programmers. What worries about the loss of control over one's own behaviour arise from this? How much reality is there in the myths and dystopias surrounding it?
- How do the processes that happen in the Global North happen in the Global South? How do companies operate in the Global South?
- What postcolonial effects are evident in digitisation processes?
- Are we witnessing the reproduction of the known imperial system or the emergence of a new order, e.g. a capitalism 4.0 or Afrotopian economies that cannot be thought of with the usual categories?

Thematic areas can be:

*Digitalisation and society*

- Digitisation processes in the Global South: use, emergence in everyday life and the world of work;
- Social change brought about by digitalisation;
- Digitalisation and gender.

*Digitalisation and political economy (material dimension)*

- Digitalisation and work, international division of labour;
- Reproduction of postcolonial class relations, neocolonialism, imperialism;
- Emergence of the new.

*The editorial deadline for articles is*

2 January 2025.

Please send manuscripts, feedback on possible contributions and further questions to [info@zeitschrift-peripherie.de](mailto:info@zeitschrift-peripherie.de). Further information for authors can be downloaded from our website at <https://www.zeitschrift-peripherie.de>.