

## **HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-01: Tackling gender-based violence against politically active women and LGBTIQ people**

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### **Research interest**

Focussing on digitally mediated forms of violence against politicians, activists and citizens we would like to understand the precedents and consequences of gender-based violence against politically active women and LGBTIQ people especially with regard to their political engagement offline and online. Online verbal violence may further the political marginalization of women and LGBTIQ people as it can result in their retraction from politics for fear of social sanctions. A digitally networked political and social environment can exacerbate such dynamics: Not only experiences of being personally attacked but also observations of other individuals being abused online, afforded by the networked character of online communication, can affect the individual. This puts democratic legitimacy at risk as a functioning democracy relies on the plurality of political voices. Furthermore, we would like to learn about the different responses to experiences of online verbal violence, especially strategies women and LGBTIQ individuals employ to build resilience and to counter abusive behaviour online.

### **Potential contribution to a consortium**

Empirically and methodologically, we would contribute data collections and analyses from a micro-sociological perspective, i.e. large-scale survey data among citizens, and qualitative studies of politicians and activists. Theoretically and conceptually, we can complement a focus on physical violence against politicians and citizens with a focus on communicative political violence, online hate and harassment.

### **Previous projects**

*Project “Digital Citizenship”, research group (2017-2022) at the Weizenbaum Institute, funded by BMFTR/Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space, Germany*

The project studied the emergence of new forms of political participation in the face of online misinformation and hate speech (e.g. Kunst et al., 2021; Porten-Chée et al., 2020).

*Project “Weizenbaum Panel” (since 2022, ongoing), funded by BMFTR/Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space, Germany*

The Weizenbaum Panel is a longitudinal national survey study (1.500-2.500 participants per year annually since 2019) that collects data on several aspects of the digital transformation of society.

*Project NOHATE (2017-2021), conducted at FU Berlin and funded by BMBF/Federal Ministry of Education and Research*

In this cooperative project with business partners and researchers we developed deep-learning-based algorithms for automated detection and categorization of incivility and hate speech on social media and journalistic media platforms.

### **Publications**

- Heger, K. & Hoffmann, C.P. (2021). Feminism! What Is It Good For? The Role of Feminism and Political Self-Efficacy in Women’s Online Political Participation. *Social Science Computer Review*, 39(2), 226-244. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439319865909>
- Kunst, M., Porten-Cheé, P., Emmer, M., & Eilders, C. (2021). Do ‘Good Citizens’ fight hate speech online? Effects of solidarity citizenship norms on user responses to hate comments. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 18(1), 258–273. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2020.1871149>
- Porten-Cheé, P., Kunst, M., & Emmer, M. (2020). Online Civic Intervention: A New Form of Political Participation Under Conditions of a Disruptive Online Discourse. *International Journal of Communication*, 14, 514–534. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/10639>