#Home

The 'home' has been a key line of defence in efforts to curtail the spread of COVID-19. Public health recommendations and governmental measures have enforced numerous restrictions on daily living, including physical distancing and isolation, home confinement, and quarantining. These mandates to be at home have relied on the construction, and assumption, of home as a familiar, stable and safe space.

However, home has always been a site of intense political contestation—be it through the temporal frames of belonging, ideas of citizenship and regionalism, role in the reproduction of capital accumulation, or as material signifiers of social status. Over the past 2 years, digital infrastructures have played an intensified role in the meaning making of the home. Coming to terms with the pandemic entailed an accelerated embedding of digital systems in many of our relationships. Be it with the state, educational institutions, workplaces, or each other. Solutions to the many challenges of infrastructure and mobility emerging over the last year have been sought in digital technologies. The digital mediation of the pandemic has ushered in visions of the 'new normal' as situated wholly in the digital.

While the initial anxieties of living through the pandemic may have now eased, and we make forays into a changed world, the spectre of the 'next normal' awaits. As we continue to come to terms with, and find ways to reorient the disruption of life, being at home has acquired many new meanings. What has it meant to be at home, and what is home? What is and has been the role of the internet and digital media technologies in navigating the contours of a changing 'normal'? How have/can digital technologies help overcome, or exacerbate existing social, economic and political challenges during the pandemic? What forms of digital infrastructure—tools, platforms, devices and services—help build, sustain and alter the notion of home?

For IRC22, we invite you to pause and reflect on the relational and material linkages between being at home and being connected. We invite sessions across a range of formats

and themes to explore and challenge conceptions of the home. Different people imagine and experience the home in various ways—as a space of refuge and comfort, but also as one of violence, care, labour or movement-building. We invite contributions that speak to these provocations through one or more of the following thematic areas. The conference will be held online in May 2022.

Theme 1
Movement(s)

The outbreak of COVID-19 and the resultant public health protocols led to significant disruptions in ongoing mass socio-political movements the world-over. Mass social movements are inherently linked to the availability of public spaces, with the home often associated with refuge, safety, and rest. As collective efforts became particularly urgent to quell the severely inequitable impact of COVID-19 responses, digital media infrastructures gained heightened importance to organise these efforts. This is not to say that this integration of digital media in offline social movements or social movements being situated online are new. Instead, the changing role of the home may have further complicated the binaries of the home and streets, and offline and online.

Some prompts that contributions to this theme can draw upon could include: How do affordances of the home, and of digital technologies interact with, and shape movements? How can digital spaces, arising from the home, of resistance, affect, and solidarity be created, sustained, and safeguarded? How can we imagine meaningful digital publics? What are the implications for inclusion, participation and voice in such digital political spaces? How do we conceptualise the home, not only as essential to movements, but also a site of contestation?

Theme 2
Violence and care

As lockdowns and preventive confinement became part of the global response to COVID-19, violence at the home intensified. Victims and survivors of violence were confined with abusers, even as they were distanced from essential relief and rehabilitation services. The rational-utilitarian logics and masculine language of normative COVID-19 responses could not be more evident.

For structurally disadvantaged communities, digital spaces have long been a space of refuge, solidarity and calling out. At the same time, use of digital spaces is also marked by a spectre of fear, abuse, surveillance and also, inaccess.

Inputs to this theme may contribute to developing understandings of the use and experience of technology and online spaces by structurally disadvantaged communities in times of socially disruptive crises. How has violence at home been replicated, and challenged in and through online spaces? Has technology been appropriated as a tool of oppression, or can it help enable sites of safety and security?

As structurally disadvantaged groups continue to remain at elevated risks of experiencing violence, it is expedient to (re)imagine what role *care* can play in shaping our responses to crises. How have digital tools, services, and infrastructures informed our notions of care, at home and outside? How do digital technologies help mediate and operationalise new forms and modes of care? What affective networks of care do they create, and how do they redefine the notions of home? What can, and do spaces embodying radical forms of safety and solidarity look like?

Theme 3
Labour

The current moment in global capitalism is marked by fragmentation and precaritisation of 'productive' work. Platform companies (across sectors including transport, logistics, e-commerce, education etc.) have emerged as wielders of tremendous economic, social and cultural power. In India, restrictions on mobility and business operations were accompanied by a forbearance for platform companies, generating the enabling environment for radical changes in urban mobility and consumption. The rapid concentration of market power over the past two years has been accompanied by astronomical market valuations and unprecedented inflow of venture capital.

These have been sustained by technologically-mediated practices deployed by platform firms to manage supply chains and workforce. While non-standard work arrangements have long been the norm in many southern contexts, the pandemic-induced need to work from home in the formal economy is re-making the formal productive workplace as well, further blurring the notions of assumed binaries between productive-reproductive labour and public-private spheres of labour.

The world of work has been significantly transformed due to public and private initiatives around technological uptake to operationalise COVID-triggered remote workflow and management processes.   Many new opportunities for resistance, risks of exploitation and inequities in the labour market have arisen. Some prompts for contributions to this theme include: How has the uneven retreat into homes and digitisation of workflows transformed

notions of work, workplace and care labour? How have they mediated and operationalised new forms of labour? How can technologies of/for work be reclaimed by labour, and what promises and limitations do alternatives hold?

Timeline

December 15, 2021:
Announcement of call for sessions.

March 9, 2022:
Deadline for submission of session proposals.

March 14, 2022:
All submitted sessions will be posted on the CIS website, without the names of those leading each session to facilitate anonymous review and selection.

March 14 - 28, 2022:
Session selection process begins. All session teams will select 10 sessions to be included in the IRC22 programme. The votes will be anonymous, that is no session team will know which other session teams have voted for their session. Scores from aggregating these votes would be assigned a 50% weightage. The remaining 50% will be accounted for by scores provided by a panel of reviewers. This panel will comprise of researchers at CIS as well as external reviewers. The panel will review submissions on the basis of originality of content, methods, participatory approaches adopted, and alignment with the goal of intersectionality. The sessions with the highest scores will be selected for the final programme of IRC22.

April 1, 2022:
Communication of selected sessions to all teams that proposed a session.

April 4-15, 2022:
Consultation with selected session teams to decide upon audio recording of sessions (where applicable), appropriate software for public events, and scheduling of public events.

April 20, 2022:
Public announcement of IRC22 registration and schedule of events.

May 25-27, 2022:
IRC22 on the internet!

Session formats

We invite teams of two or more persons to propose sessions for IRC22. All sessions will be fully designed and facilitated by the team concerned, including moderation (if any).

1. **Presentation and discussion of papers**. Each session of this type is expected to present two or three papers co/authored by the session teams. Leads of selected sessions will be requested to share a version of their papers (1000-1500 words) before the conference, along with an audio recording (of 60 minutes at most, including all papers of the session) of team members presenting the papers. Paper presentations may also be recorded individually, depending on feasibility; the organising team will coordinate with the session leads on the same. The papers and audio recordings for each session of this type will be uploaded on the conference site a week before the date of the session. The audience for each session will be expected to read and/or listen to the papers before the session, so that the majority of the session can be utilised for discussing the papers - initially among the leads of the session, and later with the audience. Each discussion session under this format would be around 45-60 minutes.

2. **Panel discussion**. Each session of this type will involve a detailed discussion of the proposed topic by the leads of the session, followed by a round of discussion/Q&A with the audience. Each session will be around 75 minutes, and will be entirely designed and facilitated by the team concerned, including moderation. Audio recordings of these sessions will be made available on the conference site after the event.

3. **Demonstration of research outputs and methods**. Leads of these sessions are expected to showcase a completed research output, ideally those available online and in an interactive format, or demonstrate a research/documentation method, ideally involving making and/or analysis of a corpus of digital data, over a live online session via audio/video-conferencing. No pre-recording of the session is needed for this type of session but the session team is expected to share the materials/software to be demonstrated prior to the session so that the audiences can familiarise themselves with the same before participating in the session. Each session under this format would be around 45-60 minutes.

4. **Workshop or collaborative working session**. Leads of these sessions will facilitate a collaborative working/making/thinking exercise addressing the proposed topics. This exercise will take place over an online live session, ideally using a video conferencing software and/or screen-sharing to coordinate collaborative work. Each session under this format would be around 60-75 minutes.

We look forward to sessions conducted in Indian languages apart from English. The proposing team, in such a case, should consider how participants who do not understand the language concerned may engage with the session. IRC organisers and other participants shall help facilitate these sessions, say by offering translation support.

There is no registration fee for the conference, and each lead of selected sessions will be offered an honorarium of INR 3,000/- for their contributions. While teams can be based anywhere in the world, we will only be able to compensate contributors with Indian bank accounts.

To propose a session, please send the following documents (as attached text files) to workshops@cis-india.org:

- **Session Title**: The session should be named in the form of a hashtag (check the [sessions proposed for IRC19](#) for example).

- **Session Type**: Please select the session type among the four types mentioned above.

- **Session Plan**: This should describe the objectives of the session (the motivations and expectations driving it), what will be done and discussed during the session, and who among the people organising the session will be responsible for what. This note need not be more than 500 words long. If your session involves inviting others to present their work (say papers), then please provide a description and timeline of the process through which these people will be identified.

- **Session Team Details**: Please share brief biographical notes of each lead of the session team, and their email addresses.

The IRC team is committed to bringing together practitioners and researchers from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and locations. To this end, preference will be given to submissions by individuals from structurally marginalised locations and sessions that engage with/bring in voices and perspectives from diverse communities. Please indicate the following in your session proposals, as applicable to your submission: (i) Is the session lead or any of the team members, a first-generation college graduate? (ii) What is your present area of work/occupation, and how is your research supported (for eg. independent means, corporate, multinational or government donors?) (iii) How will your session engage with/centre the voices, perspectives and experiences of diverse groups, including marginalised communities?