

The aim of the research project is to answer the question "**how do social movements use data to legitimize their actions?**", which will be empirically studied on the example of social movements that deal with climate and environmental issues in Poland, Europe and the world. At the center of the theoretical consideration and the research process is the category of data activism as a new repertoire of actions of social movements. Datafication is changing contemporary societies and significantly influencing politics, as well as social activism. Datafication is particularly relevant in the realms of climate and the environment, becoming the main way of knowing and making predictions about nature in public policy. In this sense, data is the universal language of technocratic governance of nature, and environmental activists are increasingly adopting this way of describing reality, turning to technologies of datafication, visualization, and the use of data in the context of argument and persuasion about environmental pollution and climate change.

Two dominant theoretical strands can be identified in data activism research. First, data activism is seen as a set of collective actions in which data are either the object of dispute or the object of contestation, as in protests against privacy violations and surveillance. Second, data activism is considered as a means of action and the use of data for the benefit of grassroots political actors, including social movements.

The research project proposes a new approach to data activism as a form of legitimization of actions in the sphere of climate and environmental policy, which at the same time is a form of participation in the so-called data hegemony in this political sphere. It thus adopts a relational and cultural perspective. Data hegemony can be defined in two ways. First, as a frame of possible experience or a system of meaning that shapes our sense of reality. Second, as a dynamic practice of binding heterogeneous elements of reality to dominant meanings. The role of data hegemony in the field of environmental policy comes down to the creation of our experience of climate change and pollution, but also to the practice of datafication of detailed or local problems that should be integrated into the sphere of political governance. The hegemonic role of data in this field is both a condition for the implementation of climate-environmental policies and a political opportunity for social movements.

The research project will employ a qualitative case study methodology. The selection of cases will be based on the scale of action of a given social movement organization in the area of environmental and climate policy. I tentatively plan to select three social movement organizations that are diverse in terms of scale of action: Greenpeace International (global case), Fridays for Future (*transnational* case), and Polish Smog Alarm (supra-local case). Each social movement organization will be examined through content analysis (a variety of data-driven social movement products) and in-depth interviews with activists from each selected organization. The empirical findings from the previous sections will be supplemented by expert interviews to reconstruct the political environment of each social movement organization.

The expected outcome of the project in empirical terms is to deepen the existing knowledge on the phenomenon of data activism as a source of legitimacy for social movements in climate-environmental politics. Theoretically, the research will extend the concept of data activism to include relational and cultural meanings. The results of the project will be submitted in the form of a research article to an international academic journal that addresses social movement research or digital sociology.