Call for Papers/Proposals for Panel on
"Health IT: A Radical Transformation of Health Policy and Medical Paradigms?"
Conference of the "Comparative Politics" Section of the
German Political Science Association

21 - 23 March
School of Governance, Technical University of Munich

Panel organizers: Tim Büthe, Cindy Cheng & Matthias Uhl
(all Technical University of Munich, School of Governance)

Contact: cindy.cheng@hfp.tum.de

The introduction of new "digital" information and communications technologies means transformative changes for health care systems everywhere. Some of the changes are gradual and well underway: Even in Germany, which in international comparisons is generally considered a health IT "backwater", approximately 60% of patients report regularly consulting the internet for a "second opinion." Other transformative changes are more sudden and radical – and advanced in some countries while they have barely yet started in others: Electronic medical or health records EMRs/EHRs – in conjunction with "big data" methods to analyze the vast amount of data made available by health-IT systems – open up an array of transformative possibilities, including safeguards against medical errors and incompatible prescription medications, early detection of contagious diseases, collaborative research on rare medical conditions, decision support for medical practitioners, patient empowerment, and substantial savings, e.g. by avoiding duplicate diagnostic tests including x-rays. Introducing such new technologies thus may save lives and result in substantially improved health outcomes for many. At the same time, the new technologies, most of which are still under development, raise important ethical questions, and legitimate – as well as arguably unfounded – concerns about privacy and the possible abuse of personal health information. They also might disrupt and reshape the entire health care sector (which accounts for 8-15% of GDP in most countries), transforming the doctor-patient relationship, introducing new forms of health governance, and/or changing how different types of expertise are valued.

The overall objective of the March 21-23 conference is to examine the causes and consequences of transformative changes and explore the opportunities and limits of "governing" such changes, whether the transformations are gradual and hence require long-term political or policy commitments, or sudden and disruptive, requiring rapid responses.

For this panel, we invite proposals for papers that will examine the health IT-induced transformative changes in health and medicine from a variety of theoretical starting points, which may range from behavioral economics or political psychology perspectives on micro behavior to macro-perspectives such as Gerschenkron's classic analytical framework for understanding "backwardness" in comparative perspective. Moreover, we are aiming for papers that use a variety of empirical methods, ranging from experiments and statistical analyses to qualitative case studies.   We are particularly interested in proposals that address the implications of health IT for health policy and/or for medical/health paradigms.

We welcome substantive **abstracts** of no more than 500 words **or** full **papers** (please include an abstract) **by Friday, 19 October 2018.** The panel organizers will decide on the acceptance of proposals/papers by Wednesday, 24 October 2018. The conference program will be published no later than 15 November 2018. More information on the conference can be found at http://www.bigtransformations.hfp.tum.de.