Call for Papers

ICA Preconference: Media Performance & Social Inclusion

Preconference at the 71st Annual ICA Conference, 2021

Sponsored by the Journalism Studies Division & the Political Communication Division

Organizers: Josef Seethaler, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Austria

Linards Udris, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Time: May 27, 2021, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ICA Office Time (EST)

Location: Virtual conference (platform: Cadmore – the same platform that ICA uses)

During the Covid pandemic it has become extremely clear that public communication may do both: contribute to the inclusion of people in a diverse society or amplifies the disintegration of society into groups serving particular interests. The preconference therefore aims at intensifying the discussion on media performance, initiated by two ICA preconferences in 2016 and 2017, but considering the main theme of ICA 2021, it will focus on how media should act to support the inclusion of people in a diverse democratic society, and how media actually act.

Especially in times of crisis, when community is particularly important, but also beyond crises, media should promote tolerant and respectful coexistence of people instead of conveying "illiberal" notions of democracy which undermine basic democratic values. Given the different social contexts, cultural practices, media ecosystems and media use behaviors, which can be observed around the globe and even within one country, the preconference aims at discussing which factors and which media types enhance rather than limit the inclusive nature and quality of media content. Special focus is given on the relation between normative principles, which themselves are rooted in different conceptions and models of democracy, and the practices to which they correspond. Moreover, the complexity and hybridity of media ecosystems should be taken into account by discussing legacy media, social media, alternative media, and other types of media in their interplay when contributing more or less to social inclusion.

It is a particular concern of the preconference to bring together researchers from different backgrounds, including theoretically, methodologically, and practically oriented researchers, in order to exchange innovative ideas on the role of the media in promoting social inclusion. As a first step to achieving this, the preconference program will include input speeches by

- Nouha Belaid, Academic Program Manager of School of Communication at the Central University of Tunis and a co-founder of the Arab Journalism Observatory,
- Aeron Davis, Emeritus Professor at Goldsmiths, University of London, Department of Media, Communications and Cultural Studies (MCCS) *(requested)*,
- Philip M. Napoli, James R. Shepley Professor of Public Policy at Duke University and a Faculty Affiliate with the DeWitt Wallace Center for Media & Democracy,
- Natalie J. Stroud, Professor of Communication Studies and Journalism at The University of Texas at Austin and the founding and current Director of the Center for Media Engagement in the Moody College of Communication.

Special emphasis is laid on

(1) contributions from countries around the world, particularly from countries or areas that have been insufficiently represented in the international literature until now;

(2) studies dealing not only with "legacy media" but also with all kinds of social and "alternative" media and their role in the overall media environment, and especially the interplay of these media types;

(3) concepts that focus on the relations between the various levels where quality can and should be measured (policy and regulatory frameworks, media system structures, newsroom investment, organizational standards, journalists' role perceptions, content characteristics, and user preferences);

(4) and reflections and practical examples why scholars should seek, or not seek, to "intervene" in public debate with their research findings supporting good practice in professional and civic journalism.

In line with the main conference, the preconference is planned as a virtual conference. Apart from input speeches by keynote speakers and participants' presentations, special emphasis will be given to interactive formats such as Q&A and debate formats involving presenters and non-presenters.

Prerequisites

Scholars wishing to present and discuss their work have to submit an abstract of 500 words (without any identifying information) which must be uploaded to https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=ica21mpsi ("ICA21-MPSI") by January 25, 2021. All submissions will undergo blind peer review, and acceptance notifications will be sent out on February 12, 2021. Authors of accepted abstracts are expected to submit a discussion paper (5-10 pages) due May 13, 2021.

The preconference is open both to presenters and non-presenters. ICA membership is not required to participate in the preconference. Registration opens on January 13, 2021 (http://www.icahdq.org) and closes on May 5, 2021. There is no special registration fee to attend the preconference.

Information, updates and questions

ICA announcement regarding the #ICA21 Conference

Preconference websites:
Austrian Academy of Sciences
University of Zurich

The preconference organizers can be contacted by e-mail and will be happy to answer any questions related to the preconference.

- Josef Seethaler, Austrian Academy of Sciences & University of Klagenfurt, Institute for Comparative Media and Communication Studies (josef.seethaler@oeaw.ac.at)
- Linards Udris, University of Zurich, Research Center for the Public Sphere and Society (linards.udris@foeg.uzh.ch)