

Call for Papers:

ICA Preconference: Media Performance & Democracy – the Debate Continues

Sponsored by the Journalism Studies Division & the Political Communication Division

Organizers: Josef Seethaler, Linards Udris

Time: May 25, 2017, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Hilton San Diego Bayfront (Conference hotel)

Keynote Speakers: **Gianpietro Mazzoleni**, Professor at the Università degli Studi di Milano

Silvia Pellegrini, Professor at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Deadline for submissions: January 20, 2017

According to many programs and initiatives launched by supranational institutions like UNESCO and the European Commission in recent years, the definition of “quality indicators for journalism is a way to strengthen democratic functions of the media” (as it is stated in a 2010 UNESCO report on Brazilian media). Nevertheless, opinion is divided on whether there is a fixed set of principles across countries that would allow measuring and evaluating the quality of democracy and media performance in an etic way, or whether the extraordinary diversity of democratic configurations throughout the world as well as the diversity of media types call for a more culture- and media-specific, emic approach. Connected to this, scholars working on media performance are particularly concerned with the main question of the 2017 ICA Annual Conference of how research could (or should) contribute to the “good life” and how scholars could (or should) make “communication interventions” in public.

After the great success of last year’s ICA preconference on “Media Performance and Democracy”, the 2017 preconference aims at intensifying the discussion by focusing on the two aforementioned challenging dimensions:

- (1) Do different concepts and practices of democracy in various parts of the world or different perceptions of democracy within a society call for different conceptualizations of the role of journalism, and thus for different principles of media quality, or do we need an internationally valid framework to assess media performance in a comparative way?
- (2) Do different types of media fulfill different functions within a democratic society, thus facing different quality demands, or are there normative claims to be made about the democratic quality of public communication across all media types?

The preconference therefore places special emphasis on

- contributions from countries around the world, particularly from countries or areas that have been insufficiently represented in international literature until now,
- studies dealing not only with mainstream “legacy” media, but also with all kinds of social and “alternative” media and their role in the overall media environment,

- concepts that focus on the relationships between the various levels quality should be measured (policy and regulatory frameworks, media system structures, newsroom investment, organizational standards, journalists' role perceptions, content characteristics, and user preferences), and
- reflections and practical examples of why scholars should seek, or not seek, to “intervene” in public debate with their research findings in order to support good practice in journalism.

The preconference would like to bring together researchers from different backgrounds, including theoretically, methodologically, and practically oriented researchers both inside and outside academia, in order to exchange innovative ideas for the further development of research on democratic media performance.

Abstracts of 500 words (without any identifying information) must be uploaded to <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=mpd2017> (“MPD 2017”) by January 20, 2017. All submissions will undergo blind peer review and acceptance notifications will be sent out on February 15, 2017.

The preconference is open both to presenters and non-presenters, but authors of accepted abstracts are expected to attend the preconference and present their work. Registration opens on January 15, 2017 (<http://www.icahdq.org>). The participation fee (including lunch and coffee break) is \$50 USD.

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