



SAINT PETERSBURG
STATE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
& MASS COMMUNICATIONS

FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG



8th Annual Conference
COMPARATIVE MEDIA STUDIES IN TODAY'S WORLD
(CMSTW'2020)

CALL FOR PAPERS

Time: **April 21–23, 2020**

Place: **St. Petersburg, Russia**

Working language: **English**

Theme for 2020:

**Back to Context? Media and communication studies
between big data and contextual meanings**

The 21st century may be called the time of disruptive public spheres. Segmentation and growth of complexity of today's societies in lifestyles, consumer behavior, and media use has coincided with proliferation of communication channels and means of micro-production of media content and meanings. The state of public communication is characterized by loss of fields of common reference – in social life as well as in communication, and public communication is described as hybrid, liquid, transgressive, or post-. Inevitably, some players of the media market condemn news personalization, prosumerism, and quick-passing fashions of communication platforms, while others benefit from them. But the general feeling of multiplication of contexts is there, further spurred by multi-level communication flows.

How do we cope with the multiple contexts of living (Deuze 2019), and what is the new role of the media systems in this coping? Are media to reproduce and reflect the complexity of today's societies, or, are they to reduce it to make life comprehensible and safe? Can one speak of 'restricted contexts' in non-democratic societies or 'closed contexts' hardly available for external examination like, to some extent, China or, almost absolutely, North Korea? Should everyday contextualization become the new large-scale aim of major media, or is this a step towards oppression of diversity and freezing of hierarchies and hegemonies (Mouffe 2000). And what, at all, do we mean today by common context and contextualization?

One answer to this seemed to come via big data research. The hope of many scholars was that collecting and running full data would 'tell it all'. But, soon enough, it was realized that dealing with big datasets from both traditional and social media demanded even more local, longitudinal, and discursive knowledge. More and more both the industry and the academe feel that, without contextualization, 'data lose its meaning and value' (boyd & Crawford 2012). If so, how does one put together data-oriented research designs and the uniqueness of each

case under scrutiny? What would be the rigorous procedure of selecting the proper contextual background for media research? How does context affect research questions, proxies, and variables? And how do we make sure that our results remain reproducible if contextualized? What is the perfect balance between theory, data, and context?

These issues become even more important in comparative perspective where a lot of side knowledge has to be omitted in order to make comparisons possible. This is why the 2020 CMSTW conference is dedicated to discussing the role of context in development of today's media and communication in different countries and regions, as well as the impact of contextual knowledge upon the media research, both in case-oriented and comparative designs. The relations between theory and context, context and method, and contextual understandings and real-world practices are in the focus of the tracks described below.

CONFERENCE TRACKS

In 2020, we will keep our **four traditional tracks** featuring various aspects of the questions posed above. The submissions might orient to but are not limited to the following sub-topics:

THEORY track

Chair: Silvio Waisbord, George Washington University, USA

- Media theories vs. context: friends or foes?
- Construction of meanings in media texts: how much of context is enough?
- Media life: the contextualizational function of the press?
- Hybridity, liquidity and other concepts of complexity and instability in media studies
- Media systems as contexts: traditional and social media as contexts for each other
- Contextualization and cross-country comparisons of media effects
- Grounded theory in media and communication research
- Critical approaches and neo-Marxism in media studies: context as basis, media as superstructures?
- Communicative cultures and their impact upon media practices
- Regional perspectives on communication: are there 'macro-contexts'?
- Public spheres: restructuring and re-contextualization

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL track

Chairs: Svetlana Bodrunova, St.Petersburg State University, Russia

Anna Litvinenko, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

- 'Still bowling alone?' Social atomization and personal media worlds
- The fall of the national? Media systems and the challenge of platform giants
- From mediatization of politics to politicization of media: mutual conditionality of media and political life
- Media and social structure(s): hierarchies and hegemonies in inter-personal and inter-group communication
- Media and memory: mediated history and 'memories on demand'
- Communication and cross-cultural understanding

- Ethnic and migrant media inside host contexts
- ‘Closed contexts’: exploring communication beyond the ‘great firewalls’
- ‘Restrictive contexts’ and their ambiguous impact upon democratic communication, journalism cultures, and survival of media
- Russia as context: media, social fragmentation, pseudo-politics, and cultural diversity

MEDIA INDUSTRY AND JOURNALISM track

Chair: Michal Glowacki, Warsaw University (tbc)

- Communicative capitalism and media life: platform policies and affordances as living conditions
- News personalization: pro et contra
- Context and content: reconstruction of reality in journalistic work and its constraints
- Debunking fakes: contextual knowledge as a weapon of media literacy
- De-professionalization of international journalism? ‘Parachute’ journalists, transnational broadcasters, and the Bellingcat in the struggle for interpretations
- Media corporations and glocalization of news
- Prosumer practices: self-produced communicative context?
- Communication as belonging: audiences in mediated contexts
- Web analytics and user tracking: the ‘audience shift’ in editorial decision-making

TECH AND METHODS track

Chair: Olessia Koltsova, National Research University – Higher School of Economics, Russia

- Communication as a post-discipline: embracing inter-disciplinarity and mixed methodologies?
- Data-oriented research designs and their proper contextualization
- From case studies to cross-context comparisons in big social data
- Field media research and big data studies: any links?
- Discursive borders in communication and methods of their detection
- Platform affordances as communicative contexts
- Exploring conflicts and their backgrounds in online discussions
- ‘This is what people ask’: recommender systems and search engines as context shapers

When submitting to the conference, **please start your title with naming the track**, e.g. ‘THEORY A new definition of contextual knowledge for media studies’.

INVITED GUESTS

Keynote speakers

Mark Deuze, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Claudia Mellado, Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Valparaiso, Chile

Mark Graham, Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, UK

Kai Hafez, University of Erfurt, Germany

Natalia Zubarevich, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia

Invited panelists and discussants

Carola Richter, Freie Universitaet Berlin, Germany

Oscar Westlund, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Daniela Stockmann, Hertie School of Governance, Germany

Michal Glowacki, Warsaw University, Poland

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Since 2013, the conference has gathered experts in a wide range of topics within comparative media research, from media systems studies and transformations in communication to the rise of platform-based communication to emotions and rationality in mediated discussions.

In 2020, the conference will include a plenary podium discussion, keynote speeches, panels, round tables, book presentations, and a range of workshops (subject to submissions).

The conference is an integral part of the 59th Russian-speaking 'Media in Modern World' Annual Forum. Thus, interested audience is ensured, and you may wish to take part in the Plenary Session (with simultaneous translation into English), as well as other sessions and panels at the Annual Forum on April 23-24.

The cultural program of the conference will include excursions to the State Hermitage and the Russian Museum that holds one of the best collections of Russian fine art in the world.

The planned round tables of special focus

As in previous years, we plan to have a geographically defined focus of the conference. But, since in 2020 the conference is completely dedicated to various contexts, we have chosen three regions to de-westernize comparative media research via round table discussions:

- **China / 'Chindia'** comprises the contexts hard to study for external experts. While China is hidden beyond the 'Great Firewall', India is extremely diverse in language use and highly differ from Europe or the USA in media consumption trends
- **Arab countries** are the world focus of today, perhaps more than ever; but the world hardly knows anything beyond Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya about its media
- **Russia** is a natural focus of many of our participants, but we aim at opening up its economic, regional, social, and cultural differences for the media scholars, to help them better understand and ground the Russian communication and society.

FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

Individual submissions

Full papers: 9 to 15 pages, anonymized

Short papers: 5 to 8 pages, anonymized

Extended abstracts: 300 words, anonymized

All submissions must be uploaded via the conference EasyChair account (will be available starting from November 20, 2019; please see the address on the conference website). **Full and short papers will be considered for publication in the conference proceedings.**

Group submissions

Panel submissions: a 300-word panel rationale plus 3 to 5 abstracts of max 200 words, free form (pdf), anonymized. Full and short papers may be submitted as parts of the panels to be included in the proceedings, but panels may also be accepted without full paper submission.

Workshops: a 2-to-4-page workshop rationale, de-anonymized

All submissions must be uploaded via the conference EasyChair account (will be available starting from November 20, 2019; please see the address on the conference website).

Workshops

Workshops are a special group form of participation in the conference. They are dedicated to detailed in-group discussion of a collection of papers (up to ten). Workshop proposals are submitted by the general conference deadline; workshop papers are submitted by a later deadline, but are subject to blind peer-review just as the conference submissions. The initial payment for the workshop includes all the papers by workshop organizers; also, external individual submissions may be included in a workshop, with separate payment on behalf of individual authors. Workshop chairs organize the reviewing process together with the conference organizers.

PUBLISHING OPPORTUNITIES AND AWARDS

Digital Journalism publishing opportunity

The conference steering committee will identify (based on the reviews) the best conference paper on issues that relate to digital media and online journalism. This paper will be suggested for publication in *Digital Journalism* (SCOPUS Q1), a distinguished journal in communication studies. Prof. Svetlana Bodrunova, the CMSTW program chair and *Digital Journalism* board member, will advise on how to make the paper fit the standards of the journal before submitting it to the journal peer review.

The Routledge Advances in Internationalizing Media Studies – TBC

The conference has received a confirmation from the Routledge Advances in Internationalizing Media Studies series (SCOPUS). For the information on the series, please see: <https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Advances-in-Internationalizing-Media-Studies/book-series/RAIM>. We are grateful to Prof. Daya Thussu, the series editor, for this generous opportunity.

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Prize for the best paper in the social&political track

Since 2010, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung has been a partner of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, St.Petersburg State University. To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the partnership, the Stiftung establishes a symbolic prize for the best paper in the social&political track.

Katrin Voltmer's prize for the best PhD student paper

In 2018, Katrin Voltmer established a prize for the best PhD student's paper of the conference; this prize is equal to 10,000 RUR.

DEADLINES AND OTHER DATES

Individual submissions

January 15, 2020 – main submission deadline (papers and extended abstracts, including papers that belong to panels)

February 5, 2020 – notifications of acceptance

February 10, 2020 – deadline to confirm participation

February 15, 2020 – camera-ready papers deadline

March 1, 2020 – early-bird registration deadline

April 1, 2020 – regular registration deadline

Group submissions

January 15, 2020 – main submission deadline (panel and workshop proposals)

January 22, 2020 – notification of acceptance and announcement of workshops on the website

February 5, 2020 – deadline for individual workshop submissions to EasyChair

February 20, 2020 – notification of acceptance for workshop papers

March 1, 2020 – registration deadline for group submissions

March 15, 2020 – early-bird registration deadline for individual workshop submissions

April 1, 2020 – regular registration deadline

Please note that there will be no on-site registration payment procedures;
please ensure your participation by paying the participation fee before April 1, 2018.

PARTICIPATION FEES

Presenters:

UN Tier 1 country: 150 euro (early-bird: 130 euro)

UN Tier 2 country: 120 euro (early-bird: 100 euro)

UN Tier 3 country: 80 euro (early-bird: 70 euro)

Student/PhD student presenter – 50 euro

Individual workshop submission: 100 euro (early-bird: 70 euro)

The lists of countries by tier may be found here: <https://www.icahdq.org/page/tiers>

Panel (up to 5 papers): 250 euro (early-bird: 200 euro), individual submissions included in payment

Workshop (up to 10 participants): 250 euro for the initial group submission

Non-presenting participant – 30 euro

Please note that the price for the entrance tickets to the State Hermitage and the Russian Museum is to be paid extra at the museum and is currently circa 10 euro, or 800 roubles.

ORGANIZERS AND CONTACTS

Program steering committee

Nico Carpentier (Belgium – Sweden)
Boguslawa Dobek-Ostrowska (Poland)
Kaarle Nordenstreng (Finland)
Florian Toepfl (Germany)
Katrín Voltmer (UK)

Local organizing committee

Svetlana Bodrunova – program chair
Anna Smoliarova
Alexander Marchenko

Conference venue, website, and email

Visa support

St.Petersburg State University provides visa support for the conference participants. Visa invitation letters will be sent out on request. Please note that, for the USA and UK citizens, preparation of an official invitation may take up to 5 weeks, while for the EU citizens it takes 1 to 2 weeks.

Also, St.Petersburg has recently introduced electronic visas. We will provide the guidance for them on the conference website as soon as there is more information on the visa application process.

The conference venue is **School of Journalism and Mass Communications,**
St.Petersburg University,
26, 1st line of Vasilievsky island, St.Petersburg 199004 Russia

The official hotel of the conference is
Solo Sokos Hotel Vasilievsky 4*

(a limited number of rooms available for discounted price on the first-come – first-get basis)

The conference website will be cmstw2020.org (opens November 10, 2019). Those interested in learning of previous conferences and general information may wish to visit cmstw2019.org.

In case of any queries, please send us your questions to cmstw2020@spbu.ru.
We're looking forward to welcoming you in St.Petersburg!