

ICA Pre-Conference: Global Media and Human Rights

May 23 (1/2 day) & 24, 2018

Off-Site Venue: Autoklub ČR, [Opletalova 29](#), 110 00, Praha 1

Conference Registration Fee: \$35.00 USD

The preconference is organized by the Leading Research Environment, "[Global Media Studies and the Politics of Communication](#)", based at the Department of Media Studies at Stockholm University, Sweden. The Leading Research Environment has a focus on human rights and the media, and has been hosting prominent guest professors focusing on socio-political and cultural dimensions of mediation.

Sponsoring ICA Divisions

ERIC (Ethnicity in Race and Communication); Political Communication; Environmental Communication; Global Communication and Social Change; Philosophy, Theory and Critique

Confirmed Speakers

Prof. Lilie Chouliaraki, The London School of Economics

Prof. Silvio Waisbord, George Washington University

Prof. Kate Nash, Goldsmiths - University of London

Dr. Ekaterina Balabanova, University of Liverpool

Media and communication studies, with its history of linking human and communication rights at crucial 20th century junctions, has a key role in promoting human rights in the 21st century. The media cannot only *boost* human rights consciousness by exposing their violations, but they can inform civic action on unprecedented scales and mobilize humanitarian intervention. On the flip side, media can (and do) *injure* human rights through desensitization, where viewers are turned into voyeurs of exotic victimization. Even more ubiquitous bruising of rights is sustained through the pervasive use of surveillant technologies, which bring with them social and historical contingencies.

Against this backdrop, ***this pre-conference is primarily based upon the question of how media and communication studies has addressed and can better address questions of justice, inequality and human rights in the current conjuncture of contested flows and forces?*** To what extent has the potential inherent in the multi-disciplinarity of media and communication studies toward this goal been utilized or exhausted? We consider civil, political, economic, social, environmental and cultural rights in relation to media and communications, and intend to bring in fresh perspectives on dynamics that underlie representation, production, consumption as well as reception ends on a historically and spatially expansive continuum. "Rights conflicts" constitute a key node here. Are certain human rights positionings used as arguments for the violation of others and *Others*? This pertains, for instance, to conflicts between the media and communications-centred right to freedom of expression on the one hand, and cultural/religious rights, on the other.

"The media" here are understood in their polysemic meanings: institutions, corporate bodies, platforms, technologies, interfaces and a vast array of communication venues from mobile apps to urban-space mediations through ads, billboards and walls. The same degree of multitude applies, historically, to the human rights discourse and literature, where *human rights* and *communication rights*, despite the underlying normative grounds that bind them together, are considered as distinct concepts, thus separate areas of analysis and research, disciplinarily ranging from legal studies to moral philosophy to media ethics. As a "rights" framing, in both discursive and practical terms, is intrinsically and

increasingly linked with *mediated voice* in the current communication milieu, this preconference aims and aspires to host provocative debates on *the state of the art* on such issues and perspectives in media and communication research.

Call for Papers: The preconference organizers invite submissions that scrutinize the persistent and emergent intersections between media and human rights in relation to sociocultural, political, economic, and environmental dynamics. What roles do, for instance, citizen journalism, and media witnessing play for strengthening human rights in the diverse contexts of communicational and spatial crossroads? How, in relational terms, do social movements, national governments and international organizations weigh in the furthering of human rights, and in what ways do media and communication (technologies) intervene and what affordances do they bring in? In what domains of legal and cultural interventionism do human rights organizations collaborate with media on digital platforms? **The overall objective is to contribute to knowledge and debates on the crucial ties between human rights and the media in a globalizing and digitalizing world. Both the challenges and opportunities (e.g. mediated humanitarian intervention vis-à-vis the question of desensitization of audiences to suffering) presented by such macro dynamics are considered.**

The preconference is intended to be of interest primarily to media and communications researchers from a diverse variety of backgrounds and disciplinary orientations. Due to the highly inter- and trans-disciplinary nature of its theme, we also invite submissions from neighboring disciplines as well as from activist networks and the creative sector. We particularly encourage creative and experimental formats and interventions such as fragments from short films, installations and other genres of critical textual/visual mediations.

Potential topics include but are not limited to:

- ✓ Communication rights
- ✓ Racial/ethnic/gendered/sexual politics and positionalities
- ✓ Cultural politics, neoliberalism and the rise of the far-right
- ✓ Social movements
- ✓ Environmental communication and rights
- ✓ Popular culture and resistance
- ✓ The media and social justice
- ✓ Media studies, 'rights' discourses and intersectionality
- ✓ Social media, human rights and activism
- ✓ Media strategies
- ✓ War, terrorism and surveillance
- ✓ Migration
- ✓ Humanitarianism

Selection will be based on abstract submission (min 250 words, max 500 words). The **deadline for abstract submissions is 31 January 2018**. The decision on accepted proposals will be announced by **February 15, 2018**. Accepted participants will circulate short position papers prior to the preconference (**deadline 30 April, 2018**).

All abstracts must be written in Word, and include the following information at the top of the page: (1) name, (2) position/title, (3) affiliation, and (4) paper title. In the abstracts, please specify (1) the thematic focus of the proposed contributions and (2) links to the preconference scope.

Please email abstracts to Christian Christensen (christian.christensen@ims.su.se) AND Miyase Christensen (miyase.christensen@ims.su.se). In the subject line please write: "ICA preconference submission (your last name)".

Organizing committee: Christian Christensen, Miyase Christensen, Anna Roosvall, Kristina Riegert (Stockholm University)