



CALL FOR PAPERS

Political Studies Association, Media and Politics Group Annual General Conference

Media and Politics in Times of Crisis and Change

12th and 13th December 2016

Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science

Whether we consider the continuing fallout from the global economic crash of 2008, the rise of Isis, the migration crisis, the possible future trajectory of the European Union, or the Zika virus outbreak in the Americas, to name just some examples, crisis seems to be central to modern political, economic and social life. The aim of this two-day conference is to consider the state of media and communications research in a world increasingly marked by crisis, as well as rapid methodological developments.

It is also hoped that the theme will prompt attendees to think about their work in different ways and challenge the theoretical and methodological orthodoxies of the sub-discipline. We would encourage contributors to use the idea of crisis and change to reflect on challenges facing media and political communication research. These include (but are not limited to):

- **How have our understandings of media and politics been changed by recent political and economic crises?** Do researchers in media and communications need to address different research questions given recent economic and geo-political events? What should be the primary concerns of our sub-discipline in coming decades?
- **How do researchers in media and politics deal with events that are truly global in scope?** Many of the events that have dominated politics and news in recent years have been truly global in scope, but have also had important regional, national and local elements to them. How do researchers bridge the gap between studying issues at these different scales and seek to understand the relationships between them?
- **How can media and politics usefully draw on and contribute to debates that span multiple disciplines?** Many of the questions raised by the events described above require scholars to look outside traditional disciplinary boundaries for answers, into adjoining disciplines, whether that's economics, international relations, history, security studies or cultural studies. What can political communication researchers learn from these disciplines and what can our research bring to more orthodox answers posited by other fields?
- **How useful are theoretical paradigms we have for dealing with current events?** As well as doing new empirical work, do we need to consider the possibility that new theoretical paradigms are required? What might these look like and what purposes would they serve?
- **How do we reconcile media and politics research with grand historical and ideological narratives? Should we be trying to do so?** While the 1990s famously saw the "end of history", the 2000s saw the return of grand narratives in economics, geo-politics and political theory. How should researchers in the field of media and politics adapt to this change? Is there a risk that, in seeking to build our research around such grand narratives, we end up reducing our focus on local details and the micro?
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- **What do our choices as researchers do to empower and disempower particular voices?** Both moments of political crisis and new media technologies empower specific voices. Is there a danger that the topic and the modes of our research empower certain voices but ignore others? How should researchers correct this?
- **Normatively, what role can media and politics research play at times of crisis?** It is inevitable that moments of crisis raise questions about the role of researchers in normative debate. What role should we and our research play, and what is the role for normative perspectives in media and politics research today?
- **The methodological challenges of researching media and politics in a changing environment.** How do deal with the opportunity and challenges posed by new datasets? And, with increasing government funding going towards “big data” type research, how can traditional media and politics research co-exist with this new way of engaging in academic study?

While the main theme of this conference is crisis and change, the Media & Politics Group operates an open and inclusive policy, and papers dealing with any aspect of media and politics are welcomed, as are papers from PhD students and early career researchers. Papers may focus on areas of political communication and journalism, but can also include a broader view of the political within such areas as online media, television, cinema and media arts, both factual and fictional. In addition to academic research, the conference will also welcome practice-based work in art, film and performance related to the area of media and politics.

Deadlines and submission process:

- **Monday 19th September 2016.** Deadline for paper submission. Please send proposals for 15 minute papers to Media.PSA2016@lse.ac.uk. These should include the following: title and name, institutional affiliation and address, and email address, together with a paper title and abstract of not more than 300 words. Proposers should also indicate whether or not they are current postgraduate students
- **Early October.** Paper proposers notified of decision by conference committee. Conference registration opens.
- **Monday 5th December.** Presenters submit completed papers (maximum length: 8000 words).
- **Monday 12th December.** Conference starts in London.

About the PSA, conference prizes and financial support:

The Political Studies Association is the UK's leading association in the study and research of politics. The Media & Politics Group is one of the Political Studies Association's larger specialist groups.

The MPG is a welcoming and inclusive group. The conference welcomes contributions both from members and non-members of the Political Studies Association and of the Media & Politics Group.

Full papers submitted by postgraduate students will be entered into the James Thomas Memorial Prize. This annual award is presented to the most outstanding paper by a postgraduate student at the Media and Politics Group Annual Conference.

The Media & Politics Group offers a limited number of travel subsidies (up to the value of £100) to support postgraduate student participation in this event. Postgraduate students interested in applying for these subsidies should please note this in their submission.