



**UK PSA Media and Politics Group
Newsletter
Honorary President: Professor Mick Temple**

What we do

The Group was set up to act as a forum for discussion between a wide variety of academics with interests in the study of media policy, journalism, political communications, new information technologies and other topics. Though a specialist group of the Political Studies Association (PSA), we encourage those working in other disciplines to join and get involved. To this end we organise panels at the PSA Annual Conference and a short themed conference in the autumn.

Website: <https://www.psa.ac.uk/specialist-groups/media-and-politics>

Newsletter items to:

Emily Harmer

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We hope you have managed to take some time off over the summer break. We have lots of MPG related CFPs and events to share with you in this latest newsletter including a reminder about the CFP for our annual conference in December, a CFP for media and politics themed papers and panels to be included in the PSA annual conference next Easter, and details about our next online seminar taking place in September.

CFP: Political Studies Association Media and Politics Group Annual Conference 2021

'Standing Together? Communities, Media and Politics'

Centre for Research on Communities and Cultures

School of Creative Arts and Industries

Canterbury Christ Church University

15-16 December 2021

Location: Online

Deadline for abstract/panel submissions: 14th September 2021

Keynote Speakers:

Professor Karin Wahl-Jorgensen (Cardiff University)

Professor Claire Wallace (University of Aberdeen)

Whether it denotes a city 'standing together' against terrorism, people reacting to racist acts, residents of a neighbourhood organising support mechanisms in the context of the pandemic, migrants setting up a new life away from their home countries, or protest groups attempting to effect some social change, the term 'community' has become a fitting notion to describe these and many other (literal or symbolic) gatherings of people.

A community can be defined by many characteristics, such as its context, its purpose or its identity. However, regardless of their particular features, communities are underpinned by one element that defines them and the social relations that exist within and around them: the community's relations to power. Despite the traditional views of community as places of harmony and solidarity, tensions and disputes are rife within any social group, while individualism, self-interests, poverty, violence and fear remain a reality. Wherever there are social relations and interdependencies, there are also power imbalances that contribute to the emergence of divisions within the social fabric.

One of the social resources on which power is based is the privileged access to political discourse and communication. Despite the burgeoning literature that has examined the possibilities that social media provide for communities to challenge the trends imposed by mainstream media, there is a pervading need to uncover the complex and often subtle ways in which hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, and to examine the social, cultural or political wrongs that they sustain.

This conference will facilitate a space for thinking critically about the concept of communities and how it is used in political discourse and political communication in the digital and (post)pandemic context. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Political discourses about and by communities
- Communities in political communication
- News and journalistic practices
- Communities and the pandemic
- Marginalised communities
- Communities of protest and resistance
- Online communities
- Migrant communities and (post)colonial discourse
- Communities and the past (heritage, memory, socio-political legacies)
- Community, discourse and context
- Community representation and self-representation
- How specific communities use and create media
- Post-truth, discourse and community
- Social media and communities
- Hybrid media systems and communities
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While the main theme of this conference is Communities, the Media and Politics Group operates an open and inclusive policy, and papers dealing with any aspect of media and politics are welcomed. This may include areas of political communication and journalism, but also includes 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:

Tuesday, 14 September 2021: Deadline for abstract submission. Please send abstract proposals for 15-minute papers to ruth.sanz-sabido@canterbury.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 no more than 250 words. Proposers should also indicate whether they are current postgraduate students.

Friday, 1 October 2021: Paper proposers notified of decision by conference committee. Conference registration opens. Details of online registration to follow: £20 conference registration fee for both PSA members and non-members; £10 for students/ precariously employed.

Monday, 8 November 2021: Deadline for presenters to register.

Friday, 12 November 2021: Draft programme released.

Wednesday, 15-16 December 2021: Conference dates.

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 from both members and non-members of the Political Studies Association and of the Media & Politics Group.

James Thomas Memorial Prize

Full papers of a maximum of 2000 words 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 & Politics Group Annual Conference. Postgraduate students wishing to be considered for the prize should please note this in their submission. Please send full papers to Emily Harmer: e.harmer@liverpool.ac.uk by 1st December 2021.

The Media & Politics Group has some funds to support postgraduate student participation in this event. Postgraduate students interested in applying for a conference fee waiver should please note this in their submission.

CFP: Political Studies Association Annual International Conference – Media and Politics themed panels at main conference.

10 – 13 April 2022, University of York, #PSA22

Hybrid conference

Deadline for abstracts and panel proposals: Monday 27th September 2021.

The PSA Media and Politics Group invites members to submit paper abstracts or panel proposals for the PSA Media and Politics stream at the PSA Annual International Conference 2022.

Papers may be related to the conference theme, Politics from the Margins, but other topics from across the disciplinary and methodological traditions are also welcomed.

Please submit abstracts (max. 300 words) and panel proposals by email to the convenors at psampg@gmail.com by **Monday 27th September** (please note that this is an earlier deadline than the direct individual submission to the PSA). We also welcome emails earlier than this date to ask for our advice on potential panel proposals. We have a limited number of panels we can submit so we may not be able to include all submissions. Decisions about inclusion in the MPG panels will be communicated on **Monday 4th October 2022**, giving you until **Monday 11th October 2022** to submit individually if you are unsuccessful.

The PSA uses the Ex Ordo system for online submissions. If your abstract is successful and included in the PSA MPG stream, we will provide further guidance on how to submit your abstract/panel proposal to ensure it is included in our allocated panels.

Please note that the 2022 PSA Annual International Conference is planned as a hybrid conference which blends the digital world and physical world together to produce the opportunities and interactions of a physical conference, with the added accessibility of an online conference.

On all submissions, please include an email address for the corresponding and the institutional affiliation. Please also indicate if you are a postgraduate student.

If you wish to propose a panel, please note for following stipulations from the organising committee:

- Panel proposals should include a panel overview (max. 300 words), outlining the title, synopsis, and chair details.
- Panels usually consist of three to four papers and a chair. A discussant is optional.
- Panels should aim to reflect the diversity of the profession, and all-male panels will not be considered.

Theme and further details:

Politics from the Margins

The conference takes ‘the margins’ as a vantage point to investigate political issues and developments. As the world reels from one of its worst crises in a generation, issues, and actors hitherto at the margins of politics have forced their way to the mainstream. Issues of health and human development have compelled a radical rethinking of statehood, citizenship and political order. The salience to global politics of actors in Asia and Africa, often marginalized in the past, can no longer be ignored. Marginal seats can move to the centre of attention. Marginalised actors can make claims on the mainstream for a redistribution of power, status, and resources. Marginal risks — of financial crisis, epidemic, climate catastrophe — can take on major significance. Indeed, what is regarded as a mainstream and what as a marginal political issue is a point of significant contention and subject to changes which need to be mapped and investigated.

The conference invites reflection on shifting centres of power in the global, regional, national and subnational political order. Devolution, Brexit and ‘levelling up’ policies have compelled us to rethink the mainstream and the margins in British politics. The rise of the BRICS and other emerging markets force a reconceptualisation of mainstream and margin in global politics. Across the world, political subjects at the margins interrogate mainstream understandings and practices of politics and power. While marginalisation of some political subjects has become further entrenched, other previously dominant voices feel newly marginalised. How does politics change and who benefits when those who feel left out or behind make their voices heard? What mechanisms contribute to their silencing or to their move to alternative forms of politics? Finally, inspired by the growing calls for diversifying and decolonising research and teaching in politics, this PSA conference seeks to cast a critical and reflexive eye on political science scholarship by considering what or who is positioned on the margins within our scholarship and academic community and what could be gained by including marginalised perspectives, voices and topics. To that end, we invite contributions that help us to think not only ‘from’ but also ‘with’ the margins, ‘against’ the margins or even ‘beyond’ the margins.

While the main theme of this conference is Politics from the Margins, the Media & Politics Group operates an open and inclusive policy, and empirical, theoretical, and practice-based research dealing with any aspect of media and politics is welcomed. This may include areas of political communication and journalism, but also includes a broader view of the political within such areas as online media, television, cinema and media arts, both factual and fictional.

Possible areas include:

- How might foundational theories for understanding contemporary political communication be adapted to include more marginal subjects/contexts?
- The role of various media in bringing marginal issues/voices to the mainstream

- The methodological challenges of researching media and politics from the margins
- Decolonising/diversifying political communication research
- The role of affect, emotion, and authenticity within political communication
- Disinformation, misinformation, and threats to democratic health
- The opportunities and challenges of digital campaigning
- The media's changing role in political communication practices and/or public diplomacy
- Datafication and challenges to democracy
- The rise of alternative political media and changing public attitudes towards mainstream media
- The role of social media platforms in mainstreaming marginalised groups/perspectives (for better or worse)
- Activism, social movements and the media
- The power of political satire, cartoons and memes
- The politics of representation across media genres
- Media, communication and inequality

Further information on registration fees and conference location can be found here:

<https://www.psa.ac.uk/events/psa22-annual-conference>

Further information on the PSA Media and Politics Group and details on how to join can be found here: <https://www.psa.ac.uk/specialist-groups/media-and-politics>

Follow the PSA Media and Politics Group on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/psamsg>

Events

PSA Media and Politics Group Virtual Panel Series 2021

Thanks to those of you who joined our previous online sessions! The recordings are available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXkiNzCFpdSWcF1JtXSDqRw>

We're pleased to announce that registration is now open for our third seminar taking place in September:

Uses and abuses of information and disinformation: Power, politics and media with Emma Briant and Natalie Martin

Date: Wednesday, 15 September 2021

Time: 4pm-5pm UK (BST)

Please register (for free) via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/psa-mpg-seminar-series-3-dr-emma-briant-and-dr-natalie-martin-tickets-168550512119>

Location: Online – link will be sent out once you have registered.

This panel seeks to address issues of disinformation, the news media and social media – and the problems this poses for liberal democracy. Dr Emma Briant of Bard College, examines the role of Cambridge Analytica and how it may influence political behaviour. Cambridge Analytica achieved notoriety following the 2016 Brexit campaign and election of Donald Trump. Dr Briant looks at the potential implications of Cambridge Analytica's techniques and how these can be countered. Her previous work has revolved around the issues of propaganda and counterterrorism. Hence her work addresses the uses to which disinformation can be put – and how it is done.

Dr Natalie Martin focusses on Carole Cadwalladr's work on Cambridge Analytica – amongst other things – during the Brexit campaign. Cadwalladr's work unveiled links between the two ostensibly separate leave campaigns and their respective links to companies owned ultimately by the American financier, Robert Mercer. Dr Martin focusses specifically on the backlash to Cadwalladr's work arguing that the vitriolic and gendered nature of it reflects the high stakes nature of her journalism. She argues that whilst Cadwalladr was writing about disinformation – she was also subjected to it, to mitigate the impact of her work.

Overall, both papers present different aspects of the threat posed by disinformation techniques through the media, broadly defined, to wider liberal societies. Dr Briant takes reporting of Cambridge Analytica to the next level – and Dr Martin looks at the backlash to journalism about it. Both present reasons to be concerned about the threat posed by it.

More seminars coming soon...

We are also working on confirming a couple of other panels which we'll advertise when we have more details.

Publications

What Do We Know and What Should We Do About Fake News? By Nick Anstead

Voters need to be informed to make political decisions, but what if their media diet not only prevents them from getting the information they need, but actively shapes inaccurate perceptions of the world?

Drawing on examples and evidence from around the world, this book aims to make a timely intervention to the debate about the concept of fake news. Its underlying argument will have three objectives. First, to offer more precise definitions for a term that is often loosely used. Second, to offer a less technologically determinist view of fake news. New social media platforms, such as Facebook and WhatsApp, are clearly an important part of the story, but they exist in wider social, political and institutional settings. Third, to situate the idea of fake news (and our concern about it) in broader arguments about an ongoing crisis and loss of confidence in liberal democratic institutions. Only with this perspective, it will be argued, can we possibly address the question of what we should do about fake news.

<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/what-do-we-know-and-what-should-we-do-about-fake-news/book271872#description>