



**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: <http://www.psa.ac.uk/psa-communities/specialist-groups/media-and-politics>

Newsletter items to:

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**PSA Media and Politics Group Conference 2021**

Given the lack of PhD student submissions to our call for the virtual panel series, we've decided to re-consider our decision not to hold an MPG conference this year. If there is enough interest, the event will take place online during the autumn/winter months as usual. We're in the early stages of planning, but we wanted to let you all know in advance that a call for papers will be coming in the next month or so.

**PSA Media and Politics Group Virtual Panel Series 2021 – starting in June!**

We're delighted to announce the first two sessions of our new virtual panel series!

**1. Lone Sorensen (in conversation with Katy Parry) - Populist Communication: Ideology, Performance, Mediation.**

**Date: Wednesday, 9 June 2021**

**Time: 4pm-5pm UK (BST)**

Please register (for free) via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/psa-mpg-seminar-series-book-launch-event-tickets-155634610309>

**Location: Online – link will be sent to those who register below.**

We are pleased to announce our virtual panel series will begin in June with a seminar introducing Dr Lone Sorensen's (University of Leeds) new book, *Populist Communication: Ideology, Performance, Mediation* (Palgrave) in a Q&A format with Dr Katy Parry, with opportunities for audience members to also ask questions.

Book abstract: How can we make sense of the current age of global political disruption when populism leaves norms overturned and the future form of democracy unpredictable? Political representatives are no longer elected for their experience and expertise but out of a desire for an ephemeral sense of authenticity, a direct connection to citizens, and the certainty of the truths they tell. But when populists project these ideas and claim to represent the citizenry, what is reality and what is strategic performance aimed to attract media attention?

This conceptually rich book explores the performative strategies of the populist politicians who disrupt the normative order with acts of 'truth-telling'. It disentangles their complex use of media—from their appeal to news values through spectacular disruptions to sophisticated social media commentary—in repertoires of mediated performances. Based on vigorous empirical research in both established and transitional democracies, it develops a theoretical framework of populist communication in the new media environment.

**2. Paul Reilly (in conversation with Emily Harmer) - Digital contention in a divided society - Social media, parades and protests in Northern Ireland.**

**Date: Wednesday, 14 July 2021**

**Time: 4pm-5pm UK (BST)**

**Location: Online – registration link coming soon!**

Our second session in the series will be discussing Dr Paul Reilly's (University of Sheffield) book *Digital contention in a divided society - Social media, parades and protests in Northern*

Ireland (Manchester University Press) in a Q&A format with Dr Emily Harmer, with opportunities for audience members to also ask questions.

Book abstract: How are platforms such as Facebook and Twitter used by citizens to frame contentious parades and protests in 'post-conflict' Northern Ireland? What do these contentious episodes tell us about the potential of information and communication technologies to promote positive intergroup contact in the deeply divided society?

These issues are addressed in what is the first in-depth qualitative exploration of how social media were used during the union flag protests (December 2012-March 2013) and the Ardoyne parade disputes (July 2014 and 2015). The book focuses on the extent to which affective publics, mobilised and connected via expressions of solidarity on social media, appear to escalate or de-escalate sectarian tensions caused by these hybrid media events. It also explores whether citizen activity on these online platforms has the potential to contribute to peacebuilding in Northern Ireland.

### **Also coming soon... (September onwards)**

**Uses and abuses of information and disinformation: Power, politics and media** – featuring Dr Natalie Martin (University of Nottingham) & Dr Emma Briant (Bard College, USA).

### **Dates and registration details to be confirmed!**

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

### **Publications**

#### **Digital Democracy, Social Media and Disinformation by Petros Iosifidis and Nicholas Nicoli**

Digital Democracy, Social Media and Disinformation discusses some of the political, regulatory and technological issues which arise from the increased power of internet intermediaries (such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) and the impact of the spread of digital disinformation, especially in the midst of a health pandemic.

The volume provides a detailed account of the main areas surrounding digital democracy, disinformation and fake news, freedom of expression and post-truth politics. It addresses the major theoretical and regulatory concepts of digital democracy and the 'network society' before offering potential socio-political and technological solutions to the fight against disinformation and fake news. These solutions include self-regulation, rebuttals and

myth-busting, news literacy, policy recommendations, awareness and communication strategies and the potential of recent technologies such as the blockchain and public interest algorithms to counter disinformation.

After addressing what has currently been done to combat disinformation and fake news, the volume argues that digital disinformation needs to be identified as a multifaceted problem, one that requires multiple approaches to resolve. Governments, regulators, think tanks, the academy and technology providers need to take more steps to better shape the next internet with as little digital disinformation as possible by means of a regional analysis. In this context, two cases concerning Russia and Ukraine are presented regarding disinformation and the ways it was handled.

Written in a clear and direct style, this volume will appeal to students and researchers within the social sciences, computer science, law and business studies, as well as policy makers engaged in combating what constitutes one of the most pressing issues of the digital age.

<https://www.routledge.com/Digital-Democracy-Social-Media-and-Disinformation/Iosifidis-Nicoli/p/book/9780367332105>

## **The New Patriarchs of Digital Capitalism: Celebrity Tech Founders and Networks of Power**

**By Ben Little and Alison Winch**

This book offers an original critique of the billionaire founders of US West Coast tech companies, addressing their collective power, influence, and ideology, their group dynamics, and the role they play in the wider sociocultural and political formations of digital capitalism.

Interrogating not only the founders' political and economic ambitions, but also how their corporations are omnipresent in our everyday lives, the authors provide robust evidence that a specific kind of patriarchal power has emerged as digital capitalism's mode of command. The 'New Patriarchs' examined over the course of the book include: Sergey Brin and Larry Page of Google, Elon Musk of Tesla, Jeff Bezos of Amazon, Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook, and Peter Thiel. We also include Sheryl Sandberg. The book analyses how these (mostly) men legitimate their rapidly acquired power, tying a novel kind of socially awkward but 'visionary' masculinity to exotic forms of shareholding. Drawing on a ten million word digital concordance, the authors intervene in feminist debates on patriarchy, masculinity, and postfeminism, locating the power of the founders as emanating from a specifically racialised structure of oppression tied to imaginaries of the American frontier, the patriarchal household, and settler colonialism.

This is an important interdisciplinary contribution suitable for researchers and students across Digital Media, Media and Communication, and Gender and Cultural Studies.

<https://www.routledge.com/The-New-Patriarchs-of-Digital-Capitalism-Celebrity-Tech-Founders-and-Networks/Little-Winch/p/book/9780367260156>

### **Calls for papers/contributions.**

#### **Call for papers for the seventh conference of The International Journal of Press/Politics (Virtual, 13-16 September 2021)**

##### **Deadline for abstracts: 5 July 2021**

On 13-16 September 2021, the seventh conference of the International Journal of Press/Politics, focused on academic research on the relationship between media and political processes around the world, will be held virtually. Professor Young Mie Kim from the University of Wisconsin will deliver a keynote lecture.

**The deadline for submission of abstracts is 5 July 2021.** Attendees will be notified of acceptance by 12 July 2021. Full papers based on accepted abstracts will be due 1 September 2021. A selection of the best full papers presented at the conference will be published in the journal after peer review.

The conference will be free to attend. There will be a voluntary conference registration fee for presenters of GBP 30. Attendees will need to register to receive the secure link to participate in the conference, and those who want to contribute to the conference budget will be able to make a symbolic donation of GBP 5. The software will be able to host up to 500 participants at any time. Recordings of the conference video feed will be made available to the public shortly after the event.

The virtual conference brings together scholars conducting internationally oriented or comparative research on the intersection between news media and politics around the world. It aims to provide a forum for academics from a wide range of disciplines, countries, and methodological approaches to advance research in this area. The conference will be held on four days, in half-day sessions alternating mornings and afternoons that will include presentations and networking sessions. The program of the 2020 conference, which adopted a similar format, is available here.

Examples of relevant topics include, but are not limited to, the political implications of changes in media systems; the importance of digital media for engaging with news and politics; analysis of the factors affecting the quality of political information and public discourse; studies of the role of entertainment and popular culture in how people engage with current affairs; studies of relations between political actors and journalists; analyses of

the role of visuals and emotion in the production and processing of public information; and research on political communication during and beyond elections by government, political parties, interest groups, and social movements. The journal and the conference have a particular interest in studies that adopt comparative approaches, represent substantial theoretical or methodological advances, or focus on parts of the world that are under-researched in the international English language academic literature.

**Titles and abstracts for papers (maximum 300 words) are invited by 5 July 2021. The abstract should clearly describe the key question, the theoretical and methodological approach, the evidence the argument is based on, as well as its wider implications and the extent to which they are of international relevance.**

Please send submissions via the online form available at <http://bit.ly/IJPP2021>

The conference is organized by Cristian Vaccari (Loughborough University, Editor-in-Chief of IJPP). Please contact Professor Vaccari with questions: [c.vaccari@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:c.vaccari@lboro.ac.uk)

**CFP Digital Journalism Journal Special Edition - 'Disrupting and resettling the local in digital news spaces'**

**Deadline for extended abstracts is June 30, 2021.**

Proposals should include an abstract of 500 words (excluding references) as well as a full list of author(s) with affiliation(s) and abbreviated bio(s). Please submit your proposal as one file (PDF) with your names clearly stated on the first page. Please email your proposal to [agnes.gulyas@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:agnes.gulyas@canterbury.ac.uk) by June 30, 2021.

Article submission should target a length of 7,000-9,000 words.

This special issue of Digital Journalism invites scholars to explore theoretically, conceptually and empirically the 'place', power and challenges of the local in digital news spaces. Both single-country and comparative research are welcome, as well as both theoretical and empirical manuscripts. The latter may involve quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods approaches. The issue particularly welcomes cross-national comparative analyses and non-Western perspectives.

Possible topics to be addressed include, but are not limited to:

- How do journalists, audiences, policymakers and others define and shape understandings of the 'local' in digital spaces.
- What are the changing ways in which journalism reproduces, represents or builds notions of locality and location in digital space?
- Conceptual and theoretical advancements in understanding digital local news.

- What aspects of traditional notions of the local in journalism have remained unaffected by technological or economic changes?
- Exploration of methodological challenges and opportunities to researching digital journalism and the local.
- Race/power relations and social justice issues in local journalism in digital spaces.
- Interdisciplinary, cross-disciplinary approaches and geographic or cultural comparative research on digital local news.
- How do news providers generate and /or how do audiences develop a sense of connection to online local news and the local communities they serve?
- How is online local news territory defined, maintained, challenged or controlled?
- Innovations in digital local news and journalism, including AI applications, social media and their algorithms, mapping and place-oriented technologies and their implications.
- Challenges of digital platforms in reporting local news in times of crisis.
- News deserts in the context of local digital spaces.
- Implications of digital connectivity issues for local media.
- Differences and similarities between commercial, public service and community owned providers in their approach to local news in digital space (comparative analysis especially welcome).

Timeline:

- Extended abstract submission deadline: June 30, 2021
- Notification on submitted abstracts: July 28, 2021
- Article submission deadline: November 30, 2021

For further information please see here: [http://bit.ly/Digital\\_News\\_Spaces](http://bit.ly/Digital_News_Spaces)

**CFP “Disinformation studies as an emerging research field”**

**Abstract deadline: September 1, 2021**

**Full paper deadline: March 2, 2022**

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This special issue of Journalism Practice looks at the complexities of disinformation and its implications on society. The number of studies that were already growing increased exponentially with Covid-19. The main goal of this special issue is to develop a set of studies and policies that allow us to identify and contribute to combat and effectively minimize the phenomena of disinformation, misinformation and manipulation in the journalistic field.

In addition to fake news, the study of disinformation in the journalistic field includes theoretical paradigms and empirical approaches that go beyond those: bias, concealment of facts, agenda building, strategic use of sources, mobilization of emotion, empathic media and omission of data are studied in other contexts of journalism studies helping to clarify this new phenomenon.

There is a vast experience in the media effects theory, whose researchers studied, in due course, a set of phenomena of information and manipulation that today, with the necessary adaptations, constitute a corpus of examples and inspiration for new researches in different contexts.

Finally, new research trends began to emerge which constitute a valuable theoretical and experimental corpus for the contemporary and present times: empathic media, recognition of patterns of reading, identification of behavior and consumption patterns with far-reaching consequences around on social, cultural and political life and considerable impact on democratic, electoral and civic participation practices.

This special issue is spurred by an October 2020 COVID-19 #DisInforStudies Seminar (<http://labcom.ubi.pt/disinforstudies/>), held by LabCom at University of Beira Interior, Portugal, and with the participation of some important scholars like Edson Tandoc Jr., Karin Wahl-Jorgensen or J. Scott Brennan. Also, by a September 2021 ECREA post-conference “Disinformation studies: perspectives to an emerging research field” ([www.ecrea2021.eu](http://www.ecrea2021.eu)).

The contributions to this special issue, from different national and international contexts, can focus (among others) on the following topics:

- Identifying through case studies, examples of media whether revealing weaknesses or, instead, using strategies particularly directed to fight the phenomenon;
- Discussing new manipulation and disinformation strategies, considering in those the study of the audience from the perspective of their manipulation through the mobilization of emotions;



- Discussing a theoretical and systematic framework for the analysis of disinformation and manipulation phenomena;
- Identifying the use of devices and tools that help to combat the phenomenon of disinformation;
- Identifying professional practices and professional routines that help to combat the disinformation phenomena;
- Identifying new and/or different journalistic practices that rise with disinformation growth (independent fact checkers and fact checking sections in newsrooms, etc);
- Identifying what strategies are local media adopting, considering the growth of digital audiences and smaller newsrooms;
- Identifying and proposing public policies to decision-makers that helps to minimize and fighting disinformation phenomena;
- Discussing the relevance of a subfield called disinformation studies.

#### SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

**If you are interested in participating in this special issue, please submit an extended abstract (500-750 words), accompanied by a 100-150-word bio introducing your relevant expertise. Abstracts should be sent no later than September 1st 2021, to [disinfo.specialissue@gmail.com](mailto:disinfo.specialissue@gmail.com)**

Upon selection, scholars will be invited to submit full papers. Article submissions should be about 8,000 words in length, including references, and are subject to full blind peer-review, following the peer-review procedure of Journalism Practice. Manuscripts will be submitted through the journal's ScholarOne website (select "Disinformation studies as an emerging research field").

#### TIMELINE

Deadline for submission of extended abstracts: September 1, 2021

Decision on abstracts: October 15, 2021

Deadline for full-papers submission: March 1, 2022

Publication: Online first after acceptance, and later in a forthcoming issue of Journalism Practice