



ECREA ECC 2018 Conference

Lugano, 31 October - 3 November 2018



The European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) in partnership with USI Università della Svizzera italiana call for proposals to be presented at the 7th European Communication Conference, to be held in Lugano, Switzerland, from 31 October to 3 November 2018. The Conference has chosen the key theme of “Centres and Peripheries: Communication, Research, Translation”. Organisers call for proposals that address the main conference theme and which relate to each ECREA Section, Network or Temporary Working Group.

Conference theme



This conference aims to analyse and to address the theme “Centres and Peripheries: Communication, Research, Translation” in communication from a multiplicity of perspectives.

First, the conference examines the issues of “core” and “margins”, inviting scholars to stretch the boundaries of media and communication research as an academic discipline. We welcome presentation of research that seeks to take communication and media studies to new territories and new fields of application. “Stretching” media and communication research means bringing attention to underdeveloped fields of research and bringing

theories, approaches and methods from other academic fields and disciplines into view. Academic subjects previously not concerned with aspects of mediated communication now acknowledge the role of media and communication processes for their discipline. This is both a challenge and an opportunity for the future role and socio-cultural impact of media and communication research.

Second, the key conference theme of centres and peripheries means reconsidering geographical, cultural and linguistic borders or boundaries. Many areas of media and communication research have been dominated by American and European scholarship, but these traditions can learn methodological and theoretical insights coming, for example, from Asian, South American and African research. In this regard, as the subtitle of the conference emphasizing “translation” suggests, this also requires re-examination in the continual dominance of the English language in academic affairs. There is no doubt that the English language has become the lingua franca in the scientific community, allowing scholars from different countries to communicate and to access each other’s work. Nevertheless, the English language-centrality needs to be questioned and discussed in a plurilingual setting such as the Swiss context and, in particular, when findings in other languages are marginalized, considered peripheral or less important. This is why special panels addressing this topic will be organised during the conference. Reconsidering borders, however, goes beyond mere reflection and deals with the materiality of communication flows. In the present global context of migration and mobility, and where terms such as flow, mobility, multi-cultural, multi-perspective, transcultural, hybrid and fragmented are ubiquitous, the issue of what we consider as communicative centres and peripheries is highly important. We thus also invite contributions that focus on the stability and fragility of the concepts of “centre” and “periphery”. This topic addresses historical and spatial instability, understanding and explaining how certain physical or immaterial entities become centres – or peripheries – for certain issues in critical times (e.g., the Silicon Valley for technological innovation related to the Internet, online communication and network societies).

Third, the key concepts of centres and peripheries in communication are associated with economic and political power. Communication flows often go from rich (central) countries to poor (peripheral) ones. Within single countries distribution of resources are often unequal in terms of information and connectedness between privileged and unprivileged areas (e.g.,

urban peripheries and rural areas). People in disadvantaged areas are often excluded by flows, forms and practices of communication that are taken-for-granted in richer regions. In this regard, we also welcome contributions addressing European “divides”, exclusions or fights for inclusion from a communication perspective.

Submission and deadline

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Proposals for individual papers, panels, and posters can be submitted to one of ECREA Sections, Temporary Working Groups and Networks through the ECREA 2018 submission platform until 28 February 2018. Submission opens on 11 December 2017.

Abstracts should be written in English and contain a clear outline of the argument, theoretical framework, and, where applicable, methodology and results. The maximum length of individual abstracts is 500 words. Panel proposals, which should consist of five individual contributions, combine a panel rationale with five panel paper abstracts, each of which shall be no more than 500 words.

Please note that participants can be nominated as the first (presenting) author in one accepted submission only. If more than one contribution with the same first (presenting) author is accepted, the participant stated as the first (presenting) author will be asked to decide which paper he/she wants to present. There is no restriction on the number of presentations where a conference participant is listed as co-author and participants can still act as chair or respondent of a panel.

All proposals must be submitted through the conference website until 28 February 2018. Early submission is strongly encouraged. Please note that this submission deadline will not be extended.

Abstracts will be published in a PDF Abstract Book. Full papers (optional) will be published via the conference submission system and available to registered attendants after logging into the system.

Timeline



Submission system opens: 11 December 2017

Submission of paper and panel abstracts and posters: 28 February 2018

Notification of Acceptance: 7 May 2018

End of Early Bird Registration Fee: 31 August 2018

Presenters' registration deadline: 15 September 2018

Deadline for submission of the full papers (optional): 1 October 2018



BIG IDEAS!

Challenging Public Relations Research and Practice

EUPRERA, 20th Annual Congress, Aarhus, 27-29 September



The European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA) is an autonomous organization with nearly 500 members from 40 countries interested in advancing academic research and knowledge in strategic communication. In order to spread new methodologies and research results, EUPRERA organizes a highly regarded annual congress each autumn in collaboration with a university or business school in Europe. Aarhus University (AU) is Denmark's second largest university. It was founded in 1928. Today, it has more than 44,000 students and more than 11,000 employees. Aarhus University is a top ten university among universities founded within the past 100 years.

Call for Contributions



All abstracts and papers to be submitted in English. Abstracts: 800 words. Full papers: 30,000–40,000 characters, including blanks. Guidelines for panel proposals and full papers are available on the congress website.

Publication of papers

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A special issue of Journal of Communication Management

A congress book (part of a book series published by Emerald)

The Congress Theme

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We seldom challenge ourselves as public relations researchers and/or practitioners. We prefer to stay inside our academic comfort zone. We travel to the same conferences, we analyze the same kind of data, and we apply the same kind of concepts and models. These are the Kuhnian routines of 'normal science'. One way to get us out of this comfort zone is by producing Big Ideas. Big Ideas can do many things. Big Ideas are transformative, they can change the way we work and communicate in organizations and societies. They might even change what we understand by public relations. Big Ideas are dynamic, they can cross borders, not only in our minds but also between disciplines. Big Ideas can create new relationships between people, organizations and nation states. Why Big Ideas? Because we sometimes are too obsessed with details. What we need is more 'big picture thinking', more theory-building, more cross-disciplinarity, more innovation in practice – in short, new ideas that are bigger and better and that will make us look up.

Sub-Themes

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Approaches to theory-building in public relations

Theory-building is one of the roads that lead to big ideas. Theorybuilding is a cognitive process guided by well known principles such as criticism and construction, explication and emendation, evaluation and extension. Challenge (1): Can we find new approaches to theorybuilding? Are we 'inventing' too many or too few ideas?

Cross-disciplinary excursions: searching for big ideas outside of public relations

Sometimes it is easier to generate big ideas when we leave our discipline and visit other disciplines? Recently, management and organization scholars have caught interest in rhetoric, text, discourse, and communication. The new umbrella term is communicative institutionalism. At the same time, a large number of public relations researchers seem to forget about the role of communication in public relations. Challenge (2): Are we selling out of our core ideas? Are there big ideas that we can import from other disciplines?

Rethinking the old ideas of public relations

Big ideas are often new ideas. However, rethinking old ideas remains a possibility. Among the old ideas that would benefit from rethinking we find, for example, the ideas of publics and relation (and public relations?). Our understanding of management and organization would also benefit from rethinking. Challenge (3): How can we rethink the conceptual heritage of public relations research and practice?

The practitioners' big ideas

Big ideas are not only invented by academics. Communication managers and communication consultants, working in and for private and public organizations, also produce their share of big ideas. Often big ideas develop when the two worlds collide in fruitful ways. Challenge (4): How can we facilitate and strengthen the interaction and the exchange of big ideas between the world of research and practice?

Public relations in a post-factual society

Some big ideas – such as Big Data, Disruption, and Hypermodernity – have already occupied both the academic agenda and the political agenda. The idea of a 'post-factual society', a society fuelled by 'alternative facts', for example, is of particular interest for public relations researchers and practitioners. Challenge (5): Will the idea of the post-factual society (elected Word of the Year in Germany in 2016) influence the image of our discipline?

Current public relations research

In order to open up EUPRERA 2018 to the most recent and thoughtprovoking research, we also invite high-quality papers that present empirical studies of other aspects of corporate and organizational communication.

Dates for submission of anonymous papers and panels for peer review

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Deadline for abstracts: 28 February, 2018

Feedback on abstracts: 10 April, 2018

Deadline for full papers: 19 June, 2018



A WORLD IN CRISIS: The Role of Public Relations



In his 1992 book, American political scientist Francis Fukuyama confidently declared that the fall of the Berlin Wall had signaled “the end of history” as Western values of liberal democracy, free markets, and open society had triumphed and therefore would henceforth be adopted by the rest of the world. What an illusion! Less than twenty years into the 21st century, the list of countries one does not associate with a liberal democratic system (China, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Turkey, the Philippines...) has been growing as does their apparent influence over global affairs. Even the USA, considered the leader of globalism in the 20th century, appears to have embraced protectionism and economic nationalism typified by the slogan “America first!” A combination of political and technological creative destruction appears to be making societies progressively less open where individuals are voluntarily ceding control over their privacy to government and corporations (such as Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google) to the levels that George Orwell, the author of dystopian novel 1984, couldn’t even imagine). The world appears to be in a permanent crisis. Trust in authorities and institutions is falling while at the same time organizational appear to be making optimistic promises of their commitment, engagement, and even enthusiasm. What is going on? Public relations has always been involved in sense-making and reflection, relationship management and storytelling. How much has it contributed to the present VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) state of affairs and what is its role in the near future? These are questions we think we need to discuss during the 25th anniversary of the International Public Relations Research Symposium – BledCom 2018.

The following are a few of the many topics subsumed in this theme: a world in turmoil and the role of public relations; crisis management; crisis communication; corporate crisis communication; government and public crisis communication; non-profits – their role in today’s world; communication and the erosion of trust in (public) authorities; agnotology, fake-news, post-truth and post-democracy; communication and (corporate, political, social) sense-making; journalism and media in crisis?; social media and their role in creating the present state of affairs; strategic communication in a VUCA world.

Call for Abstracts and Panels



We invite abstracts that are between 500 and 800 words (including title and keywords) with up to 5 references. Please use the following guidelines to present your abstract and kindly supply the word count at the end of the submission.

Please note that as has been the norm in the past, BledCom welcomes ALL papers that are relevant to public relations and communication management beyond papers that discuss the conference theme.

Format for the Abstract



Introduction and purpose of the study (and research question if there is one) – helps summarize the purpose and rationale of your study. Literature review – Helps place your work in context with the existing body of knowledge. Methodology – Define the main method used for gathering data including sample size, and state the rationale for using this method. Results and conclusions – Helps summarize the answers to the research questions while also outlining the implications of the results. Also summarize the limitations of the study and offer suggestions for future research. Practical and social implications – Offer the potential implications both for practice and society. Also provide us with 3 to 5 keywords that highlight your study. Abstracts should come as blind copies without author names and affiliations, who are to be identified on a separate cover page. Please use the suggested headings to structure the abstract. A list of literature is not necessary, but if it is provided

it is included into the word count.

Panel proposal are also welcome. The proposal should describe the title and focus of the panel, name of the chair of the panel, and names of every member of the panel and title or focus of each presentation.

Deadline

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Both paper abstracts and panel proposals should be submitted via email to bledcom@fdv.uni-lj.si no later than 1 February 2018. Decisions will be made by 1 March 2018. Full papers of no more than 6.000 words will be due by 1 September 2018.

Program Committee

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Dejan Verčič, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Ana Tkalac Verčič, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Krishnamurthy Sriramesh, Purdue University, USA

The Program Committee will be guest editing a special issue of Public Relations Review. Papers presented at BledCom 2018 will be considered for publications in the special issue.