

## **PRECONFERENCE: Making sense of Election reporting: new directions, new challenges?**

**Date:** 24 May 2018. 9.00am - 5.00pm

**Location:** Velka zasedaci sin (room), Karolinum, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

**Divisions:** Journalism Studies and Political Communication

**Organisers:** Dr Stephen Cushion (Cardiff University) and Dr Dan Jackson (Bournemouth University).

**Keynote speaker:** Professor Frank Esser, University of Zurich

### **Description and Objective**

Elections reporting is one of the most studied areas of journalism studies and political communication. From longstanding debates about agenda setting to more recent inquiries about the mediatization of politics, elections have provided the backdrop to many of the key theoretical breakthroughs in the field.

But in an increasingly fragmented news environment, where people rely on an ever-expanding range of media to understand what is happening in the world, election reporting is changing across new content platforms and providers. As the Reuters 2017 Digital News Report established, the citizens of many democracies now rely to a greater extent on online rather than broadcast and print news, with social media platforms playing a greater role in disseminating information than newspapers. Meanwhile, the political communication environment in which political journalists work continues to evolve in line with cultural and technological trends, with new challenges emerging for reporters in covering candidates who might eschew the channels of communication traditionally overseen by journalists and appeal directly to voters. New journalistic practices are also emerging in response to questions of truth and 'post-truth' in political campaigns.

It is therefore crucial that we ask the important questions of election reporting, and seek new empirical and theoretical insights that take thinking forward in this field. This one day ICA preconference, supported by the Political Communication and Journalism Studies Divisions, aims to bring together leading scholars around the world to consider the changing nature of news media during recent election campaigns. We encourage submissions that explore election reporting across both advanced and developing democracies.

We would welcome new theoretical and empirical inquiries that examine:

- The quality of information supplied during election campaign (e.g. debates about policy Vs game, hard or soft news etc.)
- Representing voters during election campaigns (e.g. use of polls, vox pops etc.)
- New insights on questions of balance, objectivity and impartiality of election reporting

- Reporting elections in a post-truth environment
- The role of fake news during election campaigns
- Blurring boundaries between news genres and popular culture in election reporting
- Who sets the media agenda and intermedia agenda setting (e.g. between new and legacy media)
- The interaction between journalists, politicians and campaign professionals during election campaigns
- New insights into the relationship between news media, public opinion and voter behaviour
- Changing news consumption habits and how this is shaping the role and influence of mainstream news media

### **Outputs from the preconference**

We are in discussion with relevant journals for a special issue on new developments in election news. If successful, submissions for the conference will be considered and full papers invited in September 2018.

### **Submission procedure**

Please send proposals for 15 minute paper presentations to Stephen Cushion ([CushionSA@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:CushionSA@cardiff.ac.uk)) and Dan Jackson ([jacksond@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:jacksond@bournemouth.ac.uk)). Proposals should include the following: title and name, institutional affiliation, and email address, together with a paper title and abstract of not more than 500 words. Proposers should also indicate whether or not they are current postgraduate students.

Contributors will be selected by peer review, and will be notified of the outcome of their proposal by 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018. Authors are expected to attend the preconference and present in person.

All participants – whether speaking or not – must register and pay fees. Registration costs (including a welcome breakfast, coffee breaks and lunch buffet) are 50 USD for presenters and non-presenters. To register, participants need to go to [www.icahdq.org](http://www.icahdq.org) and register online as part of their main ICA conference registration, or as a stand-alone registration. As spaces are limited to 40 participants, priority will be given to those accepted for presentation.

### **Key dates**

- **15<sup>th</sup> January 2018.** Deadline for paper submission.
- **26<sup>th</sup> January 2018.** Paper proposers notified of decision by conference committee.
- **1 April 2018.** Deadline for preconference registration.
- **24<sup>th</sup> May 2018.** Preconference starts in Prague.
- **Mid-September 2018.** Expected deadline for submission of full papers for journal special issue.