

**INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION ICA 2019
PRECONFERENCE CALL FOR PAPERS**

Beyond Germany: German Media Theory in a Global Context

Goethe-Institut, Washington, DC

23 May 2019, 10am – 6pm

Submission deadline: January 31, 2019

Sponsors

ICA division of Intercultural Communication

ICA division of Philosophy, Theory and Critique

Organizers

Wolfgang Suetzl, School of Media Arts & Studies, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio

Andreas Ströhl, Goethe-Institut, Washington, D.C.

Bernhard Debatin, E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio

Thematic background

‘German media theory’ has come to signify a specific way of understanding and theorizing the media that draws on a rich heritage of continental literary studies and philosophy. With its roots extending back to writers such as Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin, it has also been defined as the ‘other’ of the classical mass communication approach common in Anglophone scholarship.

The recent rapid growth of *Medienwissenschaft* in German-speaking Europe has been accompanied by recurring enquiries regarding its specific methodological and philosophical identity, including the question, “what’s German about German media theory?” asked by philosopher Claus Pias in a 2015 essay. Is there a “German *Sonderweg*,” others asked, a way of studying the media that is particular to German-speaking theorists?

Some of these debates took place in a dialogue with North American scholars of mediated communication, continuing an exchange that may have originated in Horkheimer and Adorno’s criticism of the empirical methods applied to mass communication research. German media theory still stands for a way of pursuing an approach to media studies that continues to engage with literary studies and philosophy, and considers itself distinct from mass communication studies.

But the boundaries around any ‘German-ness’ of such media theories are no longer a simple matter of language or nationality. Many works of theorists writing in German and/or working in Germany are translated into many languages, including Chinese, Portuguese, Korean, English, Japanese, French, Russian, etc. These writings have become easily accessible to scholars beyond the established transatlantic trading route of ideas. Other German-language theorists, for instance Vilém Flusser in the 1980s and currently Byung-Chul Han, have given translational and hybrid meanings to the adjective ‘German.’

Against this background, this conference invites international communication scholars to offer perspectives on the ways in which German-language media theories have communicated beyond the boundaries of the German-speaking part of the world.

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to

- Readings, adoptions, translations of German media theory outside of the German-speaking Europe
- 'German-ness' of German media theory in translational context
- German media theory in the context of cultural studies and mass communication theory
- Philosophical, cross-cultural and postcolonial readings of German media theory
- Positions of German media theory with regard to current issues in social media, artificial intelligence, etc., and to ethics, policy-making, and the public sphere
- German media theory in diaspora studies and non-German influences on German media theory
- Media ecology, media archeology, and new materialism in German media theory
- German Media theory with regard to media analytics, big data, and privacy

We invite all scholars with an interest in these and related questions to submit their contributions for this one-day pre-conference hosted by the Goethe-Institut, Washington, DC.

Submission process

Please send your submissions and enquiries to suetzl@ohio.edu no later than **January 31, 2019**. Notifications of acceptance will be emailed by February 15, 2019.

Submission formats

- extended paper abstracts (1000 words)
- panel proposals (including panelists and rationale, 500 words)
- round table proposals (including participants and rationale, 500 words)
- fishbowl proposals (including starting participants and rationale, 500 words)

Full papers are also welcome, but are not required for extended abstract submissions.

Registration

Participation is free, and open to everyone with an interest in the conference theme. Please register via the ICA preconferences website.

Venue

Goethe-Institut, 990 K St NW (entrance 20th street), Washington, DC 20006