

## **Identità e varietà delle scienze della comunicazione – Identity and Diversity in Communication Sciences**

*Annual Conference of the Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Publistik und Kommunikationswissenschaft (German Association for Journalism and Communication Science) 30.4.-2.5.2008 in Lugano*

The Department of Communication Sciences in Lugano has been a pioneer in the field of communications in the Italian part of Switzerland since the establishment of the Università della Svizzera italiana in 1996. It is highly regarded because of its strategic geographic location, internationality and multi-lingual research and teaching as well as the inclusion of topics of related subjects such as linguistics / argumentation theory, organizational theory, or risk research and therefore connects various disciplines and countries. In this spirit, the flourishing department would like to invite the members of the DGPK to take a closer look at the subject.

The 2008 annual conference will focus on Journalism and Communication Sciences as an interdisciplinary field. It regards the phenomenon of public communication from different points of view, connects and differentiates between various perspectives, and puts it in its interdisciplinary and international context. The goal of the conference is to look at the „identity and diversity“ of the subject on different levels and bring together the different areas of the discipline.

### *1. Systematic Perspective*

The research focus, courses of study, and programs aimed at practical applications of communication sciences have been further developed as a result of the diversification of the media network and the development and changes in the basic principles of technical, legal, political, and economic areas. The questions and avenues of approach have been developed and changed over a period of more than 50 years. Some topics gained importance (i.e. the question of convergence and scandal research), while others lost their significance (i.e. research on concentration). Historic case studies and quantitative long-term research (i.e. about the use of media or journalistic ways of thinking and working) show how the subject has addressed relevant socio-political questions. Accordingly, sub-

missions to the conference are requested to focus on short-, middle-, and long-term developments and changes of the media network, their contributors, their causes and effects:

- about long-term as well as current (i.a. economic) changes in the media network,
- about the influence of the affiliations of the media network on the content of the media as well as the perception of the media in specific countries,
- about the development of role-conceptions and working routines in journalism and other media related professions,
- about the changes in the relation of PR and public work and its effects,
- about the impact of changing editorial structures (working conditions, percentage of women, network of responsibilities, resources and customers) on the quality of media coverage etc.

## *2. International Perspective*

In an international comparison typical research trends can be identified for different countries or regions: Scandinavian researchers, for example, were mainly focused on the choice of coverage out of a peace promoting perspective; international comparisons of studies in the area of journalism research mainly offer information about the specifics of legal guidelines, self-images and the way journalists work. The annual conference offers a chance to compare international research. Studies which focus on the internationalization and international network of the resources of communication studies are of special interest. Accordingly, submissions to the conference are requested which focus on the internationalization of the subject and its resources. Some of these topics may include:

- journalism studies which make international comparisons (editorial analysis, interviews)
- cross-national and comparative questionnaires about current topics, conflicts, etc.
- the influence of new technological developments and products on the general population's use of media in an international perspective.
- studies about methodological gains as well as problems of comparative and cross-national projects.

### *3. Theoretical Perspective*

Theoretical approaches have become more specific and differentiated with the diversification of topics and the widening of questioning (i.e. in the area of Communications theory or about the effects of media content). New theories have been developed and gained importance (i.e. framing), others have been disproved or have lost their previous status (i.e. the catharsis theory). A complementary development shows itself as striving to integrate theories, for example to include them in meta-theories – or in universal communication theories in order to explain the actions of contributors (i.e. in a theory of journalism). The conference should take the differentiation as well as the integration of theoretical approaches into account. In relation to this, conference submissions are requested which focus on the further and new development of central theories of the subject, such as:

- theories of news coverage,
- concepts about the relationship between journalism and PR,
- theories of public opinion
- perception and impact methods
- meta-theories and theories with various ranges which connect existing theories or include new perspectives that exceed those of existing theories

### *4. (Inter-) disciplinary Perspective*

What goes for constructing and developing theories also characterizes the structure of the subject in relation to its fields of research in a similar way. New areas of research begin to crystallize with the specification of questions and the firm establishment of areas of topic. Their common ties and areas of application frequently lay beyond the frontiers of the subject, for example in the case of the conference in Lugano where the areas of linguistics, marketing or healthcare are also incorporated into the subject of communication. The integration of areas of research and disciplines unrelated to the subject will be a focus of the context of the conference.

In this regard, conference submissions are requested to reference the multidisciplinary or the connective approaches and studies. One should consider the following:

- the inclusion of categories of classic rhetoric and argumentation analysis in the qualitative and quantitative research of media content, advertising slogans and similar topics

- the adaptation of the avenues of approach of computer science for the analysis of perception and editorial processes used by the mass media,
- the inclusion of economic theories in the analysis of media or editorial structures etc.

Submissions in the form of detailed summaries („Extended Abstracts“) of three to four pages concerning the above mentioned aspects of the conference topics should be submitted by **October 15th 2007** at the latest **by Email as pdf-files** to: ***abstracts@dgpuk2008.ch***

*Formal Guidelines for Submissions:*

1. Requested are ***Extended Abstracts*** of 4.000 to 6.000 characters (incl. spaces).
2. The abstracts must be submitted with a removable title page and an anonymous main text. The cover page should contain a clear classification to one of the above mentioned topics (1) to (4). The submissions should not have previously been published in any publication or presented in any scientific conference or expert group of the DGPuK (it may also not contain identical questions, methods or results). This fact must be specifically stated on the title page. The assigned date of submission is obligatory. The same goes for the anonymization and the statement that the article is genuine. Non-observance of these general principles will lead to a disqualification of the submitted abstract out of the acceptance process.
3. The submitted abstracts will be given to three judges. The allotment is carried out by a panel of judges who are members of the board of responsible representatives and the local organizer. The judges are nominated by the expert groups of each conference topic. The process is anonymous.
4. A failure of relation to conference topics will be handled as a criterion for rejection of the abstract. Submissions which prove to relate to conference topics will be judged by the panel according to a five point scale:
  - a. relation to conference topic
  - b. theoretical foundation
  - c. relevance of questioning
  - d. appropriateness of the method / procedural method
  - e. clarity and conciseness of presentation

The abstracts should therefore contain statements according to the points a) through d)

which are able to be judged.

5. In addition, it is possible to submit exactly three abstracts as a panel suggestion which have a direct contextual relation to one another. This proposition should have a cover page which names a panel leader and a commentator as a contact person who are not participating as speakers for each abstract and explains in a maximum of 1000 characters the contextual differences between the different submissions. A title should also be suggested for the panel.
6. If panel submissions occur, the allotment of available slots will be assigned proportionally between single and panel submissions and will be separated into separate ranking lists. The acceptance of panel abstracts are subject to the same criteria as for single abstracts (see above); the respectively achieved valuations will be averaged over all three abstracts and allocated together with a fourth value for the coherence of the panel composition.
7. A binding ranking list will be made from the assessment of all the panels which decides which submissions will be accepted. If panels receive an equal rating, the submitters which sent in several papers or panels will be disadvantaged. All panel leaders will receive a confirmation of their ranking including a commentary by the judge. Single submissions within panel submissions which were not accepted will be placed in a pool with other single abstracts which were submitted.
8. A binding ranking list will be made from the rankings of all of the submitted abstracts which will decide on their acceptance. If submissions receive an equal rating, the submitters which sent in several papers will be disadvantaged. All submitters will receive a confirmation of their ranking including a commentary by the judge.
9. For the yearly conference 2008 there will also be the possibility to submit papers on short notice for the presentation in an „open panel“. These papers must not be directly related to the above described conference topic. For this purpose there will be a separate call for papers. Be aware, however, that complete manuscripts of no more than 40.000 characters are expected which should presumably be submitted by 1. MAR. 2008 and will be judged according to the above described criteria for extended abstracts.

*Submissions in English are welcome!*