OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE: CHALLENGES OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES IN THE AGE OF NEW GLOBAL REALITIES

Annual Conference of the International and Intercultural Communication Division of the DGPuK, in cooperation with the DFG Network Cosmopolitan Communication Studies

16/17 NOVEMBER 2023

FREIE UNIVERSITAET BERLIN

DGPuK

Kosmopolitische Kommunikationswissenschaft

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The world is rapidly developing in a polycentric manner: Western dominance in globalization seems to wane, new wars are challenging the world order, migration and mobility are transforming the cultural foundations of society, and modern media environments add to a seemingly fundamental structural change. Communication and media studies must face these complex developments. Yet, so far its approach to the world has been highly selective, which is problematic given the dynamic reconfigurations of global conditions. For example, Eastern Europe and the Global South are on the agenda today; however, selective interest and oversights of previous research have undermined our understanding of these developments. Therefore, not without reason, communication studies are also struggling for their societal position. In light of the contemporary global challenges, we need to ask whether our discipline risks losing its chance to contribute to the communicative restructuring of the world if it clings to old spatial references or indulges in one-sided media centrism. In which ways does communication research need to change in order to provide answers to global challenges? How can current research help to better integrate the "North" and "South"? Which approaches need to be adapted to global realities, and how can "universalism" be achieved today? How can we identify, document, and analyze new phenomena in a more international comparative way?

This conference is held by the international and intercultural communication division of the DGPuK and the DFG-network cosmopolitan communication studies, which engages in a "deep" internationalization of the discipline.

LOGISTICS

FOOD & DRINKS

Coffee and light snacks are provided during the breaks. The closest lunch option is the FU Mensa I Shokudo on the ground floor. Alternatively, you can find several small shops at the intersection of Garystrasse and Ihnestrasse close by.

LOCATION

The conference will take place in room 102A in **Van't-Hoff-Str. 6,** 14195 Berlin (above Mensa Shokudo, first floor).
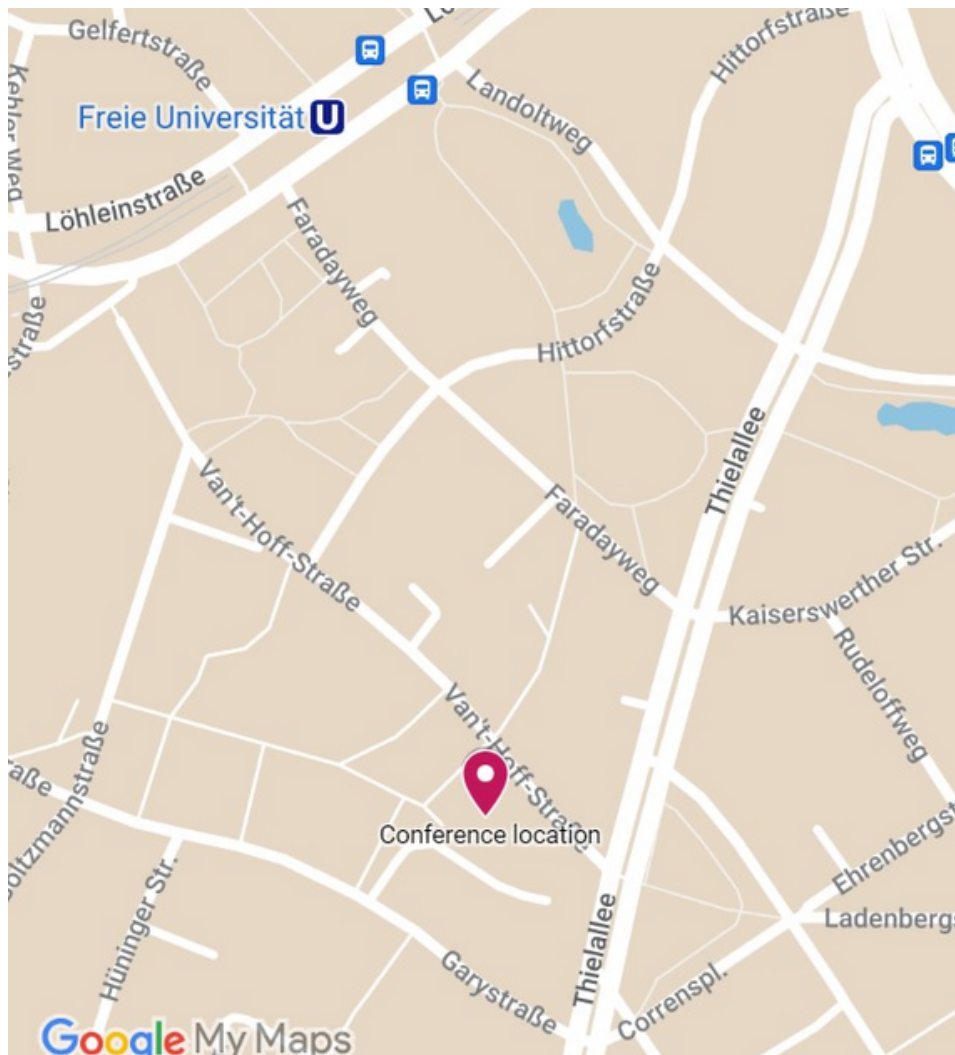
U3 Freie Universität Berlin is the closest metro station.

PROGRAM

18:00   Meet and greet

18:15 - 19:45   **Öffenliche Podiumsdiskussion:**
„Globale Herausforderungen und die Rolle der Kommunikationswissenschaft"

In einer Weltordnung, die von multi-polaren und transkulturellen Dynamiken geprägt ist, braucht es auch eine Kommunikationswissenschaft, die sich globalen Herausforderungen stellen, sie erklären und Überblicks- und Vergleichswissen liefern kann. Eine Analyse des Netzwerks „Kosmopolitische Kommunikationswissenschaft" ergab, dass sowohl die Strukturen als auch die Wissenskultur innerhalb der Kommunikationswissenschaft in Deutschland (dahingehend) noch mangelhaft sind, um gesellschaftliche Entwicklungen auch jenseits einer isolierten nationalen Perspektive konstruktiv zu begleiten. Dabei haben viele Rückschläge wie Rechtsextremismus, Rassismus und neue Kriege auch mit Defiziten der internationalen Kommunikation zu tun, die in öffentlichen Debatten selten hinreichend erkannt werden. Die Podiumsdiskussion bringt Expert:innen aus relevanten Praxisfeldern wie Medien und Migration, Medienentwicklungszusammenarbeit und digitalem Journalismus zusammen mit Wissenschaftler:innen, die in internationalen Lehr- und Forschungskontexten arbeiten. In der Diskussion sollen Erwartungen an die Kommunikations- wissenschaft formuliert werden, Defizite benannt, Entwicklungspotenziale aufgezeigt und (aber) auch best-practice Beispiele für ein fruchtbares Wirken der Kommunikationswissenschaft in die Gesellschaft hinein diskutiert werden.

PANELISTS   Anja Wollenberg (MiCT)
Jochen Spangenberg (Deutsche Welle Forschung)
Andrea Pürckhauer (Mediendienst Integration)
Kai Hafez (Universität Erfurt)

MODERATION   Anna Grüne (Universität Erfurt)
Carola Richter (Freie Universität Berlin)

FRIDAY – 17 NOVEMBER 2023

09:00 - 09:15   Welcome address/ Introduction

09:15 - 10:45   **Cosmopolitan communication studies: missing**
PANEL I   **links and outlooks for global knowledge**
                              production
                              Chair: Anna Litvinenko
                              Freie Universität Berlin

                              Leaving the "comfort zone": Mediatization research
                              from Latin America and the (missing) links to
                              European research. The undiscovered works of Latin
                              American scholars
                              Stefanie Averbeck-Lietz
                              University of Greifswald

                              Structural, cultural, and individual embeddedness of
                              academic cosmopolitanism
                              Pauline Gidget Estella, Johanna Radechovsky
                              TU Ilmenau

                              The quest for deliberative communication in Europe:
                              From research to identifying best practices, from
                              best practices to policy recommendations
                              Marcus Kreutler, Susanne Fengler
                              TU Dortmund

10:45 - 11:15   Coffee break

PROGRAM

11:15 - 12:45
PANEL II

Global structural change of the communicative world? Conceptual challenges for comparative media and communication studies
Chair: Anke Fiedler
University of Greifswald

Fact-checkers: how to conceptualize these new actors in the public communication model
Regina Cazzamatta
University of Erfurt

Conceptual challenges and adaptions in comparative research: the concept of media accountability revisited
Judith Pies
Universität der Bundeswehr

A comparative media literacy research in the age of digitalization on Indonesia and Germany
Danny Schmidt, Subekti Priyadharma
University of Erfurt / UNPAD Bandung
Padjadjaran Indonesia

12:45 - 13:45   Lunch break

PROGRAM

**13:45 - 15:15
PANEL III**

**Global and transcultural spaces, old methods?
Methodological challenges of global
communication research**
Chair: Christine Horz-Ishak
TH Köln

Deconstructing intercultural communication
competence: A preliminary research on Indonesian
(Elite) migrant workers in Germany
Aang Koswara
LMU München

Diversity vs. universalism – The methodological
recognition of differences
Mira Keßler
Ruhr-Universität Bochum

How the study of contemporary racism can
contribute to a transnationalization of
communication studies
Sabrina Schmidt
University of Erfurt

15:15 - 15:45

Meeting of the International and Intercultural
Communication division of the DGPuK

15:45 - 16:00

Farewell

1. Leaving the "comfort zone": Mediatization research from Latin America and the (missing) links to European research. The undiscovered works of Latin American scholars
Stefanie Averbeck-Lietz
University of Greifswald

> "History [writing the history of disciplines] is a vehicle toward greater collective reflexivity about our own locations, aspirations, and projects within the wider global field. It sheds light on patterns of intellectual hegemony, resistance, and plurality that cut across nations and regions […]." (Simonson & Park 2016, 1)

More recently, Peter Simonson, Dave Park and Jefferson Pooley have published relevant research in the global history of communication and media studies in parallel in Spanish and English language for a mainly US-based scholarly audience (Simonson, Park & Pooley 2022). "Leaving the comfort zone" means that language matters but so do scientific cultures, communities and milieus (ibid., also Author, N.N., N.N. & N.N. 2020). Scientific thinking and communicating relates to people's traces (or the traces they do not see, they do not notice, they do not read nor quote…) (see also Said 1983).

Informed by the international history of communication studies (and readings in four languages: German, English, French, Spanish over the last 20 years) and building on an analytical scheme by Author & NN. (2017) how to analyze the history of a field of study in communication research in terms of its corpus of ideas and its social corpus, this conference paper addresses the transnational disconnections in the field of mediatization research (see also Scolari, Fernandez & Amat 2021) with a regard to a) the Latin American and French roots of this research (Author 2010) and b) why they are still so unknown, at least in German communication studies.

It will be explained why there are reception barriers especially in Germany against Latin American and also the mixed French traditions (such as the semio-pragmatics of Eliseo Verón or the Cultural Studies approach of Jesus Martín-Barbero) which have both advanced mediatization research (Barbero 1987; Verón 2014) and are well known for this in Latin American and also French research communities (Scolari/Rodriguez-Amat 2018). In Germany, they are still more or less unknown authors.

The conference paper describes the lack of border crossing between Germany and Latin America – contextualized by the question why another European research community, geographically a neighbor of Germany, the French one (Author/N.N. 2021), had not been able to build a bridge to Germany – and vice versa (Eliseo Verón worked for about 20 years in France after returning to the University of Rosario in Argentina).

Since German communication studies after 1945 strongly rejected "ideological" formations (Hardt 2002) as experienced with Nazi Newspaper Studies (Kutsch 1987) it largely rejected normative theory building of any kind, not least Critical Theory and neo-Marxist theories during the Cold War (Scheu 2012). Instead, German Communication Studies during the 1960s and 1970s developed a critical-rationalist paradigm, traditionally oriented towards standardized methodologies and the (content) analysis of political communication (meaning the so called "Publizistikwissenschaft", Löblich 2010). This orientation was often not very compatible with international research in the 20th century.

It will be shown that a concept such as "mediatization" – which has diverse roots in Northern and Southern traditions – affects the body of ideas of communication studies on the one hand, but also its social shape, which has experienced deep ruptures through political over-formations, especially in Germany.

2. Structural, cultural, and individual embeddedness of academic cosmopolitanism
Pauline Gidget Estella, Johanna Radechovsky
TU Ilmenau

The discourse on academic cosmopolitanism gains currency in the context of unbridled globalization and expanding transnational spaces. In light of the critique leveled against the lack of diversity and western-centrism in academia (Fox Tree and Vaid, 2022), it makes sense to ask whether instituions, even those that claim to be 'global' or international, are truly cosmopolitan. This becomes an important question in a world where the relevance of intercultural competencies and international comparative research is increasing (Miño and Gibson, 2020).

The proposal addresses this question by presenting a case study on academic cosmopolitanism in Germany, a nation that, as far as its government is concerned, is aiming to be "cosmopolitan and diverse" (Bundesregierung, 2018), with an increasing number of international students coming to its universities (de Dosch, 2021). The Technische Universität (TU) Ilmenau offers opportunities for examining academic cosmopolitanism.

With a student body consisting of more than 39 percent international students hailing from over 100 countries (1.888 out of 4.752), the university presents a diverse educational environment (Geigenmüller, 2023). In particular, the Institute of Media and Communication Science (IfMK) has served a large number of students from different parts of the world since its founding in 1999, especially through its Master's program in Media and Communication Science, and has become increasingly international as a result.

At present, international students dominate the IfMK's Master's program, accounting for over 80 percent. A large proportion of the institute's academic staff also have an international background. What also makes this an interesting case is that, while it is an institution with a cosmopolitan vision, it functions within the systems of the state of Thuringia, which has a political context marked in part by strong anti-immigrant attitudes and a "strong public presence" of far-right parties, and whose infrastructure had little experience with international migration until well into the 2010s (Steigemann, 2019). Against this background, the question of how and to what extent academic cosmopolitanization is embedded in the organizational structure and culture of the Institute as well as in the individual mentality of its staff is discussed in the proposed paper.

State of research

The notion of cosmopolitanism has been described and even theorized in numerous works since its inception in the 18th century (Cheah, 2006). Beck and Grande (2012) observed that cosmopolitanism has moved beyond philosophy and political theory, its "conventional home", to the more diverse fields of social sciences, as new "critical cosmopolitanisms" emerged. Indeed, scholars have examined cosmopolitanism across a wide range of contexts, such as in education (Hansen, 2017), climate science (Beck, 2012), and engagements of transnational organizations (Hutunen et al., 2021).

Of particular importance in this study is the concept of "academic cosmopolitanism", which, according to Badr and Ganter (2021, p. 2), "combines intellectual and structural critique towards academia and aspires to create common spaces with room for differentiation". As such, it is a "complementary response" to de-westernization, which aims to decenter knowledge production dominated by perspectives and realities of the mainstream West, or Europe and North America (Badr and Ganter, 2021, p. 2). For Richter et al. (2023, upcoming), academic cosmopolitanism and "deep internationalization (see also Badr et al., 2020) require "a comprehensive recognition and integration of global diversity in knowledge production" (translated by authors, p. 1, 3). It is characterized by openness to perspectives and dialogue on equal grounds (Badr and Ganter, 2021, p. 2), devoid of the "epistemic hierarchization" that has long privileged the approaches and methodological traditions of the mainstream West, as well as White, especially male, scholars (Alves and Medeiros, 2021, p. 12).

Although there is a wealth of literature examining the internationalization and decolonization of education programs (Abdi, 2013; de Dosch, 2021), the degree of cosmopolitanism is a different issue. Literature has yet to benefit from more empirical research examining cosmopolitanism in academia, in particular how cosmopolitan institutions of learning are and what structures influence the development of academic cosmopolitanism. It is important to note that while cosmopolitanism has overlaps with the associated concepts, such as internationalism, important differences, albeit sometimes subtle, have to be considered. For example, Hutunen et al. (2021, p. 5) wrote that internationalism still maintains the "practicalities of the primacy of the na on state", while cosmopolitanism aims to transcend this in the path toward a "shared world culture".

Indeed, in research, it is necessary to operationalize the true essence of academic cosmopolitanism as distinct from related concepts and contingent on structures of academia. Toward this end, the study of Richter et al. (2023, upcoming) proved useful, as they examined
the degree of cosmopolitanism in German communication studies. They operationalized the concept as "content and space dimension of the research and teaching output of the professorships and their associated posi on structures" (translated by authors, p. 5), which manifests in denominations of professorships, job structures at predoctoral and postdoctoral level, and the integration of international scientists and doctoral students. These and other variables are examined in this study to answer the question of how cosmopolitan the IfMK is in terms of (1) its organizational structure and culture in administration, teaching, and research and (2) the individual views and experiences of academic and non-academic staff.

Methodology

We will conduct both semi-structured interviews and a survey with academic and nonacademic staff from August to October 2023, looking at experience in conducting research and teaching related to cosmopolitan topics, work experience abroad, preparedness for and perceived challenges in teaching within cosmopolitan spaces, attitudes toward a cosmopolitan orientation, common themes in cosmopolitan research (or at least studies that are purportedly cosmopolitan), among others. Some questions will be added or revised to accommodate the experience of non-academic staff (e.g., team assistants or technicians). We also plan to assess the availability of support for international students and staff and the degree of integration of international staff. The findings of the study will be situated within the global state of research on cosmopolitanism in academia and will be discussed in relation to challenges and opportunities in cosmopolitanizing education.

3. The quest for deliberative communication in Europe: From research to identifying best practices, from best practices to policy recommendations
Marcus Kreutler, Susanne Fengler
TU Dortmund

Across liberal democracies, policy-makers and critical observers have raised concerns about the development, and potential decline/abuse, of public communication, due to manifold context factors. Deliberative communication – and based on it, deliberative democracy – has repeatedly been described as a demanding, but also very promising conceptualization of public communication (Habermas, 1996; Fishkin, 2009; also edited volumes by Bächtiger et al., 2018; Elster, 1998). While there are attempts to measure the deliberative quality of democracies (Coppedge et al., 2015; Varieties of Democracy Institute, 2021), it is still unclear which social and media-related factors affect deliberative communication in a society. The proposed presentation is based on a joint effort by research institutions in 14 EU countries (see below) that attempts to map risks and opportunities for deliberative communication. The aim is to identify successful paths in order to not only better understand these social dynamics, but also come to policy recommendations.

In a first step, the consortium has developed a holistic model of risk and opportunity factors in four domains of the media systems: Journalism (including both the market and the profession), media regulation and self-regulation, media usage and media-related competencies of the population. For these four domains, a set of variables was developed to guide work on two country case studies for each participating nation: The first case study analyzed the monitoring capacities, combining data on research and monitoring activities conducted by academic, private, and public actors. This case study also serves to identify knowledge gaps that call for improved monitoring practices. After establishing the availability and quality of data and knowledge for the 14 project countries in this first case study, the second case study assumed a diachronic perspective on key developments in the media systems as well as socie=es at large, with a focus on changes during the 2000-2020 time frame.

The two case studies delivered the data for further comparative analysis of both monitoring capacities and developments in the media sector. While the former can lead to suggestions for improvement on a rather direct path (by identifying critical knowledge gaps), the question of risks and opportunities is currently being analyzed using a fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA). Using this method, different configurations in the four domains can be assessed in relation to the outcome of deliberative communication. This allows for identification of different paths that were helpful – or harmful – with regard to deliberative communication.

Both the results from comparative analysis of monitoring capacities and of critical configurations and developments in the media sector, while also relevant purely on the level of research, aim at their application into practice: By identifying what we need to know and monitor with regards to national media systems, and which of these capacities are already in place, we can come to research policy recommendations. These include very practical bestpractice examples of how such monitoring can successfully be organized. Working more directly towards deliberative communication, the fsQCA of the situation and recent developments in journalism, media regulation, media usage, and media-related competencies will help to identify key settings that work towards or against social deliberation in a mediated

public. While many of these settings may not be easily changed politically, the analysis can help to decide in which areas policy changes are most promising.

The countries included in this study are Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Sweden. While all of them are members of the European Union and thus only represent one specific world region, differences in contemporary history, social configurations, and developments in the media sector are immense: There are founding members of the EU (Italy, Germany) as well as countries that have joined this organization still during the 20th century (Greece, Austria, Sweden, also Eastern Germany) or in the past twenty years, some of which having (re-)gained their current statehood only in the 1990s. A long and uninterrupted tradition of freedom of speech and freedom of information in Sweden contrasts with countries that have only (re-)gained these rights at different moments of the 20th century. The diversity of regions, country size and political systems, and recent history, brings along significant differences in terms of social practices, configurations of the media market, and not least research traditions. All these differences require an approach to cooperative research that is both sensitive to such diversity and open to learn from it. Using these learnings may also be useful in future attempts to extend the research beyond Europe.

4. Fact-checkers: how to conceptualize these new actors in the public communication model

Regina Cazzamatta
University of Erfurt

As a reaction to the disruption (Bennett & Pfetsch, 2018) and "further structural transformation" of the (political) public sphere (Habermas, 2021), which resulted in the global disinformation phenomena, fact-checking organizations are dramatically increasing around the globe. Currently, 407 active units operate worldwide (Duke Reporters' Lab, 2020). They can be part of traditional established media or news agency units, independent start-ups, or even operate in universities. In this context, a significant question that will guide the presentation arises: to what extent are fact-checking organizations a subsystem of journalism (internal differentiation, new genre) or a subsystem of the public sphere with a different function? While closely associated with professional journalism and committed to journalistic principles, fact-checking organizations maintain a distinct identity (Bélair-Gagnon et al., 2023). Unlike most journalistic practices, fact-checking incorporates verdicts (Steensen et al., 2023). Fact-checking comes into play after the information has gained social impact, reverberation in public debate, or resonance in the online environment (Rodríguez-Pérez & Seibt, 2022). Thus, fact-checkers do not determine what news is but what is true in the public debate and social media. In contrast to traditional journalism, fact-checkers place less emphasis on timeliness, originality, and exclusivity (Graves, 2016). In light of these new developments, we expect to discuss the extent to which organizations, roles, and epistemologies of fact-checkers differ from traditional journalism and how (if it is even possible) to draw the line between the two systems.

While the primary function of journalism is societal observation through the provision of up-to-date information for public communication (Blöbaum, 1994; Kohring, 2016), fact-checkers verify third-party information already published in the public sphere. In this sense, they act as 'gatebouncers' (Vos, 2019) by distinguishing between facts and alternative facts, and their primary function is to remove (even if only symbolically) uninvited guests from the public discourse and 'purify' the public sphere. That also should include verifying information published by established news media, which is generally not a common practice (Graves, 2018). One should not forget that established media are also responsible for the spread of falsehoods (Tsfati et al., 2020). Within this context, it is also considered challenging to 'measure' or assess the levels of disinformation and democratic disruption in different societies (methodological challenge). For instance, while the impact of disinformation in Germany can be indeed perceived, its higher audience share of public service broadcasting, 42% of the population (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Humprecht et al., 2020), and its low social media use as a source of news, 31% (Fletcher et al., 2022), still demonstrates a high resilience to disinformation. The picture is entirely different in other countries, such as Brazil, with a 0,5% share of public service broadcasting (Mier-Sanmartín et al., 2019) and high social media use for news, 66% (Fletcher et al., 2022).

These indicators demonstrate that fact-checkers operate in highly different media and political systems. In countries with less developed journalism professionalism, it might be plausible for fact-checkers to be critical and discursively disassociate themselves from traditional journalism. For instance, organizations in Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Venezuela openly reprove their traditional mainstream journalism. To give a concrete example, Colombia Check criticizes and explains to the audience how the media often rely on the "official truth" and just replicate what

some sources affirm. (…) A "press release is simply replicated (…) without any journalist even trying to confirm if what has been said is true" (Colombia Check). This argument is precisely what Cunningham (2003) has discussed in "rethink objectivity," claiming that the concept makes journalists passive recipients instead of "aggressive analyzers and explainers." Escenario Tlaxcalas's Ficciones Informativas from Mexico also strongly criticize the regional media in Tlaxcala, claiming they "copy-paste" press releases. Ecuador Chequea, in its turn, welcomes the emerging fact-checking tools yet not to give journalism another surname, but to reaffirm the basis of the profession: the confrontation of data". The problem is also mentioned by Cocoyo Chequea in Venezuela - "While it is true that journalism has always been about verifying the veracity of information, much of what circulates in the media is a report of a source's statements."

Because the fact-checkers role is more associated with the purification and not necessarily the formation of a public sphere, it might be plausible to add fact-checking as a new area of public communication. Hanitzsch (2005) outlines three dimensions of public communication in the public sphere. Reporting, entertainment, and advertising may overlap, but the three formats have their criteria for managing information and distinguishing it from noninformation. The author added public relations to the model of public communication and classified the four formats according to information values (factual/fictional) and intended goals:

• Journalism: primarily factual information, but its communication objectives are typically internally defined and generally without the intention of changing the audience's behavior (that does not deny the attitudinal effects of media coverage, though).

• Public relations, on the contrary, relies mainly on factual information but aims at influencing its audience.

• Advertising also expects to influence the audience but is mainly based on fictional information

• Entertainment differs from PR and advertising because its communication objectives are internally established, there is generally no intention of altering public attitudinal behaviors, and it works with fictional information.

This presentation proposes the inclusion of fact-checking in Hanitzsch's model, arguing that fact-checkers work based on factual information by distinguishing facts from alternative facts (fictional interpretations of realities or even no-information). Although they don't set the thematic agenda by selecting daily news, fact-checkers aim to correct information provided by journalism, public relations (parties, NGOs, companies, and other societal systems), and even advertisement. Their communication strategies are also internally defined (oriented toward criteria such as checkability, viralization, and impact). Finally, there is an implicit intention to change the audience's behavior. By exposing political inaccuracies, public figures would be more careful with their statements (at least in countries with less disrupted public spheres), and the audience would be aware of different levels of falsehoods and attempts to deceive (Graves, 2016)

5. Conceptual challenges and adaptions in comparative research: the concept of media accountability revisited

Judith Pies
Universität der Bundeswehr

In 2011, a consortium of communication researchers published first results of a comparative project on media accountability. The publication outlined the status quo of mechanism able to hold the media to account by non-state means in 12 European countries, Tunisia and Jordan (cf. Eberwein et al. 2011). The publication was criticized for the choice of countries, in particular for comparing European "pluralistic media systems" with countries like Jordan and Tunisia, "where this did not apply at the date of research" (Thomaß, 2012, p. 112, transl. by author). The critic referred to the chosen concept of media accountability as outlined by Bertrand (2000) who – indeed – had developed the concept with democracies and pluralistic media systems in mind.

The proposed presentation will critically recap the conceptual challenges that came along with applying the concept to new national contexts and the adaptions that the concept has been undergone when applied to non-democratic contexts in the MENA region. It will discuss these adaptions vis à vis the idea of non-stereotypical comparison (Badr et al., 2020) and legitimate knowledge production (cf. Waisbord & Meallado, 2014). This is even more important, as the media accountability concept is not only used to produce knowledge on media-society relations but also to effect media environments on the ground through the activities of international organizations.

Method

The presentation will be based on a critical reflection of the presenter's own research activities, empirical research results on media accountability in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria (before the war and today) and Tunisia (before and after the revolution) as well as the process of knowledge production itself. It concludes with suggestions for international comparative research beyond the concept of media accountability to make it less stereotypical and the results more accountable towards its practical implications.

Results

Badr et al. (2020) point out that anti-stereotypical choices for international comparisons are meaningless if they work with concepts that do not fit the researched contexts and hence produce stereotypical results. One example that illustrates this problem within my own research was the original focus on institutionalized media accountability practices stemming from the research tradition of media self-regulation, which would have turned out to be non-existent in authoritarian contexts. But by shifting the focus toward informal and less-institutionalized practices illustrated through certain cases, the mechanism for holding the media to account, even in closed media systems such as Syria before the war, became visible.

Furthermore, the reflections on knowledge production in terms of media accountability demonstrate how awareness within the research process for normative notions is already an important prerequisite in order to challenge and adopt the concept to find meaningful answers to the question regarding how media-society relations function in diverse contexts. Sometimes

it might already be enough to shift the focus to the dynamics and multi-phases of a process, as will be demonstrated by analyzing the process of defining norms to reveal the potential for social change.

In other cases, such as the relational positioning of actors, more research and elaboration are needed. But such conceptional adaptions need to meet a key condition: If there is no chance to jointly discuss definitions, results, and challenges, and if there is no openness toward adaptions among the researchers from different contexts, some of the media accountability practices might remain invisible, also in European countries.

The example of the media accountability concept illustrates how comparative research can help to challenge the understanding of a concept, to pinpoint its weaknesses, and therefore help to make it more fruitful for diverse contexts. Such an analytical framework is even more important, as the media accountability concept is used in international organizations to evaluate, shape, and fund parts of the media landscape in the Global South. Therefore, a strong analytical and context-sensitive concept of media accountability is not only a theoretical academic effort, but academia's cosmopolitan responsibility.

6. A comparative media literacy research in the age of digitalization on Indonesia and Germany

Danny Schmidt, Subekti Priyadharma
University of Erfurt / UNPAD Bandung Padjadjaran Indonesia

How do we describemedia literacy, what do we understand under term media literacy, and how media literacy is practiced across national boundaries? Do theories and the perception about media literacy universally applicable or do differences in media habitand media or communication culturesinfluence how media literacy perceived, theorized, and eventually practiced in and by different societies. To answer that questions the study will focus on media-systems and their interrelations to the depending political systemon a global scale. Thus, the study is elaborating special contexts like the so-calledglobal north and south are reproducing aspects of colonization or decolonization in the context of media literacy. Is media literacy a term that is defined by the global north or is the global south define that term as well. Is there a dominant flow of information regarding any direction? Has the global south an own discourse about media literacy?

Beside the globalization perspective the study also focuses the context of media literacy in field of digitalization. The study tries to answer the question to what aspects the process of digitalization shapes and influence the perception of media literacy? That also leads to the questions if there are differences of the perception relating to the media system or the political system. Is the term digital literacy a new discourse that interrelate with the term media literacyor communication development?

Those are the questions that underlie this study and lead us to the idea of a comparative media literacy study in two different regions from a global aspect. The media and the political systems in Germany differ from the media systemin Indonesia. Germany ́smedia system reliesto a great degree on public broadcasting system and also to a private media system (dual media system). Like Germany, Indonesian also adopts dual media system. However, the media market is hegemonically dominated by private media companies owned by politicians or businessmen closelyrelated to the ruling regime. Additionally, the media sector is concentrated in the capital Jakarta, which speaks volume for an unbalanced public sphere. Hence, there is criticism in terms of the independence of the press and journalistic professionalism when the media system "colonialized" by the political system. This condition enhances the importance to study media literacy that is critical to evaluate both media content and media landscape.

First, this study will compare and contrast the definitions, understandings, and practices of media literacy in the two countries, using case studies approach and (qualitative) descriptive analysis to illustrate different models of media literacyconceptualizations. That step is importantto define terms and meanings about the context of media literacy and digital literacy and the differences in the two regions. It will also identify the main stakeholders involved in media literacy initiatives, such as the state, the private sector, civil society, and international organizations.

Depending on the findings in case study research above, second, this study seeks to reformulate and propose a new definition of media literacy that can encompass the diversity and complexity of media literacy experiences in both countries. An inductive approach will be employed in a series of field researches in Germany and Indonesia. Grounded theory methods will be utilized as data analysis method to generate new insights and perspectives on media

literacy and, if it deemed necessary, a new theory about media literacy. This part of the research will aim to be inclusive and respectful of different cultural, political, and social contexts of the two countries, and to explore the possibility of scaling up the theory in order to enhance its applicability and universality to other contexts.

Third, a discourse analysis will examine how media literacy is defined and conceptualized in different media sources and so representthe special discourse (research, political papers,education guidelines) and the inter discourse(public media outlets,private media outlets,lead media) of the German and the Indonesian public sphere. The finding of dominant discourse strength like the discourse of (de)Westernization or new/post/decolonization will be the main focus at that stage of the research project. The discourseanalysis will also analyze the pluralism and diversity of media literacydefinitions, as well as the similarities and differences among them. Moreover, it will address the issues of center and periphery, and periphery research, in media literacy scholarship. The results will also show, how the discourse of media literacy is covered by the media system and what actors (political actors or actors from the civil society) are forming the discourse (top-down or bottom-up).

Media literacy is also seen as part of communication development. This section will explore how media literacy contribute to communication development in both countries. It will consider how communication skills can be a support factor for communication development, as well as how communication development can improve communication processes between stakeholders. It will also examine the role of technical support (infrastructure) and individual communication skills (especially in relation to media use) in facilitating both media literacy and communication development. We will also focus on the aspect of digitalization in the context of communication development and media literacy. Here it is also important to mark the differences between the two terms and show the aspects of meaning in the public discourse in both countries.

The research findings will offer a substantial theoretical and conceptual contribution to the field of media and communication science. By conducting an analysis of the data collected, the study will identify and explore key trends within the context of media literacy. It will shed light on the evolving landscape of media consumption, the impact of digital technologies, and the changing dynamics of communication in contemporary society. Through its theoretical underpinnings, the research will contribute to the development of new theories that deepen our understanding of media literacy and its significance for digitalization. 2. Practical Recommendations: In addition to its theoretical contributions, the research will yield valuable practical recommendations for communication development and media literacy programs. These recommendations will cater to both government- run initiatives (top-down) and citizen-led endeavors (bottom-up), recognizing the importance of collaborative efforts in fostering media literacy. By identifying effective strategies and tools the study will empower policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to design and implement impactful interventions.

7. Deconstructing intercultural communication competence: A preliminary research on Indonesian (Elite) migrant workers in Germany

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Intercultural communication is becoming increasingly important in the globalized world. It is critical to promote constructive dialogue between the countries of the Global North and the Global South. Unfortunately, most studies on intercultural communication are based on Western perspectives and approaches, as well as on potentially persisting forms of hegemonic domination in the field. The purpose of this preliminary study is to examine the intercultural communication competence of highly skilled Indonesian workers in Germany. According to the 2013 UN report, Germany is the fourth most important country for Indonesian students to complete their studies after Australia (9,702), the United States of America (6,809), and Japan (2,176), and some of them choose to pursue careers in Germany. Many previous studies of Indonesian workers focus on countries that are culturally close (Malaysia and Singapore), with which there are special historical ties (Netherlands and Japan) (Fai, Yu, & Piew, 2018), or with which there is religious proximity (Middle Eastern countries).

Using Bennett's (2020) constructivist paradigm, this study highlights that intercultural communication focuses on at least three dimensions. First, on cultural identity. Bennett argues that identity is not just a thing, but a process of identification, as people do not have a culture, but create a culture through the process of socialization. Second, interactional analysis. It is not about culture per se, but about the perception and construction of cultural differences. And finally, third, intercultural adaptation to the majority culture. Bennett explains that the deeper purpose of observing cultural differences is to engage in the experience and develop cross-cultural empathy.

This preliminary research is based on ethnographic fieldwork (2020 - 2022). To date, semi-structured interviews have been conducted with Indonesian workers in Munich, focusing on engineers (three interviews) and medical staff (two interviews). Furthermore, various activities of the Indonesian diaspora community in Munich were observed in a participatory manner, such as religious and cultural gatherings, sports activities, social media networking, and other informal meetings. In addition, several informal conversations were held with Indonesian labor or elite migrants in Berlin and Essen.

Initial analysis revealed two key challenges in adapting to the German work environment: intercultural awareness and sensitivity, and language barriers. First, intercultural awareness and sensitivity help Indonesian workers adapt to the German work environment and community life. Research shows that for Indonesian workers sent as expatriates to non-German companies, cultural awareness and sensitivity are key prerequisites for building social relationships with locals. This is equally true for accompanying partners or family members. Second, the extent of the language barrier depends on the specific professional situation and the particular intercultural experiences. Engineers work mainly at computers, they rarely speak to their superiors and colleagues, and when they do, it is usually in English, especially in non-German companies. When making small talk, for example during the lunch break, on the other hand, they usually communicate in German, which is not a problem for many who have studied in Germany. In other professions, however, such as for medical staff, speaking German is obligatory in all situations.

8. Diversity vs. universalism – The methodological recognition of differences
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This proposal contributes to the key topic "New spaces, old methods? Methodological challenges of global communication research". It stems from the authors research in journalism & communication studies, and media development research. It is furthermore based on ethnographic and qualitative research methods and their specific understandings.

One of the biggest challenges of academic thinking in the German context – a context in which the author studied and does research – is the idea of "universalism" of theories and methods. It also applies to the European and American contexts from which German research often draws its scientific understandings. A big step out of the comfort zone here is to forget about the claim of universalism and to acknowledge the diversity of different perspectives and understandings from other contexts. This acknowledgement can inform methods and methodologies as presented in the following.

The diversity of research understandings become apparent in the growing discussions and voices in media and communication research, especially from researchers with e.g. Indian or different African backgrounds, as heard at an online plenary session of the IAMCR in July 2021 on "Decolonizing Communication Studies". Speakers like Radhika Parameswaran (Indiana University, USA) or Kehbuma Langmia (Howard University, USA) problematized colonial (and thus European and American) knowledge in research or the planting of American theories on African soil.

Linked to these discussions is the designation of contexts like India or countries from the African continent as "global South". The usage of this term – as opposed to the "global North" – is already problematic. The differentiation links to a ranking of countries primarily "according to their wealth and level of development" (Keßler, 2022, S. 3). Nevertheless, it is also used by researchers to emphasize power inequalities and the dominance of liberal democracies which "share a past that is intertwined with the colonial and neocolonial enterprises" (Lugo-Ocando, 2020, 2f.). Here, it is essential to reflect on the heritage of this past in the field of knowledge production and, thus, one's own terminologies. It can be done by using differentiating terms in quotation marks and clarifying if they refer to the usage in the literature or data or socio-political constructions (Keßler, 2022, 3 f.). Either way, it needs to be kept in mind that their use also further sustains their underlying hegemonic discourses.

In addition, we can also learn from the ideas of Symbolic Interactionism and ethnography. With their methodological understandings, we have tools to encounter the bias of universalism and address diversity. The author is aware, that these ideas are developed in a specific context, but she can only write about things she knows. Here, transparency and modesty of one´s own knowledge is already a methodological starting point.

According to Herbert Blumer's understanding of human actions and meanings – and thus also the actions and meanings of scientists – it is crucial to understand that humans shape them in a context-specific way (Blumer, 1981, S. 90). Furthermore, that they have references to historical entanglements (Blumer, 1981, S. 100), like hegemonies in knowledge production. To address context-specific differences in research, the methodological principles Blumer presents can be of guidance here: research is oriented towards everyday actions, it is empirical, and it is unbiased (Blumer, 1981, S. 101–130). Accordingly, theoretical concepts and terms cannot be

operationalized or tested in advance (Blumer, 1931). Thus, it help us to avoid imposing so-called universal theories. This understanding argues for a qualitative and inductive approach to data collection and analysis, reflected in Grounded Theory Methodology (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Instead of testing theories – which come from specific contexts – theoretical knowledge can only be used as a "sensitizing concept" (Kelle, 2005, § 33; Strauss & Corbin, 1990/1996, S. 25-30). Furthermore, analysis results are considered preliminary. They must be reviewed, played off against actual data, and never accepted as fact (Strauss & Corbin, 1990/1996, S. 29). Memo writing that accompanies research can make researchers and readers aware of presuppositions and make them transparent "to account for the influence these biases may have on the research." (FitzGerald & Mills, 2022, S. 32) Researchers need to lose the fear of being (that) transparent or of not being (universally) valid. They can refer to the quality criterion of "credibility" of qualitative research (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, S. 346). To fulfill this criterion, sufficient details and descriptions of the analyses and results are necessary – like the exemplary presentation of interpretations – as well as proof of data collection and evaluation for the comprehensibility of the results. Thus, more detailed method chapters are needed in research publications.

In addition ethnographic approaches offer a process of understanding that starts from the contextually different everyday and lived realities (Breidenstein et al., 2015, S. 37). An insightful example of differences and the problems caused by outsider's research perspective here is the Nepali anthropologist Dor Bahadur Bista. In his work for the Austrian ethnologist Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf in the 1960s, who was the first who got access to Nepal for research, he had to fight for the acknowledgement of his local expertise and education. He was treated as being inferior in front of the European researcher. Bista parted from Furer-Haimendorf and moved from being his field assistant to being an anthropologist on his own. He argued for the necessity of a "Nepalese anthropology" that is developed from an insider´ perspective with Nepal specific theories and methods (Fisher, 1997, 26 ff.). This is just one example of hegemonies in knowledge production, different research understandings and the awareness of diversity in contrast to "universal" research approaches.

Ethnography as a research approach is not understood here as a method, but rather as openended and opportunity-driven data collection (Breidenstein et al., 2015, S. 34; Hirschauer, 2001, 448). When researchers do research in different life and work contexts, which could already be different within their own national boarders (so called "intracultural" differences, Straub, 2007), they need to reflect this in their methodology and methods. One way is "working with bilingual data, considering non-Western cultural traditions, multiple perspectives, multi-vocal & multi-lingual texts, and technical issues to insure accessibility." (González y González, Elsa M. & Lincoln, 2006, S. 1)

9. How the study of contemporary racism can contribute to a transnationalization of communication studies

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In contemporary societies that are shaken by the rise of nationalist and populist discourse, cosmopolitism as a human principle is increasingly at stake. Being associated either with an elitist lifestyle, a neoliberal stance towards globalization or a too-lenient policy on migration and asylum, cosmopolitism has a hard time becoming an orientation factor in people's everyday life. In the academic field of communication studies, this popular reservation is (involuntarily) mirrored by a restraint to transnationalize academic practice, develop valid methods to analyze communicative forms of anti-cosmopolitism and get past a "methodological eurocentrism" (Siouti et al. 2022: 7) that tends to reproduce existing power relations between "the West" and "the rest". Thus, especially in societies that struggle with challenges of postmigrant transformations (Foroutan 2015), an academic knowledge production is needed that brings cosmopolitan perspectives to the forefront.

One research area that is particularly appropriate for the application of cosmopolitan perspectives is the analysis of contemporary forms of racism. If racism is to be understood as a multidimensional "apparatus" comprising various manifestations from subjective attitudes (individual level) to organizational/collective practices (institutional level), systemic circumstances (structural level) and public discourses (representational level) (Attia 2013), there are also various intersections with communicative phenomena that can be identified and analyzed. They range from racist ideologies in people's everyday talk, to discriminatory practices in the realm of organizational communication, to the underrepresentation of people of color as journalists in editorial offices, to racist narratives about "the other" in media discourses. If we see racism as an over arching concept of which anti-cosmopolitism builds one discursive strand – in that it stabilizes ideas of cultural and/or physical borders – the epistemological potential of racism research as part of a "deep internationalization" (Badr et al. 2020) of communication studies becomes clear.

But what, in fact, is the status quo of racism research in the field of communication studies in Germany? While there is a great deal of research on the representation of people of color in media discourses (however, less so with an international comparative perspective), rather little attention has been given to racist ideologies on the level of interpersonal communication – be it in the form of people's everyday talk or as a context factor in processes of individual and collective media appropriation (i.e., Lünenborg, Fritsche & Bach 2004). Research on contemporary forms of racism in private talk has long been a niche subject in German communication studies. This is not only due to a lack of theoretical integration of racism theories with concepts of communication (Biskamp 2016), but also results from an underdeveloped methodological expertise in the field regarding this subject-matter. Existing studies on racist perceptions and talk are either produced in the anglophone research community (i.e., Wheterell & Potter 1992), originate from other disciplines – linguistics (i.e., Jäger 1996), education studies (i.e., Leiprecht 2001), sociology (i.e., Scherschel 2006) or racism studies (i.e., Attia 2009) – or focus on individual attitudes and beliefs rather than trying to reconstruct the communicative manufacturing of "the other".

Now, in what concrete way can an expansion of racism research (with a special focus on people's everyday talk) contribute to an opening of the academic field for cosmopolitan perspectives? There are two main answers to this – one refers to the epistemological understanding of media discourses that the author of this paper holds. The other refers to methodological developments that are needed to keep track of contemporary forms of racism. Looking at the first, all media discourses must be understood as being symbolically constructed in the interrelationship between media production, media texts and audience reception (Hall 2001). Thus, from a constructivist point of view, media discourses do not only fundamentally contribute to a collective understanding of reality, identity, and current challenges/developments. They can also not be fully grasped without considering the "readings" of those who are sitting on the reception end of the media circle. These readings of media discourses are, then again, very likely to be influenced by the recipient's positioning towards certain principles and ideologies – racism and cosmopolitism being two of them. If the field of communication studies would develop a more comprehensive understanding of how racist ideologies are being appropriated by people into their everyday life-worlds, it would also be able to draw a clearer picture of the social effects of media discourses as one of the main knowledge sources in contemporary societies. This can shed new light on the following questions: To what extent does an unfavorable media framing of migrants and refugees contribute to a public perception that meets cosmopolitan ideas with distrust? What are the potentials and limitations of cosmopolitan narratives in popular media to counter anti-migrant sentiments within societies?

Regarding the second answer, methodological developments are necessary to keep track of new forms of racism. Recent studies have shown that racist discourses that circulate at the "centers of societies" tend to materialize in subtle, dynamic, and contradictory ways (Schmidt 2022). Often, they form ideological alliances with liberal, feminist and even humanitarian discourses which makes racism in everyday talk very hard to track. Here, methodological approaches that go beyond the explicit level of texts/statements and investigate the symbolical manufacturing of "otherness" on the implicit level can capture the volatile character of racism as a banal – that is: normalized – element of everyday life. These premises can be met by methods like critical discourse analysis or rhetorical analysis which both have been much applied in the fields of linguistics and cultural studies. Another premise is the inclusion of a methodological self-reflexion by the researcher as central part of a study. From point of view of Critical Whiteness Studies, contemporary racism can only be identified, if one recognizes the normality of whiteness on all layers of society as well as one's (privileged) position in it (Feagin 2013). Lastly, the application of an inter- and transnational comparative perspective can help to carve out particularities and similarities in the communicative manufacturing of racism in everyday talk.

All in all, a more consequent focus in the reception site of media discourses and a more elaborate methodological expertise for the fluidity of racism can highly contribute to the transnationalization of communication studies. By proposing this, this abstract is not so much pushing for research projects that look beyond national contexts. Rather, it makes an argument for looking into communicative processes within already transnationalized realities. Analyzing new forms of racism within postmigrant societies is one way of doing that.