

CFP Special Issue of Studies in Communication | Media 2018: Hate and Counter-voices in the Internet: Perspectives from communication science on hate speech, radicalization and prevention in online-media.

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The Internet creates a space in which hate, negativity and the derogation of certain individuals or social groups (e.g., homosexuals, migrants, or women) can be found in various facets – be it hateful comments of single users in participatory journalist offers or below YouTube videos, disinformation in forms of fake news, propagandistic messages of extremist actors, or populist speech of public parties.

There exists an apprehension that negativity, hate, trust in disinformation and propaganda in the Internet can contribute to radicalization patterns within individuals, to a polarization of society or even to a radicalization of the societal discourse. It is therefore not surprising that many – mainly civil – actors and groups are dedicated to counter hate speech in the Internet.

So far, research has addressed the question about an effect of negative online-messages and their potential for online-radicalization mostly in a scattered fashion. Moreover, prevention actions and their evaluation mostly exist in the educational literature. To date, no systematic overview of the potentials of counter-voices exist.

Thus, this special issue encourages communication scholars to provide theoretical and empirical evidence on two interwoven aspects:

1) Which specific characteristics of online communication can contribute to radicalization in individuals, groups or society?

2) Which medial or communicative prevention measures are suitable to prevent potentially harmful effects of negativity, hate speech, disinformation and propagandistic messages found online?

Submissions can tackle the effects of hate speech and online propaganda as well as prevention approaches on various levels. Individual submissions can address but are not limited to the following aspects:

- The role of individual dispositions or interpersonal communication (e.g. via Instant Messenger) for the reception and distribution of hate speech, disinformation and propagandistic online content,
- The role of algorithmic selection and individualized recommendations for the development of individual filter bubbles in the context of hate speech,
- The role of distinct forms in intergroup communication for virtual public spheres, e.g. the development of populist or hostile echo chambers,
- The effect of hateful online communication for the polarization or radicalization of subgroups,
- The effects of hate speech, disinformation and/or online-propaganda as extreme communication form for biased perceptions of online discourses,
- The role of mass media for the societal effects of hate speech on public opinion,
- The role of preventive approaches for fostering media literacy and related competencies, e.g.

- o in individuals (individual-centered approaches),
- o in potentially vulnerable groups (e.g., children),
- o in political programs or education concepts.

The special issue aims at providing an overview of evidence from communication science how to build successful prevention against effects of negative online-communication, disinformation, hate speech or propagandistic messages.

Range of papers to be considered

The CfP welcomes papers focusing on one or more of the outlined ideas.

Although the topic of negativity, disinformation, populism, extremism and hate speech has received more attention throughout the last years, the opposing side, namely the potential of counter-voices on the part of individual actors, civil groups or state organizations have not been in the focus of attention.

This Special Issue therefore provides room for research on prevention issues, such as countering hate speech, debunking disinformation, countering propagandistic messages and preventing radicalization processes in the Internet. The outlined questions can be addressed both from a theoretical as well as from an empirical point of view and via multiple methods. The Journal welcomes submissions in English or German.

Timeline

The submission process will be split up into two phases: First, we invite authors to submit extended abstracts (1.500 words, excluding abstract (150 words), figures, tables, and references). Eligible abstracts for the special issue will then be invited to write full papers. Full papers will undergo a double-blind peer-review process.

Extended abstracts due (max 1.500 words, excluding references, tables, figures): 14th of January, 2018.

The decision for an invitation to make a full paper submission will be given by 4th of February.

Deadline for full submissions will be: 1st of April, 2018.

Accepted manuscripts will go into production process at the end of October 2018 and will be published in SCM issue 4/2018.

Manuscripts should be submitted to: si.scm2018@gmail.com.

Final acceptance depends on peer-review process. A total of 4 articles will be published in the special issue. Successful contributions that are not accepted for the special issue will be published in later issues of the journal.