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Institut für Kommunikations-
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Call for Participation

Conference

From Fragmentation to Participation: Diaspora Communication in Germany

October 4th-5th, 2024

Nikolaistraße 27-29
04109 Leipzig
Room 1.01



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This conference will focus on communication from, within and between diaspora in Germany. The term "diaspora" refers to a group of people living away from their original homeland and scattered in different parts of the world. Today, the term "diaspora" is used in both public debate and academic discourse as a synonym for national, religious, or ethnic minorities, encompassing a wide variety of groups under this label (Volkert 2021). Diaspora communication refers to the interaction between members of a diaspora and their countries of origin and the countries in which they now live. It encompasses various forms of media and digital platforms that these communities use to share and support each other (Guerrero 2021).

In Germany, there are a large number of different groups that bear the label "diaspora", whether ascribed by others or by themselves (Volkert 2021, Popp 2021). Especially since 2015, Germany has seen a significant increase in the diaspora, including many members from countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq, to name but a few (Popp 2021). Among them, many of the newcomers are educational and media elites who have worked in their home countries. Over the past two decades, these countries have produced media systems that have developed rapidly and are in many ways unprecedentedly pluralistic, but also fragmented, as in Afghanistan. The people who have worked in these systems bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to Germany. They have now begun to engage in the field of communication and media, whether by studying, creating their own media programmes or actively participating as content creators (Feda 2023).



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But there are also other reasons for this engagement: their stereotypical media portrayal. The conference will focus on the fact that people with a migration background are often marginalized in the German media (Mediendienst Integration 2021, Fengler et al. 2020, Horz 2018, Treppe et al. 2016, Irrgang 2011, Röser 2010). Reporting tends to show migrants primarily in negative contexts and thus reinforces prejudices and stereotypes (Mediendienst Integration 2021, Fengler u.a. 2020, Horz 2018, Treppe u.a. 2016). It also shows that these groups are often underrepresented in the media and rarely found in key positions in newsrooms, resulting in a limited perspective on people with a migration background and refugee issues (NDM 2020, NDM 2021).

People with a migration background and refugee who are marginalised in the media rely on various strategies for self-representation and interaction. They set up their own media platforms and use social networks to present their perspectives (Jhoti 2021, Chemmencheri 2015). This enables them to act independently of traditional media channels and control their own narratives (Chemmencheri 2015). It is also emphasised that marginalisation in the media does not eliminate the “subaltern identity” of those affected, but can potentially be reinforced by media presence, creating new alliances and opportunities for support (Chemmencheri 2015). People with a migration background and refugee use social media strategically to influence their representation in public perception. These platforms allow them to shape their own narratives and actively participate in social discourse.



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In addition, social media allow for more direct and interactive communication, which encourages the dissemination of more diverse and authentic perspectives. Such activities can help to overcome stereotypical representations and promote a more nuanced view of people with a migration background and refugee in society (Jhoti 2021, Chemmencheri 2015).

The conference is deliberately interdisciplinary in order to provide a holistic view of the topic and to integrate different perspectives. We encourage submissions from a wide range of disciplines, including but not limited to sociology, anthropology, political science, cultural studies, and information technology. This conference seeks to highlight interdisciplinary approaches to understanding diaspora communication. We are particularly interested in research that goes beyond traditional communication or media studies perspectives. Our goal is to foster a comprehensive dialogue that incorporates diverse academic and practical insights into the dynamics of diaspora communication.

The conference provides a platform to discuss and analyse current developments in the field of diaspora communication in Germany. The increasing representation of BiPoC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and immigration from diverse nations, each with unique cultural and ethnical backgrounds, brings both challenges and opportunities. Understanding and promoting the dynamics, structures, and potential of diaspora communication is therefore crucial. We invite researchers and practitioners from different disciplines to address these issues. The conference aims to create a dialogue between research and practice and to provide a space for the discussion of research projects and practical initiatives in the field of diaspora communication.



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Key questions are:

1. What innovative formats, media or platform offerings are being developed by various diaspora communities in Germany, and how do these initiatives reflect interdisciplinary influences?
2. Who are the key actors, including non-media professionals, involved in the creation and dissemination of these offerings, and what motivates their participation?
3. How do these diverse media offerings enhance the participation and representation of migrants and refugees in German society, beyond traditional media narratives?
4. Can diaspora media be a means of overcoming the marginalisation of people with a migration background and refugees within established media structures?
5. How do self-images, identity constructions, and cultural contexts shape the media practices of diaspora communities, and how do these practices influence their societal integration and public representation in Germany?
6. What role do diaspora communities play in advocacy efforts both within Germany and in their countries of origin, and how are these efforts communicated through various media channels?
7. How do economic incentives influence the creation and dissemination of user generated content (UGC) related to diaspora communities, and what impact does this have on the nature and quality of the content produced?



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Here are streamlined themes for abstract submissions for the conference:

- 1. Interdisciplinary Media Initiatives by Diaspora Communities:** Explore innovative communication offerings and media created by diaspora communities through interdisciplinary approaches, including social sciences, cultural studies, and technology.
- 2. Communication Channels and Diverse Actors:** Analyze the channels used and identify the actors behind these initiatives, highlighting contributions from various disciplines such as political science, sociology, and information technology.
- 3. Identity, Advocacy, and Content Development:** Investigate how diaspora communities use media for identity construction and advocacy, particularly focusing on issues like women's rights and social justice through interdisciplinary lenses.
- 4. Target Audiences and Societal Impact:** Examine the target audiences for these media offerings and the opportunities and challenges that arise from these dynamics, emphasizing interdisciplinary strategies for broader societal impact.
- 5. Advocacy Efforts and Media:** Assess the role of diaspora communities in advocacy efforts within Germany and their countries of origin, and how these efforts are communicated and amplified through media channels.
- 6. Economic Incentives and Media Production:** Explore how economic incentives drive the creation and dissemination of user-generated content related to diaspora communities, and the effects this has on content quality and representation.



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Call for abstracts:

We invite the submission of abstracts for oral and poster presentations and workshops. Abstracts shall be between 400-500 words and should be submitted no later than **15 July 2024**. Authors of accepted abstracts are going to be notified in the last week of **July 2024**. We plan to publish the best papers from the conference. These will be published either in collaboration with a prestigious science journal or as a stand-alone publication.

Formalities:

The conference is free of charge. Registration details are available on our website:

<https://transfertage-ec4sc.de/registration/>

We look forward to your participation and an inspiring exchange at the conference!



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