

PSA MEDIA AND POLITICS GROUP ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

****20th Year Anniversary****

‘Politics and Performance’

School of Media and Communication
University of Leeds, 16-17 December

Book of Abstracts



Political Studies
Association



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Book of Abstracts

Presented in order of panels

Parallel session 1A: Performing power

Julia Peetz (University of Warwick): 'What does that sound like, me being President?' – On the theatricality of political performance

When Bill Clinton gave his first inaugural address in 1993, the speech was conventional, unremarkable, and certainly devoid of Donald Trump's rhetorical bluster. The address lacked the empathic, improvisatory persona Clinton had so successfully performed throughout his campaign and reached for John F. Kennedy as a presidential model to emulate. Clinton thus did not sound quite like himself in his inauguration speech.

This paper will take this curious circumstance – a president-elect, who, upon being conferred the presidential title, no longer manages to resemble himself – to open up a discussion about how the concept of performance is theorized in politics and performance research. If a politician can fail to resemble himself in public performance, the paper asks, then to what extent should his performed persona be regarded as a fictional character? And how can the degree to which this persona is abstracted from Bill Clinton, the person, be adequately accounted for in theories of performative representation?

Drawing on both social science scholarship (Moffitt 2016; Saward 2014, 2010) and theatre and performance research (Nield 2014; Davis 2003; Feral 2002), I will show that current research exploring the representative function of politicians' public performances underestimates the complexity of the concept of 'performance'. I will argue specifically that politics and performance research must account for how politicians' performances, in addition to being performative, are also *theatrical* in a broad, conceptual sense that not only captures the split between person and persona, but also illuminates issues of distance and distrust in representative politics.

Penny Andrews (University of Sheffield): Performing the performances and dragging politics

This paper combines live drag performance and analysis, as a kind of meta-paper, as the performances themselves are based on analysing the mediated performances of politicians and the actors involved in this. Due to time constraints, half the paper time will be given over to performing Blair to a custom backing track, and the rest to analysis and discussion. The paper uses the work of Derrida, Butler and Goffman on identity and performance as well as the author's own framing of political fandom in order to understand how the process of performance, analysis of performance, performing past politicians and being received by a contemporary audience inform our understanding of current politics.

Camp, flamboyance, misogyny, transphobia and homophobia all come into play in this space, along with nostalgia and humour. The character of Tony Bel Air enables audiences to consider their complex feelings about "sensible" and polarising politics and the way it is portrayed in the media and in Parliament.

Peter Lunt (University of Leicester): The performance of power and citizenship: David Cameron meets the people

How do citizens respond to and engage the performance of political power in the context of mainstream media? Through an analysis of two television programmes aired during the UK Brexit referendum campaign of 2016 a picture emerges of citizenship as the performative disruption of the performance of power. In the programmes the then UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, met members of the public for a mediated discussion of key issues in the Brexit referendum. Their interactions are analysed here as a confrontation between the performance of citizenship and power reflecting activist modalities of disruptive citizenship played out in the television studio. The article ends with reflections on questions about political agency as individualistic forms of disruptive political autonomy.

Parallel session 1B: Protest, street politics and social justice

Jeremy Collins (London Metropolitan University): Milkshakes and snowflakes: affective performance in news coverage of political insults and protests in 'late-brexite'

The proposed paper will analyse the mediated reception and debate around the use of insults and protests around 'Brexit' in the context of the 'emotional public sphere' and the notion of political 'guerrilla theatre' (Bogard, 2005).

Scholars have noted the growing attention being paid in studies of political participation and media and communications more broadly to the concept of affect (Dahlgren, 2018); (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2014). Participation in the 'emotional public sphere' has been seen to conflict with traditional liberal democratic theory which places a strong emphasis on rationality as a means of participating in political discourse within the/a public sphere.

Liberal commentators have characterised recent political developments as the rise of an irrational and intolerant politics of populism, in some cases of the left or, more commonly, of the right. This has been linked to the recently emergent concept of post truth politics, in which Frankfurt's model of bullshit (Frankfurt, 2005) suggests that political discourse is not so much riven with intentional deceit as with a lack of interest in truth as a tool of persuasion (Ball, 2017); (d'Ancona, 2017). It is in this context that my paper will analyse the performance of discourses surrounding particular 'Brexit' related political protests and insults (e.g. 'gammon', 'snowflake', 'centrist dad', and 'milkshaking'). These can be understood as performative aspects of political theatre in the context of the ongoing Brexit crisis.

Stephanie Diepeveen (University of Cambridge): Performing politics in the Kenyan public sphere: A normative dilemma

To what extent can publics be the basis for realising a more engaged and inclusive democratic citizenship? In Kenya, such a concern is at the fore of political and scholarly debate, driven by the persistence of personalised, identity-driven politics amidst an active media sector and varied public sphere, which manifests in ubiquitous informal political discussions both in the streets and online. Drawing on qualitative fieldwork in the city of Mombasa between 2013-2017, this paper explores the relationship between the performance of publics and the potential for new political repertoires in Kenya through the case of Mombasa's "street parliaments", everyday informal spaces for political public debate located throughout the city.

This paper reveals and interrogates a catch-22 in the nature of performance that sustains and animates public political discussion in everyday life in Kenya. The way in which politics is performed in the street parliaments contravenes normative views of an inclusive civic public

– they are often male, personalised and partisan. Equally, it is these very characteristics that sustain the street parliaments as spontaneous and somewhat unpredictable gatherings in everyday life. The paper argues that realising changed terms of political debate in Kenya requires releasing publics from normative expectations about what the terms of debate should be. Attempts to direct the sort of discussion that takes place ends up foreclosing their animation and even their possibility.

Aylwyn Walsh (University of Leeds): Performance resists: Tshisimani’s tactical vision of alternative futures

Global social justice movements, including those focused on land rights, people organising against systemic racism and in decolonisation movements, and those working on labour rights draw on long histories and trans-cultural protest movements. Activism’s geographic grammars have included mapping alliances across contexts and organising skills sharing beyond local conditions (Bogad, 2016). Performance, on the other hand, enables crucial use of aesthetics, play and innovation in the field and in scholarly dissemination. Scholarly work about activism is often predicated on historicising European practices, despite many significant movements emerging from the Global South, as explored in Paul Routledge’s latest work *Space Invaders: Radical Geographies of Protest* (2017). Thus, I propose a consideration rooted in the knowledges and performances of politicised movement building in the Global South that moves beyond merely applying performance as a metaphor, but builds from the discourses at play.

Drawing on an emerging dialogue with Tshisimani Centre for Activist Education, this presentation concerns popular protest movements in South Africa and the role of performance in such protests. Grassroots activism in South Africa remains focused on conscientisation and rights education. #RhodesMustFall and other related protest movements in South Africa moved beyond student activist circles. At this historical moment, land rights and decolonisation form the optics for the issues to be explored. These movements envision an alternative future in which marginalised voices and experiences are staged as central to the concerns of popular protest movements in South Africa. Cape Town-based organisation Tshisimani highlights the value and the values of the arts that enable a particular way of learning about and through activism. In the talk, human geography and performance studies come together in dialogue. Both disciplines engage in processes of thinking through spatial, embodied practices that firstly constitute understanding of worlds, and secondly represent experiences of worlds. Together, they enable rigorous consideration of the performative tactics of activism.

Parallel session 1C: Constructing and challenging the 'other' in media

Natalie Jester (University of Bristol): Constructing the 2019 UK/Saudi Arabia relationship in the British press

Since 2015 a coalition of countries from the Middle East and Africa has been fighting in Yemen when the pro-Saudi governor Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi was removed from power. The response from the Saudi-led coalition was to deploy airstrikes over the country and many civilians were killed; more recently, the fighting between these two factions has facilitated famine in the region, killing tens of thousands more. Over the course of the last four years, the UK government has come under ever more scrutiny from the press as a result of its relationship with Saudi Arabia, especially in the context of the Yemeni conflict. For example, *The Guardian* has as one headline, ‘Selling arms to the Saudis was always immoral. Now it is unlawful, too’ (*The Guardian*, 20 June 2019). In this paper I demonstrate that the UK/Saudi

Arabia relationship is deserving of further attention, especially with regard to its discursive construction in the UK media. Focusing on arms sales, I examine representations of this relationship across a range of media outlets (left and right wing, broadsheet and tabloid) in recent times, asking what *work* is performed by these constructions. Preliminary analysis of the data shows that these news articles either construct the UK as either participating in rational economic endeavours, or portray the UK government as acting against the nation's natural sense of behaving in a "civilised" fashion in selling arms to a "barbaric", Orientalised Other. I finish by investigating the practices made im/possible by these constructions, especially within foreign policy.

Matthew Kirk (Queen's University Belfast): Visual performativity of Palestinian female Suicide bombers: Intersectional victimisations of race, gender and Islam in US broadcast news media (2002-2004)

Since Wafa Idris' bombing of a popular Jerusalem shopping district in early-2002, the Palestinian female suicide bomber has been a figure of key interest to the "West". Historically, news media has played a key role in presenting these women to the consumer public and, ultimately, formulating discourse for consumption. However, prior academic analyses of media coverage have demonstrated prominent themes in news media emphasising the gendered nature of these bombings, especially compared to these bombers' male counterparts. Besides their gendered anomalousness, the racial status of these bombers – as Arabs and Muslims – provides an opportunity to assess whether traditional Orientalist discourse is utilised in Western news media portrayals of these intersectional actors and their construction as politically-inspired actors. Notable in this case is the scarcely-examined realm of broadcast news media.

Examining the most popular U.S. non-cable broadcast news media news programmes between 2002 and 2004, this paper shall establish if the use of Palestinian female suicide bombers' visual imagery is complicit in fashioning intersectional discourses promoting Palestinian female suicide bombers' supposed victimised status. Such is important when interrogating the construction of these female actors' political agency and whether discourses exist that propagate historically Orientalist views on the women of the "Orient". Identifying 'Race', 'Gender' and 'Islam' as three key areas, focus shall be given to establishing whether the use of pre-bombing images, martyr video images and the visual prominence of the Islamic veil impact upon agential representations of Palestinian female suicide bombers.

Jenny Hayes (University of Sheffield): The use of social media for sousveillance by Palestinian activists

Sousveillance is a form of inverse surveillance, where those who are typically the subject of surveillance deploy recording tactics to monitor their watchers. The sharing of these recordings has the potential to challenge power structures and bring about change through increased accountability and transparency. Mobile phones, along with social media, have widened access to the production and distribution of such content, encouraging the public to engage in political discussions online. This can be particularly powerful in asymmetric political debates where one actor has majority control over traditional communication media, leading to an increased adoption of newer technologies by the less powerful actor.

In Palestine, arguably one of the most heavily monitored environments, the online sharing of evidence of interactions between the Israeli regime and Palestinians has the potential to disrupt the balance of power. While the use of social media for Palestinian activism has been the subject of recent research, very little is known about sousveillance in a Palestinian context and how media captured on mobile phones is distributed on social media. A content analysis

of instances of sousveillance and corresponding comments will be carried out to investigate how political activists use social media to share videos from Palestine and the response of the public to such messages.

Aliaksandr Herasimenka (University of Westminster): Shadow organising on digital media platforms: Disinformation and protest campaigns

The paper aims at contributing to the debate about the nature of political organisation in the digital age (Karpf, 2019), specifically the importance of the backstage organisational layer of digital politics (Gerbaudo, 2017; Kim et al., 2018; Treré, 2015). This debate raised the question of how we should conceptualise the groups of people behind protests and other contentious political processes that organise with the use of digital media. Can we describe some of these groups as “organising without organisations” or should we rather approach them as formal organisations? The paper analyses the backstage practices of two recent political campaigns in Russia – the Anti-corruption protest campaign of 2017 and the disinformation campaign to spread the news of the “planned” Russian annexation of Belarus in 2018.

The analysis draws on the interviews with the leaders of the Anti-corruption campaign and network analysis of channels and groups on Telegram, a messaging platform, related to both campaigns, as well as their content analysis. The paper argues that despite an initial impression of “organising without organisations”, both campaigns were formal organisations. We propose to categorise these two campaigns as the cases of shadow political organising on digital media platforms. We conclude that organising on digital media platforms increasingly becomes a substantial issue across different contexts that problematises the conceptualisation of political organising.

Parallel session 2A: Theatre and political performance

Kerstin Pfeiffer and Katerina Strani (Heriot-Watt University): Grassroots political performance: the case of *The Sideshow*

This paper focuses on grassroots performance as political statement. An increasing body of work is focused on grassroots activism and activist public spaces (e.g. Norris, 2004, 2007; Doerr and Mattoni, 2007; Jacobsson, 2015; Isin & Saward, 2015), as well as ‘emergent publics’ (Angus, 2001; Koller & Wodak, 2008; Barnett, 2014). Although it shares its concerns about communities and democratic participation with much recent work in Applied Theatre Studies (Dolan 2005; Harpin and Nicholson 2017; Neelands 2007), artistic performance by grassroots organisations as political statement is usually discussed under the ‘activism’ umbrella.

Our paper draws on both fields to look at the case of the play *The Sideshow*. Inspired by the current (June 2019) grassroots public campaign ‘Save Leith Walk’ in Edinburgh, *The Sideshow* is part of the Displaced project “exploring gentrification and regeneration in Leith and beyond” (<http://leithfestival.com/event/the-sideshow-2/>) with the ultimate aim to raise awareness and sensitise people against the demolition of buildings that would destroy the heritage of communities. Using counterpublic theory (Warner, 2002; Asen, 2000; Squires, 2002; Brouwer & Paulesc, 2017) and scholarship on politically engaged community-based theatre (Taylor 2003; Jeffers 2017; Snyder-Young 2013) against the backdrop of the carnivalization of politics (Bakhtin, 1984, 1985), our paper examines the role of performance and theatre as political communication in *The Sideshow*. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, we explore civic engagement and the political implications of *The Sideshow’s* community narrative, thus providing a case study of how the political can be redefined in and through performance.

Miranda Duffy (University of Leeds): Promoting youth political literacy through live theatre performance

My PaR (Practice as Research) PhD research enquiry interrogates the extent to which basic political concepts can be embedded in live theatre performance for 9-12 year olds. The objective of this study is to use an arts-based strategy to encourage confident questioning skills and identify age-appropriate access points to big political ideas.

The vehicle created for my pilot practice was a one-hour stage play about democracy called *Rox Paper and The Scissors* where three candidates – autocratic school bully, Rox, head girl (rule of law) Paper, and disruptive class clown, The Scissors – battle to become school president but find out the hard way that not all elections are fought fairly. At the climax of the show, the audiences were asked to vote in a process that shadows the general election, and the final vote count was declared at the end of the tour (March 2019).

The paper will outline my pedagogical approach, specifically, the use of humour and performance to enrich Curriculum teaching of three of the five PSHE British Values: democracy, the rule of law and mutual respect. I will contextualize this approach within my PaR methodology. Finally, I will use two case studies: firstly, on voting and secondly, policy analysis, to demonstrate how I embedded basic political concepts in the play, and the impact that was generated in the pilot phase. For more information on the project, please see our showreel on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwulCmE_qxM and www.GttD.co.uk

Sarah Weston (University of Bolton): Performance efficacy: Using theatrical principles to unpack what makes a successful political performance

In this presentation we will think about what makes a political performance successful. Rather than analyse through the discourse of politics, I will explore this question applying the principles of theatre. Through the theories of Schechner (1988), Kershaw (1992) and Weigler (2016) I will examine 'performance efficacy': why are some performances successful? What is it about theatrical performance that gets us? Why are certain exceptional moments on stage so exceptional? Specifically focusing on Weigler's idea of *touching the live wire*, I will examine the principle of performance conventions: the established framework through which a performance is read that both establish what aspects of reality are being conveyed, and through what kind of theatrical form they are being communicated. I will demonstrate how performance conventions are created within the performative framework, and what happens when these conventions are broken. This is the idea, following Weigler, that the performed breaking of convention creates theatrical magic. What happens if we apply this to political performances?

Beginning with this theoretical unpacking of the components of theatrical performance, with performative demonstration, I will outline a formula for analysing political performance. We will then as a group apply this framework to some examples of political performance to see if this theatrical language can help decipher whether and how they were successful performances.

Malaika Cunningham (University of Leeds): Audiences as citizens: The potential of participatory theatre as a democratic space

There is a significant gap between the ideal of democracy and the reality of our current democratic political system. The ideal being an egalitarian society governed by its citizens, who regularly debate and exchange ideas around the common good, and who ensure a diversity of perspective and an inclusive approach to decision-making. The reality being

closer to a Schumpeterian version of democracy, in which citizens are cast as consumers, using infrequent opportunities to vote as opportunities to select the candidate most likely to further their interests. A system based on the self-fulfilling prophecy of the rationality of self-interest and individualism.

Exploring potential means of narrowing the gap between these versions of democracy is the subject of this paper. This paper is based on empirical research on two participatory theatre projects, each focussing on significant political issues of the day (the housing crisis and the environmental crisis). These projects use theatre to create a kind of democratic space: asking their audiences to become citizens, and to seek alternatives to a failing political system. Overall, this paper asks: can theatre spaces like these offer a unique approach to realising a more ideal version of democracy?

Parallel session 2B: Negotiating being a woman in UK Politics

Nathalie Weidhase (Bournemouth University): Theresa May's (white) tears, or: Who belongs to the nation?

After Theresa May's tearful resignation in May 2019, a clip of journalist Owen Jones went viral in which he, when asked if he feels sympathy for May, explains he feels sympathy for the victims of her policies, namely those on Universal Credit, the Windrush victims, and the victims of Grenfell tower. Interviewer Adam Boulton responds by repeatedly asking about his sympathies for *her*, therefore shifting the focus from a critique of May's political legacy to a woman's tears. This conversation between two white men mirrors the mechanics of 'white women's tears' that are mobilised to shut down conversations of structural racism because of the white woman's supposed hurt feelings, and here shuts down conversations about deaths in part caused by May's policies.

Public silence about particular types of death dehumanises victims and makes them 'ungrievable' (Butler, 2004; 2009). This paper argues that through the mediation of her white (female) tears in the UK mainstream media landscape, particular notions of belonging to the nation are performed: we are asked to feel sympathy for a white woman (May), while working-class communities and people of colour who have been on the receiving end of her (often damaging) policies are not 'worth' crying for. Mediations of May's tears serve as a performance of social abjection (Tyler, 2013) and delineate the classed, raced, and gendered subject that are seen to belong to the nation, and those who are pushed to the margins in Brexit Britain.

Kate Gilchrist (London School of Economics): Silencing the single woman?: Narratives of lived experience and popular cultural representation of single feminine subjectivities

Images and narratives of the single woman have become hypervisible within contemporary Anglo-American popular culture (Negra, 2004, 2009; Taylor, 2012), yet it is argued that such representations continue to narrowly draw on historical and postfeminist (Gill, 2016) tropes to stigmatize single femininity and render certain, more diverse, constructions of single femininities invisible. Existing research has largely examined cultural representations and the lived experience of single woman in isolation. However this paper looks at both, to consider how representations of the single woman in popular culture may be impacting on individual women's subjectivities. This paper takes Foucault's theory of subjectivity and technologies of the self (Foucault, 1988) and Judith Butler's theory of gender as performativity (Butler, 1999) as its framing, employing the psychoanalytically-informed concept of fantasy (Fuss, 1995) to investigate how the single femininities are being performatively constructed and regulated

within single women's self-narratives of lived experience. It employs a thematic and a Foucauldian discourse analysis which incorporates an intersectional approach (Crenshaw, 1989) to explore how single women are discursively *negotiating* or *resisting* what may be stigmatising, regulatory cultural fantasies. It also pays attention to what *alternative* constructions of single femininities may emerge within the self-narratives of single women's lived experience, and asks how the silencing (Walkerdine, 1990), repudiation or obscuring of such narratives within cultural representations may be impacting single women. Semi-structured interviews with 25 single women will be the primary qualitative data drawn upon, and this will also be informed by an analysis of contemporary US-UK popular culture media texts from across multiple genres.

Emily Harmer and Rosalynd Southern (University of Liverpool): A place of their own? Assessing incivility and abuse towards women politicians on Instagram

Online political communications scholarship tends to position Twitter as the main social media platform for communicating to, and with, political audiences. This research aims to respond to calls for studies which assess other social media platforms, or incorporate cross-platform work (Vaccari, 2019). Whilst social media can facilitate alternative forms of political appeal and performance for politicians to traditional media, recent research highlighting the abuse directed at women politicians on Twitter (Stamboliva, 2017; Southern and Harmer, 2019) has shown, its use can be risky for individuals.

Since Twitter can be a hostile platform for women politicians in particular, we argue that there is an even more pressing need for research that assesses online abuse or incivility in other online spaces. Emerging scholarship has suggested that Instagram may be a more 'feminine' online space. More women than men use it (Sales, 2016) and some research has found that feminists and other women's group have successfully used it to subvert the abuse they receive on other online platforms (Vitis and Gilmore, 2016; Kim and Ringrose, 2018). With this in mind, this study aims to replicate our work on Twitter abuse of female politicians (Southern and Harmer, forthcoming) to assess whether similar patterns can be found on Instagram. It will analyse all replies to female MPs' Instagram posts for abusive and uncivil comments to determine if the same patterns of incivility are present on this more 'feminine' platform, or whether constitutes a safer space for female politicians to connect with citizens on social media.

Parallel session 2C: Brexit, lies and emotionality

Kostas Maronitis (Leeds Trinity University): Brexit and the cultural performance of victimhood

This paper examines the political campaign of the Brexit Party in the run up to the 2019 European elections via the conceptual frameworks of cultural performance and the politics of victimhood and recognition.

The Brexit Party election broadcasts focus predominantly on the post-industrial working class communities by depicting them as forgotten and betrayed and attack the Labour Party as their natural representative for its stance on Brexit. As a result the post-industrial working class becomes at once the victim of failed social and economic policies and the authentic representative of a country unable to assert its dominance in the world economy. The social actors in the Brexit Party's campaign are being motivated by and towards moral and cultural concerns the meaning of which are defined by signifiers of regional inequality and nostalgia. By deploying Alexander's (2011; 2017) conceptualisation of cultural performance as a social process by which actors display for others the meaning of their social situation, and Fraser's

(1997; 2019) theoretical formulation of social justice based on the material conditions of recognition the paper identifies the current status of victimhood and its political communication in the 2019 European elections and in the wider Brexit debate.

The paper makes two different yet interconnected arguments. First, the cultural performance of victimhood is a precondition for contemporary articulations of nationalism and belonging. Second, the cultural performance of victimhood is an indispensable component for the political communication of loss, democratic deficit and for presenting the working class as a racialized minority.

Özlem Atikcan (University of Warwick): Communicating risky choices: Brexit and high-stakes referendums

A great majority of policymakers, academics and the general public, expected the British public to vote to remain in the European Union on 23 June 2016. This perception was based on the well-established idea that voters resent change. Why did a critical group of the British public defy these apparent rules and vote to take a major economic risk? This book, based on extensive interview and survey data, and with its comparative angle and its focus on political framing, addresses this question. Politicians mobilize voters by encouraging them to think along particular lines. This is called a framing effect, and campaign framing matters. But not every argument is equally effective. Research shows that vivid, concrete, image-provoking, emotionally compelling frames with negative information are especially effective in changing people's minds.

In the Brexit case, the Leave side neutralized the economic risks of Brexit, and argued that there would be other risks relating to remaining in the EU, such as losing control of immigration policy and the NHS, urging the public to 'take back control'. These concrete and emotionally compelling arguments immediately struck a familiar chord with voters. Most intriguingly, the Remain side was silent on these issues, without an emotional case to present. This book presents a multi-method, state-of-the-art analysis of how the Brexit campaign contributed to the outcome. What is more, by showing that the strength of an argument is not about its empirical validity but about its public appeal, this research also uncovers the core mechanism behind post-truth politics.

Calvin Duggan (University of Amsterdam): Parliamentary politics and posthuman performativity: Brexit, (ir)responsible representation and the meaningful vote that wasn't

Brexit has raised manifold questions about the nature of responsible political representation in the UK. Lisa Disch (2012) traces a move from *responsiveness* to *responsibility* in Hanna Pitkin's work on the concept of political representation. At the heart of this move for Disch is the notion of *quasi-performativity*, whereby a representative claim is considered not a mere descriptive utterance, but "an action, for whose consequences the speaker is responsible" (Pitkin qtd. in Disch 608). This paper argues that attention to Karen Barad's posthuman performativity can draw out the critical promise of Pitkin's concept of responsibility and thus suggest the beginnings of a new mode of parliamentary analysis and critique.

Taking Barad's performative approach as a potential new starting place for formal political analysis—though not leaving it unquestioned—allows for a greater understanding of how different representational practices matter, whilst simultaneously promoting a radical and, so this paper argues, necessary reconfiguration of the ways in which we evaluate the responsibility of political performances. Specifically, this paper takes as a case study the deferred parliamentary "meaningful vote" on the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement that was to

have taken place in December 2018 and the debate surrounding it. Arguing that this non-vote represents a key moment through which to apprehend the contradictory, confused and often conflicting understandings and practices of responsibility and representation performed within the House of Commons, this paper aims for a sharpening of our critical tools in deciphering “what is going on” in our current political conjuncture.

Imke Henkel (University of Lincoln): The long life of lies: Discursive strategies on the way to Brexit

Lies by political actors, disinformation in news stories, as well as misleading reporting had a significant impact on the Brexit vote in the 2016 British referendum on EU membership. My paper argues that what has been described as “post-truth politics” (Higgins, 2016) – the persistence of lies despite their debunking and without condemnation – reflects the corruption of the public discourse to which the British EU coverage has contributed since decades. For this paper I investigate two text corpora: the so-called “Euromyths” and selected political speeches from the official Brexit campaign Vote Leave. Since the late 1980s, the British press has been notoriously reporting a uniquely distorted image of European affairs (see, e.g., Steele & Kettle, 2002), which have been documented and debunked as “Euromyths” by the European Commission between 1992 and 2017 (N=465).

Using Critical Discourse Analysis, I find that the “Euromyths” news stories undermine critical fact-checking because they partake in two conflicting orders of discourse (Fairclough, 1992). The journalistic discourse is counteracted by a conversational discourse that implies a communality between the (British) reporter and the (British) audience against an elitist EU, thus constructing a populist dichotomy (Mudde, 2004). In a second step I investigate how this populist myth of the plucky and witty British people standing up against an elite EU bully reappeared in “fake news” during the British EU referendum campaign. I argue that the linguistic strategies developed by the “Euromyths” were again used in Vote Leave political speeches, corrupting the democratic function of political communication.

Parallel session 3A: Politics and popular culture

John Street (University of East Anglia): ‘Democracy is ragtime on the corner’: Performing politics in song

My title comes from Gil Scott Heron’s ‘Winter in America’ (1974). The lyric reads: ‘The Constitution/A noble piece of paper/With free society/Struggled but it died in vain/And now democracy is ragtime on the corner/Hoping for some rain’. Scott Heron’s song is just one among many that use music to give voice to political views and to inspire political action. This paper is about this phenomenon: music as political communication and as the performance of politics. But in focusing on song, my intention is to ask how music performs politics, and to ask how sound communicates. This does not mean ignoring the lyrics, but rather to understand them less as political statements or poetry, and more as oratory and rhetoric. It is also to draw attention to the political role played by the voice, the melody and the rhythm, among other elements of the sound - as the musician Bunny Wailer once remarked ‘the melody has to sing the message of how you feel’. The paper makes its case by considering briefly a small number of recent songs: the grime artist Dave’s ‘Question Time’ and Childish Gambino’s ‘This is America’. My hope is to raise questions about how we (political scientists) should understand and analyse song as political performance.

Jooyeon Lee (Macau University of Science and Technology): Same or different agendas?: An analysis of the agenda between political entertainment programme and blogosphere in South Korea

Nowadays the alterations of the political environment such as the increase of political cynicism and the weakening of political identification have led to a high degree of political apathy. Naturally, these current situations have forced to create a new form of political entertainment programmes that combine political contents and entertainment elements as one of many efforts to draw citizens' political interests. In particular, the diversification of broadcasting industries and channels has expanded the opportunities for voters to acquire political information through various channels, and it is no doubt that the on-going development of mass media has enlarged the sphere of citizens' political expressions and has become active in the exchange of political opinions. Many scholars have studied whether the viewing of political entertainment programs actually affects the improvement of citizens' political interests and knowledge, however, there have been little researches on what political issues citizens actually discuss since watching such programmes.

Accordingly, the study aims to find out which agendas are largely being discussed and debated by Korean citizens on personal blogs in NEVER, the leading web search engine site in South Korea, after watching a political entertainment programme entitled 'War of Words'. In particular, the study analyse how the political agendas dealt with by 'War of Words' for two years from 2017 to 2019 has been reconstructed and discussed by citizens using quantitative content analysis.

Anastasia Denisova and Aliaksandr Herasimenka (University of Westminster): How Russian rap on YouTube advances alternative political communication: Power, gender, resistance

The late 2010s have seen the unprecedented rise of Russian rap culture on YouTube. This study delves into the unexplored area of the relationship between rap music, politics, and the internet audience in Russia. It focuses on the analysis of the production of the most popular rap videos – their narratives, power relations, and socio-political themes, as well as the prevailing patterns in the discussion on socio-political issues by the YouTube audience. The study brings three contributions that identify the power relations in the Russian society that manifest in the field of rap music. Firstly, the Russian-speaking users demonstrate a high level of criticality towards the pro-Kremlin rap music on YouTube and challenge the lies of propaganda rap. Secondly, pro-government rappers follow the Soviet authoritarian ethos and praise belonging to the collective of elites, while liberal ones adhere to the individual responsibility. Thirdly, we demonstrate the prevalence of patriarchal gender values, including macho politics and unquestioned sexism, which are representative of gender politics in the country.

This paper proves the importance of socio-political commentary on YouTube and points to the rap videos as the popular hubs for the socio-political debates. Users flow to rap videos and utilise the comment section in order to have their say on the political context and power relations rather than the music, to engage with others and contribute to the emerging collective debate. The comment sections on these rap videos have a unique value for the Russian users who exploit them as the negotiation space in the void of other platforms for social dialogue in Russia.

Ellen Watts (London School of Economics): Performing national identity? Representations of citizenship in political satire

'Who is actually German? And what is it actually: German?' Jan Böhmermann's reflections on

Facebook following a shooting in Munich by a man with dual citizenship are indicative of a broader theme in his satirical talk show. *Neo Magazine Royale* plays with stereotype and supposedly taboo history to construct modern Germans and their position in the world, in response to crises in Europe and the rise of the far right. Political satire has however been accused of failing to adapt its critical edge to populist politics. The *New York Times* recently asked whether satire is even possible under President Trump, while the panel show has been key to crafting the popular persona of Boris Johnson (Ruddock, 2006; Wood et. al., 2016).

Kilby (2018) demonstrates some American satirists are shifting their approach, attempting to mock liberal citizens into more effective resistance rather than attempt in vein to hold Trump to account. With the relationship between satirists and citizens under reconfiguration, I return to Baym's (2014) argument that such figures can represent 'politico-cultural identities'. I argue we should begin to explore how satirists make claims to represent citizens (Saward, 2010), and *who* exactly these citizens are claimed to be. I use two cases as a starting point: Böhmermann's construction of 'real Germans' in opposition to the Alternative für Deutschland, and Adam Hills' addresses to UK citizens on *The Last Leg* following terror attacks. By exploring how satirists construct citizenship, I raise further questions over how citizens could benefit from these forms of political performance in times of crisis.

Parallel session 3B: Women in international politics

Mercy Ette (University of Leeds): Negotiating access and privilege: Women and politics in Nigeria

From a normative perspective Nigeria is a consolidated democracy after two decades of uninterrupted civilian rule following many years of military dictatorship. In 2015, a successful transfer of power from a ruling to an opposition party suggested democracy was maturing. However, that transfer of power, and a subsequent relatively peaceful general election in 2019, has not resulted in the deepening of democratic values and norms. The disconnect between the ideal and reality is particularly glaring in the level of women's political participation. Although formal representation and women's political equality are enshrined in the constitution, Nigeria has not achieved significant progress in the representation of women in elected offices. This variance is accentuated by political development in other parts of Africa where many countries, such as Rwanda, have recorded significant increase in women's political representation.

This paper creates space for women to narrate their lived experiences in the Nigerian political space. The paper argues that in a country where politics is masculinised and masculinity is privileged, women face unique challenges simply because of their status as women. However, beyond gender identity, women's relative invisibility in the political and media space in Nigeria is also an outcome of the intersection of several other economic and socio-cultural factors and patriarchal nature of political parties. This paper outlines some of these factors as generated from interviews with female politicians in Nigeria. It also examines some of the mechanisms women have adopted to negotiate access to participation and relevance in Nigerian politics.

Jacki Willson (University of Leeds): Bras not bombs: Performing and politicizing the international development discourse of the reproductive body

In this paper I would like to consider the way that female-led humanitarian organizations perform the politics of women's reproductive body. By way of aid groups such as The Unmentionables, Knickers, Knickers, Knickers and Bras for Refugees and Bras not Bombs, I would like to reflect on the performative way that humanitarian organizations use pleasure

and humour to politicize humanitarian aid, specifically as it relates to women. Humour is used in a disarming manner to neutralize shame and embarrassment especially in relation to taboo items that touch the intimate sexual and reproductive body. By doing this these organizations hope to deliver essential under-represented aid which ensures dignity for vulnerable women in the aftermath of humanitarian crisis.

This critical discussion will also unpack the way that international development discourse reduces women's sexual and reproductive health to very limiting global vectors of fertility and disease. This discourse deflects from questions of pleasure and sexual agency. Blogger and activist Nana Karkoa Sekyiamah created a blog in 2009 to counter that narrative in relation to African women in Ghana. She argues that, 'Pleasure is connected to well-being' and 'If you don't have control over your body, what can you really have control over?' This discussion will add to the newly emergent reproductive turn in scholarship by drawing from recent feminist literature on the biological body (Wilson 2015; Alaimo 2017). I will argue that by being playful, women-led organizations and activists perform women's sex education in a more comprehensive way – where pleasure, dignity and agency over the body remain central.

Heather Savigny (De Montfort University): Mediated sexism: #MeToo and the politics of a f*ck you moment

#MeToo has resulted in a huge media storm and high profile naming and shaming of public figures. Individual women have used their voices to speak out against the abuse and harassment that they have been subject too. As citizens and audiences we are invited to question whether this moment where (mainly white celebrity) women said 'fuck you, we have had enough' can be a catalyst for change and difference.

The paper is based on my forthcoming book 'Why #MeToo is not enough: from f*ck you to f*ck this' and I explore the structural ways in which sexism is written in and through media structures, how this does violence to women, and argue that restoring and understanding of collective history of feminism, enables us to move from individual fuck you moments, to a fuck this of collective action.

Florencia García-Rapp (University of Sheffield): An austere politician and the fight against corruption: Facebook comments to Argentinian Governor María Eugenia Vidal

A brave woman against the ingrained machismo and structural corruption of Argentina's most populated province. A powerful female ally against inequality. Finally, someone who listens. The country's most popular politician meets the desire for change and the thirst for new ways of doing politics. Pairing an easy charm with a tireless work ethic, the 46-year old mother of three became Buenos Aires province's first female governor in 2015. This paper considers user comments to the official Facebook profile of Buenos Aires' governor María Eugenia Vidal to assess a diversity of citizenship performances from an interpretive epistemology (Charmaz, 2006; Merriam, 2009; Saldaña, 2012).

This contribution from the fields of digital and popular culture at the intersections with audience and fandom research, examines through visual and textual analysis 500 comments and an array of official posts from the governor. Commenters demonstrate not only identification, but hope and respect for the work of the politician. They demand 'changing the rules of the game' and congratulate her for having started to do so. Fans, followers, sympathizers, citizens? How is political representation and participation reflected and contested by online audiences? Between the performance of fannish affect and a certain hopeful citizenship, user comments are interpreted in light of intimacies of identification and the framework of political celebritization (Richards, 2004; Street, 2004; Driessens, 2013;

Sandvoss, 2012).

Parallel session 3C: Public information and soft power

Colin Alexander (Nottingham Trent University): Foreign aid as performance: Behavioural norms, positive image and power consolidation in North-South relations

This paper examines the relationship between a country's foreign aid programmes and its intent to communicate a positive image to both domestic and international audiences. In this paper I argue that political communications analyses can provide useful critical understanding of the aid and development industries beyond the more traditional approaches of political economy, anthropological and postcolonial studies. Far from the compassionate and selfless narrative of power and knowledge transfer, foreign aid ought to be considered a central part of the source government's soft power accumulation strategy through virtue signalling. To this end, the paper provides analysis of explicit and implicit political communications from several aid programmes and reveals the multitude of audiences that these activities are intended for beyond the direct recipients of assistance. It can therefore be argued that foreign aid has a performative function, and, indeed, is likely driven by that function rather than any wider altruistic concern for the world's poor.

Gillian Bolsover (University of Leeds) and Coraline Goron (Duke Kunshan University): Engagement or control? The Impact of the Chinese Environmental Protection Bureaus' burgeoning online presence in local environmental governance

Since 2011, Chinese environmental authorities have undertaken a project of "occupying" online spaces, with a particular focus on social media such as Weibo. These activities have been analysed alternatively as a promising attempt to improve environmental governance by increasing citizen engagement and transparency, or as a new tool of control over online environmental discourses. However, empirical research into the practices of state microblogs is rare, and the implications of their emergence for local environmental governance remain poorly understood.

Using a combination of online and offline investigation methods, this paper analyses the use of microblogs by 172 local environmental authorities in Shandong Province, whose multi-level EPB microblogging system is seen as a model for other provinces, testing whether this system improves environmental governance, and whether this objective is impeded by practices aimed at controlling online environmental discourse. We find limited evidence of improved environmental governance that would be attested by enhanced information disclosure and active citizen engagement. Instead, EPB communication appears mostly insular, and obstructed by floods of diversionary content and propaganda, aligning with broader state control goals of combatting 'rumours,' 'guiding' public opinion and "performing performance" in tackling pollution. We suggest that while these behaviours are likely driven by misaligned state incentive structures and fears of triggering social unrest, they also support the goal of discursive control by occupation.

Paul Reilly (University of Sheffield) and Faith Gordon (Monash University): Tackling the 'Societal Shrug': (Social) media activism against paramilitary-style attacks against young people in Northern Ireland

Two decades after the Belfast Agreement, paramilitary violence against children and young people remains endemic within working-class loyalist and republican communities. Paramilitary-style attacks (PSAs) leave young people with a host of life-changing physical injuries, as well as long term psychological trauma that often manifests itself in alcohol and drug misuse. This paper sets out to explore the efficacy of public awareness campaigns

designed to highlight these negative impacts upon victims and challenge the views of citizens who justify or defend these actions. It does so by first reviewing the literature on PSAs and providing an overview of the two most prominent advocacy campaigns to date, namely Stop Attacks and Ending the Harm. A particular focus of the study is the extent to which social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter raise awareness of PSAs amongst young people, who are often the victims of these attacks. These issues are explored through a thematic analysis of interviews (N=10) conducted with key stakeholders from both including as the Department of Justice (Northern Ireland), the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and restorative justice organisations such as Alternatives NI. Results indicate that there was much enthusiasm for the use of social media in raising awareness of this issue, particularly amongst those loyalist and republican communities that continue to distrust the PSNI. Snapchat in particular was considered an effective tool for digital storytelling campaigns that challenged the views of citizens who believed that the victims 'must have done something' to deserve PSAs.

Petra Desatová (University of Copenhagen): Nation branding as a strategy for political legitimisation

Nation branding is a relatively recent approach to national reputation management that has gained much popularity worldwide. Many countries have invested time, effort and financial resources into re-defining their external images and internal identities through branding. Although the concept itself has enjoyed ample academic attention, especially by scholars in the disciplines of business and urban geography studies, there are surprisingly few studies that link nation branding to the process of political legitimisation. Yet, like political legitimisation, nation branding is a primarily discursive and semiotic process that involves the production and dissemination of narratives. These narratives are the sources of norms, traditions, values and obligations on and around which state-society relations are built.

In this paper, I will examine the relationship between nation branding and political legitimisation by drawing on scholarship in the disciplines of politics and communication studies. I will argue that nation branding's legitimisation potential resides in its ability to create and disseminate specific kinds of applied national myths: strategic national myths. These myths are selective interpretations of the nation's past and its present character, and contain elements of future vision and aspirations (implicit or explicit) that seek to shape legitimisation discourses inside and outside of the nation.

Parallel session 4A: Performing authenticity

Darren Lilleker, Icaro Joathan, Simone Faustino and Amelia Turner (Bournemouth University): Manufactured authenticity? Politicians' performed roles on social media

Members of parliament seem increasingly to want to project an image of themselves as hardworking as well as in touch and authentic. With a dearth of opportunities for impression management offered by legacy media, social media has become the major forum where politicians share material about their daily lives and routines. While strategically we can suggest an MP will balance insights into their ordinary lives against their work as a representative of their community as well as being a hardworking, parliamentarian studies have shown diversity in the way MPs project themselves. Previous research (for example Jackson and Lilleker 2007) shows for some MPs their parliamentary work is prioritised, for others social media is a space for personal insights. Yet more recent work (by Svensson and others) suggests most MPs now give a rounded impression of their image as an MP.

Employing a schematic developed for the measurement of permanent campaigning we

compare the Facebook posting strategies of 20 UK and 20 Brazilian parliamentarians across marginal and safe seats using content analysis to assess the extent they engage in permanent campaigning activities using social media as well as the images they project. Our research, with coding of the 2,493 posts in our sample to be completed, will determine the frequency of posting as well as the extent of a common pattern across parliaments and explore whether MPs retain an individual approach to impression management or whether there is a more homogenised approach when considering what to post on social media.

Matthew Lovatt (University of Leeds): “I’ve always tried to be the type of politician who people can relate to”: Personalised storytelling and the performance of political representation

Contemporary politicians are confronted with an emotionally reflexive citizenry, who are increasingly likely to judge them according to how well they can demonstrate varying degrees of authenticity, empathy, and relatability in their interactions as representatives. In this paper, I explore how politicians attempt to navigate these performative and rhetorical challenges by telling personal stories and anecdotes. Personalised storytelling has become a growing feature of British political rhetoric since the 1990s, yet few attempts have been made to conceptualise precisely what political functions these stories might serve. Using examples from conference speeches and parliamentary debates, I suggest that politicians draw on stories and anecdotes to perform representation in a style of communication that is more intimate and experiential. I identify two key parts of this process: one being the way politicians tell personal stories about themselves to demonstrate that they are relatable and ordinary, and the other being the way they tell personal stories about citizens to enact a more empathetic, personal, and attentive representative relationship. I conclude by discussing the potential these stories might have to engender better connections between politicians and citizens, referring to moments where these storytelling performances have gone well, and not so well.

Chris Birchall, Todd Graham, Mollie Plummer and Stephen Coleman (University of Leeds): MPs’ use of Twitter during times of crises (Brexit negotiations) and non-election periods

The aim of this paper is to investigate how social media are impacting the relationship between politicians, journalists, and citizens. It focuses on Twitter, which has become one of the most influential social media platforms among politicians and journalists. The use of Twitter is steadily playing a more prominent role in political communication across Western democracies. In the United Kingdom, the 2017 General Election saw Twitter make its place as one of the core political communication tools. In this paper, we move beyond election campaigns by studying the way MPs do or do not engage in conversation with their constituents or the broader public through Twitter in quiet times (summer recess) and times of crisis (Brexit negotiations). The study uses digital methods to collect and map data including tweets and connections between actors but then uses quantitative content analysis to investigate tweeting behaviour (e.g. the nature of any interaction between MPs and members of the public), searching for evidence of different communicative practices, such as listening or exchange of views, which may be important in representative democracies.

Amy P. Smith (University of Sheffield): Performing beyond the podium: The role of network power and authenticity in setting the media agenda during the first 2015 UK General Election leaders’ debate

The performance of authenticity is a key strategy for politicians during election campaigns. Authentic communications increase the potential for elite actors to assert control over the media agenda. Using the first televised leaders’ debate of the 2015 UK General Election as a

case study, this paper explores how political and media elite actors performed authenticity to exert influence over the media agenda. By applying theories of hierarchical and network power and extending Enli's (2015) theory of mediated authenticity, the paper assesses challenges posed to established power structures and to the role of citizens in agenda-setting. Using an innovative qualitative methodology based on information flow analysis across online and offline media, I evaluate three stories arising from the debate. I find that effective actors use power dialectically; successful candidates and journalists work across boundaries and successfully perform authenticity in their communication acts. I further conclude that failure to successfully perform authenticity breaks down the citizen-elite relationship, weakening an elite actor's ability to set the agenda while increasing citizens' roles in subverting or challenging the agenda. These findings challenge thinking about agenda-setting as a dichotomous process, either elite-led or citizen-led, introducing nuance to our understanding of the role of citizens on social media, the crucial performance of authenticity by elite actors, and their subsequent electoral outcomes.

Parallel session 4B: Political rallies as performance

Nicole Beardsworth (University of Warwick): Persuading partisans or courting 'co-ethnics': The UPND's 2015 & 2016 campaigns in Zambia

Building on innovative new research on campaigns and rallies in Africa (Paget, 2018; Horowitz, 2016), this paper explores the campaign strategy of Zambia's largest opposition party - the United Party for National Development (UPND). Long described as an 'ethnic' party in a party system defined by high levels of co-ethnic voting, the UPND was not expected to be able to break out of its traditional vote base in the 2015 and 2016 polls. However, the party defied expectations, going on to lose the elections by the smallest of margins. Drawing on participant observation of over a dozen rallies, video and audio recordings as well as internal campaign documents and GIS mapping of electoral data, this paper will argue that the UPND's campaign strategy relied on rallies and performative politics as the sharp edge of a broader mobilisation machine. Holding 125 star rallies in 54 days in 2015, the party stamped its presence around the country.

These rallies were intended to do multiple, overlapping things. They were performances of localised knowledge and custom, appeals to local values and entreaties for votes – often amongst a relatively diverse group. But they were also intended to be demonstrations of strength and national viability – through endorsements, evocations of what had happened in other regions of the country, and via media, both electronic and in print. This paper will explore these two campaigns, highlighting the performance of 'ethnicity' at rallies - and the performance of politics at rallies more broadly - highlighting the ways in which this campaign diverged from and challenged existing academic theories of co-ethnic mobilisation.

Gabrielle Lynch (University of Warwick): Playing to which crowd? Political rallies and their audiences in contemporary Kenya

Across sub-Saharan Africa, campaigns for elective posts – from the presidency down to local councillors – are ground and rally intensive (Paget 2019). Here the audience is the assembled crowd, but also other politicians and leaders gathered on the dais (Waddilove 2019) and a broader population that hears about the rallies through TV, radio, and/or social media reports. Critical in this regard is the presence of reporters. In the case of national rallies, this often includes journalists from national news agencies, but for rallies of all sizes it will usually involve an aspirant's own communications team; most notably, photographers and "bloggers" who upload images, short videos and sound bites to social media. By taking the example of Kenya, this paper looks at how this reality of multiple audiences, and the associated

importance of traditional and social media coverage, helps to shape campaign rallies as a political performance and how this can help us to better understand how politicians actually seek to mobilise support for themselves and against their main rivals. In so doing, the paper reveals how a lens of performance can help to shift attention from a common focus on “vote buying” and “ethnic support” to a more complex politics of persuasion, and thus further nuance our understanding of contemporary politics.

Dan Paget (University College London): Campaign modernisation without mediatisation: Capitalising the performative production of rallies in Tanzania

The literature treats mediatisation as the central pillar of campaign modernisation. It is the root cause of it and part-definitive of it. In this paper, I examine performances enacted through a medium characterised as ‘traditional’ by that literature: the rally. I examine how rallies are produced. I argue that festivity, status, popularity and wealth are performed through rally production. The characterisation of rallies as ‘old-fashioned’ homogenises them. Other studies of performances at rallies do not challenge this homogeneity. I depart from those studies. I argue that rally production is heterogeneous. I exploit this heterogeneity to complicate the concept of campaign modernisation. I distinguish between labour- and capital-intensive methods of rally production. I argue that innovations in rally production initiate a competitive process of rally capitalisation which raises the cost of campaigns and draws parties closer to their financiers. This constitutes an alternative process of campaign modernisation and a variant on campaign modernity. I advance this argument through a case-study of Tanzania, which has the most rally-intensive campaigns in the world. By studying rally capitalisation in this extreme case, I identify that process in its most pronounced form. I use process tracing tests as an expositional tool to make explicit the inferences which link my theory and evidence. My evidence rests on a year of field work and latent participant observation of 42 rallies in Tanzania.

Parallel session 4C: The public sphere and political interest

Ilona Biernacka-Ligieza (Canterbury Christ Church University): Online communities – the chance to rebuild local agora?

The paper contributes to our understanding of online public spaces, culture and integration in the context of local communities, an important but under-researched subject area. It provides a comparative analysis of how online platforms and new communication technologies could and do already strengthen citizens’ trust and participation in local matters and enhance local public dialogue, integration and civic engagement. The main goal of proposed paper is to examine the ways in which digital local spaces could counteract fragmentation and division. The issue is directly linked to the concept of the public sphere. This article explores how the quality of democratic process can be augmented by digital media uses on the local level. It is discussed the contemporary structure of contemporary civil society structure in selected regions. Secondly the paper focuses on the development of local community e-participation (bottom-up process). Using both quantitative and qualitative aspects of research the author of the paper is trying to analyse how the power of digital media is used by local communities. The aim of this paper is to conduct a comparative study of digital local public spaces in different countries (Poland; USA; Italy) and explore the ways in which these public spaces could contribute to greater community and civic engagement, as well as social cohesion and integration. The paper is discussing the potentials and limitations of local public sphere digitalization process in terms of democratic participation and governance; learned about strategies (adjusted/not adjusted to community expectations) for information society creation and making local politics more intelligible for the citizen; influenced the communication policy of different regions. The paper applies a mixed method approach,

which includes content analysis, interviews and focus groups, and social media network analysis.

Antje Glück (Teesside University): The absent East. How the marginalisation of East Germany in the national German public sphere might have contributed to the rise of right-wing populism

The historically different East of Germany with its socialist past has been documented to be marginalized in national German news coverage since the reunification in 1990 (Früh et al. 1999, Abhe 2009, Ruhrmann 2016). The neglect of East Germany and East German citizens ('Ossis') together with a largely devaluing and at times misinformed representation of their different historical past showed up recently in labels such as 'colonialism' (Richter 2017) or 'German-German racism'. Media discourses remained often limited to (West German) experts struggling to explain the popularity of right-wing populist movements among East Germans, speaking ABOUT the EAST without actually speaking TO East Germans, who remained largely voiceless until very recently.

The national hegemonic German mass media outlets played an important role in this process of exclusion and – following the dominant political discourse – in shaping a rather negative image of East Germany, perpetuating Cold War ideologies in a different manner.

I argue in this paper that because of this systematic long-term exclusion from a German national public sphere, populist movements became a more successful platform to articulate particular "East German" perspectives and sentiments. This reached a peak in 2017 with the upsurge of populist right-wing movements especially in Germany's East (AfD, Pegida).

A Critical Discourse Analysis will be deployed in order to analyse around 50 news items which appeared at the time of the parliamentary elections 2017 in major news outlets, such as ARD, Spiegel Online, Zeit etc. It analyses how meaning is created through language and symbols and how this interlinks with discursive power. This study aims to deliver an important contribution to understanding the dynamics of media coverage, subjective feelings of exclusion, identity-formation and populism.

Milda Malling (Södertörn University): The invisibles: Informal and unmentioned sources in the political coverage in two countries

Elite sources are the most often quoted in the political news, but the context for this news is often set by the actors that remain invisible both for the audience and for the content researchers.

This paper aims to map, measure and compare the input by the informal sources and by the sources whose names are not mentioned in the final copy. An example of the latter can be PR-staff, whose role is strengthened due to the political source professionalization. Without the empirical data, the usage of the unmentioned and informal sources and their impact can be both overestimated and/or underestimated.

This paper is based on 40 reconstruction interviews (Reich, 2009) with political reporters in Sweden and Lithuania. It shows in detail how both formal and informal, visible and invisibles sources contribute, including initiating the contact and the stories. The interviews covered about 600 journalist-source interactions.

The preliminary results indicate that from 30 to 50 percent of all the interactions are invisible, and about 50 percent of all the interactions could be classified as non-formal (though the level of informality varied). The way informal sources were used was similar, despite the country differences. Instead, there were differences depending on at what type of media the journalists worked for and the time limitations they experienced: the less time for

the story – the more reliance on the governmental PR. The suggested analytical model should contribute to the comparative studies of the journalism culture.

**Eike Mark Rinke (University of Leeds) and Patricia Moy (University of Washington):
Need for cognitive closure, political interest, and political news consumption**

Political information is a key ingredient of healthy democratic life, and one that in recent years has increasingly been studied from a personality perspective. Most studies in this domain have examined effects of basic dispositional traits (the Big Five) on citizens' consumption of political information. In this paper, we step beyond this broad approach and examine the effect of a more directly relevant dispositional construct, the need for cognitive closure (NFCC), on citizens' political interest and news consumption. This will be a report about the outcomes of a study preregistered on the Open Science Framework (OSF) platform before the data was accessible. We will test theoretical predictions regarding the association of citizens' dispositional need for cognitive closure (NFCC) with their political interest and news consumption using a newly validated short measure of NFCC, which has been implemented in the GESIS Panel, a high-quality probability panel survey of the German adult population. With this study, we will replicate results from pilot studies indicating that NFCC has a robustly negative effect on citizens' general interest in politics, impacting their news consumption. However, exploiting the multi-year GESIS panel data to look at the "2015 European Refugee Crisis", we extend previous studies by testing the more nuanced prediction that while people high in NFCC will show less interest in politics during politically routine periods, they will show greater interest in political crisis periods. Data for this study is scheduled to be made available by GESIS in July/August 2019, presentation at the PSA-MPG conference will cover the entire set of analyses preregistered on OSF.

Parallel session 5A: Journalism practice and democratic norms

Declan McDowell-Naylor (Cardiff University): The media and connected and autonomous vehicles: How do the UK and US press represent state-sponsored innovation?

This paper understands and examines media representations of state-sponsored innovation in the United Kingdom (UK), with a focus on the development of connected and autonomous vehicles (CAVs). Based on a content analysis of online news stories from ten UK news outlets, between July 2014 and April 2018, the central finding is that British media have broadly replicated the strategic message of the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV), a policy unit within the UK government. This strategic message is understood through a discourse analysis of first-hand interviews with two government officials from within CCAV and a discourse analysis of government grey literature and press releases. An adapted conceptual framework of agenda-building (in contrast to agenda-setting) is applied to explain the transference of policy-maker's preferred representations into the media texts examined in this study, arguing that elite stakeholders have become the dominant source of information for journalists. The findings and analysis here pose important broad implications for press-state relations and democratic pluralism in an era of where the implications of advanced technologies, such as CAVs, is being widely felt across society.

John Steel, Martin Conboy, Charlotte Elliott-Harvey, Jane Mulderrig (University of Sheffield), Julie Firmstone (University of Leeds), Carl Fox, Paul Wragg, Joe Saunders (Durham University): Journalists' perceptions of press freedom in practice: Perspectives from the front-line

In addition to disruptions in journalism in the contemporary era, the current transformations within journalism and society more broadly have significantly disturbed the already complex

questions concerning the meaning and scope of press freedom and its function in the twenty-first century. This paper addresses several of the key conference themes by providing empirical, qualitative, and cross-nationally comparative insights into the way journalism ethics are responding to transitions in news ecosystems in a range of cultural contexts. Indeed, questions regarding the impact of variations in journalistic practices for the ethical standards of quality, balance and fairness are of key concern to our AHRC-funded interdisciplinary research project: *Defining Freedom of the Press* (AH/R00644X/1). This paper presents data from the second stage of this research project, drawing on interviews with 40 journalists and news-workers from five countries: Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland.

Utilising a phenomenographic approach (Marton, 1981; Åkerlind, 2012) we examine journalists' perceptions of the contribution of ethics codes of practice in their everyday journalistic practice. We also aim to build an understanding of journalists' shared experiences of what constitutes 'press freedom' in their cultural setting. The analysis will also outline preliminary results from interviews with non-journalist representatives from NGOs whose work intersects with journalism practice and press ethics. Taking a non-media centric approach is an important contribution of our overall research strategy as it is concerned with understanding how news workers and civil society actors understand and practice freedom of the press within a variety of cultural contexts.

James Dennis and Susana Sampaio-Dias (University of Portsmouth): Not just swearing and loathing on the internet: Analysing BuzzFeed, VICE, and the affective turn in election reporting

Given the significant growth in youth engagement in the 2017 UK general election, it is important to examine the information sources that young people draw on when deciding how to cast their vote. In this paper, we combine human-coded content analysis and in-depth discourse analysis to analyse two news organisations, BuzzFeed and VICE, and explore how they draw on emotional forms of storytelling when reporting to younger audiences. Drawing on 337 articles from the official campaign period, we show how BuzzFeed maintained a journalistic style that blurred the lines between information and entertainment, as humour was a constant feature. In comparison, VICE hovered between satirical features and long read pieces that pushed a more serious agenda. Unlike BuzzFeed, VICE was not concerned with balance, attacking the Conservatives with fearless partisanship. Authentic, informal, and identifiable, their coverage was unapologetically subjective.

More than simply distributing partisan coverage designed to appeal to specific audiences, BuzzFeed and VICE embrace the culture of social media. Their reporting reflects the subjective, confessional, and personalised forms of expression that characterise communication on social platforms. By drawing on the ideas, language, and behaviours of the social web, BuzzFeed and VICE offer election coverage that is uniquely tailored to a younger audience. This emotional storytelling challenges the norms of election reporting in the UK. In doing so, this study adds to the growing body of work in journalism studies that illustrates how emotional reporting can help facilitate audience engagement (Pantti, 2010; Wahl-Jorgenson, 2019).

Susana Rogeiro Nina (University of Lisbon): Eurozone crisis narratives in bailout countries: European convergence in national media. The cases of Portugal, Spain and Ireland

The last decades have been marked by the enhancement of Europeanisation and the politicisation of European issues on national public spheres. In 2009, the Eurozone crisis had

hastened this process, and European issues have become significantly more contested. However, the permissive consensus that currently rules the relations between the EU and its citizens exposed the so-called communication deficit and the weakness due to a lack of a common European public sphere. In this paper, we argue that the convergence of narratives in national media on European economic issues is a powerful mechanism to a meaningful European public sphere and a transnational community of communication. Our main goal is to test the idea if Portugal, Spain and Ireland countries that faced austerity measures, present similar narratives regarding the Eurozone crisis. In other words, if the bailout countries are convergent and have a common pattern on the way European economic issues are framed on national newspapers. Empirically we analysed more than 6000 economic news from one left-wing (Público, El País, The Irish Times) and one right-wing wing (Diário de Notícias, El Mundo and The Irish Independent) mainstream newspaper of each country. The period selected was the electoral campaign from 14 national elections before and after the Eurozone crisis (Portugal: 2002, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2015; Spain: 2004, 2008, 2011, 2015, 2016; Ireland: 2002, 2007, 2011, 2016). We carried out a content analysis and introduced a new typology capable of measure the similarity on narratives that combines three dimensions: media attention, tone and framing, particularly looking into five dominant frames (Problem, Cause, Responsibility, Consequences and Solution).

Parallel session 5B: Professionalization of political communication

Dan Jackson, Anastasia Veneti and Darren Lilleker (Bournemouth University): Greek political communication and social media: Stories of order and anarchy

Social media is now a central part of the political communication ecology and is being used in increasingly sophisticated ways by parties all over the world. General trends suggest a trajectory of increased professionalization of political communication, and adoption of each new communication tool; however, more in-depth studies show levels of adoption and use of social media vary by country, even across Europe, with Greece, for example, typified by fragmented and instrumental use (Poulakidakos & Veneti, 2016). Meanwhile, amidst the burgeoning literature on the use social media in electoral politics, there are still relatively few recent studies that actually seek to understand developments in campaigning from the inside, by speaking to political parties and their campaign consultants.

In this paper, we address both phenomenon, by presenting the findings of 22 semi-structured interviews with Greek politicians and political communication consultants. Theoretically, we draw from Kreiss et al.'s (2018) analytical framework that seeks to account for the ways that candidates and consultants perceive platforms in relation to *audiences*, *affordances*, and *genres* of different social media platforms, as well as the *timing* of the electoral cycle, in order to effectively study strategic social media communication. We find that Greek campaigns are embracing many social media but still have a relatively rudimentary understanding of the affordances of different platforms and their communicative cultures. Where campaign communication strategies are shaped by politicians, they typically favour one platform as a channel for all their content. Understanding audiences through data analytics is entirely the domain of consultants. Findings are discussed in relation to ongoing debates around campaign professionalisation and the role of platforms.

Sally Osei-Appiah (University of Leeds): Mediatization of politics: A contribution from emerging democracies

Mediatization of politics is increasingly becoming an influential concept for exploring the complex relationship between the media and politicians in a given society. However, its

application has so far been limited largely to western democracies with very little recourse to other non-western contexts such as Africa. Through a focus on print and radio news, and 49 semi-structured interviews of (female) politicians, journalists and civil society experts in Ghana and Nigeria, this paper reveals mixed mediatization processes which seem to differ from those observed in western democracies. It finds that certain media platforms lend themselves more easily to professionalization of political communication by politicians than others. In particular, the paper indicates that radio, through such features as soundbites and hourly news broadcasts, enable politicians to more easily adopt and utilize news media logic for their political benefit than print. Finally, despite an emerging trend towards professionalization of political communication, the paper shows Ghanaian and Nigerian female politicians to be largely resistant to strategic management of their media presence partly due to the cultural constructions of women which discourage their agency. In discussing the factors that shape the interaction between journalists and (female) politicians in Ghana and Nigeria, the paper seeks to build on mediatization of politics scholarship by suggesting newer ways in which the concept can additionally be theorised.

Ivor Gaber (University of Sussex): From spin to fake news – Spot the difference

In the light of the apparent rise in accusations of fake news, notably in the UK in the Brexit referendum, the 2017 General Election and the 2019 Conservative Leadership election, this paper examines how ‘traditional’ spin has morphed through (what I am calling) ‘extreme spin’ to the dissemination of fake news, not by shadowy groups online, but by mainstream parties and politicians. The most recent example was the use of a photograph of Conservative leadership candidate Boris Johnson which purported to show him relaxing with his partner in an attempt to kill stories about their having had a serious row which led to the police being called. In fact it soon became clear that the picture pre-dated the reported row, probably by many months.

However, this paper will go on to suggest that it is arguable whether there ever has been any meaningful distinction between spin, extreme spin and fake news. During the Second World War, for example, the UK Ministry of Information planted a story that British fighter pilots were eating carrots to improve their eyesight. It was a complete lie put out to deflect attention from the importance of radar to British pilots. Ironically, the story was the work of George Orwell and is a classic example of how politicians and governments have always been content to mislead when they deemed it an unavoidable necessity.

Parallel session 5C: Political argumentation and its audiences

Dominic Wring and Nathan Ritchie (Loughborough University): The campaign that nearly never was: UK Parties promotional strategies during the EU 2019 Election

The 2019 EU Election in the UK was a highly atypical kind of campaign. Less than three weeks before polling day it was still uncertain as to whether the country would participate and elect Members of the next European Parliament. But with Brexit stalled, the UK government was obliged to hold the election as a continuing member state. What transpired was Theresa May’s final campaign in office- not that she greatly featured- and an opportunity for parties both brand new (Brexit and Change UK) and established (Conservative, Labour, LibDems, Greens and UKIP) alike to articulate their views on the EU as well as other issues in the midst of a political crisis. This paper presents findings from analysis conducted by the UK team who were part of the European Parliament funded study of promotional activity in every member state during the elections. Due to the unusual circumstances surrounding the British campaign that made prior preparations difficult, the parties’ advertising efforts could be best assessed through their use of online platforms. This paper will compare and contrast the

communication strategies of the aforementioned UK wide parties through analysing the 540 posts they collectively made during the two and a half week formal campaign preceding polling day. The findings offer revealing insights into how the rival leading politicians attempted to exploit (or avoid) the current crisis for their own electoral purposes.

Giles Moss and Stephen Coleman (University of Leeds): Analysing audience responses to political performances: The value of a new real-time audience response method

This paper presents a new method for capturing and analysing the responses of audiences to political performances in real-time. Whereas real-time methods like ‘the worm’ measure the preferences of audiences, our method captures people’s sense of when important democratic capabilities are promoted or not by political performances, something which provides a more sophisticated and critical-normative understanding of political communication (Coleman, Moss and Martinez-Perez 2018). To demonstrate the value of this method, we present the findings from a recent experiment involving a nationally-representative sample of 504 UK voters. Participants were asked to respond to short video clips of Theresa May, Jeremy Corbyn, and Nigel Farage speaking about Brexit using a custom-made web app. Almost 50,000 responses were generated in response to around 20 minutes of video, providing a rich source of data to mine for insights into how audiences respond to political performances and how different political performances may foster or frustrate key democratic capabilities.

James Morrison (Robert Gordon University): Pluralist public sphere or elite closed circle? Musical chairs, ‘stare-offs’ and performative posturing on *Politics Live*

Politics Live launched in September 2018 to replace BBC2’s long-running weekday discussion show, *The Daily Politics*, which had been criticised for its political imbalance – specifically, a tendency to prioritise ‘centrist’ over leftist pundits in debates with conservatives and the right-wing bias of its anchor, Andrew Neil. Billed as the corporation’s answer to chatty US political digest *Morning Joe* and described by *The Guardian* as “more like *Loose Women* than *Newsnight*”, *Politics Live* promised various innovations – including a less inquisitorial, more discursive style redolent of podcasts, meaningful engagement with social media, a dynamic ‘musical chairs’ approach to refreshing panels throughout the show and live fact-checking of disputed claims made by panellists.

Despite a shaky start, it has since been praised for striving to reflect concerns beyond the ‘Westminster bubble’ – if also criticised for being too self-consciously inclusive, by omitting mainstream party representatives and featuring women-only panels. But how substantively different is the show from that which preceded it? While it may have banished ‘Punch and Judy’ mud-slinging and technocratic point-scoring, is its tendency towards pub-style rows and alpha-male ‘stare-offs’ really a boost for deliberative democracy? Most importantly, how truly pluralistic, let alone reflective of the diversity of UK society, is it? This paper employs thematic analysis to examine the range of voices and issues aired on *Politics Live* during the first three months of its second year, to determine the extent to which it encapsulates a genuinely representative public sphere as opposed to merely repackaging the self-selecting elite circuits of old.

Jen Birks (University of Nottingham): Vote for me (not *that* me): the relevance of ad hominem attacks in a personalised leadership/election campaign

After the Conservative decision to fight the general election on the strength of Theresa May’s leadership qualities backfired in the face of ‘weak and wobbly’ ‘Maybot’ jibes, the battle to replace her has been mired in similar tensions. Both short-listed candidates have campaigned on their leadership qualities as evidence that they can be trusted to break the Brexit deadlock, but both camps have rejected personal attacks on their personal characteristics as irrelevant.

Ad hominem attacks – ‘against the man [person]’ rather than against their argument – are often regarded as fallacious because they can be used to dismiss valid arguments without directly engaging with them, and can offer little recourse for the accused to counter a subjective judgement against them. However, when political argumentation is focused centrally on personal credibility it is more difficult for politicians to make a case for the irrelevance of these counter-arguments. Furthermore, there are variants of ad hominem, including arguments about inconsistent commitment (insincerity), that can be supported by evidence, and are open to critical questioning.

This paper will examine disputes over personal characteristics, and the performance of leadership in particular, in the 2017 general election and 2019 Conservative leadership campaigns to examine the extent to which ad hominem arguments have effectively interrogated a performative campaign, or led to the debate degenerating into unilluminating mud-slinging.