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UNIVERSITÄT
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SEIT 1386

1st HCIAS INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON IBERO-AMERICAN STUDIES

COMMUNICATION IN POLARIZED SOCIETIES

Heidelberg Center for Ibero-American Studies (HCIAS)
4 - 6 December 2023
Internationales Wissenschaftsforum Heidelberg, Germany

The Heidelberg Center for Ibero-American Studies (HCIAS) is calling for abstracts for the *1st HCIAS International Symposium*. This initial symposium aims to offer a space for the exchange of approaches which broadens our understanding of the forms, premises, and consequences of communication in polarized societies, viewed from multiple angles of the social sciences and the humanities. The symposium aims to create a space for the exchange of academic experiences, to generate knowledge, and to contribute to the training of the next generation of scholars in interdisciplinary area studies on Ibero-America.

Communication varies among the social contexts it is used in, from politics to public health, the environment, security, business and commerce, and science and technology, among others. Effective communication in all of these social spaces becomes even more crucial during periods of change or crisis. The recent succession of global crises and transformations, such as political and religious fundamentalism, the increasing impact of climate change, pandemic outbreaks, and the rise of radical populism, highlights the fundamental need for communication in modern societies to be effective and reliable.

Public communication, in particular, reflects societal change and offers a platform for political and social polarization, and the advance of radicalism and populism. Prominent examples of this are the malicious use of propaganda and communicative dynamics in social media that generate hate speech and disinformation. Phenomena like fake news, for instance, are undermining the very concepts of 'public sphere' and 'public communication' and question the possibility of effective and reliable communication based on contrasted facts.

The *1st HCIAS International Symposium* addresses the study of communication and its multiple socio-political implications in Ibero-American societies. Ibero-America, with its imbrications within the region and with other regions of the world, is characterized by highly dynamic, socio-cultural processes of transformation in which the role of communication is decisive.

The symposium adopts an interdisciplinary perspective to reveal the analytical potential of the framework of societal communication, especially regarding the analysis of transversal issues such as democratization and democratic backsliding, polarization, or trust. At the same time, it highlights the capacity of area studies to analyze and interpret contemporary communication phenomena based on profound regional knowledge.



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Contributions

The *1st HCIAS Symposium* welcomes theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions from different perspectives of the social sciences and the humanities focusing on:

- the *areas* of social communication (e.g., communication and politics, science and technology, environment, public health, security);
- the socio-cognitive *dimensions* of social communication (e.g., communication and sociology of language, perceptions and attitudes, multimodal discourse);
- the *dynamics* of social communication (e.g., communication and development, social justice, literacy, and participation);
- the *practices* of social communication (e.g., knowledge transmission, technologies and tools, media, and social media).

We call for the submission of proposals addressing one of the following four subfields:

1. Political Communication and the Public Sphere

Contributions may ask, for instance, in which way the discourse of the media, political parties, social movements, or the users affects political participation or supports democracy and social polarization; how social media shape political communication beyond traditional channels (such as legacy news media, election programs, press releases, etc.); and what political narratives and counter-narratives look like and how they play out when addressing contested issues and events.

2. (Inter-)cultural Communication

We further call for submissions which address, for example, how cultural values are being described and interpreted in social communication; how cultural and socio-economic factors interact in the processes and products of public communication; and what individual or situational obstacles are encountered in cross-cultural negotiation processes during periods of social change or crisis.

3. Public Communication, Knowledge Society, and Social Development

In this field, we are interested, for instance, in the orientation of communication in literacy processes in specific world regions and in Latin America, in particular; how knowledge transmission occurs in different contexts; and how communication contributes to development and social justice.

4. Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence in Public Communication

Contributions may ask, for example, how social media shapes the formation of public opinion in terms of conditions and constraints; what effects communication in digital and social media has on how individuals receive and process news and political information; and how artificial intelligence and machine learning are applied in public communication, and to what ends.

Language of the symposium

The working language of the symposium will be English.



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Participation

The symposium will be held in person. **Places are limited.** Participation is possible in the following modalities:

- Presentations

Presentations shall have a maximum length of **15 minutes** and will be organized in panels of 4 presentations, which will be followed by 30 minutes of discussion. Proposals for contributions need to be included in the registration form and submitted via email to hcias-symposium2023@uni-heidelberg.de.

- Flash Talks

The symposium invites **doctoral students** to submit proposals for a flash talk. Flash talks are **4-minutes presentations** showcasing ongoing doctoral research projects. Proposals for flash talks can be submitted by completing the registration form for abstracts of flash talks. The registration form should be submitted via email to hcias-symposium2023@uni-heidelberg.de.

- Participation without presentation

If you would like to participate in the symposium without giving a presentation or flash talk, please fill in the registration form and send it via email to hcias-symposium2023@uni-heidelberg.de. Please note that places in the symposium are limited and preference will be given to participants with presentation or flash talks.

Registration and submission of abstracts

To register and submit your proposal for a presentation or flash talk, please fill out one of the following PDF forms and email the completed form to hcias-symposium2023@uni-heidelberg.de:

- [Registration and Submission of Abstracts](#)
- [Registration and Submission of Abstracts for a Flash Talk](#)

Application deadline and communication of acceptance

Deadline: 30 June 2023

Communication of acceptance: 17 July 2023

Contact Information

Website:

<https://hcias-symposium2023.de/>

E-mail:

hcias-symposium2023@uni-heidelberg.de

Address:

[Heidelberg Center for Ibero-American Studies | HCIAS](#)

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Venue address:

[Internationales Wissenschaftsforum Heidelberg \(IWH\)](#)

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