

Call for Papers

Critical Sociology of Media and Communication: Theoretical contributions to a disconnected field

Symposium in *Critical Sociology*

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Guest Editors: Paško Bilić and Thomas Allmer

Alongside Durkheim and Weber, Marx is often credited as one of the founding figures of sociology in almost all major handbooks and introductory courses to sociology. Yet, contrary to this elementary recognition, rarely does the debate within mainstream sociology offer an analysis of how generations of critical scholars influenced the canon and our understanding of contemporary society. The situation is similar within the field of sociology of media and communication, although with an added layer of complexity. Even though some of the founders of sociology in the first and second generation of the Chicago School studied communication (e.g. Goffman, Mead, and Park), the relationship between sociology, media and communication has been, for the most part, tenuous and vague. Many authors have argued that, with the growth of public opinion research and institutionalization of communication, media, and journalism departments, sociology has abandoned media and communication altogether (e.g. Berelson, 1959; Katz, 1983; Pooley and Katz, 2008). Others would argue that sociology has much to offer to the study of media and communication (e.g. Benson, 2014; Chen, 2018; Waisbord, 2014). However, the role of critique in these discussions is not developed fully. At the same time, many critical scholars have never abandoned the study of media and communication and have, instead, developed a deeper sociological understanding of the field (e.g. Fuchs, 2011; Golding and Murdock, 1978; Meehan & Wasko, 2013; Mosco, 2009; Wasko, 2001). In this understanding, the focus is on a range of topics such as capitalism, power, media industries, the public sphere, democracy, ideology, nationalism, authoritarianism, labor, gender, and social inequality to name a few.

This special issue of *Critical Sociology* seeks papers exploring the critical sociology of media and communication. Contributions examining epistemological, ontological and axiological/praxiological dimensions are particularly welcome.

We invite sociologists, media and communication scholars, critical theorists, interdisciplinary, and other scholars to address one or more of the following or related questions:

- Which theoretical approaches are needed to study the sociology of media and communication critically?
- How should sociology study media and communication critically?
- Why is the critical sociology of media and communication needed?
- What should be the focus of analysis for the critical sociology of media and communication?
- How are society and communication best defined, explained and critiqued by the critical sociology of media and communication?
- What can critical theory offer to the sociological study of media and communication?
- How do approaches and thinkers inspired by Marx enrich the field of sociology of media and communication?
- What is the historical role of the critical study of media and communication within the discipline of sociology? How has it changed over time?
- Does the critical sociology of media and communication differ from other critical approaches such as critical theory and political economy? How are they related to each other?
- Are there any specific regional approaches to the critical sociology of media and communication?
- Which political processes need to be supported by the critical sociology of media and communication to achieve a commons-based society?
- How can the critical sociology of media and communication contribute to the development of public data infrastructures and communication services?
- Given that production and reproduction of critical media and communication sociology depends on the material and human resources, how can such an approach best be sustained?
- How can different critical approaches to media and communication overcome divisions and separation and work together in the age of digital capitalism, fake news, big data positivism, new nationalism and authoritarianism?

Deadlines

Abstract submission: 31 October 2022

All abstracts will be reviewed and decisions on acceptance/rejection will be communicated to the authors by the end of November 2022.

Full paper submission: 15 April 2023

Please submit the article title, author name(s), contact details and an abstract of 200-400 words to Paško Bilić, pasko@irmo.hr, and Thomas Allmer, thomas.allmer@uti.at

About the Guest Editors

Paško Bilić is a critical sociologist working at the Institute for Development and International Relations in Zagreb, Croatia. His primary research interests include the sociology of media, the political economy of media, and media regulation. He is the co-author (with Toni Prug and Mislav Žitko) of *The Political Economy of Digital Monopolies* (Bristol University Press, 2021), *Sociology of media: routines, technology and power* (Jesenski and Turk – in Croatian, 2020) and editor (with Jaka Primorac and Bjarki Valtysson) of the *Technologies of labour and the politics of contradiction* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

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Thomas Allmer is a social scientist, based at the University of Klagenfurt in Austria. His research focuses on critical social theory, political economy of media and communication, digital media and society, digital labour and capitalism, and universities and academic labour. His publications include *Towards a Critical Theory of Surveillance in Informational Capitalism* (Peter Lang, 2012) and *Critical Theory and Social Media: Between Emancipation and Commodification* (Routledge, 2015). His forthcoming book, *Universities and Academic Labour in Times of Precarisation and Digitalisation*, will be published with Routledge in 2023.

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About the Journal

Critical Sociology, Website: <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/crs> Editor: David Fasenfest, Wayne State University, USA

Critical Sociology is an international peer reviewed journal that publishes the highest quality original research. The journal seeks to engage and promote critical thinking by publishing articles from all perspectives broadly defined as falling within the boundaries of critical or radical social science. *Critical Sociology* is included, among others, in the following abstracting and indexing databases: Scopus, Social Science Citation Index, and Sociological Abstracts.

Once the Symposium has been published in *Critical Sociology*, we are planning to materialize the collection in the form of an edited volume as part of the Studies in Critical Social Science book series by Brill. The book will initially appear in hardcover by Brill and in paperback by Haymarket Press about a year after publication.

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