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BEYOND THE AUDIENCE

**Rethinking Participation
and Power in the Age of Data
Capitalism**

15-16 JANUARY 2026

**UNIVERSITÀ IULM
Via dei Montecatini, 17
Rome, Italy**



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15 January 2026

09:00 **Arrival and Registration**

09:30 **Welcome Speech** - Josef Seethaler [Austrian Academy of Sciences, MEDEMAP Principal Investigator] and Andrea Miconi [Università IULM]

09:45 **Keynote Speech**
Plenary Room Sofie van Bauwel [Gent University]
Discussant: Panos Kompatsiaris [HSE University]

11:00 **Panel 1 - Media Audiences and Epistemic Practices**
13:00 Chair: Nuno Cintra Torres [Lusófona University]
Plenary Room **Critical, Qualitative and Situated: Pedagogical Initiatives in Datafied Societies.**
Riccardo Pronzato [Università IULM] & Ana Kubrusly [NOVA University]

From Page to Play: Reading and Gaming as Epistemic Practices.

Dejan Jontes, Andreja Trdina & Breda Luthar [University of Ljubljana]

Serial Dramas and Young Audiences in the Platform Society: Insights from the GEMINI Project.

Marica Spalletta & Paola De Rosa [Link University of Rome]

Media Importance and Specialisation as Factors in Media Use.

Amanda D. Lotz [Queensland University of Technology]

Uses Without Gratification: The Digital Angst of Media Audiences.

Nuno Cintra Torres [Lusófona University]

11:00
13:00
Room 2

Panel 2 - AI, Algorithms and Digital Audiences

Chair: Panos Kompatsiaris [HSE University]

Astrology with DeepSeek: Data Disclosure, Playful Labour, and Emotional Bonds in AI-Mediated Divination.

Yingwen Wang [University of the Arts London] & Hui Lin [King's College London]

An Argument for the Opaque: Specta(c)torship and AI Data Work.

Mihai Băcăran [Independent Scholar]

Audience Labour in the Age of AI-generated Comments: Insights from Reddit.

Danai Tselenti [University of Porto]

“At the end of the day “likes” are the only... like one of the few things that we actually control”. Trying to Resist TikTok’s (addictive) Algorithm.

Ellenrose Firth & Stefania Parisi [Sapienza University of Rome]

Algorithm and Folklore in Vernacular Gastro-Populism: Franchino Er Criminale and the Dialectics of Influencer-Audience Discourse

Marco Briziarelli [University of Milan - Bicocca]

13:00
14:00

Lunch Break

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14:00	Panel 3 - Civic Participation, Media, and Democracy
16:00	Chair: Brankica Petković [The Peace Institute in Ljubljana]
Plenary Room	<p>Engaging Citizens in Shaping Media Futures: Democratic Participation in Slovenian Media Policy-Making. Brankica Petković, Tjaša Turnšek, & Lori Šramel Čebular [The Peace Institute in Ljubljana]</p> <p>Mediated Democracy: Citizens' Media Engagement and Perceptions of Democracy in Estonia. Kristiina Raud & Alessandro Nani [Tallinn University]</p> <p>From Treaties to Tweets: Media Governance and Democratic Participation in a Changing Media Environment. Josef Seethaler & Maren Beaufort [Austrian Academy of Sciences]</p> <p>Transforming the Audience into a Political Actor: The Czech Citizen Parliament on Media and Democracy. Nico Carpentier & Vaia Doudaki [Charles University]</p> <p>Facilitating Public Engagement in Mapping the Future Needs of the Media to Support Democracy: The Irish National Citizens' Parliament as Example. Rosemary Day, Jude McInerney & Kathy Cush [Mary Immaculate College]</p>
14:00	Panel 4 - Audience and Activism
16:00	Chair: Barbara Thomass [Ruhr-University Bochum]
Room 2	<p>Marketing Black Audiences: Agency and Activist Contestation over Urban Media Markets in the United States. Dan Guadagnolo [University of Toronto]</p> <p>The Politics of Dissemination: Online Protests and Internet Shutdowns in India. Kokil Jaidka [Nanyang Technological University] & Saifuddin Ahmed [National University of Singapore]</p>

Critical Czechs? How the Czech Audience Wants to Resist the News Media in the Digital Age.

Karolina Šimková [Charles University] & Jeffrey Wimmer [Augsburg University]

Transforming the Unacceptable into the Habitual: Strategic Decisions to Mitigate Resistance Among the National Audience. The case of Russia.

Tatiana Chervyakova [Lusófona University]

Performance by Design: Audience Agency on Quantified Literary Platforms.

Juliette Parmentier [Free University of Brussels and University of Namur]

16:00 **Panel 5 - Platforms, Social Media, and Users' Behavior**

18:30 Chair: Giulia Ferri [Università IULM]

Room 2

A Silent Observation in the Shadow of the Algorithm: Psychologists' Negotiations of Ethics, Labour, and Platform Affordances on Instagram.

Bahadır Öz [Kadir Has University] & Suncem Koçer Çamurdan [Koç University]

“Metric Hacking” as Agency: How Digital Creators in the Baltics Negotiate Platform Visibility

Eugenija Marksaitė [LCC International University]

Gestuaries: The Imbrication of Authorial and Audience Personae in TikTok Memes

Jessie Krahn [York University]

From Private Messaging to Personal Media Streams: Understanding Use in Social Media's Third Phase.

Gabriela Lunardi [Queensland University of Technology]

16:00
18:30
**Plenary
Room**

Engineering Credibility: How Fraudulent Health Ads Mobilize Users and Exploit Platform Infrastructures on Meta
Carlos E. Barros, Débora G. Salles, & Rose M. Santini [Federal University of Rio de Janeiro]

Quantifying the Hybrid Audience: TV, Streaming, and Datafication.

Giovanni Ceccatelli [Cattolica University in Milan]

Panel 6 - Gender, Feminism, and the Media

Chair: Sofie van Bauwel [Gent University]

The Gendered Logics of Data Colonialism: Toward a Feminist-Decolonial Theory of Digital Power.

Tanja Bosch [University of Cape Town]

Humor as Resistance: Feminist Meme Practices in the Age of Manfluencers.

Fabrizia Pasciuto [Tuscia University]

Seen, Then Silenced: Feminist Mobilization and Deepfake Harm on Chinese Platforms.

Xiaohan Yang [University of Sydney]

Is She or Isn't She: Lesbian (in)visibility and Multiauthor Transmedia Narrative Production.

Dunja Nešović [Concordia University]

Swiping Against the Grain: Queer Online Resistance and the Politics of Participation.

Iveta Jansová [Masaryk University]

Activists as Audiences, Audiences as Creators: Eroded Boundaries of Russophone LGBTQ+ Grassroots Networks post-2022.

Emma Tarasenko [University of Manchester]

16 January 2026

09:45 **Keynote Speech**
Plenary Room **Tiziana Terranova [University of Naples I'Orientale]**
Discussant: Nello Barile [Università IULM]

11:00 **Panel 7 - Capitalism and Labor**
13:30 Chair: Tiziana Terranova [University of Naples I'Orientale]
Plenary Room **Commodifying Death: Thanatechnologies as Platform Workers in the Digital Afterlife Economy.**
Jasmine Erdener [Koç University]

The Stagnant Sensorium, or: Who Watches the End of Capitalism?
Devin Wangert [Tyumen State University]

Of Earthworms and Flying Worms: From the Subject of the Commons to the Datafied Dividual.
Xindi Li [Tyumen State University]

Lost in Translation, Found in Data: How Subtitle Choices Shape Global Humor Under Digital Capitalism
Abderrahim Eljazouli & Noureddine Azmi [Cadi Ayyad University]

Attention Negotiation and Ethical Labour in Platform Capitalism
Elina Tolonen & Heikki Heikkilä [Tampere University], Auksė Balčytienė [Vytautas Magnus University], Laura Amigo [Università della Svizzera italiana], Christina Krakovsky & Marina Lindmeyer [Austrian Academy of Sciences], Marko Milosavljević [University of Ljubljana]

Audience Reception and Platform Capitalism: Reviewing Netflix's Tudum 2025.
Rubab Batool [HSE University]

13:30 **Lunch Break**

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15:00 **Panel 8 - Audience, Fandom, and Identity**

17:30 Chair: Nico Carpentier [Charles University]

Plenary Room

Streaming Audiences and the Questions of Representation: Meaning-Making and Identity Construction in Series.
Lucile Coenen [Free University of Brussel]

Measure, Agency, and Other-than-Human Users.
Elizabeth Bullock [SUNY Alfred State College]

Replay Culture: Platform Seriality as a Generational Algorithmic Archive
Alfonso Amendola & Martina Masullo [University of Salerno]

From Faith to Fitness: Catholic Influencers and Their Fans at the Digital Marketplace
Nina Krapić [Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome]

From Customer to Political Subject and Cultural Negotiator: Exploring Streaming Audiences in Türkiye
Bahadir Öz, Irem Inceoglu, Melis Behlil [Kadir Has University], Ozen Bas [Bilkent University]

“To Look is to Labour”: Digital Cinephilic Engagements and Data Capitalism in Malayalam Cinema
Haritha.R [Independent scholar] & Sharath Chandra Bose [Independent scholar filmmaker]

15:00
17:00
Room 2

Panel 9: Mediatization, Populism, and Power

Chair: Nello Barile [Università IULM]

From Intellectual to Influencer: Populist mediation in the citizenship referendum debate.

Alessandro Ralli [Sapienza University of Rome]

The Mediatization of Charisma. Populist Leadership and Digital Audiences in the Social Media Age.

Luca Massidda [Tuscia University]

Atmospheres of War: an Analysis of Feelings and Audiences in Contemporary War Crises

Federico Montanari & Enrico Barbetti [University of Modena and Reggio Emilia]

A Potential and Limits of an Epistemic Public Sphere: Media, News Ecosystem and Democracy in Poland.

Monika Szafrańska & Beata Klimkiewicz [Jagellonian University]

OTT Platforms as Heterotopias: An Ecological Approach to Power, Attention, and Participation between Traditional and New Media.

Pierandrea Villa [University of Urbino Carlo Bo]

17:30
18:00
Plenary
Room

Workshop: Map for Political Information Environments

18:00
18:30
Plenary
Room

**Meeting – restricted to the MEDEMAP representatives only
(one per partner institution)**

Contacts

General Inquiries

conference@medemap.eu

Conference Organization

Panos Kompatsiaris

Giulia Ferri

Elisabetta Risi

Info

roma@iulm.it

