ECREA Media, Cities & Space Section Report – 2020

Note: *Since early 2020, the world has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The ensuing public health crisis has cast its shadow on academic travel and events, fieldwork and research, teaching and collaboration, and mental health. As with the rest of the academic community, our Section has also felt these impacts and they have significantly curtailed and shaped our activity in 2020.*

Management of the Section

Media, Cities & Space Section came into existence in 2019 after a successful application for Section status by the Temporary Working Group *Media & the City*. The new Section inherited the TWG's management team, including Tanya Lokot (Dublin City University) as chair, and Seija Ridell (Tampereen yliopisto/Tampere University) and Simone Tosoni (Università Cattolica di Milano/Catholic University of Milan) as vice-chairs.

Since 2016, the management team is backed up by an *Advisory Group,* whose role focuses on increasing the diversity and scope of expertise of the Section's activities. The Advisory Group currently includes Zlatan Krajina (University of Zagreb), Matteo Tarantino (University of Geneva), Giorgia Aiello (University of Leeds), Shaun Moores (University of Sunderland), Scott Rodgers (Birkbeck, University of London), and the new section YECREA representative Lou Brandner (Sapienza University of Rome).

The management team elections were due to take place in the autumn of 2020, but since the ECC 2020 conference was postponed to 2021, the management teams were asked to prolong their tenure for another year, and the MCS team agreed to do so, after consulting with the Advisory Group.

As of January 2021, the Section has 101 members, involving an active network of researchers across the field of media studies, urban studies, locative media studies, geography, science and technology studies and other disciplines.

Despite the difficulties 2020 presented in terms of public health restrictions for collaboration, travel and events, the Section pursued a range of activities during the year in the following areas: *events*, *teaching*, *publishing*, *research collaboration* and *dissemination*.

Events

31 March, 2020: Advisory Group member Scott Rodgers co-organized a [panel discussion](#) 'Urban Media Now' at Birkbeck University London. Inspired by the release of the *Routledge Companion to Urban Media and Communication* (2019), Rodgers was joined by volume co-editors, Advisory Group member Zlatan Krajina (Zagreb) and Deborah Stevenson (Western Sydney), as well as Charlotte Brundson (Warwick), David Rowe (Western Sydney), to explore the genealogies, present tendencies and future possibilities of

the urban as a key locus for the increasingly diverse fields that compose media, communication and cultural studies.

15 January, 2021: Advisory Group member Giorgia Aiello organised [Sensory Qualities of Urban Space](#), an interdisciplinary seminar on researching the sensory, affective and imaginative dimensions of urban space. Advisory Group member Zlatan Krajina was one of the seminar's speakers. The seminar is part of an exploratory, interdisciplinary project at the University of Leeds, *Using scenography to understand the experience of urban space project,* funded by the Leeds Arts and Humanities Research Institute.

Teaching

Section Advisory Group member Zlatan Krajina and Section member Ilija Tomanić Trivundža organized a teaching collaboration (as lecturer and convener) on the latter's Image and the City course at the University of Ljubljana in the winter term 2020/2021, collaborating on teaching and assessment as well as designing the structure of the course together.

Member Publications

Aiello, Giorgia (2020). Communicating the "world-class" city: a visual-material approach. *Social Semiotics* (online first): 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2020.1810551

Dias, Marcos (March 2021). *The machinic city: Media, performance and participation.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Krajina, Zlatan (2021). Multispace: A non-media-centric approach to mediated cities. in McQuire, S. and Wei, S. (eds.) *Communicative cities and urban space.* London: Routledge.

Parviainen, Jaana, and Seija Ridell (2021). Infrastructuring bodies: Choreographies of power in the computational city. In: Nagenborg, M. & al., (eds.) *Technology and the city.* (pp. 137-155). Dordrecht: Springer.

Rodgers, Scott, and Susan Moore (2020). Researching urban life through social media. In: Ward, Kevin (ed.) *Researching the city: A guide for students (Second edition).* London: Sage. (In press)

Rodgers, Scott, and Susan Moore (2020). Platform phenomenologies: Social media as experiential infrastructures of urban public life. In: Stehlin, J., Hodson, M., Kasmire, J., and Ward, K. (eds.) *Urban platforms and the future city: Transformations in infrastructure, knowledge, governance and everyday life.* (pp. 209-222). London: Routledge.

Tarantino, Matteo (2020). The multiple airs: Pollution, competing digital information flows and mobile app design in China. In: Díaz-Pont, J., Maeseele, P., Sjölander, A.E.,

Mishra, M. and Foxwell-Norton, K. (eds.) *The local and the digital in environmental communication*. (pp. 69-87). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tarantino, Matteo (2020). Navigating a datascape: Challenges in automating environmental data disclosure in China. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 63(1): 67-86.

Section chair Tanya Lokot joined and Advisory Group member Scott Rodgers continued as members of the Editorial Board for *Mediapolis: Journal of Cities and Culture*. In 2020, they each published a piece in Mediapolis:

> Scott Rogers, [Where We Care: Local Attention in a Platformized Pandemic](), *Mediapolis Journal 3*(5), 27 August 2020.

> Tanya Lokot, [The Landscape as a Monument: Time, Space and Memories in the Geographies of Eastern Ukraine](), *Mediapolis Journal 4*(5), 11 November 2020.

Advisory Group member Giorgia Aiello is currently editing a special forum issue of the *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* journal focusing on urban media & communication in Europe with a critical/cultural approach. The issue will feature contributions by the Section's management team, advisory group & members, to be published in 2021.

Research Collaboration

Section members Matteo Tarantino, Tanya Lokot, Scott Rodgers and Simone Tosoni, with Susan Moore and others, are continuing collaboration on a research study into the urban data cultures across eight countries and their role in evidence-based housing policymaking, in partnership with UNECE. The second stage of the project, [REDEHOPE](), received research funding from Geneva Science-Policy Interface in 2020. The team are currently in the process of completing the research and producing a final report later in the year.

In May 2020, Section chair Tanya Lokot and Advisory Group member Scott Rodgers in collaboration with a wide network of colleagues submitted a joint application for an ESRC-IRC UK/Ireland Networking Grant for a project titled *Locating Platform Politics: Investigating Social Media Locality in UK and Irish Contexts*. The proposal was ultimately unsuccessful, but generated good network connections for future events.

Dissemination

The Section's communication and dissemination activities continued on its three key public and semi-public channels: the Section website, a Facebook page and a Facebook group.

The Section website (https://mediacitytwg.wordpress.com/) is used for informational purposes and as a repository of downloadable materials (such as the podcasts of keynote

speeches from the *Urban Media Studies Conference* held in Zagreb in 2015). For 2021, the management team plans to add a Publications section featuring latest member publications.

The Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/mediaandthecity/?ref=ts&fref=ts), used both for informational purposes and to keep in touch with the Section members, currently has 231 followers/members (up from 212 in 2019).

The membership figure in the Facebook group (https://www.facebook.com/groups/media.city.ecrea/?fref=ts), used as a space of discussion, community building, and sharing resources, has increased from 277 in 2019 to 295.

The Section looks forward to convening its panels at the postponed ECC Conference in Braga, Portugal in September 2021 and is currently preparing for the management team elections as well as planning other future events and collaborations for 2021-2022.

February 10, 2021