

Refugees, Religious Threats, and Political Radicalization: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives



Sophie Lecheler (U of Vienna, Austria)
Jörg Matthes (U of Vienna, Austria)
Hajo Boomgaarden (U of Vienna, Austria)

This preconference aims to shed light on the role of mass or social media during the European refugee crisis. The ongoing migration of refugees seeking shelter within the borders of Europe has fueled the development of increasingly polarized societies within Europe, with some political or societal actors stressing humanitarian values and others stirring fears of religious threats and rising terror.

The media play a central role in this development; they set the agenda for public discourse, identify problems or challenges and may provide solutions that may lead to the peaceful integration of refugees in European countries. The refugee situation has also shown just how central digital and social media communication has become in many European citizens' lives, with Facebook and Twitter functioning as first sources of (perhaps untruthful) information, as well as potential platforms for political radicalization.

The preconference invites theoretical and empirical contributions that either:

- (1) study the **depiction** of the “refugee crisis” in mediated communication,
- (2) focus on how mediated depictions **influence** individuals' reactions to the “refugee crisis”, both with respect to the depiction of refugees themselves, but also with an eye on radicalization by right-wing populist parties,
- (3) take a **comparative** view of the issue, as topics such as the migration and integration of refugees, political polarization, and radicalization are rarely confined to one country alone,
- (4) connect the broader issue of the “refugee crisis” and its consequences with other **relevant questions**, such as journalistic professionalization and responsibility, political protest, or methodological development within our field.

The goal is to facilitate an open, interdisciplinary, and international debate on the issue, taking place right in the centre of Europe. The organizers plan to publish selected contributions to the preconference in a special issue in a ranked journal.

How to participate:

Please submit an extended abstract of a maximum of five pages (double-spaced, includes all tables, figures, references) to Hajo Boomgaarden (hajo.boomgaarden@univie.ac.at) by **January 7, 2018**. Extended abstracts must include a clear discussion of the research problem, the theoretical framework including literature review, and describe methods as well as results in case of empirical work.

Successful applicants will be notified not later than February 1, 2018. The preconference will be a full-day conference (9 am to 5 pm), held at the ICA conference hotel in Prague on Wednesday, May 23rd, 2018 (costs \$40). Full papers will need to be submitted no later than April 30th, 2018 and will be made available to all those participating in the preconference.

If you have questions, please contact Hajo Boomgaarden (hajo.boomgaarden@univie.ac.at), Jörg Matthes (joerg.matthes@univie.ac.at), or Sophie Lecheler (sophie.lecheler@univie.ac.at).