

CAMRI Regional Audience Conference a major success

The topic of audiences in Africa and the Arab region was debated by around 100 academics who came to the CAMRI conference on 'African and Arab Media Audiences: Shared Agendas for Research', held from 30-31 March at the University of Westminster's Cavendish site. Winston Mano reports.



The delegates from Britain, the United States and countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, and the Arab countries focused on the contextual, historical and contemporary dimensions of audience research in a globalising world. Opening the conference, Sally Feldman, the Dean of the School of Media, Arts and Design, welcomed the delegates and paid special tribute to CAMRI for its unwavering commitment to research of an international standard. Feldman pointed out that CAMRI's impeccable research credentials were evidenced by its top grades in the 2009 RAE.

The two-day audience conference began with a roundtable, chaired by Peter Goodwin, that saw Daya Thussu, David Gauntlett, Naomi Sakr and Winston Mano debate audience research in CAMRI regions. Overall it was observed that existing 'audience research' was underdeveloped, too localised or too internationalised and often driven by industry rather than by academic knowledge. The roundtable argued for a rethink of audience research. Political economic approaches, qualitative approaches and visual methodologies were given as examples that can help show the shared research agendas. The focus on regional audiences could contribute immensely to the debates about internationalising media studies not least because the media themselves are international.

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Pictured left to right: Daya Thussu and keynote speaker Tariq Sabry

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Arab Media Research

CAMRI member Naomi Sakr has been awarded a Professorship. Inside, she gives an account of her most recent work as a researcher, teacher and consultant in the field of Arab media. See page 6 for the full story.





CAMRI Regional Audience Conference contd

'On African audiences' was the topic of the opening keynote address, delivered by Karin Barber, a professor of cultural anthropology at the Centre for West African Studies, University of Birmingham. As someone who worked in Nigerian television, theatre and academic institutions for many years, Professor Barber argued that audience work in Africa should be seen in relation to production practice. Her argument was that some of the seemingly new concerns with audience behaviour in Africa have been with producers for many years. New formats in Nollywood, for example, have been driven by producers' understandings of audiences from early television drama and theatre, which she took part in the 1980s and 1990s. Professor Barber argued for a more nuanced approach which deals with political, economic and social elements of people who engage with the media in Africa. The first day also included panel sessions on conceptualising audiences, diasporic audiences, transforming audiences and new media audiences.



Jane Thorburn from the University of Westminster and Dr Ola Ogunyemi from the University of Lincoln

CAMRI's Tarik Sabry's keynote, delivered on the second day was entitled: 'The Holy Spitting Man: modernness and the impasse of Arab thought'. His central argument was that Arab media audience research is not yet fully developed and that so far it has failed to draw on Arab thought and everyday life, both crucial if one was to fully engage with how real people encounter the media text. Work on Arab culture and thought should be included to shed more light on audience work. The closing reception saw the launch of the *Journal of African Media Studies*, published by Intellect. Overall, the conference was a great success and a very good opportunity for productive joint debate about Arab and African media consumption in a globalising context.

Investigative journalism in Central China

Nick Davies, Paul Kenyon and Hugo de Burgh with the Chinese media



The China Media Centre organised two simultaneous workshops on in-depth reporting, cooperating with International Media Support from Denmark, the Swedish Embassy and Peking University. The workshops took place in Zhengzhou, capital of Henan. Henan is China's most

populous province and scene of a number of serious investigations, for example into contaminated blood transfusion. Participants from the two main media houses in the Henan Province, the Dahe Newspaper Group and Henan TV, were briefed about British investigative journalism over four days by Chinese experts as well as European ones. Nick Davies, a Guardian journalist and author of *Flat Earth News*, Paul Kenyon from the BBC series *Kenyon Confronts* and *Panorama*, and Hugo de Burgh, a former producer of Channel 4's *Dispatches* and now Director of the China Media Centre (CMC), shared their practical experiences. Chinese instructors included Ms Xu Hong, Professor of Journalism at Peking University and former Editor at *Xinhua News* and Ms Cheng Jie, Lecturer in Freedom of Information at Tsinghua University Faculty of Law. The participants eagerly participated in discussions with the lecturers, in particular on the ethics of reporting.

These workshops will be followed by environmental journalism seminars targeting senior environmental journalists and editors from key Chinese media which will take place in Beijing and Copenhagen in June 2009. There will also be follow-up seminars on in-depth reporting in the Autumn. The environmental reporting seminars will be supported by the International Media Support and Caijing Environmental Journalism Fellowship Programme, and are managed by Dr Zeng Rong, Postdoctoral Fellow at CMC, and Alja Kranjec, CMC Knowledge Transfer Manager.

Hugo de Burgh, Director of CMC, was a panellist on the 3rd Intellectual Dialogue on Tibet on 19 April, hosted by the Tsinghua International Center for Communication Studies (TICCS) in Beijing. The in-depth discussion among Tibetan scholars and Western journalists focused on Tibet's politics, history, religion, economy and culture.



Professor Hugo de Burgh,
Director of the China Media Centre



Collaborating with the RSA



Professor David Gauntlett and researcher Lizzie Jackson are both Fellows of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.

The RSA was founded in 1754 by William Shipley and originally modelled on the Dublin Society for improving Husbandry, Manufactures and other Useful Arts. In 1774, it moved into a new building near the Strand in central London designed by the Adam Brothers. The first occupant of 18 Adam Street was the Adelphi Tavern, mentioned in Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers*.

Over the past 18 months the Royal Society has been exploring how to use new technology, in particular online networking, in order to assist social change and for projects undertaken by RSA Fellows. The Society's 26,000 Fellows are located all over the world, and therefore it seemed sensible to begin to link the Fellowship digitally. David Gauntlett, Lizzie Jackson and a fellow Fellow, journalist and consultant David Wilcox, approached the RSA in December 2008 offering to run a workshop to think through these issues. On 19 February 2009, the half-day workshop was held at the University's Cavendish site. 30 RSA Fellows from across the UK imagined how the RSA might use online networks and digital and face to face participation.

The workshop produced six models of 'networked Fellowship' expressed in Plasticine, Lego and other

materials. This process built on the methods presented by David Gauntlett in his recent book, *Creative Explorations*. What became clear was that Fellows really wanted ways to connect with each other, and that they were keen to undertake activities which would benefit society. The Fellowship was expressed by one group as a Banyan Tree which sustained itself by putting down new roots, spreading and reproducing itself. The modern Fellowship is diverse and it takes different forms in different parts of the UK and in different parts of the world. It was clear some Fellows are adopting technology enthusiastically; the RSA Fellowship will have a resource from which to draw in the future. The ability of the Royal Society to reinvent itself for a digital age indicates that the Fellowship itself will adapt and develop. New long-term projects include delivering fresh drinking water to the developing world, and exploring the feasibility of a UK-wide personal carbon trading system.

A video showing highlights of the workshop can be viewed at www.artlab.org.uk/rsa-workshop.htm



CAMRI seminars

Presenting the latest research in media and communications, the CAMRI seminars series reflected the wide-ranging interests of the Institute.

Journalism and the changing nature of the news emerged as a major theme this year. Wayne Hope from the Auckland University of Technology commenced the series with a presentation on global television news. His talk examined the effect of 24/7 rolling news cycles and ICT networks, as well as the manipulation of real time news formats for the purposes of political and military propaganda. Adopting a historical perspective, Milly Williamson from Brunel University provided a fascinating case study of the US press in the 1890s. Focusing on the 'penny' press newspapers of figures like Hearst and Pulitzer, Williamson showed that the emergence of celebrity journalism resulted more from developments within the early newspaper industry, such as the increasingly dominant role of advertising, rather than as a response to popular tastes. Still on the theme of journalism, but addressing current developments, a team from Goldsmith's College discussed whether news in the digital age can lead to a reinvigorated public sphere. The seminar included presentations from James Curran, Natalie Fenton, Aeron Davis, Angela Phillips and Tamara Witschge drawing on data from the 'Spaces of the News' project run by the Goldsmith's Leverhulme Media Research Centre.

The theme of digital technologies was taken up by three other seminars, each one examining a different angle. Gary Hall from Coventry University explored what might be termed a third generation of new media theory that pays closer attention to the affective and performative aspect of new media. He illustrated this analysis with ideas from his recent book on the growing open access revolution in scholarly publishing. Bart Cammaerts from the London School of Economics examined Internet-mediated civic participation, focusing on two multi-stakeholder processes beyond the nation state: the UN/ITU World Summit on the Information Society and the European Convention on the Future of Europe. Christopher Finlay from the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania also discussed the nexus between journalism, new media and activism focusing on the London 2012 Olympics and British identity. Being the first Olympics to embrace Web 2.0 and user-generated content, the narrative of the 2012 Games is still challenged by 'unofficial actors', including a variety of activist and local groups.

Focusing on conventional politics, the seminar by Aeron Davis from Goldsmiths College drew on interview-based research with 80 politicians and journalists operating in and around the UK Parliament. The talk explored the concept of 'media capital' looking at how an individual politician's accumulation of such capital affects their mobility within the political field.



Christopher Finlay from the Annenburgh School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania

Finally, two of the CAMRI seminars discussed media systems in Africa concentrating on the effects of democratic transition. Professor Colin Sparks, the head of CAMRI, investigated the development of the South African media during and after the end of the Apartheid regime. His talk suggested certain modifications to the theory of elite continuity in order to accommodate the distinctive features of the South African transition. Wallace Chuma, from the University of Cape Town in South Africa, reflected on issues of media and power in Zimbabwe. His presentation demonstrated that in post-independence Zimbabwe the absence of a vibrant civil society and strong journalistic unionisation meant that the mainstream media easily gave in to the structural pressures posed by power centres. This talk successfully concluded the CAMRI seminar series for this academic year.

Further details of the 2008/09 talks can be accessed at www.westminster.ac.uk/mad/page2041

The 2009/10 programme is currently being arranged and suggestions for speakers are very welcome. Please contact Anastasia Kavada at kavadaa@westminster.ac.uk

In the aftermath of Gaza

مركز الإعلام العربي
Arab Media Centre

Arab Media Centre news

The Arab Media Centre and the Anna Lindh Foundation, a Euro-Med body with headquarters in Alexandria, Egypt, co-organised a roundtable and press event entitled 'In the Aftermath of Gaza: Conflict Reporting, Media Perspectives and Public Perceptions' at the Regent Street site on 16 February.

The event also involved collaboration with the Alliance of Civilizations, the Euromed Media Task Force, Chatham House, and the Foreign Press Association in London. It gathered around 50 journalists and academics from across Europe and the southern Mediterranean. Zaki Chehab, Political Editor of LBC/AH-Hayat, David Gardner, Associate Editor of the *Financial Times*, and CAMRI's own Jean Seaton started the morning roundtable by evaluating coverage of the Gaza crisis in December 2008/January 2009, during which the Israeli military authorities blocked access to Gaza for Western media. There was a sharp contrast in Gaza reporting between the performance of Western and Arab media because the latter continued to report from inside the territory. This led to accusations of bias on both sides.

The afternoon press event was well attended, especially among representatives of the foreign press in London, as the President of the Anna Lindh Foundation, André Azoulay, spoke about his vision for peace, understanding and cooperation in the Middle East. The fact that he is not only advisor to the Moroccan king but also that he spoke of his personal experience as a Moroccan Jew made his speech even more compelling for the audience, prompting many questions that he received in the Q&A session.

During the spring semester, the Arab Media Centre continued to hold guest lectures in the Regent Street Boardroom. In February, the Internet project MEEDAN,

which aims to help bridge the linguistic divide between Arabic and English speakers, was introduced by its founders Anas Tawileh and George Weyman. This lecture attracted much attention from representatives of the software industry who are interested in the use and development of computerised translation devices. MEEDAN utilises computer-generated translations from Arabic into English and vice versa but its particular innovation is that MEEDAN users are encouraged to expand the vocabulary of the computer-generated translation capacities by feeding it with new translations. Since MEEDAN sees itself as a networking site to promote understanding between the Arab world and the West this happens while Arabic and English-speaking users are debating cultural or political issues online.

In March, three short films by the Lebanese filmmaker Sabine El Chamaa were screened under the heading 'Elegy for a City', followed by a Q&A session with the director. The films deal with her experience of war through whole or partial use of animation. Her recent short film premiered at the Berlin Today Award at the 59th Berlin Film Festival to much acclaim and the Arab Media Centre screening at Regent Street was the first time that her films were shown in the UK.

The Arab Media Centre has launched a CD entitled *Journalism Testing Legal Boundaries: Media Laws and the Reporting of Arab News*, edited by Katharina Nötzold and Maha Taki. It includes proceedings of the conference held under the same title on 20 June 2008. Copies of the CD can be obtained from the Arab Media Centre on request, and its content will soon be made available online. The Centre's most recent conference was held jointly in March with the African Media Series and Audiences Group.

'In the Aftermath of Gaza', a roundtable hosted by the Arab Media Centre



CAMRI professor is invited speaker at Arab media events

Naomi Sakr reports here on her extensive travels and recent work engaging with a wide range of Arab media issues.

Women and media in Saudi Arabia, journalism in Arab dictatorships, the US liaisons of Arab media moguls: these are some of the topics I have written and spoken about since my last entry in *Findings* two years ago. I have also been involved in consultancy and overseas teaching related to two of my research interests: foreign aid for media development in Arab countries and media coverage of human rights.

My article 'Women and Media in Saudi Arabia: Rhetoric, Reductionism and Realities' appeared in the *British Journal for Middle Eastern Studies* in December, one of three pieces I had published in peer reviewed journals in 2008. The others were 'Diversity and Diaspora: Arab Communities and Satellite Communication in Europe', carried in *Global Media Communication*, and 'Oil, Arms and Media: How US Interventionism Shapes Arab TV', in the Austrian *Journal für Entwicklungspolitik*. I was invited to present my research on Saudi Arabia at a conference on media representations of women in East and West, jointly organised in Qatar in April 2009 by Northwestern University and Italy's Reser group. A few months earlier I contributed a paper on 'Using Media to Promote Women's Economic Rights' to a project run by the British Council on the Role of Women in Economic Life in the Mediterranean, and presented the paper at a conference in Brussels in November 2008.

My trip to Qatar in April will have been my third to the Gulf so far in 2009. I was invited to Abu Dhabi in January to speak about Gulf media laws at a conference organised by New York University. In February, as part of a small team recruited to

evaluate the work of Denmark's International Media Support (IMS), I was sent to Dubai to attend the launch conference for the Ethical Journalism Initiative and talk with members of Arab journalists' syndicates who have been working with the International Federation of Journalists in a project backed by IMS. In the same capacity I also attended a workshop on youth programming with Jordanian, Syria and Lebanese broadcasters in Amman.

In March, IMS itself asked me to give a talk to Danish journalists in Copenhagen about changes in Arab media. Last April (2008) I was asked to give a similar talk in Brussels to European Commission press officers based in countries neighbouring the EU. In other talks I have focused more specifically on media in Egypt, for example in a presentation at a roundtable on Transparency in Foreign Reporting, organised by Erasmus University in Rotterdam in April 2008 (papers from the event are awaiting publication) and at a meeting on 'Egypt in Crisis' held in May 2008 at St Antony's College, Oxford. In Egypt I am involved in an ongoing project with the London-based Media Diversity Institute and academics at Cairo University to help develop modules on human rights and diversity reporting for Egyptian journalism students.

There has been a welcome new French dimension to my work over the last year. I have a chapter on Arab TV talk shows in a volume about to be published by Actes Sud, based on a conference in Lyon where I managed to give my presentation in French. More recently, Tarik Sabry and I have joined a three-year French research project on Arab media and migration.

Naomi Sakr (below left) with delegates at the Regional Audiences conference



Research journalism in conflict

CAMRI student Yennue Zarate-Valderrama reports here on the progress of her doctoral studies.



My doctoral research is entitled 'Telling the truth about war? The role of journalism in conflict'. I am studying aspects of human rights and peace reporting within conflict, in particular journalists' perceptions and practices in regards to western standpoints on peace journalism. My case study is Colombia, the oldest conflict in Latin America, which is a unique case because has had an important reflection towards responsible conflict reporting linked to quality, social responsibility and hope in a violent society.

I conducted my fieldwork in Colombia from January to June 2008. Based in Bogota (a city that is not as dangerous as depicted), I also travelled to the main cities and villages to conduct in-depth interviews and participant observation. Being a researcher in a foreign country was a big challenge for me, however the ethnography was straightforward. I discovered that Colombia has a sort of fascination for Mexico (my home country), which made it easier to gain access to impossible places. During the six months, I observed a series of extremely tense moments in the armed conflict, such as guerrilla hostage liberations and humanitarian agreements, but the most critical moment was the diplomatic crisis (and potential conflict) with the neighbouring countries Ecuador and Venezuela due to Colombian military trespassing to bomb a guerrilla camp. Luckily, the crisis was resolved and from the research perspective it was a brilliant time-period to analyse how news is framed and also issues around patriotism, censorship and objectivity.

Based on my preliminary findings, I presented a paper at the IAMCR 2008 conference in Sweden, in the Journalism Section, and also at the IPRA (International Peace Research Association) conference in Belgium. I was invited to present at the WACC Conference 'Communication and Peace' in Cape Town 2008. Finally I participated at the Latin American Studies Conference in Cambridge, 2009. These forums were an important space to present and debate my research with academics, journalists, and peace and conflict researchers. They have also motivated me to continue writing up my following chapters.

Orwell Prize winners 2009



Since 2007 CAMRI Professor Jean Seaton has been chair of the Orwell Prize – Britain's pre-eminent prize for political writing.

Broadcast and film journalism as well as internet publications are included in the scope of the annual prize, the latest winners of which were announced in April. As Jean Seaton explains, 'basically the whole prize is an empirical experiment in capturing attention for quality political argument using the new and the old media'.

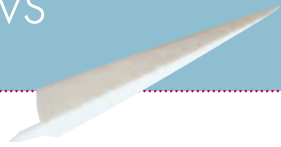
Winner of the book prize was *Fishing in Utopia: Sweden and The Future That Disappeared* by Andrew Brown. The journalism prize was awarded to Patrick Cockburn, for articles in *The Independent* and *The London Review of Books*. And this year, for the first time, a prize was awarded to the best blog contributing to political writing. Some time was spent authenticating the policeman who is the anonymous writer of the blog *Nightjack, an English Detective*. The judges also awarded a Special Prize for Lifetime Achievement to Tony Judt. Unusually for a serious book prize, this year's Orwell Prize received a whole page of coverage in *The Sun*, as well as in various broadsheets and Jean Seaton was interviewed on Radio 4's *Today* programme.

Announcement of the prizes followed a week of debates at the *Sunday Times* Oxford Literary Festival. Events included a discussion about *1994* and contemporary civil liberties involving Shami Chakrabarti (Director, Liberty) and Nick Cohen (author, journalist) attended by 600 people, and the 'Africa and China Debate', involving CAMRI's Dr Winston Mano.

The Orwell Prize's own blog (orwelldiaries.wordpress.com) has been nominated for a 'Webby' award. Followers can read extracts from Orwell's diaries – each one published exactly 70 years after it was written.

For further information about the Orwell Prize (and also links to videos of events on YouTube) visit:

www.theorwellprize.co.uk



news

CAMRI Professor Colin Sparks has been using his sabbatical semester to work on his forthcoming book on media in transitional societies.

The book builds on work on Central and Eastern Europe undertaken in the 1990s and will look at the ways in which the media have changed in Brazil, China, Poland, Russia and South Africa. In all of these cases, substantial social change has taken place in the last 30 years. In some, there has been a marked shift to democracy and in others very rapid economic development. The ways in which the mass media have changed with those processes helps us to understand the nature of the more general social changes.

At the same time as working on the book, he has presented papers on his preliminary findings in Zagreb and Lund, and lectured on media and globalisation in Zhuhai, Wuhan and Beijing. His most recent publication is 'South African Media in Transition', an article based on part of the research for the book, which appears in the *Journal of African Media Studies*, 1.2, Spring 2009.



CAMRI members now have the opportunity to post news on the Westminster Media Comment blog.

Launched in February 2009, it is produced by staff at the School of Media, Arts and Design, University of Westminster and aims to become a forum for 'world-class media debate'.

Current top posts on the site include:

- The cost of being connected
- Misha Glenny on the secrets of the Mafia
- Peston is the TV News 'Slumdog'
- YouTube as documentary: What I should've said on Radio 4
- Charles Leadbeater and the social media academics

Read the latest contributions and join the debates at: <http://westminstermediacomment.wordpress.com/>

Forthcoming CAMRI events include:



'Creativity and Innovation in Chinese Media'

A conference to be hosted by the China Media Centre, 22-23 June 2009. Papers will consider a wide range of issues examining the complex process of change that has taken place within Chinese media over the last 30 years. For further information visit www.westminster.ac.uk/mad/page-2088

'Media Regulation in the Era of Convergence'

A joint summer school to be held in Beijing, 2-16 August 2009. The summer school is organised by the China Media Centre and supported by sponsored by the National Centre for Radio and Television Studies, Communication University of China, the School of Journalism and Communication, Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania. For further information visit www.westminster.ac.uk/mad/page-2111

'Transforming Audiences 2: Creativity/Knowledge/Participation'

An international conference hosted by CAMRI's Audiences Group, in association with ICA, IAMCR, and ECREA on 3-4 September 2009. There will also be a preconference on 'The presentation of self in everyday digital life'. For further information visit www.transformingaudiences.org.uk

www.westminster.ac.uk/camri

Any enquiries please contact Caroline Dover, email C.J.Dover@westminster.ac.uk