



UNIVERSITÄT
LEIPZIG

Call for Proposals for the ICA 2019 Preconference

Crafting Theory. Methods of theory building in communication

Friday, 24 May, 2019, 9 am – 5 pm approx.

Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C.

The state of theory building in communication has been the object of lamentation, disappointment, caricature, even ridicule, but also appeals and aspiration throughout the history of our field. Rather than restating deficiencies in our field's theory building in comparison with our neighboring disciplines or reiterating the reasons for or consequences of these deficits time and again, this preconference aims at collecting and advancing our field's methodological tools and practices for theory building.

“Theory building” or “theory development” can be characterized as a creative problem solving process of generating novel or modifying existing conceptual structures (statements about concepts and their relations) with the aim of describing and explaining phenomena better than before (Hagen, Frey, & Koch, 2015; Weick 1989). This preconference is interested in a methodological discussion of cognitive operations, individual and social practices, and empirical approaches researchers use in this process of theory building.

In stark contrast to the great importance theory building is attributed by the scientific community in general and in our field, the collection, development and dissemination of methodological knowledge about how to develop both original and well-crafted theory only forms small part of our methodological research and teaching. For example, there is a scarcity of textbooks that cover more than the formal requirements and logical principles of “theory construction” (Blalock, 1969; Dubin, 1969; Freese, 1980) and accommodate the specifics of our field (but see, as one prime exception, Shoemaker, Tankard & Lasorsa, 2004). Also, inspiring and instructive collections of individual experiences with and approaches to theory building have been published, e.g., in psychology (Kruglanski & Higgins, 2004), human resource development (Turnbull, 2002) and management (van de Ven, 1989), but not in communication.

This preconference aims at stimulating the scholarly reflection and discourse about methods and methodology of theory building across all subfields of communication and ICA divisions by inviting participants to share their thoughts, experiences, and insights in an open, interactive and interdisciplinary exchange. We invite proposals for theoretical, empirical or historical contributions including but not limited to:

- case studies about the practice of theory building in your own work or in the work of other scholars
- empirical or literature-based overviews of methods used for theory building in communication
- collections and discussions of heuristics, tools, practices and approaches in every phase of theory development
- examinations of methodological challenges and potentials specific to theory building the field of communication

- analyses of social, situational, and individual factors conducive (or detrimental) to creative and well-crafted theory building
- experiences in teaching theory building.

We are interested in submissions covering one or several of the above aspects or related questions. We encourage submissions with a broad variety of approaches and from diverse perspectives. Scholars at all stages of their careers are welcome to apply.

Submission and selection process

Extended Abstracts (800 to 1,200 words plus references) should be sent as a PDF file to Benjamin Krämer (kraemer@ifkw.lmu.de). Please remove any kind of information that would identify the authors. The deadline for submission is **25 January 2019**. Submissions will be peer-reviewed (please volunteer to review!) and decisions will be sent out by mid-February 2019.

Dates, conference fee, registration

This preconference is approved by the ICA 2019 organizing committee and is part of the official ICA 2019 conference program. The preconference will take place on 24 May 2018 (9 am to 5 pm approx.) onsite in the conference hotel in Washington, D.C. The registration fee will be \$60 for presenters and non-presenters, covering the expenses for facilities, coffee breaks (lunch not included) and administrative overhead. Registration will be open to anyone wishing to attend.

Organizers

If you have any questions and/or would like to volunteer as a reviewer, please feel free to approach the organizers Felix Frey (ffrey@uni-leipzig.de) and Benjamin Krämer (kraemer@ifkw.lmu.de).