

Call for Papers - International Academic Workshop

Fragmented and Contested? Debates on Racism in Traditional and Social Media

12 June 2026, DeZIM, Berlin

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In recent years, particularly sparked through the Black Lives Matter campaign, racism has become an increasingly prominent subject in both traditional and social media. Yet its visibility, framing, and interpretation seem to vary greatly across contexts, platforms, and political environments. While some racist incidents spark widespread media outrage and mobilization, others remain less visible or get reframed in ways that minimize or distort their significance. This workshop invites critical academic engagement with the dynamics of media salience and valence to explore not only what becomes visible in media debates, but *how* it is made to matter. Is racism portrayed as a serious structural issue, an individual moral failing, a contested label, or even dismissed altogether?

We seek contributions that interrogate in how far racism is made visible or invisible, normalized or contested in contemporary media landscapes—ranging from traditional print media to user-generated content platforms. We welcome qualitative case studies, quantitative content analyses, comparative research, theoretical contributions, and mixed methods approaches. The workshop aims to bridge disciplinary and methodological boundaries, fostering dialogue between scholars working in media and communication studies, political sociology, and ethnic and racial studies, among other fields.

We welcome papers that address (but are not limited to) the following questions:

- How do salience and valence of racism differ across space, time and media types?
- Which factors explain variance in the salience and valence of racism in media debates?
- What role do editorial practices, technical affordances, algorithms, or audience engagement play in shaping the salience and valence of racism?
- How do different actors (journalists, activists, policymakers) frame and evaluate racist incidents?
- How do societal contexts shape media representations of racism, and what are the measurable societal effects of such representations on public attitudes, policy preferences, and experiences of racialized communities?
- How can novel methodological and ethical approaches advance the study of racism in media? What insights emerge from critically reassessing or innovating upon conventional research methods?

Please submit an abstract of 250–300 words outlining your proposed paper, along with a short bio (max 150 words), **by January 31, 2026**, to hotait@dezim-institut.de.

The workshop is designed as an author workshop where full papers are discussed in detail. Selected papers may be considered for inclusion in a special journal issue following the workshop. Selected participants will be asked to submit full papers of 6,000–8,000 words (including references) by May 31, 2026, for circulation prior to the workshop.

For inquiries or further information, please contact: Nader Hotait, hotait@dezim-institut.de; Tom Runge, runge@dezim-institut.de; or Elias Steinhilper, steinhilper@dezim-institut.de.