



Inciting violence or encouraging peace? MeCoDEM kicks off research on governance and conflict management

How do public authorities in Egypt, Kenya, Serbia and South Africa communicate during periods of conflict? And how does this impact on the escalation or resolution of the conflict? These questions will be central to the forthcoming fieldwork activity of EU-funded project “Media, Conflict and Democratisation” (MeCoDEM). The project’s final research phase was kicked off at a fieldwork planning meeting in Belgrade, Serbia, on 4-6 December 2015.

MeCoDEM’s research focus shifts to political communication in its third and last research phase. During the next six months MeCoDEM country teams will interview members of parliament, ministers and tribal chiefs as well as analyse of speeches and laws. The acquired insights will inform the project’s findings on media representation, journalistic ethics and political activism. Taken together they enable MeCoDEM to advance the understanding of communication dynamics in democratisation conflicts.

Prior to the fieldwork planning meeting the project members were welcomed to a joint workshop by the Faculty of Political Sciences (FPN) at the University of Belgrade. Here distinguished local colleagues enriched discussions on MeCoDEM’s preliminary results with their perspectives on Serbian conflict cases. **Snježana Milivojević** addressed the role of recycled conflict frames in remembering events from live coverage of conflicts. **Miroljub Radojković** talked about exploitation of the public interest in conflicts about media legislation. **Ana Milojević** offered an analysis of successes and failures of media democratisation in Serbia.

“It is fantastic to see that our findings are taking shape and provide a sound basis for discussion”, said **Katrin Voltmer**, MeCoDEM’s coordinator. “We are looking forward to adding the last part of the jigsaw now by investigating the communication of political actors.”

About MeCoDEM:

MeCoDEM began on 1 February 2014 and will run over three years. The project investigates the interplay of communication and democratisation conflicts in four countries, Egypt, Kenya, Serbia and South Africa, each of them representing unique aspects of transitional / post-transitional divisions. Based on a comparative case study design, the research covers constitutional conflicts, civic conflicts and conflicts surrounding accountability and good governance. These conflicts constitute arenas of dispute where the media interact with the communicative strategies of governments on the one hand, and political activists and political movements struggling for recognition on the other.

MeCoDEM is funded by the European Union within the EU’s Seventh Framework Programme. With a budget of 2.2 million Euros, the project consortium includes eight partner institutions from six countries: University of Leeds (coordinating institution), University of Belgrade, University of Hamburg, University of Cape Town, University of Oxford, Stockholm University, Ruhr University Bochum and American University in Cairo.

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