Call for Papers
ESTIDIA
(European Society for Transcultural and Interdisciplinary Dialogue)

5th ESTIDIA Conference
Hybrid Dialogues: Transcending Binary Thinking and Moving Away from Societal Polarizations

19 September 2019 (Pre-Conference Workshops)

20-21 September 2019 (Conference)

University of Naples 'L'Orientale' (Italy)

Conference Theme

The 5th ESTIDIA conference, to be held on 19-21 September 2019, is organised together with the *I-LanD* Interuniversity Research Centre and hosted by the University of Naples 'L'Orientale', the oldest school of Sinology and Oriental Studies in Europe, with a strong tradition in language, cultural and social studies. The conference welcomes a wide variety of thematic and disciplinary approaches to hybrid dialogues in various communities of practice across time and space. The theme of the conference was prompted by the risks and challenges posed by the increasing use of virulent polemics both on- and off-line that are constantly shifting the boundaries between traditionally dichotomous forms of communication (e.g., public/private, face-to-face/virtual, formal/informal, polite/impolite) and types of mindsets (e.g., trust/distrust, liberal/illiberal, rational/emotional, biased/unbiased). The dangers of dichotomy (Vickers 1990) run parallel with a blurring of the distinction between real and unreal, true and false, genuine and fake, etc., in terms of both what people say and do, and what they say they do. This is increasingly manifest in behaviours that are far from the ideal way of acting and communicating, i.e. "I do what I say and I say what I do." Instead, the behaviour of many actors in the public sphere indicates the opposite: "Do as I say, not as I do", a distinct expression of double standards. At the same time, conflicting, and often contradictory, understandings of socio-political issues, cultural concepts and historical events are fostered by a proliferation of binary thinking, whereby one side of the divide is set up as positive/right, and the other as its negative/wrong counterpart (Dascal 2008; Munné 2013). Binary or dichotomous thinking is responsible for producing and/or maintaining historically unsustainable hierarchies and inequitable power relations. As a counterbalance of dichotomy-based beliefs and ways of thinking, new and hybrid forms of dialogue are needed to cross the frontiers of established dichotomies, questioning the legitimacy of increasingly conflictual, aggressive and divisive encounters (Sunstein 2007; Mason 2015) conducted both offline (in public meetings, TV debates, political and parliamentary debates, etc.) and online (on social media, such as Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat).

Online dialogue shares certain features with face-to-face dialogue, such as users' connection strategies and bi-directional communication flow. The boundaries between online and offline discourse may sometimes become fuzzy, allowing newly integrated and/or overlapping forms of discourses and uses of language to emerge (Tannen/Trester 2013). For example, YouTube facilitates a practice of communicative interaction by means of comments that typically function as response moves to the initiation of a video posting, but these turns are shaped by the affordances of the YouTube interface, such as display of the most popular and most recent comments first, rather than comments in sequential order (Androutsopoulos 2013; Benson 2016). According to Tromble (2016: 1), Twitter "enable[s] direct interaction and dialogue

between politicians and members of the public", while Zappavigna (2012) points out that Twitter users, although they do not necessarily know each other, may share common interests and get involved in communal performance, such as hashtagging. The findings reported by Gruzd (2012) suggest that there are pockets of political polarization on Twitter (in so-called 'echo chamber' environments – see also KhosraviNik 2017), but at the same time Twitter as a communication and social networking platform may be able to facilitate cross-party and cross-ideological discourse.

In order to foster forms of open and democratic dialogue, it is essential to question the legitimacy of dichotomy-based ways of debate that occur on social media, and expose the surge of abusive language and trolling aimed at weakening trust in civil community and representative institutions. Polymedia (Alm/Lowe 2001; Madianou/Miller 2012) is an emerging environment of communicative opportunities that functions as an 'integrated structure', inextricably linked to the ways in which interpersonal relationships are enacted and experienced. Users switch between these to achieve their purposes: what cannot be achieved by email, can be accomplished by Skype, MUDs or instant messaging, or a phone call. Such flexible communication paradigms have the prerequisites of a hybrid dialogue since Polymedia can be extended to include non-digital forms of communication, such as resorting to face-to-face interaction.

While cyberspace communication environments can trigger and stimulate creative and productive dialogues that can be integrated with face-to-face dialogues, we are still witnessing a growing proliferation of dichotomy-based misperceptions and misrepresentations of world phenomena and societal events (Beaufort 2018), which involve the mismanagement and manipulation of interpersonal relations and institutional power networks, leading to an environment of apprehension, suspicion and insecurity, strongly amplified and aggravated in recent times by anti-social discourse and behavior, extremist movements, and hate speech. Offline and online aggressiveness can have far-reaching consequences for social relationships and compliance with societal norms. Recent research has shown that social media users frequently post aggressive or insulting comments (Papacharissi 2004; Upadhyay 2010; Hutchens *et al*. 2015). Evidence indicates that cyberbullying is more pervasive and has longer lasting consequences than face-to-face bullying (Park *et al*. 2014). Further, there is a potential for online to offline carry-over of conflictual behaviour that fosters polarization and extremism.

In situations when interlocutors fail to listen to each other, genuine dialogue turns into a pseudo-dialogue ('*dialogue des sourds*') made up of disconnected sequences of monologues, or simply into a mock-dialogue of audience-targeted and media-supported performance. At the opposite end of the continuum are newly emerging forms of dialogue, such as 'hybrid dialogues', which mark a paradigm shift through more inclusiveness and easy accessibility, by bridging the gap between public and private, face-to-face and virtual, or formal and informal, modes of communication, and

crossing boundaries across the age, gender and ethnic divide. These hybrid dialogues shape and are shaped by inter-connectedness and co-performativity, since they enable participants to enact their private and public identities in online and offline performances, building interpersonal relationships through intertwined face-to-face and virtual communication in various political, business, educational communities of practice.

A primary goal for researchers is to expose the dichotomy-driven and polarizing slogans, as well as the rhetorical fallacies vehiculated in politically and ideologically manipulative propaganda, whereby the frequent repetition of misconceived one-dimensional notions is creating artificial divisions and barriers in society, between and within socio-political groups, institutions, and various categories of citizens. A wide range of analytical tools pertaining to multi-disciplinary frameworks of analysis can effectively contribute to identifying and critically examining dichotomy-based conceptualisation strategies that undermine existing democratic norms and practices, giving rise to polarized, confrontational and downright violent off- and on-line discourses.

This international ESTIDIA conference, like the preceding ones, offers an open forum for cross-disciplinary and multi-level dialogue among researchers and practitioners interested in exploring dialogic and discursive interaction observable across communities of practices and various social-cultural contexts. The questions participants are called upon to consider, analyse and debate include, but are not limited to, the following:

•	What types of polarized dialogue are to be found in various communities of practice (e.g. business, politics, education, health sector)? What are the distinguishing features of such dialogues in particular institutional settings? How do they emerge and develop?

•	Has the increasing use of social media had a noticeable impact on the proliferation of the use of aggressive language and person-targeted attacks? Does this apply to some forms of social media more than to others?

•	What cross-cultural parallels can be noticed with regard to dichotomy-based polarization patterns in off-line and online dialogues? Is it possible to identify differences in terms of age, gender, education, to name but a few?

•	What dichotomy-based forms of reasoning and arguing are more likely to be found in spoken, written or hybrid types of discourses, respectively?

•	How are the audience's emotions targeted, as well as manipulated, by the use of fallacious dichotomies in online and offline dialogue? Are there strategies that are specific for particular subtypes/instances of these two kinds of dialogue?

- How do face-to-face and online dialogues compare as to the opportunities they offer various categories of interlocutors willing to have their voices heard and their interests taken into account in particular contexts?

- Are there characteristics of the interactants' communicative styles across social media that confirm the assumption that online interactions are more prone to disagreement and conflict? How do they compare to offline interactions?

- What discursive and metadiscursive mechanisms can be found in populist rhetoric deployed in the private and public sphere, whereby speakers resort to audience manipulation through topic dissociations and issue polarizations?

- Is there empirical evidence that indicates a greater tendency of communicating with known others (through the phenomenon of echo chambers) in online or offline interactions?

- What is the role played by digital platforms in reproducing, reinforcing or challenging class and gender systemic inequalities within and across social/professional groups?

- How have radicalised, polarized, confrontational and downright violent discourses of extreme political movements given rise to institutional confrontations and the use of violence in both face-to-face and online interactions?

- To what extent do current media debates about crises of democratic legitimacy overlap, intersect, complement or contradict/compete with each other?

- Whose voices and visions are being articulated in different types of public discourse, and to what particular (converging and diverging) audiences are they targeted?

- To what extent is gender an impactful element in adversarial discursive behaviour? Are women and men equally inclined to initiate confrontational types of dialogue? How similar and/or how different are women and men when reacting/responding to aggressive language?

- What types of argumentation and contra-argumentation strategies are particularly prevalent in female and male professionals/leaders when engaging in adversarial debate?

- How can standards of social cohesion and structures of mutual solidarity be affected and/or changed in a world dominated by divisive discourse and binary thinking?

- How can new, hybrid dialogues help to address the polarization which reinforces the current social and political crises in a vicious circle of multiplying conceptual dichotomies, deceptive binary thinking and fearmongering slogans or 'shockvertising'?

You are warmly welcome to propose contributions from diverse fields of enquiry, including linguistics, media studies, journalism, cultural studies, psychology, rhetoric, political science, sociology, pedagogy, philosophy and anthropology.

Keynote speakers

Marina Bondi, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy

Cornelia Ilie, Strömstad Academy, Sweden

Lucy Jones, University of Nottingham, U.K.

Majid KhosraviNik, University of Newcastle, U.K.

Thematic Workshops

- **The Cyberdiscourse: A Hybrid of Polarized Stances**
  Convenors: **Andra Vasilescu**, **Adriana Ştefănescu**, and **Rodica Zafiu**, University of Bucharest, Romania

- **Languaging in Lingua Franca Interaction: Beyond the Classroom-Workplace Dichotomy**
  Convenor: **Hiromasa Tanaka**, Meisei University, Japan

- **Populism and New/Old Media: The 'Populist Turn' in Western and Emerging Postcommunist Democracies**
  Convenor: **Daniela Rovenţa-Frumuşani**, University of Bucharest, Romania

- **Différences, enjeux constants dans la polarisation des idéaux et des comportements: Expérience (2012/2017) d'un groupe pluridisciplinaire en sciences humaines et santé entre 2012 et 2017**
  Convenors: **Anne Vega** and **Mariana Lecarpentier**, Direction Générale de l'Assistance Publique – Hôpitaux de Paris, France

Methodological Workshops

- **Critical Discourse Studies and Digital Practices: Theory, Methods and Techniques**
  Convenor: **Eleonora Esposito**, University of Navarra, Spain

- **Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis: Methodology, Analysis, Interpretation**

Convenor: **Antonio Fruttaldo**, University of Naples 'L'Orientale', Italy

- **Perspectives on Multimodality: Foundations, Research and Analysis**
  Convenor: **Sole Alba Zollo**, University of Naples Federico II, Italy

Abstract Submission

We invite submissions of abstracts both for individual paper presentations (20 minutes for presentation, to be followed by 10 minutes for questions) to be scheduled in parallel sessions, and for paper presentations within thematic workshops. The thematic workshop format will be determined by the workshop organisers, taking into consideration the correlation of topics/sub-topics and the number of participants.

All abstracts should include the name, institutional affiliation and email address of the author(s), the paper title, and four-five keywords. The abstract should be approximately 500 words in length.

All abstracts will be peer-reviewed by the conference scientific committee according to the following criteria: originality and/or importance of topic; clarity of research question and purpose; data sources; theoretical approach; analytical focus; relevance of findings if already available. We especially encourage abstract submissions from early-career researchers, including postgraduate research students and postdoctoral researchers.

Email abstract submissions to: estidia2019@gmail.com

Conference languages: English, Italian, French, Spanish, German

Workshop Proposal Submissions

In addition to the already listed workshops, we welcome proposals for further workshops devoted to a topic of relevance to the theme of the conference. Proposals should contain relevant information to enable evaluation on the basis of importance, quality, and expected rate of participation. Each workshop should have one or more designated convenors. Proposals should be 1-2 pages long and include at least the following information:
- The workshop topic and goals, their significance, and their appropriateness to ESTIDIA 2019;
- The intended audience, including the research areas from which participants may come, the likely number of participants (with some of their names, if known);

- Convenors' details: a description of the main organisers' research and publication background in the proposed topic; and complete addresses including webpages of the organisers

N.B: The **methodological workshops** are particularly intended for postgraduate students and early career scholars, whose participation is encouraged. Attendance at the conference methodological workshops is free, but prior booking is essential. There is, however, a limit on the number of places in the methodological workshops – a maximum of 40 people. Registration in advance is required. Please register for the workshops on the conference website.

Email workshop proposal submissions to: estidia2019@gmail.com

Important Dates

- Early bird registration opens   1 January 2019
- Deadline for workshop proposals   1 February 2019
- Deadline for abstract submission   28 February 2019
- Notification of acceptance   31 March 2019
- Standard Registration opens   15 June 2019

Registration fee

The early bird registration fee (by 15 June 2019) is **100 EURO**. The late registration fee (after 15 June 2019) is **120 EURO**.

A reduced fee of **80 EURO** applies to students without a regular salary, retired participants, and persons without a regular income. They also apply to all participants from economically challenged countries.

The conference fee includes the book of abstracts, the conference bag, refreshments/coffee breaks and 2 light lunches.

Please check our Conference website for registration details (bank account, etc.).

Conference website: http://www.unior.it/ricerca/18780/3/5th-estidia-conference-hybrid-dialogues-transcending-binary-thinking-and-moving-away-from-societal-polarizations.html

Publication procedure

All accepted papers (following editorial review) will be included in the conference proceedings published in *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Studies and Environmental Communication* (ISSN 2285 – 3324).

Authors of high-quality papers will be given the opportunity to have their papers reviewed for publication in *Palgrave Communications*, a top international journal. Alternatively, they will have the possibility to submit their papers to be reviewed for inclusion in a collective volume published with *Cambridge Scholars Publishing*, a high-impact international academic publisher, with whom ESTIDIA has reached a collaboration agreement.

Scientific Committee

Giuseppe Balirano (University of Naples 'L'Orientale', Italy)

Marina Bondi (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy)

Giuditta Caliendo (Université de Lille, France)

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Majid KhosraviNik (University of Newcastle, UK)

John McKeown (Uskudar American Academy – UAA, Turkey)

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Ana Maria Munteanu (Ovidius University, Constanţa, Romania)

Maria Cristina Nisco (University of Naples Parthenope, Italy)

Cezar Ornatowski (San Diego State University, USA)

Margaret Rasulo (University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli, Italy)

Daniela Rovenţa-Frumuşani (University of Bucharest, Romania)

Arie Sover (Ashkelon Academic College and the Open University, Israel)

Helen Spencer-Oatey (University of Warwick, UK)

Ariadna Ştefănescu (University of Bucharest, Romania)

Girolamo Tessuto (University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli, Italy)

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Organising Committee

Emilio Amideo (University of Naples 'L'Orientale', Italy)

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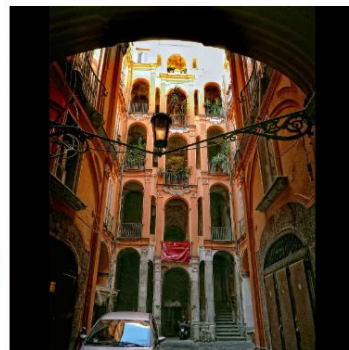**Giusy Piatto** (University of Naples 'L'Orientale', Italy)

Sole Alba Zollo (University of Naples Federico II, Italy)

Angela Zottola (University of Nottingham, UK)

Contact

Please check the Conference website periodically or send inquiries to:
estidia2019@gmail.com

Conference Venue

The venue of the 5th ESTIDIA conference will be the Palazzo del Mediterraneo, University of Naples 'L'Orientale'; https://goo.gl/maps/s7eFBk0ehnF2. Registration, book exhibitions, and most talks will be scheduled in this building.

University website: http://www.unior.it/