

# ECREA Audience and Reception Studies Section

## Section objectives

The Audience and Reception Studies Section organises a strong network for European research and education in the field of audience and reception studies. Research within the section embraces studies of media reception, understood as sense-making and other experiences of audiences in their relation and interaction with all forms of media, studies of media use and usage as well as studies of audience representations and discourses in different contexts such as democratic participation, popular discourse or professional, industry and business environments. It welcomes various approaches (theoretical/critical works, methodological discussions or empirical studies) and methods (quantitative or qualitative research, and mixed methods) and encourages work that crosses disciplines and traditional boundaries (between “old media” and “new media”; between mass communication, group communication and interpersonal communication; between content/production and audience/reception). Additionally, the section invites scholarly work achieved in collaboration or in interaction with various stakeholders, both public and private, as well as reflections about the challenges and opportunities of these encounters.

The section is open to different conceptions of audiences, such as citizens, consumers, publics, users, producers, participants, attendees, etc., and encourages comparative studies on a variety of relevant factors, such as age groups, educational divides, national contexts, etc.). The section recognises the interdisciplinary character of audience and reception research, and the importance of crossing institutional and disciplinary boundaries for our understanding of audiences. It therefore invites contributions from neighbouring fields of research, for example science and technology studies, museum studies, arts and performance studies, social change communication, urban studies, etc., but highlights the need to clearly signal and delimit the contribution to audience and reception research in scholarly work submitted to the section events.

The section actively seeks new theoretical inspirations as well as methodological innovations as means to identify changing conditions in the field of media and communication and generate new research questions. Transformations in the media landscape, such as digitisation of media and communication, interactive affordances of media, and more recent trends such as the platformisation of the web and the datafication of societies, have considerably affected the conditions by which media engage with audiences and vice-versa. The section wishes to underline the importance of mapping these changes and their implications for audiences via empirical studies and critical scholarship, in ways that recognise both the diversity and complexity of audience agency and its threats, co-option or colonisation.

### **Main objectives of the section:**

- To develop further research in the field, i.e. to consolidate existing approaches and methods and to explore new avenues of research.
- To build a culture of exchanges and collaborations between European audience and reception researchers.
- To encourage junior researchers.

- To cooperate with other relevant ECREA sections and other media and communication research associations.
- To communicate existing works from section members to the academic world and to the public at large whenever possible.

**Some topics of interest for the section:**

- Theoretical and methodological challenges for audience and reception studies.
- Media reception as social and political participation.
- Tension, intersection and hybridisation between consumers and citizenship.
- Discourses and representations of audiences.
- Cross-media uses.
- Media and identities.
- Media and everyday/family life.
- Interactivity and produsage.
- Amateur content production, blogging and vlogging.
- Datafication of audiences, media and society.
- Use of digital methods to research audiences and society.