

BSA Media Study Group Annual Report, 2023-24

The *BSA Media Study Group* continues to provide one of the only spaces for media sociologists to both congregate and share ideas. The group began life as the 'News Media Study Group' in 1999. Following a rebrand in 2006, it has been developed to appeal to those exploring media beyond the confines of news journalism and legacy media. It operates presently amid a growing acknowledgement of the importance of media and communications in society more generally and its members reinforce the importance of media study within their ongoing contributions to media-related BSA conference streams, panels and group events.

The group includes a reasonably secure membership (as based on jiscmail registration figures). In practice, members interact regularly through posts on the groups' jiscmail discussion list. In doing so, they often update others on relevant research and information on conferences and publications as well as engaging more generally in detailed discussion as part of events hosted by the group. Such interactions are encouraged by the group's commitment to providing spaces for the discussion of research projects and topics by both early career researchers and established academics, as is demonstrated below.

This year, and as inspired by ongoing world events, the group hosted a single day conference entitled – 'Media at Times of Crisis and Conflict. This brought together media sociologists and interested audiences to examine and discuss the place of media in experiences of ongoing crisis and conflict situations. Hosting nine speakers across three specialised sessions (i.e., (i) *Conflict/ Crisis Production and Communication* , (ii) *Conflict / Crisis Content and Impacts* , (iii) *Crisis / Conflict Audiences and Technology*), the event offered insights into current projects and research findings alongside designated spaces – for both the speakers and the gathered audience – to reflect on the presentations and make connections between various themes - whether those focused on the pandemic, conflict in Ukraine , the climate crisis, far right activities or general health disinformation - and their own insights and research experiences.

On the basis of the success of this event, its format will be taken forward into the next year's events.

Dr Julian Matthews, Convenor BSA Media Study Group.