

# YOUNG SCHOLARS NETWORK (YECREA)

## NETWORK ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2012

### **1. Organisation**

Elections were held at the ECC 2012 in Istanbul. Alenka Jelen (vice-chair) and Julie Uldam (vice-chair) stepped down as vice-chairs due to their taking up new functions in ECREA.

Benjamin De Cleen stays on as chair of the network. Anne Kaun of Södertörn University and Christian Schwarzenegger of Augsburg University were elected as vice-chairs. Each of the members of the management team was elected with 29 YES votes, 0 NO votes, NO abstentions, and 1 invalid vote. No competing teams were presented.

Benjamin, Anne and Christian are now members (ex-officio) of the editorial board of "PLATFORM: Journal of Media and Communication", a biannual open-access online postgraduate publication.

Membership: The young scholars' network now (25 October 2012) has 307 members, an increase of 27 since 2011.

### **2. Activities**

#### **Information dissemination**

One of the main tasks of YECREA is to provide information dissemination. YECREA informs its members of job opportunities, conferences, workshops, and relevant publications through the website [yecrea.eu](http://yecrea.eu), a bi-annual newsletter, and a facebook group.

In 2012, the website [yecrea.eu](http://yecrea.eu) continued to be used for information dissemination.

The Yecrea facebook group has now become the main channel of information dissemination. The facebook presence has resulted in increased interactivity. The group now has 322 members (an increase of 42 since 2011).

In 2012 YECREA continued to develop and coordinate its network of young scholar representatives in the ECREA sections and in all countries of Europe. Representatives to the TWG's are also being introduced. Representatives continued to inform young scholars through the Yecrea website and the facebook group.

#### **Young scholars workshops**

YECREA representative in the Audience and Reception Studies Section, Ranjana Das, organised a cross-generational workshop in Brussels in April 2012.

Three generations of audience researchers met for an intensive day of plenaries and parallel workshop sessions at the Facultes Universitaires Saint Louis, Brussels, on 11th April 2012. Co-organized by YECREA (Ranjana Das) and COST IS0906 Transforming

Audiences transforming Societies, and supported by the Audience and Reception Studies section of ECREA, the workshop looked closely at future prospects and challenges ahead in the field of audience research. Denis McQuail began the day with thoughts on the past fifty years of audience research tracing the field's origins from the early days of mass communication research, followed by David Buckingham speaking on public representations of the audience, Kim Schroeder on methodological innovation and dogmas in audience reception studies, Martin Barker on the ethical responsibilities of being an audience researcher, and Sonia Livingstone on the challenges that lie ahead for the field.

This was followed by 15 workshops, spread over three sessions with 5 parallel workshops in each. The plenary speakers (mentors) worked individually with small groups of 2 to 5 doctoral students discussing three different aspects of their research – theoretical challenges, empirical rigour and locating oneself in the field. Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt concluded this intensive day with a closing plenary on planning an academic career as a young audience researcher.

The Taylor and Francis journal *Communication Review* published a special issue guest-edited by Ranjana Das (University of Leicester, UK) with Andrea Press (University of Virginia, Charlottesville) consisting of the plenary talks and peer-reviewed essays from young scholars. A call for papers has been circulated to the participants, for submission by August 2012. Publication of this special issue is scheduled for 2013, Volume 16 (1).

At the ECC 2012, YECREA organised a young scholar workshop on internationalisation and mobility entitled: 'Perpetuum Mobile? A Young Scholar's Guide to the Galaxy of Internationalization and Mobility in Academia'. The workshop was organized by Olivier Driessens, Anne Kaun, Christian Schwarzenegger, and Esengül Ayildiz. Between 45 and 50 people attended the workshop and had a very lively discussion with the panelists.

Academia is inherently and is increasingly becoming international. For a young scholar taking your first steps into the academic field, it seems to be no longer a question if you want to engage in international networks and whether you are to become an academic nomad. As international experiences and mobility have become crucial assets on the academic job market, the right question to ask rather seems to be how to become a node in international networks and how to ensure you make the most out of wherever your efforts of mobility take you to. Internationality and an intellectual cosmopolitanism are compelling components of the academic life-style – but they are costly. Even as a scholar you still have something like a life outside of academia and at times you may doubt how internationalization and being persistently on the move are compatible with leading a somewhat "normal" life.

Addressing amenities and hassles of the increasing internationalization of the field this workshop offered a platform for discussing if and how to go international and how to get the most out of this profession's benefits without paying a too big (personal) price. The discussion was focused on internationalization more generally: intensified globalization has resulted in closer connections between universities all over the world, receiving and sending their staff and students across the globe to prepare them for international careers. At the same time new boundaries are emerging in the globalized and neoliberal academic

landscape. For young scholars, internationalization is increasingly not an option, but a necessity on their track, while financial security, stable patterns of social contacts, relationships and families are not indicators that pay off in terms of “impact factors” and academic rankings. The consequences of this potential state of “forced internationality” as well as possible alternatives will be discussed critically.

The workshop also touched on more practical issues. Accepting that internationality is now a crucial element of academia, the panelists discussed on research visits abroad for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers. More practical issues that young scholars have to deal with were addressed. For example, what criteria are important when selecting possible candidates for visiting positions? What are the goals of a research visit? Is it better to go at the beginning or at the end of your (post-)doctoral research? And how about funding?

The panel consisted of both professors who have selected and supervised incoming students at their universities, and doctoral and post-doctoral researchers who have spent time abroad during or after their PhD. They shared and discussed their personal experiences and estimations with the other participants and the audience.

Panellists were Prof. Nick Couldry (Goldsmiths, University of London), Prof. Sonia Livingstone (LSE, University of London), Prof. Clemencia Rodriguez (University of Oklahoma), Dr. Gabriele Balbi (Northumbria University), and Tina Askanius (Lund University).

### **Other events**

Christian Schwarzenegger presented YECREA at a meeting of the German young communication scholars DgPuk in Mainz in September 2012.

At the ECC 2012, YECREA, with much help from Esengül Ayildiz, Nigar Digermerci, and Burcu Yılmaz Gündüz organised an excursion to independent media organisation Bianet. Around 25 people visited the Bianet offices, where Bianet presented its workings.

At the ECC 2012, YECREA (again with the help of Esengül Ayildiz and Nigar Digermerci) also organised a very well attended social event.

### **ECREA Wikipedia presence**

In 2011-2012, (then) YECREA representatives Anne Kaun, Christian Schwartzenegger and Ana Alacovska wrote and published the ECREA Wikipedia entry. They presented a paper based on the work they did for this entry at the ECC 2012.

### **3. Future plans**

YECREA's main plans for 2013 are to sustain and further develop its current activities and network of section and country reps.

YECREA will organise workshops and social events for young scholars at as many of the sections' conferences in 2013 as possible. It will do so through the involvement of its section reps and country reps.

YECREA will publish a report based on the YECREA workshop on internationalisation and mobility at the ECC in Istanbul.