

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### ***FEMINIST MEDIA STUDIES* SPECIAL ISSUE** **Mediating Post-Socialist Femininities**

Edited by: Nadia Kaneva, University of Denver  
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The year 2014 will mark a quarter of a century since the opening of the Berlin Wall – an event that came to symbolize the end of the Cold War and the failure of state socialism as a plausible alternative to liberal democracy. The end of the socialist experiment in Central and Eastern Europe also meant that gendered relations of power in the former “Eastern Bloc” were up for renegotiation. In the post-socialist context, many women were eager to discard the ideological models of socialist femininity, which had depicted them for decades as mythical heroines – workers, mothers, and revolutionaries. At the same time, the range of new post-socialist femininities was constrained by unprecedented economic, political, and technological changes. A rapid shift to neoliberal policies undermined many of the socialist achievements for women in terms of public participation. Newly liberalized and privatized media industries churned out hyper-sexualized representations of women, unseen during socialist times. An influx of foreign capital and media content, as well as new communication technologies, also meant that struggles over the construction and performance of post-socialist femininities were inevitably enmeshed with transnational and global ones.

Although much has been written about media and cultural change in the post-socialist world, the bulk of existing literature within the field of media and communication studies continues to pay limited attention to feminist perspectives and to women’s issues more broadly. This special issue seeks to address this gap and provide a forum for innovative, feminist media scholarship on women’s experiences, struggles, and identities as they intersect with media production, distribution, and consumption in the post-socialist context. Political philosopher Nancy Fraser has argued that “post-socialism” describes the global state of politics after the end of the Cold War. However, the scope of this issue is informed by a conviction that post-socialism has a particularly visceral and immediate significance in the lived experiences of people in the former Eastern Bloc. Hence, this issue will focus specifically on research that explores gender and mediation in relation to the geographic regions of Central and Eastern Europe (including the Balkans) and the former Soviet Union.

A second goal of this special issue is to open up a space for transnational examination of Western feminist theory in light of the post-socialist experience. In the English-language academe today, it is not unusual to discuss gender and media in relation to various “paths” (e.g. socialist, liberal, postcolonial, etc.) and “waves” of feminism. However, the particular challenges presented by post-socialist women’s experiences offer an opportunity to revisit some of these received knowledges and trajectories of feminist scholarship and to raise new questions about the changing nature of feminism as a political and a theoretical project with many faces.

The following questions suggest some, though not all, directions for inquiry that will be of interest for this issue:

- What is the role of media and of mediation, as a broader cultural process, in the lived experiences and struggles of post-socialist women?
- How have post-socialist women engaged with media as media producers and consumers, as well as objects of media representation?
- What is the significance of rapid and spectacular commodification of mediated femininities in the post-socialist context and beyond?
- How does the female body serve as a battleground for the enactment and renegotiation of gendered identities in the post-socialist context?
- How can we understand and theorize women's protest and activist movements in the post-socialist cultural space?
- How can research on the mediation of post-socialist femininities inform broader, transnational concerns about feminism as a political and a theoretical project?

This issue seeks to include a range of methodologies and sites for the examination of post-socialist femininities and their mediation. Studies that go beyond textual analyses of media representations and conceive of gendered mediation as a broader cultural process are particularly encouraged. Theoretical discussions related to this issue's key questions are also welcome.

Please submit a 350-word abstract to Dr. Nadia Kaneva at: [nkaneva@du.edu](mailto:nkaneva@du.edu) no later than **July 15, 2013**. Authors whose abstracts are selected will be asked to submit complete manuscripts by January 31, 2014. Acceptance of the abstract does not guarantee publication of the paper, which will be subject to peer review.

### **Aims and Scope**

*Feminist Media Studies* provides a transdisciplinary, transnational forum for researchers pursuing feminist approaches to the field of media and communication studies, with attention to the historical, philosophical, cultural, social, political, and economic dimensions and analysis of sites including print and electronic media, film and the arts, and new media technologies. The journal invites contributions from feminist researchers working across a range of disciplines and conceptual perspectives.

*Feminist Media Studies* offers a unique intellectual space bringing together scholars, professionals and activists from around the world to engage with feminist issues and debates in media and communication. Its editorial board and contributors reflect a commitment to the facilitation of international dialogue among researchers, through attention to local, national and global contexts for critical and empirical feminist media inquiry.

For guidelines on how to format your paper, please visit the "Instructions for Authors" section on the *Feminist Media Studies* website: [www.tandf.co.uk/journals/rfms](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/rfms).

When submitting your paper, please **do not** follow the link "Submit Online" through ScholarOne/Manuscript Central as special issue papers are handled directly via email with the special issue Editor.