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Media and Society: the Role of Television

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Historian Christina von Hodenberg told FBK how television has changed the pace and habits of families since the post-war period until today

On August 31, FBK's **Italian-German Historical Institute** hosted a seminar by **Christina von Hodenberg**, a professor of European history at Queen Mary University in London and an expert in the history of journalism and the media. The seminar, titled "Writing the National and Transnational Mass Media History after 1945", ideally launched the activities of the new 2017-2019 strategic plan of the institute, led by newly appointed director **Christoph Cornelissen**.

The work of von Hodenberg has focused mainly on the concept of "**mediatization**", namely the progressively increased impact of the media (in particular **television**) on the habits and customs of modern society. Starting from the 1950s, in the period defined as the "limited choice" one, when there were very few television channels and everyone watched the same programs: the language of television was therefore one, and anyone wishing to use television to influence the public's views and gather consensus, like **politicians**, had to adapt to that language.

The scenario has changed very rapidly in recent years. "There have been steps of major change in how media can influence choices and opinions such as, in Italy, the case of Berlusconi," the professor stressed. "Later on, with the advent of the **Internet** in the late 1990s, the hegemonic role of television was overcome."

The media available today are many more, but according to von Hodenberg they are not mutually exclusive at all. "People tend to use more media **at the same time**, devoting in total more time to the media than in the past."

Another important issue discussed during the seminar was the **transnational** nature of mass media. "By their very nature, the media provide information and content that cannot be confined to national boundaries. Especially the television entertainment industry, which includes film broadcasting, has always been a borderless market. And there are examples of real transnational television programs, such as the **Eurovision Song Contest**. "

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