

Department for Communication and Media Research **DCM**

## Gressly and Fleck Lecture 2015

The DCM is pleased to announce the  
Max Gressly and Florian Fleck Lecture  
given annually by our visiting resident scholar

**Tuesday, November 3, 2015**

17:15-18:45

Room B130

**Prof. Dr. Christopher Ali**

Department of Media Studies, University of Virginia/USA

**What does it mean to be local?  
Lessons from media policy and regulation**



The United States, United Kingdom, and Canada are each experiencing a resurgence of “the local” in everything from commerce (“Small Business Saturday”), ecology (“Buy Fresh, Buy Local”), boosterism (“Keep it Local”), news (“Read Local”), and politics (“Big Society”). Not to be left out, media regulators have also been struck by this local agenda. Indeed, the reemergence of the local in society and culture has put questions of local control, local content, and local news squarely on the media regulation agenda. But what exactly does it mean to be local within the context of media policy and regulation? This is not an easy question to answer, as our relationship with the local, and with related concepts like “place” and “community,” is contingent upon individual subjectivities, experiences, histories, politics, cultures, and discourses. This presentation seeks to address this question through a discussion of local media policies in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Drawing on my forthcoming book *Media Localism*, I argue that a political economy of localism has emerged within media policy that discourages alternative approaches to localism that might resolve the many ideological, political, economic and regulatory challenges facing local media. At its core, this system has rendered localism a rhetorically pleasant, but ultimately empty term. Suggestions of how to recover media localism for the 21st century conclude the presentation, as we seek to better understand the place of local media in policy and everyday life.

*Christopher Ali is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Media Studies at the University of Virginia. A visiting scholar in the Department of Communication and Media Research at the Université de Fribourg in the summer of 2015, his research interests include comparative media policy & regulation, localism, community and public media, and critical political economy.*