

Workshop (Forced) Migration and Media

University of Leicester

13th and 14th of June, 2016

Outline Day 1 – Interdisciplinary Workshop aimed at academic knowledge exchange

The 4 streams:

- Stream 1: Media representations of (forced) migration

While discussing attempts by migrants who have made the crossing to Europe from Calais through the English Channel last August, David Cameron has referred to them as a "swarm" (BBC, 2015) and other government representatives, journalists, politicians and policymakers have used a language that is similarly dehumanizing people looking for a refuge in the UK (see Malmberg, 2004; Masocha & Simpson, 2011; Stevens, 2010, Baker et al., 2008; Khosravini, 2010). Yet, at a local level, in towns, cities and communities across Britain, British residents - first generation migrants as well as native citizens – communicate, connect, organize and work together with refugee people against an inadequate governmental language and intervention. In this stream we will explore the possible discrepancy between the highly mediated national discursive representations of refugee people, on the one hand, and locally circulating discourses and practices that do not receive similar media coverage, on the other hand. We will also look at the role of the various representations in the consolidation or resistance against national and local discriminatory practices, especially after the attack at Paris's Bataclan and the New Year's Eve sexual assaults in Cologne.

The main questions therefore are:

- how refugees are represented in the media?
- are there discrepancies between mediated national discursive representation of refugee people and discourses and practices at the local level?

- Stream 2: Methodology, media and migration

In this section we consider different methodological approaches that can help us to further understand the interplay between media and (forced) migration. Localized methodological approaches towards media-use enables us to further the understanding on how media constitutes and enables social processes and plays out in the everyday. We wonder how we can apply - what used to be more static - approaches like ethnography with a mobile population, what role quantitative methods can play in understanding this phenomenon and how and what lessons can we draw from anthropological research with settled and/or non-forced migrants. We will also explore the methodological challenges of working with a vulnerable population. The main aim of this session is to establish a dialogue between scholars using different methods, so we can together find ways to know differently.

- Stream 3: Trajectories of (forced) migrants.

In this theme we will explore a variety of issues which revolve around the role of media, both traditional and digital, in the lives of migrants. We have set a double aim: Initially, to enrich existing knowledge with the latest research on how diasporic communities use media to maintain ties with the homeland and the family "left behind", as well as to facilitate their social inclusion in the receiving countries. Secondly, to introduce ongoing empirical research projects in a relatively new field that seeks to understand the role of (digital) media in migrant's trajectories. In particular, we seek to explore the importance of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) affordances for populations that are currently fleeing their countries: in relation to planning their journey, coping with the intense feeling of insecurity about their future on a daily basis as well as promoting transnational activism towards their right for safety, safe movement and a new life.

- Stream 4: Media power in the politics of (forced) migration

The European Union and its member states have implemented a series of political measures aimed at providing a political response to what has been called the largest refugee crisis in human history. According to the thesis known as "CNN-effect", media are to be considered as the main driving force of humanitarian interventionism and refugee reception policies. However, the pressure that media can impose on policy makers is oftentimes circumvented to realm of "cosmetic" policy responses (see Gowing 1994). A final and opposite thesis suggests instead that media rather than driving political responses (substantial or cosmetic), simply reflect the policy agendas of government officials (see Livingston and Eachus 1995).

This stream explores the link between media and the political measures implemented by the European Union and its member states; the main interest of this stream revolves around the ambiguous role that media can play within the field of humanitarian interventionism.

The main question of this stream is whether media shape policies and if yes, to what extent? What role can we as academia play in this shaping of policy?

Outline - Program of the workshop Day 1, The 13th of June, 2016:

- 10.00 – 10.30 Registration - Tea and coffee.
- 10.30 – 10.45 Opening
- 10.45 – 11.15 Key note 1
- 11.15 – 11.45 Key note 2
- 11.45 – 12.00 Small coffee break.
- 12.00 – 12.30 Key note 3
- 12.30 – 13.00 Key note 4
- 13.00 – 14.30 Lunch
- 14.30 – 16.30 Workshop, subgroups working with key note speakers.
- 16.30 – 17.00 Closing – Round table key notes.
- 17.30 – 19.30 Dinner, opportunity to further network and socialize.