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Migration in Media Histories

While migration has always been a defining feature of human history, shaping societies, cultures and economies across the globe, it seems safe to say that nowadays it is a more contested and emotionally charged issue than ever before. Migration encompasses a wide range of experiences of human mobility, including labour migration, postcolonial migration, refugee conditions, exile, diaspora, and other forms of (forced) displacement driven by economic, political and/or environmental forces. Political responses to the social realities of our 'age of migration' are marked by fear, panic, anger, resentment, hatred, bitterness, and hostility.[1] Today's global political landscape is witnessing the rapid rise and expansion of populist, far-right, and alt-right movements that advocate zealous nationalism and virulent anti-immigration sentiments. By constantly evoking fear and disgust of migrants, and by portraying them as threats to cultural identity, economic stability, and national security, these political movements contribute to and capitalise upon, what Sara Ahmed has coined, our current 'affective economy of migration', in which emotions are instrumental in constructing immigrants as 'others'.[2] The proliferation of right-wing populism and the far-right, and the popular backlash against migrants that has been unfolding in recent times in the global north demonstrate the normalisation and naturalisation of previously marginalised forms of xenophobia, racism, and nationalism. As a consequence, we are increasingly confronted with the ways in which these political fears and anxieties materialise in exclusionary and violent border regimes in the global north. Today, we are witnessing a rise in anti-immigrant protests and violence across European countries, securitisation of borders, stricter immigration law enforcement, lethal push-back policies by the EU's border agency Frontex around the Mediterranean sea, the instalment of laws criminalising helping illegals and, in the US, disruptive deportation raids by ICE, where foreign nationals end up in detention camps awaiting court cases without legal aid.

Violence towards migrants also takes place in the domain of media representation. Global political debates on migration are fuelled by an endless array of narratives, images and frames provided and reproduced by (mainstream) media, such as the press, television, film, radio, and social media platforms. Media discourses can be considered co-constitutive of the violence of global border regimes, since they often confine migrants to rigid stereotypes, such as dangerous invaders, passive helpless

victims, uncivilised and racialised 'others', bogus asylum seekers, and fortune seekers.[3] Scholarship has revealed that such portrayals circulate affects of fear and pity, dehumanise migrants by denying them agency and voice, and often reiterate the neoliberal discourse of deservingness, that categorises migrants in terms of those who are deserving and useful for the nation (often labelled as 'genuine refugees') and those who are undeserving and useless (often labelled as 'asylum seekers', ; 'fortune seekers', and 'migrants').[4] Besides, scholarship has raised concerns about the persistent framing of migration from the global south to the global north as a 'crisis' or 'emergency'.[5] Such framing connotes events that are sudden and alarming in nature, thereby neglecting the temporal dimensions of human mobility and disregarding the long durée of migration and migration policies. Besides, such framing perpetuates Eurocentric perspectives constructing the global north as the gravitational centre of events, thereby ignoring the incredible risks taken by migrants worldwide.[6] Eleonar Paynter argues that 'emergency' and 'crisis' labels cultivate what historian Michele Colucci has called 'an obsession with the present', and frame precarious migration as taking place in 'an endless, ahistorical now', despite the fact that these migration 'emergencies' signal continuity rather than sudden change.[7] Similarly, other scholars have pointed out that media coverage of migration tends to be ahistorical by denying the historical roots of conflicts causing migrants to leave, and by making invisible the historical connections between migratory movements and the (colonial) pasts of the 'host' countries.[8]

This special issue on migration in media histories explicitly aims to move beyond this persistent ahistorical rhetoric of 'crisis' and 'emergency', and wants to both acknowledge and foreground the temporal and historical dimensions of migration as a phenomenon, an experience, and a process. Many European countries have histories of migration driven by the legacies of colonialism and post-WW II reconstruction efforts. Today's moral panics over migration are rooted in discontents about our multicultural societies that emerged as a consequence of these migratory movements. The descendants of labour and postcolonial migrants, despite their birth-righted legal citizenship, are often still regarded as outsiders, compelled to continuously prove and demonstrate their national belonging. It is our contention that the current xenophobic sentiments cannot be fully understood without turning to the past and scrutinising the historical roots of today's anti-immigration climate. The enduring nature of migration patterns over time raises questions about how migrants have been mediated in the past, how media representations have been informed by colonial relations, how migrant voices have been silenced and excluded previously, and how forms of

epistemic violence have emerged historically. Besides, we can ask questions about how media enabled migrants to organise, identify and express themselves. To borrow from sociologist Saulo Cwerner's work on the temporality of migration, we can question how media enables us to think and conceptualise the heteronomous, asynchronous, remembered, liminal, diasporic and nomadic histories (and futures) of migration.[9] Historicising the entanglement of media and migration thereby becomes indispensable. Despite the proliferation of scholarship on the nexus of media and migration, a profound historical approach is still rather undeveloped. Therefore, this special issue on migration in media histories has a double impetus: it aims to counter the ahistorical representation of migration by foregrounding its temporal dimensions, and it wants to respond to the gap in media and migration studies by presenting relevant avenues for media historical research.

The field of media and migration studies has become an interdisciplinary research area where different approaches and methodologies meet.[10] What binds these approaches is the inherent link between migration and mediation, as media serve both as important tools for imagining and visualising migration, and as essential means of communication for migrants both locally in the land of arrival, and between the 'new' land and the homeland. Discursively, media have a double role when it comes to representing migration and diaspora. In its hegemonic function they consolidate existing political relations by reproducing familiar media frames and visual regimes. At the same time, film, radio, television, and digital media are equally instrumental in formulating, imagining, and vocalising counternarratives 'from below'. They allow not only for what Stuart Hall has labelled the representation of difference, but also potentially for counter-strategies that challenge, contest, and possibly transform the politics of representation.[11] This interplay of various media operations has resulted in an interdisciplinary perspective on media and migration, focusing at once on structural, systemic, and institutional perspectives, while also opening up for individual, singular productions and media objects.

In journalism and media studies, a lot of scholarly work has been done on media representation and framing of migration in print media and audio-visual forms of journalism.[12] This research has shown that, while refugees and migrants are hypervisible as subjects of news stories, their dehistoricising and dehumanising representation tends to result in invisibility.[13] A substantial amount of research has been published since the refugee 'crisis' of 2015, and has identified media mechanisms of othering, through the framing of refugees as threats or voiceless victims and through reducing them to numbers that need to be managed.[14] The question of visibility/invisibility is also

taken up on in the study of fiction and documentary film, particularly in relation to the violent borderscapes of 'Fortress Europe' and the refugee 'crisis'. Besides studies that identify familiar stereotypes of migrants and refugees in fictional formats and documentaries, scholarship focuses on alternative representations that disrupt and unsettle dominant frames and visual regimes.[15] Here, the cinematic mediation of migration is discussed in terms of 'accented cinema', 'postcolonial cinema', '(im)migrant and/or diasporic cinema', 'Fifth Cinema' and, more general, in terms of migrant (first-person) voices and perspectives.[16] What these approaches have in common is their focus on the strategies that filmmakers use to counter the representational regime that racialises and criminalises migration and to contest hegemonic notions of 'Europeanness'. As such, these studies centre on migrant voices, perspectives, and identities, as well as migrant authorship and ownership. Likewise, studies in (transnational) migrant radio and podcasting address how sound media can provide room for migrant voices and experiences. [17]

Currently, scholarship on media and migration has shifted towards digital media.[18] Alongside research on how mechanisms of dehumanising and de-historicising migrants and refugees gain power in the digital new media environment, scholarly work focuses on the potential role of migrant voice and agency, as well as on migrant media use.[19] Digital migration studies and research into digital diasporas, drawing on concepts such as 'mediascapes' and 'shared imaginaries on the move', 'migrant polymedia' and 'the connected migrant', have become crucial frameworks for understanding the intersection of media and migration in contemporary globalised society.[20] Studies revolve around migrants' use of digital media for maintaining connections with their home countries, for navigating new environments, and for building communities in their host countries.[21] Additionally, scholarly work focuses on the role of digital media as what Kaarina Nikunen, following Hannah Arendt, has termed 'spaces of appearance': sites for cultural expression, identity formation and digital activism of migrants and refugees.[22] This research moves away from mainstream media representation and reveals how online grassroot and collaborative contexts can form counter-narratives to the persistent stereotyping, undo the hierarchies of representation, and give voice and agency to migrants and refugees themselves.[23]

While the historical perspective on media and migration is still quite underdeveloped within this significant body of work on media and migration, promising avenues of research have emerged recently. Moving away from contemporary representations of migration in the media, a growing number of scholars have turned to analysing media representations of migration over time.[24] These studies demonstrate that historicising of media narratives of migration and paying attention to wider

temporalities can help to understand the emergence and persistence of (stereotypical) stories and images of migration, and to recognise the historical roots of contemporary media discourse of migration. Besides, scholars have shown that computational approaches can offer promising opportunities for historical, cross-media, and systematic longitudinal research on media and migration.[25] Another productive line of historical research on media and migration revolves around archives and mediated memories of migration. Various scholars engage with (marginalised) audiovisual collections, and study the archival representation of migrant communities, and the systematic underrepresentation and silencing of these groups in heritage.[26] Others seek to examine the remediation of archival footage of migration to demonstrate how media re-narrativise migration, and how media make (counterhegemonic) use of mediated migratory memories in contemporary productions.[27] Besides, scholarly work focuses on the history of multicultural programming in European broadcasting.[28] And finally, scholars are invested in historically-informed inquiries of media technology and media use across migration contexts.[29]

This special issue on migration in media histories seeks to further these promising avenues of historical research on the topic of media and migration. The case-studies presented here collectively address predigital mediations of migration and offer complex and nuanced analyses that show how migrant communities were represented in the past and over time, how they were addressed by the media, and how migrant filmmakers' work has been subject to insufficient archival strategies. Each contribution is exemplary for the promising avenues that research on media and migration can take, varying from spotlighting the understudied representation of postcolonial migrants on television, to taking a longitudinal approach to the television representation of labour migrants, to examining the overlooked work of a diasporic female filmmaker documenting labour migration, and finally to scrutinising exilic radio production that targeted labour migrants. Three of the scholars whose work appears in this issue focus on the Dutch context, and all of the studies included here are situated in Europe. This is not in any way a reflection of the importance of the Dutch context and merely a matter of coincidence. We contend and hope that the research presented in these case-studies can invite other scholars working in the field of media and migration to expand these approaches to other national contexts.

Our special issue opens with Leonie Schmidt's "A Conditional Welcome: Early Dutch Television and the Affective Terms of Postcolonial Inclusion", which discusses Dutch television representation of repatriates from Indonesia in the 1950s and 1960s. Drawing on the work of Sara Ahmed on hospitality,

affect and conditional inclusion, Smidt investigates how postwar Dutch television shaped narratives of Indo-Dutch and Moluccan repatriation, and explores how television functioned as a key medium for producing the emotional terms of postcolonial inclusion. Thereby Smidt explores how televised hospitality narratives function as a mechanism of conditional belonging, where inclusion is tied to the expectation of gratitude and adaptation. Schmidt convincingly argues that in the 1950s television constructed a self-congratulatory narrative of repatriation as a national success story, depicting the Dutch state as an efficient and benevolent moral actor, while portraying repatriates as voiceless and exoticised 'others', whose belonging was granted only on the condition of obedience, gratitude and economic usefulness. In the 1960s, as Schmidt demonstrates, new television genres enabled repatriates to voice their experiences of marginalisation, discrimination and misrecognition. However, despite the emergence of a critical counter-narrative that challenged the idealised image of Dutch hospitality, television persisted in framing repatriates as 'others', whose inclusion remained conditional. Schmidt's compelling article not only sheds light on an understudied part of Dutch television history, it also adds a postcolonial dimension to Ahmed's critique of the discourse of hospitality. Ultimately, the article demonstrates that the emotional politics of inclusion, that are so prominent in today's affective economy of migration, were already articulated in Dutch television programming of the 1950s and 1960s. It reveals that even migrants who were legally Dutch were subjected to conditional hospitality.

Andrea Meuzelaar's contribution "Reporting on the Rituals of Islam: Changing Televisual Narratives on Integration and National Belonging of Muslim Immigrants" also critically addresses conditional Dutch hospitality, in her case through a longitudinal study of Dutch television representation of Muslim labour migrants. Starting from the arrival of Turkish and Moroccan 'guest workers' in the 1960s, Meuzelaar's study traces Dutch television coverage of Islamic rituals over five decades, and investigates the evolving televisual narratives on national belonging of Muslims. Grounded in extensive archival research and drawing on scholarly work on the discourse of deservingness, conditional hospitality, and the stereotyping of Muslims, the study demonstrates the gradual emergence of a 'good Muslim/bad Muslim' approach on Dutch television. Meuzelaar's article reveals that during the first two decades of Islamic immigration, Dutch television portrayed Muslim labour migrants as exotic and deserving of hospitality, while from the 1980s onwards, as it became clear that the Muslim 'guest workers' were here to stay and were increasingly evaluated in terms of integration, television began to gradually present two competing narratives: of the well-adapted,

integrated, deserving Muslim whose religious practices aligned with Dutch values, and of the maladjusted, undeserving Muslim whose religious practices conflicted with Dutch values. Ultimately, Meuzelaar's longitudinal approach enhances the understanding of the historical roots of contemporary discourses of national belonging of Muslims, and demonstrates that, despite their legal citizenship, only Muslims who are similar to 'us' and who have reciprocated 'our' hospitality with adaptation and integration, can inhabit the Dutch nation. Through historicising the discourse of deservingness and the stereotyping of Muslims that characterise today's affective economy of migration, the article opens a relevant avenue for further research within media and migration studies.

Turning to a double story of migration, Aslı Özgen's thought-provoking "The Relational Mode: Farideh Fardjam's Documentary Strategies of Migration and Intersectional Archival Activism" examines the work of Iranian filmmaker Farideh Fardjam, a diasporic female filmmaker who documented Turkish labour migrants in the 1970s in the Netherlands, and whose work has ever since been overlooked and faded into oblivion. Özgen takes a twofold approach and both places Fardjam's work in the context of broader archival silences surrounding the legacies of migrant, diasporic, and displaced women filmmakers, and analyses the documentary strategies that Fardjam developed to represent labour migration in its full complexity. Drawing on the work of Édouard Glissant, Özgen proposes 'the relational mode' to characterise Fardjam's foregrounding of migration as both a thematic and methodological concern in her filmmaking practice. The article offers an profound analysis of two documentaries, that convincingly shows how Fardjam's films served as a critique of the exploitation of 'guest workers', of the discourse of hospitality, and of transnational capitalism and patriarchy. Özgen thereby demonstrates how Fardjam channelled her own experiences of migration into a documentary ethics and aesthetics of collaboration with her migrant subjects, while also connecting Fardjam's positionality to broader contexts of feminist and activist documentary filmmaking of the time. With her insightful analysis of these predigital 'spaces of appearance' of migrants, Özgen advocates the capacity that Fardjam's documentary strategies have for unsettling the way migrants are represented today, and calls out for new intersectional archival strategies to ensure that such pioneering work of diasporic women filmmakers is not forgotten.

We close our special issue with yet another double story of migration: Maria Adamopoulou's "Exiled Airwaves: the Greek Communist Radio in Bucharest Addressing the Gastarbeiter in West Germany (1960-1968)". In this article, the author turns the spotlight on an understudied historical media object: the exiled Greek communist radio station 'The Voice of Truth', that was based in

Bucharest, and that targeted Greek 'guest workers' in West Germany. By examining a radio station operated by political exiles that targeted labour migrants across the Iron Curtain, Adamopoulou adopts a transnational perspective on radio broadcasting in Cold War Europe. Thereby, Adamopolou departs from the still dominant focus in Cold War media history on the binary East-West, as well as from studying diasporic and migrant media in terms of 'home' and 'host' country. The article is based on a profound study of the archival records of the station, and provides a fascinating insight into the various media strategies that the Greek political refugees in Bucharest used to address their fellow Greek migrant workers in West Germany, situating the broadcaster's aim of offering informed resistance to capitalism and (internal Greek) right-wingism in the broader context of Cold War propaganda struggles. The study shows how the radio shows provided news that addressed the conditions of the migrant workers, such as miserable housing and exploitation, and that framed these conditions in terms of a broader transnational struggle against capitalist exploitation and right-wing ideologies. As such, the article gives important insights into a forgotten historical chapter in both media and migration studies and Cold War media history.

All in all, these contributions highlight the relevance of moving beyond the current rhetoric of 'crisis' and 'emergency' and showcase the importance of adopting a historical perspective on the entanglement of media and migration. As such, the articles invite reflection on historical mediation of migration and on the ongoing legacies of past migratory movements and media discourses of migration. The articles are insightful and compelling, and collectively showcase exciting avenues for research on migration in media histories. We hope you enjoy reading them.

Notes

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