



TALLINN UNIVERSITY

Baltic Film, Media and
Arts School



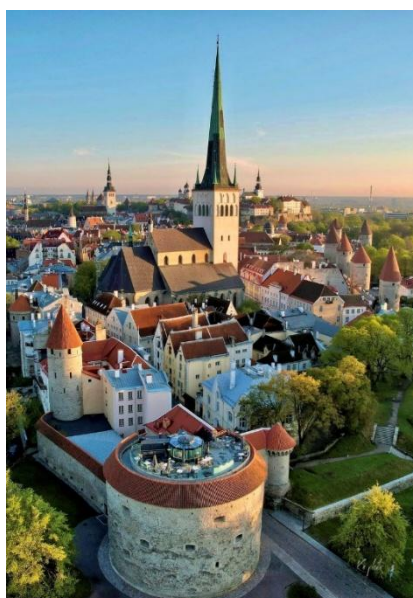
European Communication Research
and Education Association

ECREA Diaspora, Migration and the Media - International and Intercultural Communication Sections Conference

'Beyond Borders: Creative Methods and Reflexive Approaches to Migration, Media, and Intercultural Dialogue'

#DMMIIC2025 #ECREA

Abstract Book



Tallinn University, Tallinn, Estonia ([campus map](#))

September 16–18, 2025

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Table of Contents

Contact information	5
Scientific Committee	6
Welcome to #DMMIIC2025! Welcome to Tallinn University!	7
Venue	8
Conference Dinner	10
WIFI Connections.....	10
Keynote Speaker 1 for the PhD Workshop.....	11
Keynote Speaker 2.....	12
Keynote Speaker 3.....	13
PhD Workshop.....	14
ABSTRACTS	31
For session chairs and speakers.....	31
Session 1 (Room M-648)	32
Session 2 (Room M-133)	36
Workshop (Room M-218).....	40
Session 3 (Room M-648)	41
Session 4 (Room M-133)	45
Panel 1 (Room M-218)	49
Session 5 (Room M-648)	54
Session 6 (Room M-133)	58
Panel 2 (Room M-218)	62
Session 7 (Room M-218)	63
Session 8 (Room M-648)	67
Session 9 (Room M-133)	71
Session 10 (Room M-218)	75
Session 11 (Room M-648)	79
Some useful links.....	83
Tallinn Airport	83
To and From the Airport	83
Public Transport in Tallinn	83
Taxi & ridesharing in Tallinn	83
DIGITAL TALLINN	83
Visit Tallinn	83
Between Helsinki and Tallinn onboard a ferry.....	83
Weather forecast in the Internet.....	83

Visit Narva	83
How to get to Narva by bus	83
Visit Tartu	83
How to get to Tartu by bus	83
Tallinn and Tartu Bus Stations	83
Living in Tallinn as a Foreigner: What To Expect.....	83
Safety guidelines	83
Pharmacies	83



Contact information

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Scientific Committee

❖ ECREA International and Intercultural Communication

- ✓ Anastassia Zabrodskaja (Tallinn University, Baltic Film, Media and Arts School, Estonia)
- ✓ David Ongenaert (Charles University, Czech Republic; Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands)
- ✓ Melanie Radue (University of Passau, Germany)
- ✓ Shomaila Sadaf (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)
- ✓ Ana-Nzinga Weiß (University of Rostock, Germany)
- ✓ Arne van Lienden (Erasmus University Rotterdam/Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands)

❖ ECREA Diaspora, Migration and the Media

- ✓ Sara Marino (University of the Arts London, United Kingdom)
- ✓ Silvia Almenara Niebla (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium)
- ✓ Çiğdem Bozdağ (University of Groningen, The Netherlands)
- ✓ Miriana Cascone (Södertörn University, Sweden)
- ✓ Claudia Minchilli (University of Groningen, The Netherlands)
- ✓ Rob Sharp (University of Sussex, United Kingdom)

Welcome to #DMMIIC2025! Welcome to Tallinn University!

Dear Conference Participants,

Tere tulemast!

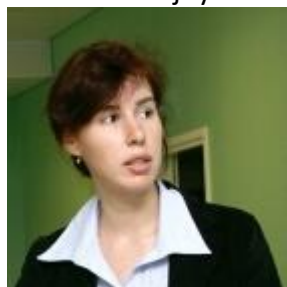
It is a true pleasure to welcome you to the ECREA Diaspora, Migration and the Media – International and Intercultural Communication Sections Conference, hosted by the Baltic Film, Media and Arts School (BFM) at Tallinn University. Under the theme *"Beyond Borders: Creative Methods and Reflexive Approaches to Migration, Media, and Intercultural Dialogue"*, we come together to exchange knowledge, challenge boundaries, and build networks that transcend geography and discipline. This conference has been made possible through the dedication and collaboration of many—it truly does take a proverbial village to bring together such a dynamic and forward-thinking event. I am deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to making this gathering a reality, including **David Ongenaert** (Charles University, Czech Republic; Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands), **Melanie Radue** (University of Passau, Germany), **Shomaila Sadaf** (University of Jyväskylä, Finland), **Ana-Nzinga Weiß** (University of Rostock, Germany), **Arne van Lienden** (Erasmus University Rotterdam/Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands), **Sara Marino** (University of the Arts London, United Kingdom), **Silvia Almenara Niebla** (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium), **Çiğdem Bozdağ** (University of Groningen, The Netherlands), **Miriana Cascone** (Södertörn University, Sweden), **Claudia Minchilli** (University of Groningen, The Netherlands), and **Rob Sharp** (University of Sussex, United Kingdom).

We invite you to immerse yourselves in an exciting program of keynotes, panels, and workshops that showcase the cutting edge of research in migration, media, and intercultural communication. These sessions explore urgent social issues through creative and reflexive lenses — including participatory filmmaking, digital diasporas, and media discourses around displacement and identity. This gathering also offers invaluable opportunities to reconnect with colleagues, forge new collaborations, and engage with scholars from diverse academic and cultural backgrounds. I hope you will take full advantage of the vibrant intellectual community around you, as well as the cultural richness of Tallinn, a medieval city with a modern spirit.

On behalf of the organizing committee, I am thrilled to welcome you here. Explore the beautiful Tallinn University campus, connect with fellow researchers, and enjoy everything this one-of-a-kind event — and this exceptional place — has to offer.

Thank you for being part of #DMMIIC2025.

Aitäh and enjoy the conference!



Anastassia Zabrodskaia, Conference Chair, Professor of Intercultural Communication and Head of the Master's Program in Communication Management, Executive Director of the European Masters in Intercultural Communication

Venue

Tallinn University Campus: <https://www.tlu.ee/en/campus> or <http://virtualtour.tlu.ee/>

How to get to **rooms M-133, M-218 (Tallinna saal) and M-648**

If you approach Tallinn University from Narva Road (**Narva maantee** in Estonian).
Come to Narva Road, 25 Terra building and find this view:



Then walk along the Narva road (Narva maantee) and follow this arrow:



You will see this building in the courtyard. Pass this building. Turn here round the marked corner.



Congratulations! You have arrived at the Mare building (NB! Address is Uus-Sadama 5). Please come through that door!



Once you enter, please take the lift to the **2nd floor** (press the number 2). Our room, **M-218 Tallinna saal**, will be on this floor. Alternatively, you can take the lift to the **3rd floor** (press number 3), where you'll find the **Mare Atrium**. This is where the coffee breaks, lunches, farewell gathering, and opening reception will take place. If you press the number 6, you'll be taken to the 6th floor, where room **M-648** is located. **Please note that stairs are available between the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd floors, but the lift is the only option for reaching the 6th floor.** There are two large lifts available, so you should have no trouble. **Room M-133 is located on the 1st floor.**

Conference Dinner

The conference dinner will take place on **Wednesday, September 17th**, at **Restaurant Peppersack** (Vana-Turg 6, Tallinn), starting at **7:00 PM**.

Peppersack is located in a historic building in the heart of Tallinn's Old Town, just steps away from the Town Hall Square. Learn more about the restaurant [here](#).

Table reservations are under the keyword: *DMMIIC2025*

NB: Guests with allergies are kindly asked to inform their waiter, who will ensure that suitable food is provided.

WiFi Connections

Wireless networks at Tallinn University (click [here](#) for more information)

Public wireless networks (WiFi networks) are available in the following university buildings and rooms:

Mare (Uus-Sadama 5, Tallinn): full coverage. SSID: TLU

Terra (Narva rd 25, Tallinn): full coverage. SSID: TLU

Eduroam

Tallinn University is part of an academic network called Eduroam, which provides our teachers and students free internet access at several universities, institutions and libraries across the world. At every organisation that has joined the project, Eduroam is accessed by logging in with the home university e-mail address (username@tlu.ee) and password.

Hashtag

Are you connected? Please check how it works by posting about the conference and using the hashtag **#DMMIIC2025**.

Keynote Speaker 1 for the PhD Workshop

Feeling the Field: An Exploration of a Multisensory Positionality in Creative Migration Research

Karolina Nikielska-Sekuła

Jagiellonian University, Poland

This intervention introduces the concept of multisensory positionality. Grounded in the theoretical discussions around intersectionality and positionality (Anthias 2002; 2008; Yuval Davis 2006) in migration research, and supported by the sensuous scholarship (Stoller 2010; Howes 2020), multisensory positionality is a wholistic, intersectional approach to the positionalities of the researcher and the research participants, which acknowledges the role of the body and senses as a meaningful dimension of positionality that actively participates in the negotiations of meaning between people and spaces relevant for the researched situation. Multisensory positionality's role in the research process is discussed in the context of research methodology, the negotiation of meaning in the field, and at the stage of data analysis.



Dr [Karolina Nikielska-Sekuła](#) is Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center of Migration Research, University of Warsaw and Assistant Professor at the Institute of Intercultural Studies, Jagiellonian University, Kraków.

Her current scholarly research focuses on migration, visual and sensory sociology, and cultural heritage in the multicultural context.

Her previous posts include Associate Professor in Human Geography at the University of South-Eastern Norway, and Marie Curie Early Career Researcher jointly at the Migration Research Center (MiReKoc) at Koç University in Istanbul and the Pedro Arrupe Human Rights Institute at the University of Deusto, Bilbao. Nikielska-Sekuła coedited a book **Visual Methodology in Migration**: New Possibilities, Theoretical Implications, and Ethical Questions (with A. Desille), awarded by IMISCOE. She

is a member of the INTEGRIM Lab, International Sociological Association, International Visual Sociology Association, IMISCOE-DIVCULT standing committee, and the Nordic Migration Research Network.

Keynote Speaker 2

Beyond Borders: Creative and Reflexive Approaches to Intercultural Communication Research

Diyako Rahmani

Massey University of New Zealand, Auckland, New Zealand

In a global context increasingly marked by border closures, migration criminalization, and the rise of far-right ideologies, intercultural communication research faces significant methodological and ethical challenges. This keynote address critically examines how creative methods and reflexive approaches can be employed to study the complex intersections of migration, media, and intercultural dialogue, focusing on empowering migrant voices and fostering human dignity.

Building on the methodological themes of the conference, I will explore participatory media projects, generative AI tools, and arts-based research as avenues for addressing exclusionary practices and the criminalization of mobility. These methods not only enable nuanced analyses of diasporic experiences but also serve as tools for amplifying counter-narratives that challenge hegemonic ideologies. By integrating digital storytelling, AI-enhanced ethnography, and other creative methodologies, this keynote presentation highlights how innovative approaches can produce actionable insights into practices of inclusion and belonging.

The discussion will also emphasize reflexivity in research, particularly the ethical considerations of studying migration in contexts of surveillance, exclusion, and precarity. I will argue that by co-creating knowledge with migrant communities and reflecting on the researcher's positionality, we can develop methods that are both rigorous and transformative.

This keynote speech invites participants to engage with pressing questions about the ethical dimensions of researching migration and media, the role of creative methodologies in intercultural communication, and the potential of digital tools to reimagine boundaries and foster dialogue in a fragmented world. Through this exploration, I aim to contribute to ongoing discussions on the intersection of migration, media, and intercultural communication, while offering practical strategies for researchers working in this critical field.



Dr. [Diyako Rahmani](#) is a senior lecturer specializing in data analytics and communication. He earned his Ph.D. in Intercultural Communication (University of Jyväskylä, 2017), a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Teaching and Learning (Massey University, 2022), and a Master of Data Analytics with First Class Honours (Massey University, 2024). Diyako teaches data analytics in marketing and communication, with research focusing on online communication, analytics, and Kurdish studies. He frequently publishes in top communication and information systems journals and serves as editor of the *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*. He is also a fellow of

the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

Keynote Speaker 3

Resisting Technocolonialism: Reimagining ‘Technologies for Social Justice’ through Participatory Action Research Mirca Madianou

*Department of Media, Communications and Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths, University of
London, London, Great Britain*

Digital technologies and AI are increasingly ubiquitous in humanitarian operations among refugees. Several of these innovations are understood as part of the wider phenomenon of ‘technology for social good’, or ‘AI for social good’. In my recent book, I theorise such developments as ‘technocolonialism’, which refers to how digital innovation, data and AI practices engender new forms of violence and new inequities between global majority and global minority worlds. My talk takes as a point of departure the practices of resistance to technocolonialism and the need to respond to the question: what can be done? Just like colonialism is a story of resistance, technocolonialism is contested. Recognising the space for contestation is crucial for reimagining technological systems and solidarities. The talk will outline visual participatory action research as a suitable method for working collaboratively with our refugee interlocutors. To illustrate this approach, I draw on current research in refugee camps in Thailand – in collaboration with Charlie Hill and Hayso Thako – where our participants were able to express the values they prioritise in reimagining digital identity systems through art and visual methods. In so doing, I decentre the notion of ‘technology for good’, which is narrowly associated with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and co-opted by the tech industry, to reimagine technologies in the ‘pluriverse’ (Escobar, 2018) and for social justice.



[Mirca Madianou](#) is Professor in the Department of Media, Communications and Cultural Studies and co-Director of the Migrant Futures Institute at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her research focuses on the social consequences of communication technologies, infrastructures and artificial intelligence (AI) in a global south context especially in relation to migration and humanitarian emergencies. She is currently Principal Investigator on a British Academy grant on

digital identity programmes in refugee camps in Thailand. Her latest book [**Technocolonialism: when technology for good is harmful**](#) was published in November 2024. Earlier books include *Mediating the Nation: News, audiences and the politics of identity* and *Migration and New Media: transnational families and polymedia*.

ABSTRACTS

*For PhD Workshop
Participants*

*Abstracts are listed in
alphabetical order.*

**Speakers, please ensure your presentation is
saved on a USB drive.**

**Note: Personal laptops may not be used for
presentations.**

Digital communities and intercultural dialogue: Integration experiences of non-EU graduates in Lithuania

SUAT AKSU

(Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences, Institute of Sociology; Department of Employment and Social Welfare Research, Lithuania)

As global labour markets evolve, digitalisation is reshaping how young people with migration experience navigate employment, cultural integration, and professional identity-building. In Lithuania, international graduates face distinct challenges in transitioning from higher education to the workforce, including limited integration experience, visa restrictions, and a lack of social network (Han, Gulanowski, & Sears, 2022). This research explores how digital communities facilitate intercultural dialogue, social support, and professional integration among international graduates.

Drawing from qualitative narrative inquiry, this study examines how international graduates utilise digital spaces—such as social media platforms, online forums, and virtual networking groups—to navigate professional and intercultural challenges. The theoretical framework integrates insights from Bourdieu’s social and cultural capital theories and Beck’s risk society concept, addressing how online interactions mitigate risks, foster resilience, and enhance professional networks.

The methodology includes semi-structured interviews with international graduates aged 21–29 to explore their narratives on transitioning from higher education to employment in Lithuania. The collected qualitative data are analysed thematically, highlighting individual strategies, structural barriers, and the supportive roles of digital communities.

Initial findings indicate that digital communities provide graduates with crucial social capital, including mentorship, informal job referrals, cultural exchange, and emotional support, significantly improving integration prospects. These platforms facilitate intercultural dialogue, enabling collective identity negotiation, challenging exclusionary labour market practices, and strategising around bureaucratic barriers. Reflexive online engagement allows graduates to reframe narratives of belonging and employability.

This research underscores digital communities’ potential as vital support infrastructures for migrants facing institutional and social exclusion. Recommendations include institutionalising digital networking initiatives, supporting online intercultural mentorship, and recognising digital platforms as legitimate integration support venues.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.

Blackmore, J., & Rahimi, M. (2019). How “best fit” excludes international graduates from employment in Australia: A Bourdieusian perspective. *Journal of Education and Work*, 32(5), 436–448.

Han, Y., Gulanowski, D., & Sears, G. J. (2022). International student graduates’ workforce integration: A systematic review. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 86, 163–189.

Suat Aksu is a sociologist and holds an MSc in Sociology of Education. He is a PhD candidate at the Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences, Institute of Sociology, Department of Employment and Social Welfare Research in Vilnius, Lithuania. His research interests are labour migration, school-to-work transition, youth work and social policy. Besides, he has excellent knowledge of EU funds by designing grant proposals and coordinating the granted projects since 2018. He is the director of a non-profit organisation, Suatas Project Academy, that provides non-formal education, research and training activities and organises the Suatas Talks podcast series to share educational content.

Gendering digital practices and the intersections of vulnerability: On the challenges and potential for refugee women in the Netherlands

AMBER I. BARTLETT

(Radboud University, the Netherlands)

In recent years, the potential of digital competencies for reducing inequalities for refugee communities have been explored by NGO's, governmental organisations and academics (Potocky, 2022). While many speak to the huge potential of digital platforms to foster inclusion for refugees, more critical scholarship caution that so called 'ICT solutions' may exacerbate existing inequalities. In this research, I make use of literature on digital literacy to conceptualise how (limited) access to digital affordances can reproduce inequalities. Drawing on feminist scholars, who caution against objective understandings of digital literacy (Georgiou et al., 2024; Witteborn, 2018) and advocate for understanding digital practices as the interweaving of digital lives with everyday lives, this project asks: What is the relationship between digital practices and their outcomes for refugee women resettling in the Netherlands and how does this interact with their existing vulnerabilities?

To approach this topic, I will use participatory action methodologies to produce a series of co-created internet cafes, designed with for the specific needs and challenges of refugee women. The first stage of the research project investigates how refugee women use ICTs to gain offline benefits, as well as the challenges they encounter in accessing such outcomes. In the subsequently stages, I employ a framework of tactics (Smit et al 2024) to understand the role of marginalisation in overcoming barriers of digital literacy. In doing this, I move away from understanding those experiencing exclusion as passive but highlight the strategies and tactics digitally marginalised communities employ to navigate these challenges, and how the use of these tactics are embedded in intersecting inequalities. This approach will highlight refugee women's active agency in navigating and reshaping digital landscapes and will contribute to innovative action-based approaches to knowledge production in the context of migration and digital communication. The outcomes of this project will contribute to a better understanding of the complex entanglement of offline and online inequalities, by exploring the ways in which marginalised communities are structurally excluded, while making use of the skills, knowledge and resources around them to overcome such exclusion.

- Bastick, Z., & Mallet-Garcia, M. (2022). Double lockdown: The effects of digital exclusion on undocumented immigrants during the COVID-19 pandemic. *New Media & Society*, 24(2), 365–383.
- Georgiou, M., d'Haenens, L., Zaki, A., Donoso, V., & Bossens, E. (2024). Digital skills *of* and *for* lives marked by vulnerability: Being young, refugee, and connected in Europe. *European Journal of Communication*, 39(3), 277–285.
- Potocky, M. (2022). Role of Digital Skills in Refugee Integration: A State-Of-The-Art Review. *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion (IJIDI)*, 5(5).
- Smit, A., Swart, J., & Broersma, M. (2024). Bypassing digital literacy: Marginalized citizens' tactics for participation and inclusion in digital societies. *New Media & Society*, 1-19
- Witteborn, S. (2018). The digital force in forced migration: Imagined affordances and gendered practices. *Popular Communication*, 16(1), 21–31.

Amber I Bartlett is a PhD researcher at the Centre for Language Studies of Radboud University, the Netherlands, and is currently researching the role of refugee women's digital practices in their resettlement in the Netherlands. She is particularly interested in the impact of intersecting inequalities on digital literacy in an increasingly digitalising society, as well as the potential of participatory action research for social impact.

Turkish diasporic children and digital media

EBRU BASER

(SOAS University of London, United Kingdom)

This study focuses on Turkish diasporic children and youth in the UK and seeks for answers to questions related to how diasporic children are using digital technologies; and what type of digital media engagements, use forms, experiences and digital skills they develop. The current study coincides with academic attention towards children, their digital media use forms and their digital skills in the digital age but seeks partially to fill the gap in the literature related to the study of diasporic children. It also focuses on diasporic children's socio-economic status and socio-cultural background, since these conditions would shape and transform media perception, engagement, identification and sense-making of children (Smahel et al., 2020).

This study explores digital technology use forms, engagements and skill constructions of 106 second-generation Turkish diasporic children born and raised in London. Through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, focus groups and informal dialogues, the study investigates how Turkish diasporic children use digital technologies. It aims to provide ethnographic data from diasporic children and youth regarding their technology use forms, engagements and outcomes of diasporic conditions and digital skill construction.

The study has revealed that diasporic children's digital media use forms and engagements serve four main purposes, which are entertainment/fun, communication, creation and learning. The study also highlights that the factors encouraging the participants to go online would imply early and latent stage of going online process, which implies the construction not only the escape from real lives, loneliness and boredom, but the meeting, connecting and socialising with friends in the online spaces. It has been found that having better socioeconomic status (SES) makes children more skilled. As indicated in the report of ySKILLS (Youth Skills) project by Haddon et al. (2020) children who are in the households from better and higher socioeconomic status have been found more digitally skilled. As such, better digital skills are profoundly related to better access and better demographic variables.

Haddon, L., Cino, D., Doyle, M., Livingstone, S., Mascheroni., and Stoilova, M. (2020).

Children's and young people's digital skills: a systematic evidence review. *ySKILLS*

Smahel, D., Machackova, H., Mascheroni, G., Dedkova, L., Staksrud, E., Ólafsson, K.,

Livingstone, S., and Hasebrink, U. (2020). EU kids online 2020: survey results from 19 countries.

Ebru Baser: I am final year PhD researcher at SOAS University of London. My research focuses on Turkish diasporic children and their digital media use. My project attempts to discover how Turkish diasporic children use digital media, and what skills, experiences and engagement forms they develop. I conducted ethnographic research for data collection. I have been holding two master's degrees, which are MA (Akdeniz University) and MSc (Brunel University of London). Also, I assisted my supervisor in project, which was 1001 project of TUBITAK, No: 114k364 focusing on "TV Viewing among Conservatives in Turkey: Identity, Popular Taste and Boundaries funded by TUBITAK.

Navigating the political field: Methodological reflections on research with far-right actors and migrant communities

JULIETTE CAYREL

(Università degli Studi di Padova, Italy)

This presentation offers a methodological reflection on positionality in migration and political studies, alongside the directly informed design of an ongoing PhD research within the DEMINE project, exploring the intersection of gender and migration in far-right political discourse in France and Italy. This research, through a gender-sensitive approach, aims to contribute to the development of strategies that challenge extreme political narratives by engaging with two groups of political actors: institutional local political figures and members of migrant organisations navigating politicised discourse in their everyday lives. These groups occupy different positions within social and institutional hierarchies, necessitating differentiated research strategies that are methodologically coherent and ethically grounded.

The first part focuses on qualitative methodologies for working with far-right political actors. Drawing from literature on elite interviewing and researcher positionality in politically sensitive environments, with particular attention to the asymmetries of power, it explores the challenges of researching problematic actors and contentious topics, including the ethical and emotional tensions that can arise when navigating such fieldwork settings. A gender-informed analytical framework will be employed to examine how gendered narratives are mobilised within far-right discourse. The second part addresses participatory and creative methods in research with structurally marginalised communities, with emphasis on ethical challenges and the potential of co-produced knowledge and strategies to counter extreme and exclusionary discourse.

This research design pays close attention to the positionality of the researcher, including the role of multisensoriality, dynamics of (un)familiarity, affinity, and dissonance. By bringing together these two methodological approaches reflecting different dimensions of the political field, the presentation outlines a coherent and reflexive design for engaging with diverse political actors. This research seeks to contribute to interdisciplinary discussions in migration, media, and political studies on how to implement ethically responsive methodologies that approach discourse as both a political tool and a lived social experience.

- Bellè, E. (2016). Knowing as being, knowing is being. Doing a political ethnography of an Italian right-wing party. *Anthropologie & développement*, (44), 79-100.
- Mason-Bish, H. (2019). The elite delusion: reflexivity, identity and positionality in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 19(3), 263-276.
- Moralli, M. (2024). Research as care: Positionality and reflexivity in qualitative migration research. *Qualitative Research*, 24(3), 751-770.
- Soedirgo, J., & Glas, A. (2020). Toward active reflexivity: Positionality and practice in the production of knowledge. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 53(3), 527-531.
- Verloo, M. M. T. (2005). Mainstreaming gender equality in Europe: A critical frame analysis approach.

Juliette Cayrel is a Ph.D. student in Social Sciences at the University of Padova and a member of the MSCA DEMINE Doctoral Network. With a background in social sciences, she has developed research interests focused on the intersections of gender, politics, and media in multicultural contexts. Her current research project explores the role of political actors in shaping media narratives about gender and migration, examined through a femonationalist lens.

**Re-thinking methodologies otherwise:
On feminist ethics of care in digital migration and diaspora research**

SEVILAY CESURER

(London College of Communication, University of the Arts London, United Kingdom)

This paper offers a conceptual and reflexive reflection on the role of feminist ethics of care in shaping methodologies for migration and diaspora research. Drawing on feminist and postcolonial scholarship, it examines how care can serve not only as an ethical imperative but also as an epistemological lens—particularly in researching displaced, marginalised, or diasporic communities—navigating layered forms of marginalisation and negotiating social, political, and cultural identities.

While my PhD project is in its early empirical and ethnographic stages (employing both digital and traditional methods), it focuses on Palestinian women’s digital story-telling practices as sites of belonging, activism, and resistance in the diaspora. In this context, the paper explores how a care-centred approach can inform the researcher’s positionality, their relationships with participants, and the broader ethics of (co-)producing knowledge. Engaging with recent work on affective methodologies, digital migration, and feminist reflexivity (Haraway, 1988; Marino, 2020; Clark-Kazak, 2023; Leurs & Ponzanesi, 2024; Minchilli & Ponzanesi, 2025), it poses the question: How might a politics of care and attention to everyday lived experience transform not only what we study, but why, how and with whom we conduct research?

- Clark-Kazak, C. (2023). “Why Care Now” in Forced Migration Research?. *ACME*, 22(4), 1151-1173. <https://doi.org/10.14288/acme.v22i4.2210>
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575-599. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>
- Leurs, K., & Ponzanesi, S. (2024). *Doing Digital Migration Studies: Theories and Practices of the Everyday*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Marino, S. (2020). *Mediating the Refugee Crisis: Digital Solidarity, Humanitarian Technologies and Border Regimes*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Minchilli, C., & Ponzanesi, S. (2025). Digital/Postcolonial Belongings. Migration, Digital Practices & the Everyday. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2025.2502942>

Sevilay Cesurer is a second-year PhD candidate at the London College of Communication, University of the Arts London, researching the intersection of digital media, migration, and gender. Her doctoral research examines how Palestinian women in London use TikTok and Instagram, as well as offline spaces, to document their experiences of displacement, belonging and resistance to the ongoing brutality they continue to bear witness to. She explores the performative, political, and gendered dimensions of their engagement through a combination of digital and traditional ethnography informed by feminist and postcolonial approaches, and a non-media-centric lens.

Horizontal enclaves:
The construction of a cultural counter-public sphere by Hong Kong new immigrants
JADE JIEWEN DENG
(University of Massachusetts-Amherst, United States of America)

This prospective project is interested in exploring the relationship between diasporic public spheres and immigrant activist enterprises. The emergence of diasporic public spheres and their role in connecting immigrants with their host countries and countries of origin is not a new phenomenon (Appadurai, 1996). However, previous research tends to emphasize the role of mass media and, later, the internet in facilitating transnational interaction and expression (Rovisco, 2025). Moreover, the bourgeois public sphere as conceptualized by Habermas (1991) often represents serious, rational, and exclusionary political debate, while research on the alternative expressive public sphere that emphasizes presence, aesthetics, and emotion such as in the arts and culture and multiple public spheres of subaltern groups remains insufficient (Fraser, 1990; McGuigan, 2005; Rovisco, 2025). This suggests that the internet is not the only promising public sphere at present, and the spatial cultural dimension of publicness calls for attention to alternative counter-public sphere creation (Fraser, 1990) and meaning making, particularly for immigrant groups that are often marginalized and otherized.

Drawing on the theory of cultural public sphere (McGuigan, 2005), this project will adopt digital and offline ethnography as well as interviews to investigate an independent bookstore Nowhere and a gallery Ngo Dei opened by Hong Kong new immigrants in the Netherlands as a point of entry to explore the configuration and operation of diasporic counter public sphere in a transnational context. It thus contributes to looking into public life and political participation of minority groups such as immigrants and the role of immigrant activist entrepreneurship in the construction of counterpublic spaces.

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Jade Jiewen Deng is currently a PhD student in the Department of Communication at University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her research interests lie in everyday media representation and activism of migrants and citizens, particularly in the context of post-colonial Hong Kong and global Hong Kong diaspora through employing qualitative and art-based approaches.

Understanding digital doings: Digital inclusion in settled migrant families in the Netherlands

ROSA DIJKSTRA

(University of Groningen, The Netherlands)

This PhD is part of the broader DigiMig project, which investigates how socio-cultural factors influence digital inclusion in culturally diverse societies in the Netherlands. While other subprojects analyze policies promoting digital inclusion (Post-doc) and digital literacy in diverse primary schools (PI), this project focuses on how patterns of digital inclusion emerge among people with a migration history in the Netherlands. The study compares second- and third-generation Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch families, analyzing how a migration history influences digital inclusion. By examining intergenerational dynamics within families, the research seeks to understand how digital media practices evolve and how knowledge exchange occurs, especially as children often act as cultural intermediaries supporting their parents (Katz, 2014). Furthermore, it explores children's own interactions with digital technologies and online communities, noting prior findings that Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch youth often occupy ethnically segmented online spaces (Kommers & de Haan, 2021). These patterns reflect cultural differences but also reveal exclusionary dynamics in both online and offline spaces, highlighting power relations within majority-minority interactions. The PhD research adopts a qualitative, multi-method approach grounded in ethnography. Through interviews, participant observations and intergenerational participatory design, it analyzes digital inclusion along five dimensions: access, motivation, skills, engagement, and outcomes. Specific methods include: Systematic review: A comprehensive review of existing literature will be conducted to identify key themes and gaps in research on digital inclusion among migrant communities. One-Day-in-Life method: Spending a day with each family, conducting semi-structured interviews to understand daily digital media use and skill acquisition. Intergenerational participatory design: Families will collaboratively design a prototype social media platform and thereby think about futurist media inclusion, self-presentation, privacy and security, and community building in digital spaces.

The study includes participants from 20 families equally divided between urban Rotterdam and rural Groningen in the Netherlands. The children of the families are starting to develop critical media evaluation skills and are between the ages of 8 and 12 years old. Through selecting different families we ensure diversity in gender, socio-economic status, education, parent-child relations and digital skill levels. By interviewing both parents and children, the research captures intergenerational knowledge exchange, shedding light on how digital skills and literacies are transmitted within families. A key innovation of this project lies in its transnational approach. Digital inclusion is often studied within local or national contexts, yet migrants maintain transnational networks that significantly shape their digital practices (Diminescu, 2008; Madianou & Miller, 2013). These connections influence digital inclusion and identity formation, offering new insights into integration processes. An intersectional framework further enriches the analysis, examining the interplay of factors such as nationality, gender, ethnicity, class, and age (Leurs & Ponzanesi, 2013). While intersectionality has been widely applied in gender-focused media studies, this project broadens its scope to migration and urban-rural divides, providing a comprehensive view of digital inclusion challenges. Potential challenges include: how my positionality as a researcher might influence the participatory method. How to make sure that both voices of parents and children are equally valued in the co-design process. How to navigate potential cultural differences in the conceptualization of self-presentation, privacy, digital literacy skills and community-building on digital platforms. Questions for discussion:

- How can I effectively balance cultural sensitivity with critical analysis, particularly in addressing power dynamics within majority-minority relationships?
- What strategies might help overcome challenges related to participant trust and intergenerational communication during fieldwork?
- How can participatory methods, like designing social media platforms, be optimized to engage participants and generate meaningful data?
- More practically: How to take good field notes of creative methods?
- What alternative forms of writing and storytelling might best capture the creative outputs (e.g., platform designs) and the underlying socio-cultural narratives they represent into research output?

Rosa Dijkstra is a PhD candidate at the Research Centre for Media and Journalism at the University of Groningen. Rosa's PhD research is part of the DigiMig project, which explores digital inclusion through the lenses of the user, policy, and education. Within this project she focuses on socio-cultural patterns that influence digital inclusion among families with a migration history in urban and rural contexts in the Netherlands. Using an intersectional child-centered approach, her research examines how different children and parents engage with digital media, emphasizing intergenerational digital literacy exchange within families.

Online networks of migrant women from Turkey: community building and politics of representation

YAGMUR ERDOGMUS, CARLA MOLEIRO AND SUSANA BATEL
(Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL), Cis-IUL, Portugal)

This article explores how migrant women from Turkey navigate gendered identity and solidarity through digital platforms, focusing on a public woman-to-woman Instagram page formed and maintained by women from Turkey (20,000+ users). Analyzing 130 posts through a thematic discursive analysis (Wetherell, 2008), the study examines how transnational subjectivities are discursively and affectively constructed in a space shaped by gendered experience, cultural familiarity, and transnational mobility. Identity is approached as an embodied and situated process, while solidarity is conceptualized as a discursive and affective relation shaped by shared migratory experience and cultural-linguistic proximity (Wetherell, 2008). Drawing on feminist ethics of care (Tronto, 1993) and transnational solidarity (Gould, 2007), the analysis highlights how digital features—such as hashtags, tagging, and co-sharing—mediate collective storytelling and platform-specific belonging. These practices facilitate affective support, knowledge exchange, and coordination of mobilizations, such as online grief sessions after earthquakes and political organizing in diaspora cities during Turkish elections, demonstrating the online/offline nexus of transnational solidarity. These solidarities are shaped by broader sociopolitical dynamics where dominant narratives and exclusions—based on ethnicity, ideology, or sexuality—also surface. The platform’s selective engagement with certain global struggles, alongside relative silences on others, illustrates how visibility and solidarity are conditioned by geopolitical contexts and emotional proximity. This reflects how all solidarities—digital or embodied—are situated within sociohistorical hierarchies and affective investments, including the emotional labor and technocultural decisions involved in moderating content and sustaining group cohesion. Drawing on the author’s insider perspective, the analysis reflects on how dual positionality informed ethical reflexivity and interpretation. The study contributes to feminist migration scholarship and critical discursive psychology by framing digital solidarity not as a fixed identity or political stance, but as a relational, affective, and situated practice. It offers a psychosocial account of how rootedness and movement shape digital forms of care, connection, and representation across transnational contexts.

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Yagmur Erdogan is a PhD researcher in social psychology, adopting interdisciplinary approaches to study gender and migration. Her current work focuses on digital networks, consequent online/offline mobilities and gendered negotiations of migrant women from Turkey in transnational contexts. She draws on critical discursive and intersectional methods to explore identity, belonging, and solidarity. Alongside academic research, she has experience in humanitarian settings, providing psychosocial support for displaced populations. She aims to generate research that bridges theory and practice, contributing to more inclusive policies and interventions that center the voices of marginalized communities.

Carla Moleiro is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology of the School of Social and Human Sciences of ISCTE - Lisbon University Institute. She holds a PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Initially, she specialized in Clinical Psychology at the University of Lisbon, and as a psychotherapist at the Portuguese Association of Cognitive-Behavioral and Integrative Psychotherapies. She is currently a researcher and the director at the Center for Psychological Research and Social Intervention (CIS), working on mental health and diversity, including ethnic minority, migrant, refugee, sexual and gender minority (LGBTI+) clients.

Susana Batel is an integrated researcher at the Centre for Psychological Research and Social Intervention of the University Institute of Lisbon (CIS, ISCTE-IUL), with a fellowship granted by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology. Her research adopts a critical perspective to look at the relation between representation, identities, power, discourse and communication, and social change, namely regarding public participation in environmental issues, and responses to renewable energy and associated technologies. She is co-editor of the journal *Papers on Social Representations*.

**Reflexive methods in qualitative fieldwork:
The role of local mediators in multicultural contexts**
TRIANTAFYLLOS GKARAGKANIS

(Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania and CY Cergy Paris Université, France)

This presentation delves into fieldwork experience acquired in different sociocultural settings during the first semester of 2025, particularly in France (Lyon) and Hungary (Budapest), within the context of a comparative analysis of immigrant communities and their positionality in challenging media environments. Each case study offered insights on intergroup dynamics and migrant-led critical media discourse, despite the obstacles encountered during the organization and execution of the fieldwork research plan. More specifically, the attendance and demographic representation were limited in Lyon, while Budapest was marked by open and inclusive dialogues among multiple participants. Because of the different nature of fieldwork conditions, it is significant to underline the unpredictable realities of research on mobility and integration.

The original research design included focus groups to listen to shared experiences on media representations on migration and analyze their reactions to negative media portrayals from a qualitative research standpoint. Therefore, the fieldwork researcher emphasizes the need to perform flexible and creative methods to address these challenges: the involvement of local mediators for recruitment purposes, the inclusion of visual prompts, and the introduction of small-group discussion groups. Once the new research design was adopted, it had a positive impact in Budapest, where collaboration with NGOs and community spaces helped build trust and intercultural dialogues. However, in Lyon, similar efforts did not yield the expected results, possibly due to limited engagement by local mediators during the recruitment process and fieldwork research plan execution time and conditions.

Based on the acquired fieldwork experience, it can be argued that external factors play a significant role in its implementation and results, especially when this involves the mobilization of individuals with diverse and multicultural backgrounds. Hospitality centers and associations can act as ‘bridges’ between research and on-the-ground realities, which can help the researcher understand their positionality and monitor potential tensions between institutional expectations and field-based practice. Methodological reflexivity eventually positions itself among the vital elements to manage processes and results during the fieldwork research organization and execution. Lastly, it is worth noting that creative methods can be both alternatives and valuable tools for ethical knowledge production and dissemination.

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Triantafyllos Gkaragkanis is a Joint PhD Researcher in Communication Sciences at Babeş-Bolyai University and CY Cergy Paris Université (EUTOPIA Cotutelle Doctoral Fellow). In his doctoral research, he delves into the digital media representations on migration and integration in Europe (2015-2024) and analyses their impact on immigrant communities from the Global South in three EU Member States; France, Greece, and Hungary. Thus far, he has presented at international conferences, sharing his findings on online hate speech and migrant-led critical media discourse. Before his doctoral studies, he worked as a Consultant at the International Migration Division of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Between conflict and ethics: A reflexive study of reporting practices in Ukraine and France

OLEKSANDRA IAROSHENKO

(National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine)

As a PhD researcher working at the intersection of media, war, and ethics, I explore the evolving roles and practices of crisis reporters in Ukraine and France. My study investigates how journalists navigate conflicting professional, cultural, and technological expectations while reporting on the ongoing war in Ukraine. Drawing on twenty in-depth interviews with Ukrainian and French war correspondents, this study focuses on how new technologies (e.g., drones and AI) are reshaping verification processes and visual storytelling, and how journalists respond to rising challenges, including propaganda, emotional fatigue, and blurred lines between objectivity and advocacy.

While the empirical component of the study is currently underway, I am confronting several key dilemmas that I would like to discuss during the PhD workshop. These include:

- How to analyse and compare journalistic practices across countries experiencing radically different wartime realities?
- How can I maintain reflexivity regarding my positionality as a Ukrainian researcher immersed in the field?
- How can I effectively integrate insights from intercultural communication and journalism studies into a unified analytical framework? I am especially eager to receive feedback regarding the integration of qualitative research methodologies with media theory. Additionally, I wish to deliberately examine how ethical considerations during wartime may (or should) impact our methodological choices. I anticipate engaging with fellow PhD researchers and mentors to enhance my approach and to identify shared perspectives across various studies pertaining to media, conflict, and migration.

Oleksandra Iaroshenko is PhD candidate in Media and Communication at the Mohyla School of Journalism (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy), Kyiv, Ukraine. Editor-in-Chief of the Ukrainian edition of the European Journalism Observatory (EJO). Communications manager for the Ukraine Task Force at ECREA (European Communication Research and Education Association). In 2024, she was a visiting scholar at Sorbonne University (École des hautes études en sciences de l'information et de la communication) in Paris, France.

LGBTQ+ along smuggler routes

JON MARTIN LARSEN

(Kristiania University of Applied Sciences, Norway)

I will present a research project under development. The project is seeking to explore the conditions, communication, public health situation and other needs of LGBTQ+ migrants who are displaced, living in transit or host countries without legal permission, and particularly those who might have experiences with so called smuggler routes.

The LGBTQ+ dimension of using so called smuggler routes embrace social, political, cultural, racial, ability and economic similarities and inequalities, but also public health issues as STDs, HIV and Mpox and the displaced own dialogue and contact with public health institutions or other (LGBTQ+) facilities aimed at giving support or services.

The main aim is to develop a solid understanding of who the queer people who might be using smuggler routes or who the queer people who have experience with smuggler routes are, including their reasons for fleeing (climate change, gender and sexuality diversity, economical, political etc), how they communicate and the discourse surrounding them.

A particular interesting group of LGBTQ+ displaced are the sex workers who are both very visible in social media but also not approachable for municipalities in their transit or host countries.

The study is empirically grounded in ethnographic research and queer methodologies, including research diaries, the development of narratives from semi-structured interviews, remote research of the interviewee's social media as well as text mining in social media in Norway, Turkey and Span/Canary Islands.

The project will be led from Kristiania University of Applied Sciences in Norway in cooperation with Las Palmas University in Spain, Özyeğin University in Turkey and other partners, if relevant. Examples of findings from the first research diaries will be shared during the workshop, as well as challenges met in the initiating phases. Further suggestions or advice in the development of this project would be highly valued.

Jon Martin Larsen is a PhD Candidate in Communication & Leadership and Assistant Professor in Journalism at Kristiania University of Applied Sciences in Norway. He is an experienced international journalist and humanitarian communications director who has been on missions all over the world in crisis, conflicts, wars and disasters, particularly in the Middle East and Turkey. His main research interest is absence and silence of minority groups towards societies and authorities.

Remembering London on social media: Chinese students' identity, attachment and digital placemaking via digital place memory

CHENFEI LI

(Department of Culture, Media & Creative Industries, King's College London, London, United Kingdom)

In the background of growing global student mobility, overseas Chinese students have become a significant population in the UK higher education, where they represent a major part of transnational knowledge migrants (Brooks and Waters, 2021; The Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2025). While their economic and academic contributions are widely acknowledged, they as young migrants still face challenges in fitting themselves into the host city which is their transient 'home' abroad. Existing studies typically put an emphasis on social media as a communicative tool to ease such a cultural integration (Forbush & Foucault-Welles, 2016; Guo, 2024), but few examine its broader roles in mediating how these students' experiences and memories in the foreign city are created, circulated, and imagined, therefore facilitating meaningful home-making with the host city in transnational contexts.

Focusing on London, this study addresses this gap by exploring how overseas Chinese students at universities in London dynamically construct place identities, place attachment, and practise digital placemaking via social media in the process creating digital place memories. Guided by a constructivist phenomenology lens (Harvey, 1996; Relph, 1976), this research proposes an original 'experience-memory-imagination' cyclical framework (Figure 1) to investigate how overseas Chinese students' hybrid urban experiences crystallise into digital memories of place on social media and are transformed into idealised imaginations of London and the selves as a way of digital placemaking through visual presentation.

Digital photos of place posted on social media will be regarded as digital place memories. Methodologically, the study employs a three-phase mixed-method design: explorative questionnaires (Phase One), photo-elicitation interviews (Phase Two), and visual content analysis (Phase Three). This creative, visual-driven approach captures the multi-layered urban lives that reflect dynamics in Chinese students' place memory-making through embodied experiences, socio-cultural constructions, and platform mediation.

By introducing the concept of 'digital place memory', this research will make a novel contribution to interdisciplinary dialogues across urban communications, migration studies, and digital media. It will highlight how social media mediates the evolving person-place relationships, offering a reflexive lens on how individuals creatively document, construct, share, and reinterpret their urban encounters within transnational networks.

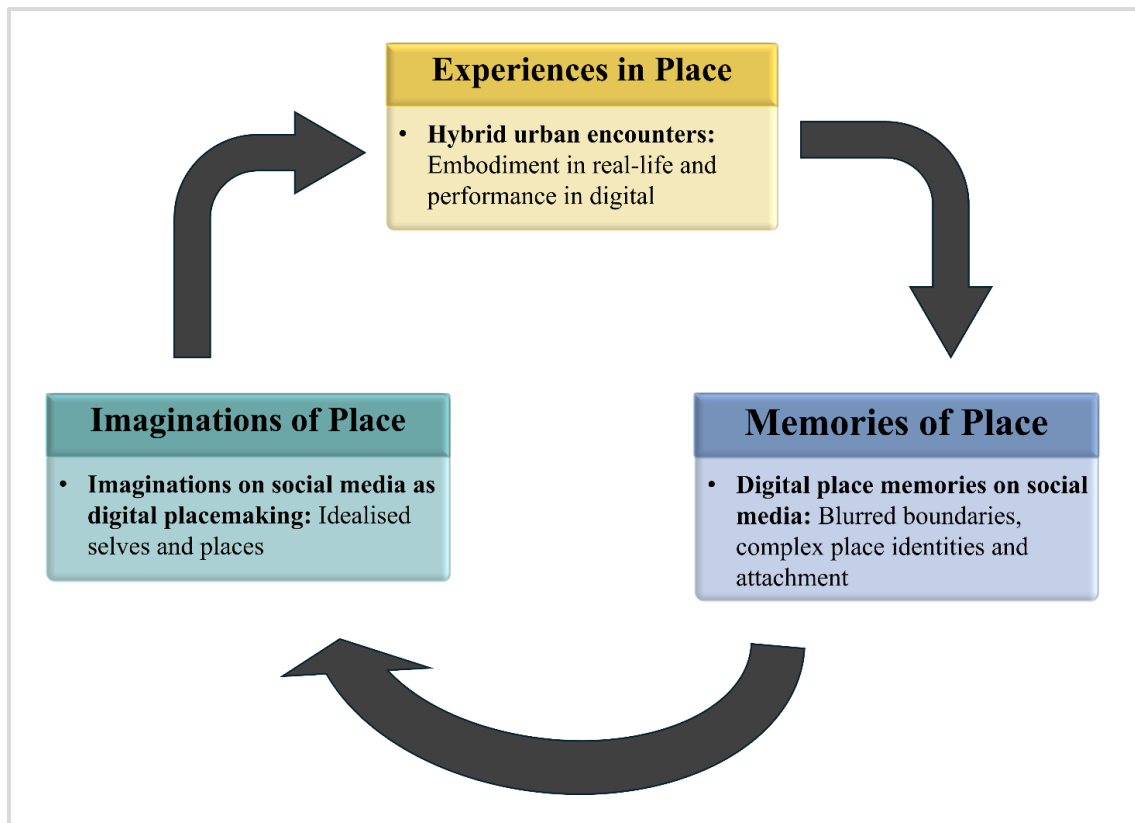


Figure 1: The ‘experience-memory-imagination’ cyclical framework

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Chenfei Li is a PhD candidate and Graduate Teaching Assistant in the Department of Culture, Media & Creative Industries at King’s College London. She has interdisciplinary interests in digital place memory, identity and attachment, and digital urban placemaking among overseas Chinese students in everyday social media usage via visual-driven mixed methods. She gained her MA with Distinction in Digital Asset and Media Management from the Department of Digital Humanities at King’s. Beyond academia, Chenfei is also a certified translator and has professional experience in education consultancy and 4A advertising industries.

Empowering digital advocacy for queer Middle Eastern diasporic communities on Alternative streaming platforms

FATMA OZEN

(York University, Toronto, Canada)

In a rapidly evolving digital world, alternative streaming platforms are vital for Middle Eastern queer diasporic communities to navigate tensions between cultural heritage and shifting identities. These platforms provide inclusive environments for unconventional narratives, enabling connections across borders and reconfiguring dominant Western epistemologies (Schoonover & Galt, 2016), especially where traditional media often fail to address their unique experiences. Scholars have explored how queer diasporic communities identify themselves and forge communities in the digital world, considering the impacts of social media, blogs, chat rooms, and dating apps on queer migrants, as well as the concepts of queerness and diaspora in transnational cinema and digital media (Puar, 2007; Atay, 2016; Baser & Halperin, 2019; Luibhéid, 2008). However, little is known about the ways alternative streaming platforms shape the Middle Eastern queer diasporic experiences, identities, and communities.

My PhD research focuses on Middle Eastern queer migrant/diasporic communities on alternative streaming platforms whose content is primarily consumed by queer audiences, and which claim to showcase inclusive and authentic queer narratives. Ultimately, I aim to understand how these platforms curate queer-related content, based on what criteria, how they affect M.E queer migrant/diasporic spectators' experience and where M.E queer identities and narratives are situated within these curatorial and distribution models, as well as how viewers from these communities engage with such content through reception and spectatorship patterns. This research combines queer studies, migration & diaspora studies, streaming platforms, and Middle Eastern studies to highlight the urgency of creating inclusive digital spaces for queer diasporas in transnational contexts. This convergence allows me to investigate how sexuality, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, migration experiences, and digital media engagement interact and influence each other.

In this research, I will utilize three different methods: digital ethnography, interviews, and focus groups. Through the participatory digital ethnographic approach, I investigate their spectatorship practices, the emotional and political dimensions of media reception, and the potential of digital platforms to foster communal modes of meaning-making and identification. Interviews with platform founders, curators and viewers provide me with direct narratives and personal in-depth reflections on their media consumption, spectatorship, and identification with content on the platforms. Focus groups are necessary to gather their collective experiences, disagreements, and common themes among community viewers.

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Fatma Ozen is a PhD student in Cinema & Media Studies at York University in Canada. She holds an MA in Cultural Studies from Trent University in Peterborough, Canada. Her research interests include migration & diaspora studies, gender & sexuality, digital media (specifically on-demand streaming platforms), and transnational cinema. In addition to her academic studies, she has been actively working at film festivals since 2018.

Identity construction through stance-taking practices in a virtual exchange

MAHNAZ SHIRDEL AND MARKO SIITONEN
(University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

This study explores identity construction through stance-taking in a Virtual Exchange (VE) between university students of languages from Finland and Iran. Prior research suggests that such exchanges tend to emphasize commonalities over differences, which can constrain meaningful intercultural learning (Ware & Kramersch, 2005; Helm & Baroni, 2020). Drawing on a constructionist approach to identity, the study views identity as co-constructed in interaction, with stance-taking, particularly alignment and affiliation, playing a central role (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). A qualitative analysis was conducted on a 66-minute recorded Skype discussion where participants exchanged views on superhero movies. Conversation Analysis (CA) was employed to examine how students used stance-taking and how they invoked or resisted social categories. Findings show that frequent alignment among participants supported smooth turn-taking, reinforced in-group cohesion, and fostered rapport. In contrast, rare moments of disalignment or disagreement allowed individuals to express more distinctive identities and highlighted cultural nuances. Group-level identities also emerged through shared critiques of external groups, such as stereotyped views of American media. However, excessive alignment risked missing opportunities for open dialogue, as students appeared to avoid conflict or disagreement and exploration of differences views and experiences (Belz, 2003). This reinforces the argument that while VEs are valuable tools for fostering connection, they must be intentionally designed to stimulate critical dialogue and self-reflection (Ware & Kramersch, 2005; Helm & Baroni, 2020). This study contributes to understanding identity as fluid and interactionally achieved within online intercultural settings. It suggests that educators and VE designers incorporate training on stance-taking and provide mentoring to navigate sociopolitical and contextual constraints (O'Dowd, 2023). Future research could investigate how guided disaffiliation and structured reflection might enhance intercultural learning outcomes.

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Mahnaz Shirdel is a doctoral researcher in the Department of Language and Communication Studies at the University of Jyväskylä's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Her research focuses on identity formation and intercultural communication in technology-mediated interactions. Mahnaz's recent open-access publication, "Identity gap formation: an exploration of participant experiences in a virtual exchange program," appeared in *Digital Culture & Education* (2024). Leveraging qualitative methodologies in her doctoral dissertation, Mahnaz investigates how virtual exchange participants communicate and shape their identities. Her research contributes to advancing telecollaborative pedagogies aimed at fostering 21st-century skills.

Marko Siitonen is Professor of Intercultural and Technology-Mediated Communication and Head of the Department of Language and Communication Studies at the University of Jyväskylä. He holds a PhD in Speech Communication and leads the international Master's Programme in Language, Globalization and Intercultural Communication (LAGIC). His research explores the interplay between communication and technology, focusing on online communities, virtual teams, and identity construction in digital environments.

Navigating belonging:

How news consumption shapes immigrant adaptation to the receiving society

CAMILA MELÍCIA VALGAS¹², SANNE KRUIKEMEIER², TIM GROOT KORMELINK³ AND Yael DE HAAN¹⁴

(¹Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands, ²Wageningen University & Research, Netherlands, ³Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands, ⁴University of Groningen, Netherlands)

Migration is reshaping Europe's demographic landscape, making the cultural adaptation of immigrants a central concern in academic and policy debates. News consumption plays a pivotal and dual role in this process by shaping immigrants' perceptions and experiences of belonging within their receiving societies. On the one hand, news media can act as a bridge by helping immigrants navigate societal norms, participate in civic life, and establish connections with their new society (Elias & Lemish, 2011). Conversely, news media can act as a barrier by conveying exclusionary or discriminatory narratives, potentially fostering alienation and impeding adaptation (Yoon et al., 2011). This study investigates this complex relationship through two questions: How are news consumption and immigrants' feelings of belonging related? And how do demographic factors, such as migration motive, length of stay, and age, moderate this relationship?

To answer these questions, we conducted a large-scale survey of immigrants in the Netherlands, including refugees, knowledge migrants, labor migrants, and family migrants. To enhance inclusivity, the survey was offered in Arabic, Dutch, English, French, Polish, Portuguese, Turkish, and Ukrainian. This multilingual approach allowed participants to engage with the study in the language they are most comfortable with, thereby improving response rates and data quality. The survey explored multiple dimensions of immigrants' news consumption, alongside demographic characteristics and self-reported feelings of belonging in Dutch society.

The study raises several questions for discussion at the workshop: What innovative strategies can effectively engage immigrant populations in large-scale surveys? How can (survey) studies be designed to accommodate diversity in age, digital skills, and language proficiency? And how can sensitive issues, such as exclusion or discrimination, be addressed ethically in surveys to minimize participant discomfort? By tackling these challenges, this research contributes to media and migration studies, offering insights into how news consumption informs immigrants' sense of belonging in multicultural societies.

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Camila Melícia Valgas is a PhD candidate in the Quality Journalism in Digital Transition research group at Utrecht University of Applied Sciences and Wageningen University & Research. Her doctoral work investigates how immigrants consume news and the role news consumption plays in their cultural adaptation. Camila holds a Bachelor's degree in Journalism from the Federal University of Santa Catarina (Brazil), earned in 2017, and a Master's degree in Media Studies, specializing in Digital Cultures, from Maastricht University (Netherlands), completed in 2021 with the Orange Tulip scholarship.

Sanne Kruikemeier is a Professor of Digital Media and Society at the Strategic Communication Group of Wageningen University & Research (WUR). Her research focuses on the causes and manifestations of digitalization and its consequences on society and democracy.

Tim Groot Kormelink is an Assistant Professor in Journalism Studies at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in the Netherlands. His research focuses on everyday practices and experiences of news and media use.

Yael de Haan is Professor of Applied Sciences for Journalism in Digital Transition at the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht in the Netherlands and Professor of Local Journalism at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. Her research focuses on the consequences of digitalization in journalism productions, consumption, and ethics.

ABSTRACTS

For session chairs and speakers

Session Chairs: Please review the schedule for your session in advance. We recommend allocating **15 minutes per presentation**, followed by **5 minutes for discussion** per paper and **2–3 minutes for transitions** between speakers.

Speakers: Please arrive before your scheduled session at your assigned room. Ensure your presentation is ready on a USB drive, as personal laptops cannot be used for presenting.

The **workshop** will run for **60 minutes**, followed by an optional **30-minute discussion**. The **two panels** are organized in a unique format—see the program for details.

Co-creating digital futures: An intergenerational participatory design approach

ROSA DIJKSTRA, Çiğdem BOZDAĞ AND MARCEL BROERSMA

(University of Groningen, The Netherlands)

With 28% of the Dutch population having a migration background (CBS, 2024), ensuring digital inclusion for migrants is key for building equal opportunities and enhancing social integration. While media literacy research acknowledges the role of culture, digital literacy is often framed as a neutral skillset that overlooks socio-cultural contexts. Cultural backgrounds along with factors such as socio-economic status, education, gender, and age shape how individuals engage with digital technologies and can lead to socio-digital disadvantages (Helsper, 2021). This research explores how cultural and social factors intersect and shape digital inclusion among migrant generations focusing on intergenerational dynamics and the two-way exchange of digital literacy practices (Terras & Ramsay, 2016). We examine two research questions: (1) What role do intergenerational dynamics play in digital literacy practices within migrant families? and (2) How can intergenerational participatory design methods capture and address culturally specific digital needs? The research looks at 20 Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch families in Groningen, the Netherlands, including children aged 8-12 and their parents. While participatory design (PD) approaches have gained popularity for creating innovative and ethical technology with children, they typically include children from privileged, Western backgrounds (Korte et al., 2023). PD research with children from culturally diverse backgrounds, particularly those with migration backgrounds, remains limited. Through semi-structured interviews, existing digital practices and possible challenges are explored, together with participant observations during family technology use in the home. Intergenerational participatory design activities are used to co-create prototypes for mobile applications that tap into inclusive, future-oriented media imaginaries and address identified needs around self-representation, sense of belonging, and online safety. This research contributes to bottom-up approaches to understanding digital inclusion theory and practice and to developing culturally responsive tools in diverse communities.

CBS. (2024). *Integratie en samenleven 2024*, November 22. [Report] Retrieved from <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/publicatie/2024/47/rapportage-integratie-en-samenleven-2024>

Helsper, E. (2021). *The digital disconnect: The social causes and consequences of digital inequalities*. SAGE Publications, Limited.

Korte, J., Sim, G., Constantin, A., Eriksson, E., Fails, J. A., Alexandru, C. A., Read, J. C., Wilson, C. (2023). Editorial: Pushing the boundaries of participatory design with children. *International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction*, 35 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijcci.2022.100547>

Terras, M. M., & Ramsay, J. (2016). Family digital literacy practices and children's mobile phone use. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01957>

Rosa Dijkstra is a PhD candidate at the Research Centre for Media and Journalism at the University of Groningen. Rosa's PhD research is part of the [DigiMig project](#), which explores digital inclusion through the lenses of the user, policy, and education. Within this project she focuses on socio-cultural patterns that influence digital inclusion among families with a migration background in urban and rural contexts in the Netherlands. Using an intersectional child-centered approach, her research examines how different children and parents engage with digital media, emphasizing intergenerational digital literacy exchange within families.

Çiğdem Bozdağ is an associate professor at the Research Centre for Media and Journalism Studies at the University of Groningen and the PI of the NWO Vidi project DigiMig (2024-2028), focusing on digital inclusion and migration. Her research interests include media and migration, digital media use, digital literacy, digital inclusion, and media education in schools.

Marcel Broersma is full professor and director of the Centre for Media and Journalism Studies at the University of Groningen. He is the academic director of the Dutch Research School for Media Studies ([RMeS](#)) and one of the coordinators of the national VSNU [Digital Society](#) research program. His research focuses on the interface between the digital transformation of journalism, social media, changing media use, and digital literacy and inclusion. Broersma received numerous grants for his research and his work is published widely.

Mobile digital diaries: Advancing a participatory method for migration research

MICHELE FERRIS DOBLES
(University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica)

The experiences of migrants appropriating communication technologies are deeply rooted in the historical inequalities and systemic discrimination they have faced as a community. Migrants often use their smartphones to reduce risks during their journey. Mobile devices fulfill various functions, ranging from emotional support and political organization, to assisting with practical tasks. Smartphones enhance interpersonal communication while in transit, enabling connection with support networks, sharing vital information, finding navigation routes, and facilitating financial transactions (Ferris-Dobles, 2022). This article theoretically engages with a socio-technical approach (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1985/1999; Nagy & Neff, 2015) that acknowledges people's agency to appropriate technology.

This article examines Central American migration to the U.S. The world's densest migratory corridor (Feldmann et al., 2019) and a hazardous route. I propose "mobile digital diaries" as a method to analyze the complexities of migration in the digital age. Data was collected in 2021-2022 at the Saltillo Migrant Shelter in Mexico. It included 21 in-depth interviews and three long-term mobile digital diaries, which enabled participants to share texts, audio recordings, videos, and photos, self-reporting in real-time their migration experiences. I introduce the use of "mobile digital diaries" as an effective participatory method to tackle the challenges of researching transnational migration.

"Mobile digital diaries" incorporate the same technologies involved in the migration process—smartphones, apps, interfaces, networks, and GPS—into research tools. This enables researchers to become familiar with the significant media used in migration. This technique is essential for conducting transnational research as people share experiences and foster social relations across geographical, nation-state, cultural, and language borders.

"Mobile digital diaries" encourage participants to share their stories, engage in the research with agency and creativity, and foster collaborative knowledge creation between them and the researcher. This article contributes to the discussion by reflecting on knowledge generation and addressing the ethical dimensions of researching migration and media.

Feldmann, A. E., Bada, X., & Schütze, S. (2019). *New migration patterns in the Americas: Challenges for the 21st century*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ferris-Dobles, M. F. (2022). New communication technologies and peoples' movement. In A. E. Feldmann, X. Bada, J. Durand, & S. Schütze (Eds.), *The Routledge history of modern Latin American migration* (pp. 400–411). Routledge

MacKenzie, D., & Wajcman, J. (1985/1999). *The Social Shaping of Technology*. Buckingham, United Kingdom: Open University Press.

Nagy, P., & Neff, G. (2015). Imagined Affordance: Reconstructing a Keyword for Communication Theory. *Social Media + Society*, 1(2).

Michele Ferris Dobles is a documentary filmmaker, researcher, and professor at the School of Communication of the University of Costa Rica, Central America. She earned her PhD in communication from the University of Illinois at Chicago with a Fulbright scholarship. Her research examines the social, economic, and political aspects of media technology, specifically its relation to social inequalities, gender, and migration. In 2023, she received the Dordick Dissertation Award from the International Communication Association (ICA) for her thesis on communication, mobile media technology, and migration.

Post-migrant media practices in post-migrant Sweden

JESSICA GUSTAFSSON
(Södertörn University, Sweden)

Sweden is a post-migrant society (Foroutan, 2015), with 34.7% of the Swedish population of foreign origin (SCB, 2024a; 2024b). In recent years, anti-immigrant sentiment has increased in Sweden and, as a result, the public discourse on immigration has become much harsher (Ekman & Krzyżanowski, 2021). The ethnically diverse suburbs of Sweden's largest cities and the youth residing therein, have become symbols of failed integration in the public debate. They are depicted as if they do not belong to the Swedish nation (Sernhede et al., 2019) and can therefore be argued to be racialised, i.e. othered, in the same way as most of the population in these areas (Molina, 1997). Sweden is thus a polarised and divided nation. In several of these suburbs, different forms of media initiatives have emerged that aim to counter the stereotypical portrayal of mainstream media and be the voice of ordinary people. By adopting the concept of post-migrant media (Ratkovic, 2019), voice (Couldry, 2010) and listening (Bassel, 2017; Dreher, 2010), and focusing on their distinct media practices (Couldry, 2012) this paper aims to explore the potential role that post-migrant media can play in diverse societies. The paper will be based on semi-structured interviews with people involved in these projects as well as content analysis of selected productions. The paper argues that recognition and listening are crucial elements of democratic communication throughout the entire production and dissemination process. Moreover, the paper illustrates that post-migrant media are important but under-utilised resource as they offer different voices and perspectives that should be recognised as they can contribute to a more diverse and inclusive public debate. Furthermore, guided by solidarity and collaboration they can promote unity and understanding and potentially prevent further polarisation in post-migrant societies.

Bassel, L. (2017). *The politics of listening. Possibilities and challenges for democratic life*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Couldry, N. (2012). *Media, society, world: Social theory and digital media practice*. Polity: London.

Couldry, N. (2010). *Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics after Neoliberalism*. Sage.

Dreher, T. (2010). Speaking up or being heard? Community media interventions and the politics of listening. *Media, Culture and Society*, 32(1), 85-103.

Ekman, M., & Krzyżanowski, M. (2021). A populist turn? News editorials and the recent discursive shift on immigration in Sweden. *Nordicom Review*, 42(S1), 67-87.

Foroutan, N. (2015). *Unity in diversity: Integration in a post-migrant society* [Policy brief]. Focus Migration. https://www.bpb.de/system/files/dokument_pdf/Policy%20Brief_Integration%20in%20a%20post-migrant%20society_2015.pdf

Molina, Irene. (1997). *Stadens rasifiering*. Uppsala: Uppsala universitet

Ratkovic, V. (2019). From niche to mainstream? Post-migrant media production as means of fostering participation. In T. Thomas, M.-M. Kruse, & T. Stehling (Eds.), *Media and participation in post-migrant societies* (pp. 147-163). Rowman & Littlefield.

SCB. (2024a). *Befolkning efter födelseland och år*.

https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/sv/ssd/START__BE__BE0101__BE0101E/FodelselandArK/table/tableViewLayout1/

SCB. (2024b). *Antal personer med utländsk eller svensk bakgrund (grov indelning) efter region, ålder och kön: År 2002-2023*.

https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/sv/ssd/START__BE__BE0101__BE0101Q/UtlSvBakGrov/table/tableViewLayout1/

Sernhede, O., Rosales, L. Söderman, J. (2019). *När betongen rättar sin rygg – Ortenrörelsen och folkbildningens renässans*. Daidalos: Göteborg.

Jessica Gustafsson is an Assistant Professor whose research focuses on media and marginalised groups. She has conducted research on community media and media use by marginalised groups.

Session 1 (Room M-648)

Navigating the complexities of migration coverage:

Migration journalists' Sisyphean battle?

MARIA AVRAAMIDOU¹ AND SANEM ŞAHİN²

(¹Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands; ² University of Lincoln, United Kingdom)

Research on migration usually studies media content and rarely journalists' perceptions and practices. This study explores how migration journalists perceive the news media's role in representing migration, and how they navigate the complexities of reporting it. Focus is on professional journalists covering mostly exclusively refugee issues, irregular migration and displacement for international media at Europe's borders providing insights into their opinions and experiences. Understanding their perspectives is crucial for improving the representation of migrants in the media and for shedding light on journalists' working conditions at times that migration is cast as a national threat.

Consequently, the paper addresses three interconnected research questions: 1) How do journalists perceive the media coverage of migration?; 2) How do journalists perceive their interaction with their sources as part of their professional routines?; 3) How do journalists navigate the ethical and personal challenges of covering migration?

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 migration journalists during the pandemic (2020) via online video-calls; ethical standards were followed and participants were granted anonymity. All participants, apart from one, were freelancers who reported for media like British *BBC* and *Channel 4*, US-based *CNN* and *NYT*, the Qatari-based *ALJ* and others. There are two Greeks, three US nationals, one British, one Moroccan, one Syrian, one Italian, and a German participant. Participants were selected for the additional reason that they are reporting on migration from an inclusive perspective.

The preliminary themes of an inductive thematic analysis are presented with an emphasis on tensions and challenges. The first explores journalists' perceptions of media content. Participants thought the media narrative is repetitive, simplistic and overloaded with victimization of migrants. They suggested that this tension could be eased with adding context, such as noting the border policies and their implications. The second theme discusses journalists' challenging interactions with sources, such as authorities, migrants and local communities. Participants reported a paradoxical relationship with authorities: while relying on them for information still scrutinizing their abuse of power. Simultaneously, while some migrants were keen to share their stories with journalists, others were suspicious of them. The third theme focuses on the professional dilemmas journalists experience in deciding whether to aid migrants in need or express their views openly. Such choices could frame them as "biased" and jeopardize their professional credibility. This theme also reflects on the emotional toll of witnessing human suffering and how professional precarity exacerbates all these challenges that sometimes make their work resemble a Sisyphean battle.

[Maria Avraamidou](#) is a Lecturer in Media and Communication, Erasmus University-Rotterdam. Since completing her PhD in Communication and Internet Studies, she developed a research and teaching portfolio on media approaches to migrant/refugee reception, and their interplay with nationalism and racialization.

[Sanem Şahin](#) is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education and Communication at the University of Lincoln, UK. Her research focuses on peace and conflict reporting, journalistic roles, marginalised communities, and refugee journalists. She has published works examining the journalism's role in societies affected by conflict, particularly in Cyprus.

Session 2 (Room M-133)

Uncovering tensions in European migration discourse: A critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics approach

VALÉRIANE MISTIAEN
(Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium)

Migration has been central to European political discourse, particularly with conservative parties mobilising around European identity challenges (Krzyżanowski, 2013). Research on migration-related discourse has explored governance and management (Geiger & Pécoud, 2010), European normative power (Diez & Manners, 2007), and identity construction (Zappettini, 2019).

While most of these studies adopt a political focus and analyse specific events, there remains a significant gap in research on the legal dimensions of European migration-related discourse over the long term. Therefore, this communication examines how long-term semantic changes reflect the evolution of European migration policies and their underlying ideological shifts. Specifically, it investigates how European legal discourse on migration operates to mediate the tension between the construction of a European identity, the principle of freedom of movement rooted in neoliberal ideology, and human rights. This research highlights how these discursive constructions shape a collective imagination (Cussó & Gobin, 2008) of Europe as a champion of human rights, one that manages and regulates (im)migration with compassion and *solidarity* among European countries while engaging in *cooperation* with third countries to externalise asylum seekers at the lowest cost.

By integrating Discourse Analysis (Lecolle, Veniard & Guérin, 2018), with key aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) and Corpus Linguistics tools (Baker *et al.*, 2008), this research analyses a corpus of 109 EU legal texts spanning from 1951 to 2024. Rather than focusing on specific events, it adopts a long-term discursive perspective, an approach that, to our knowledge, has not been undertaken before.

- Cussó, R., & Gobin, C. (2008). Du discours politique au discours expert: le changement politique mis hors débat?. *Mots. Les langages du politique*, 88, 5-11.
- Fairclough, N. & Wodak, R. (1997). "Critical discourse analysis". In T. A. van Dijk (Ed.). *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction* (pp. 258-284). Sage.
- Geiger, M., & Pécoud, A. (2010). *The politics of international migration management*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Krzyżanowski, M. (2013). "From anti-immigration and nationalist revisionism to Islamophobia: Continuities and shifts in recent discourses and patterns of political communication of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)". In R. Wodak, M. KhosraviNik & B. Mral (Eds.). *Right-wing populism in Europe: Politics and discourse* (pp. 135-148). Bloomsbury.
- Lecolle, M., Veniard, M., & Guérin, O. (2018). Pour une sémantique discursive : propositions et illustrations, *Langages*, 210, 35-54.
- Zappettini, F. (2019). *European identities in discourse: A transnational citizens' perspective*. Bloomsbury.

Valérieane Mistiaen is a FWO junior postdoctoral researcher at VUB-Vrije Universiteit Brussel. She holds a PhD in Information and Communication (ULB-Université libre de Bruxelles) and in Communication and Media Studies (VUB). Her PhD research combines Discourse Analysis with Corpus Linguistics to study how denominations used to name people on the move in Belgian French- and Dutch-language media shape the public issue of migration differently in both linguistic communities of Belgium. Her current research focusses on how grammatical morphology carries ideology in state-induced return discourse related to migration. This research is conducted in French, Dutch, Spanish, and English.

Session 2 (Room M-133)

Who leads whom? Media attention and the responsiveness of the members of the European Parliament

NAJA THAULOV CAMISA AND BIRTE NIENABER
(University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg)

Migration has been a defining feature of the 21st century, amidst a permanent rising trend in the movement people, which culminated with the so-called “refugee crisis” in 2015. This period of heightened media salience and rapid political responses raised questions relating to the political influence of the media framing on migration. This article examines the impact of the media on European migration policy debates between 2013 and 2017, through the investigation of the dynamic interplay between media framing and the responsiveness of the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), asking the question – who leads whom?

Employing automated content and regression analyses, the research investigates whether the framing in traditional and social media influences the symbolic political agenda, measured within the Parliamentary debates. The findings reveal a statistically significant mutual dependency between media and Parliamentary framing, with traditional media exerting a sustained influence, especially through frames associated with securitization, while Twitter rather serves as a reactionary medium.

Although these findings are based on English-speaking media, they transcend linguistic boundaries, affecting MEPs across official Parliamentary languages and political ideologies. These findings contribute to broader debates on mediatization and agenda-setting, by empirically confirming that the media not only reflect, but also actively shape the symbolic political agenda during times of perceived crises. The evidence of temporal precedence and significant lagged effects, suggests that media framing plays a role in setting the tone of political debates relating to migration, having important implications for the understanding of how the media and policy sphere are interlinked.

Naja Thaulov Camisa is a doctoral researcher in the Department of Geography the University of Luxembourg. She holds a BA in Social Sciences from Roskilde University and an MSc in Global Refugee Studies from Aalborg University. She has professional experience working within European institutions on issues related to migration and communication. Her dissertation, funded by the Luxembourg National Research Fund (FNR), examines the impact of traditional and social media on EU asylum and migration policies during the so-called refugee crisis. Her research interests and expertise include European policymaking, European asylum and migration policies, and the communication of migration-related issues.

Birte Nienaber is Associate Professor in Political Geography at the University of Luxembourg. She holds a PhD from the University of Münster and a habilitation from Saarland University. She has coordinated several EU-funded migration projects, including H2020’s MIMY and MOVE, and led work packages in DERREG, CEASEVAL, and RELOCAL. Currently, she is involved in the HEU project INNOVATE and coordinates Luxembourg’s EU contact points EMN and FRANET. She also directs the trinational Master in Border Studies and serves on the UniGR-CBS Steering Board. Additionally, she contributes to national and European advisory bodies, including OECD-SOPEMI and several EU funding programme committees.

Media as bridge or barrier?

The role of news consumption on immigrants' sense of belonging

CAMILA MELÍCIA VALGAS¹², SANNE KRUIKEMEIER², TIM GROOT KORMELINK³ AND YAEL DE HAAN¹⁴

(¹Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands, ²Wageningen University & Research, Netherlands, ³Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands, ⁴University of Groningen, Netherlands)

This study investigates how news consumption influences immigrants' sense of belonging and how demographic factors shape this relationship. News media can act as a bridge—offering insights into societal norms and encouraging civic participation (Elias & Lemish, 2011)—and a barrier, reinforcing exclusionary narratives that fuel alienation (Yoon et al., 2011). To understand this dual role, a multilingual survey was conducted to measure news consumption, sense of belonging, and demographic variables of 500 immigrants in the Netherlands. Targeted recruitment reached refugees, knowledge migrants, labor migrants, and family migrants via community organizations, social media, and migrant networks. The survey was available in nine languages, ensuring accessibility. This study illuminates how news consumption shapes belonging, accounting for intra-group differences among the immigrant population, and offering insights for more inclusive media practices and policymaking.

Elias, N., & Lemish, D. (2011). Between three worlds: Host, homeland, and global media in the lives of Russian immigrant families in Israel and Germany. *Journal of Family Issues*, 32(9), 1245–1274.
Yoon, T. I., Kim, K. H., & Eom, H. J. (2011). The border-crossing of habitus: Media consumption, motives, and reading strategies among Asian immigrant women in South Korea. *Media, Culture & Society*, 33(3), 415–431.

Camila Melícia Valgas is a PhD candidate in the Quality Journalism in Digital Transition research group at Utrecht University of Applied Sciences and Wageningen University & Research. Her doctoral work investigates how immigrants consume news and the role news consumption plays in their cultural adaptation. Camila holds a Bachelor's degree in Journalism from the Federal University of Santa Catarina (Brazil), earned in 2017, and a Master's degree in Media Studies, specializing in Digital Cultures, from Maastricht University (Netherlands), completed in 2021 with the Orange Tulip scholarship.

Sanne Kruikemeier is a Professor of Digital Media and Society at the Strategic Communication Group of Wageningen University & Research (WUR). Her research focuses on the causes and manifestations of digitalization and its consequences on society and democracy.

Tim Groot Kormelink is an Assistant Professor in Journalism Studies at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in the Netherlands. His research focuses on everyday practices and experiences of news and media use.

Yael de Haan is Professor of Applied Sciences for Journalism in Digital Transition at the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht in the Netherlands and Professor of Local Journalism at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. Her research focuses on the consequences of digitalization in journalism productions, consumption, and ethics.

Session 2 (Room M-133)

Media in conflict: Exploring crisis reporting practices in France and Ukraine

OLEKSANDRA IAROSHENKO

(National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine)

Crisis reporting places journalists at the forefront of navigating unique challenges in environments fraught with tension, danger, and rapidly evolving circumstances. In addition to the physical and psychological toll of covering conflict and war, crisis reporters are tasked with balancing their responsibility to report the truth while upholding ethical standards (*Kotišová, 2019*). The context in which journalists work, whether in a politically stable environment, such as France, or a nation embroiled in war, like Ukraine, adds distinct layers of complexity to their profession.

This study explores the realities of crisis reporters in Ukraine and France, focusing on their evolving roles during crises, the methods they use to gather and verify information, and the ethical challenges they face. It aims to highlight differences, identify common themes, and provide insights into the future of war reporting amid technological advances, such as AI and drones. Key questions include:

- How do crisis reporters adapt to war in Ukraine?
- How do Ukrainian reporters' practices compare to those in France?

To explore these questions, this study uses twenty in-depth qualitative interviews with frontline journalists reporting on the ongoing war in Ukraine (including 10 French and 10 Ukrainian). The results show that journalists working in Ukraine face unique challenges in terms of collecting and verifying information. A key finding is the significant impact of new technologies on war reporting. Journalists are increasingly using drones to capture aerial footage, providing a unique perspective on the battlefield. AI tools are also being used to analyze large volumes of data and verify the authenticity of images and videos, helping journalists distinguish between real and fake content in the flood of information that accompanies any modern conflict.

In terms of ethical dilemmas, both French and Ukrainian journalists face similar challenges in maintaining objectivity while reporting on highly polarized issues. Ukrainian journalists often find themselves needing to adapt their methods due to the widespread influence of propaganda and disinformation. This means they must focus even more on maintaining accuracy and objectivity, a challenge that their colleagues in France may not encounter as frequently.

Kotišová, J. (2019). *Crisis Reporters, Emotions, and Technology*. Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21428-9>

Oleksandra Iaroshenko is PhD candidate in Media and Communication at the Mohyla School of Journalism (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy), Kyiv, Ukraine. Editor-in-Chief of the Ukrainian edition of the European Journalism Observatory (EJO). Communications manager for the Ukraine Task Force at ECREA (European Communication Research and Education Association). In 2024, she was a visiting scholar at Sorbonne University (École des hautes études en sciences de l'information et de la communication) in Paris, France.

Workshop (Room M-218)

Rethinking reflexivity and positionality in media and migration research: Ethical questions and ways forward

SARA MARINO¹ AND SILVIA ALMENARA NIEBLA²

(¹London College of Communication, University of the Arts London, United Kingdom;

²Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium)

This workshop aims to foster critical debate on the ethical dimensions of conducting research on migration through digital and visual methods, emphasizing the importance of reflexivity in promoting fairer and more equitable research practices. For decades, a non-media-centric approach has inspired a variety of methodological approaches that have illustrated and generated greater knowledge about the reality of migration and its fit with media experiences. However, digital and creative practices of engagement with migrant and refugee communities pose new and unfamiliar challenges around positionality, the commitment to co-participatory and mixed-methods research approaches and of course the constantly evolving field of Internet Research Ethics. This workshop aims to bring together experts and researchers with the aim to collectively think through a range of ethical and inclusive strategies for understanding the lived experiences of migrants, asylum seekers and displaced communities.

Participants will be invited to critically discuss and propose ideas or examples of ethical academic practice around five broad research themes: 1) Internet Research Ethics and Platforms 2) Visual and Participatory Methods 3) Positionality and Care 4) Tension and rules of engagement in doing impact-driven work with migrants and 5) Creativity and Ethics. The workshop will feature researchers with extensive experience in critical methodologies and approaches, including Mélodine Sommier (University of Jyväskylä), Kevin Smets (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), Amanda Alencar (Rotterdam University), Karolina Nikielska-Sekuła (Jagiellonian University, Poland) and Koen Leurs (Utrecht University). They will facilitate the conversation by encouraging workshop participants to think through some key ethical dilemmas.

Workshop Facilitators:

Dr Mélodine Sommier (University of Jyväskylä, Finland):

<https://www.jyu.fi/en/people/melodine-sommier>

Dr Kevin Smets (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium): <https://birmm.research.vub.be/kevin-smets-0>

Dr Amanda Alencar (Rotterdam University, The Netherlands):

<https://www.eur.nl/en/people/amanda-paz-alencar>

Dr Karolina Nikielska-Sekuła (Jagiellonian University, Poland): <https://nikielska-sekula.com>

Dr Koen Leurs (Utrecht University, The Netherlands): <https://www.uu.nl/staff/KHALeurs>

The Game: participatory digital storytelling of unaccompanied minor migrants

VITTORIO IERVESE

(University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy)

Everyday teenagers who have fled their countries try to cross Europe's borders in search of protection and a better life.

"Game, game, game. If you want to go to Europe, you have to play many games. The game means that you will have to cross the border illegally. There are different games. The boat game. The train game. The container game. The taxi game (...)",

This is how Sajid Khan (from Afghanistan, aged 15) describes on his cell phone the 'games' he had to complete to get into Europe. These 'games' represent spatial tactics employed by refugees in response to the challenges of legally accessing their desired destinations. These accounts are predominantly conveyed by the protagonists themselves via their smartphones, employing a narrative style that is partly ironic, partly dramatic, partly autobiographical, and partly designed to assist other children in their migration endeavours. In early 2021, Eefje Blankevoort and Els van Driel initiated *Shadow Game*, an interactive and participatory transmedia project comprising two long feature documentaries, a short doc series, an adventure game, a photo series, an exhibition and an impact campaign (<https://shadowgame.eu/en/homepage/>). The project was created with the involvement of migrant children. The present study focuses on *Shadow Game*, and its potential to provide a counter-narrative to the dominant discourses that tend to victimise, criminalise or exclude migrants.

Migrant children's agency is manifested when it is possible to observe children's active participation in communication, which is enhanced by the availability of choices of action that subsequently enhance alternative actions and thus change in the interaction. While children's active participation can happen anytime in communication, the achievement of agency needs the promotion of a child's right to active participation in relation to choice and construction of meaning and narratives. In light of these considerations, the present contribution will direct its focus towards communicative forms that have the potential to foster the agency of migrant children as narrated.

Baraldi, C., & Iervese, V. (2017). *Narratives of memories and dialogue in multicultural classrooms: Analysis of workshops based on the use of photography*. *Narrative Inquiry*, 27(2), 398–417

Leurs, K., & Ponzanesi, S. (Eds.) (2024). *Doing Digital Migration Studies: Theories and Practices of the Everyday*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press.

Minca C., Collins J. (2021). The Game: Or, 'the making of migration' along the Balkan Route. *POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY*, 91, 1-21

Vittorio Iervese is Professor of Sociology of Cultural Processes at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (I). He has conducted research on visual culture, digital communication, conflict management and cultural design. He collaborated with and chaired the Festival dei Popoli - International Documentary Film Festival. He conceived and directed DHIALOGUE, an advanced training programme on Digital Humanities for researchers and experts. His latest research projects are: Spatial Practices in Art and Architecture for Empathetic EXchange (SPACEX) and SHARMED. Shared Memory and Dialogue, an international research project on the use of images to build narrative memories in intercultural schools.

Suppliants of Syria: Participatory theatre, filmmaking and reflexive approaches to migration narratives

İLKE ŞANLIER, KIVANÇ TÜRKGELDI & ASLI ILGIT
(Çukurova University, Türkiye)

In an era where migration is increasingly criminalized and borders serve as sites of exclusion and surveillance, creative methodologies offer a means to amplify migrant voices and disrupt dominant narratives. This paper examines the potential of digital storytelling as a reflexive and participatory method in migration research, drawing on insights from the Suppliants of Syria project. Inspired by Aeschylus' *The Suppliants*, this project reimagines ancient narratives of displacement through the lived experiences of Syrian refugee women in Turkey, using participatory methods and digital media to foster intercultural dialogue and transhistorical solidarity.

Through participatory media practices, Suppliants of Syria provides a platform for migrants to craft their own narratives, challenging mainstream representations that often frame them as passive subjects of crisis. The project integrates interactive storytelling, audiovisual media, and digital performance to explore questions of identity, belonging, and exile. By engaging migrants as co-creators rather than research subjects, it emphasizes agency, self-representation, and epistemic justice in migration studies.

This paper reflects on the methodological and ethical challenges of employing digital storytelling in migration research. It interrogates how digital infrastructures shape the visibility and vulnerability of migrants, the role of platform affordances in transnational storytelling, and the ways in which digital multilingualism fosters or inhibits social cohesion. Additionally, it considers the reflexive dimensions of the researcher's role, questioning how knowledge production can be co-created rather than extracted. By situating Suppliants of Syria within broader discussions of digital counter-publics, diasporic activism, and participatory media, this paper highlights the transformative potential of creative methodologies in migration research. It argues that by integrating artistic and digital practices, researchers can move beyond borders—both literal and epistemological—to cultivate ethical, inclusive, and agentic forms of storytelling in migration studies. Keywords: digital storytelling, participatory media, migration narratives, intercultural dialogue, digital transnationalism, reflexive methodologies.

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Kıvanç Türkgeldi completed his PhD in 2018 with a focus on film philosophy and empathy in art and cinema. During his graduate studies, he worked as a research assistant at Akdeniz University Faculty of Communication and coordinated the university's Communication Film Workshop (AIFA). Since 2019, he has been an assistant professor in the Department of Radio, Television, and Cinema at Çukurova University. Active in film production since 2012, he has worked on various short films, documentaries, and commercial projects. His current research explores video essays and audiovisual criticism.

Aslı Ilgit is a Professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Çukurova University, Turkey. She completed her B.A. in Political Science and International Relations at Boğaziçi University, her M.A. in International Relations and her Ph.D. in Political Science, both at Syracuse University, USA. Her research interests include theories of state identity, politics of identity, foreign and security policy, emotions, and migration. Her work has been published in *Political Psychology*, *Review of International Studies*, *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *Security Dialogue*, *Mediterranean Politics*, *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, *the World Financial Review*, and *MERIP*. Since 2022, she has been one of the Associate Editors of *Mediterranean Politics*.

Session 3 (Room M-648)

Documenting border barriers: Expanding public awareness through visual art

A. PAMELA DODDS

(Independent Visual Artist, Toronto, Canada)

Documenting Border Barriers is a research-based artwork that addresses the exponential rise in the building of fences and walls between nations and territories to keep people out. It is a series of etchings (hand-printed drawings) with companion texts. Each etching and text together portray a specific border barrier in the world today.

The cross-disciplinary nature of this creative project provides an entry point to engage and inform the public about the growing prevalence and brutality of physical anti-migration barriers, while offering validation to those viewers with personal or family experience of migration and borders. The slow, methodical etching technique factors into its compelling aesthetic that draws the viewer in to the subject. The texts that accompany each print provide detailed descriptions like height, length, surveillance systems, and context.

An ongoing, growing compendium, 26 pairs of prints have been created to date. The artwork, texts, multiplicity of borders represented, and the format in which the work is exhibited, provide an overwhelming impression of the pervasive presence of barricaded and militarized borders in the world.



Figure 1: Artwork Installation, Documenting Border Barriers, Pamela Dodds, Museum of Art, Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, 2023.

Pamela Dodds is an independent visual artist. Her work in painting, drawing and printmaking is exhibited in Canada, USA and Europe. Her art installation, *Documenting Border Barriers*, has been exhibited in galleries in Canada, Mexico, and upcoming in Italy, and at international border studies conferences including Border Walls/Borderlands International Colloquium, U Quebec, Montreal, 2022, and presented on conference panels at University of Arizona, Tempe, USA, University SMBA, Fez, and Ibn Zohr University, Agadir, Morocco, 2024. Selected prints have appeared in group art exhibitions and received awards at international printmaking bi/triennials in Brussels, Belgium and Krakow, Poland in 2024.

Session 3 (Room M-648)

Co-creating knowledge with videos and podcasts: reflecting on the poetics and politics of collaborating with marginalized groups

NESKE BAERWALDT¹, ASMA MATAICH², HEMMO BRUINENBERG³, KINAN ALAJAK² & KOEN LEURS²
(¹Leiden University, ²Utrecht University, ³Common Frames)

This presentation reflects on the practicalities, politics, and poetics of co-creating knowledge through short videos and podcasts, drawing on two recent research projects. The first project, Co-designing a fair digital asylum system (conducted by a multidisciplinary team, led by Koen Leurs), examined how Dutch authorities use data from asylum seekers' smartphones, tablets, and laptops as tools for border control and migration governance. During the asylum process, the Identification and Screening Asylum Seekers Service (DISA) routinely screens digital devices to verify identities. This practice, now common in Europe, the US, and Australia, intensified after the so-called 'European refugee crisis' and the 2015 Paris Attacks, reflecting heightened security and xenophobic concerns. Our research revealed that the Dutch government obscures information about these screenings. In response, the team collaborated with the Dutch Refugee Council, an animator, legal experts, and people with lived experience to produce short information videos in key languages, aiming to provide asylum seekers with transparent, accessible knowledge about their rights and the process. The team and key informants also shared experiences in the podcast series *The Arena* on the challenges of pursuing public engagement and impact, this process of role-reversal and academics becoming interviewees may stimulate greater accountability and reflexivity. The second project revolved around a podcast series, setup by a team of researchers and practitioners to center the voices of young Muslim women in the Netherlands. These women, navigating multiple forms of marginalization, share their experiences through music, activism, faith, and community. Each episode is built around in-depth conversations, interwoven with sound fragments and music chosen by the guests—ranging from protests to poetry and personal recordings. The podcast provides space for discussions on Islamophobia and racism, while also exploring the fullness of life beyond struggle. By reversing the dominant narrative lens, the series tells stories of the Netherlands as seen and felt by Muslims themselves, embracing multiplicity, beauty, complexity, and accessibility. Both projects highlight the potential of digital storytelling and podcasting as co-creative, human-centered research methods. The presentation will review:

- Practical, creative, and artistic considerations in producing collaborative media.
- Political and ethical dimensions, such as transparency, representation, and power dynamics.
- Recommendations for future projects, emphasizing the importance of genuine and engaged collaboration with communities navigating hostile environments.

Ultimately, these projects illustrate how co-creation with affected communities may generate more nuanced and engaged collective understandings.

Neske Baerwaldt is a PhD candidate at the Van Vollenhoven Institute for Law, Governance, and Society at Leiden University, and researcher affiliated to the Department of Media and Culture, Utrecht University, the Netherlands. In her dissertation, she studies Europe's borders as bound up in colonial and imperial histories and the stratification of human life. She is also the co-producer and host of the podcast *de Verbranders*, together with Wiebe Ruijtenberg, where they learn about Europe's borders through conversation, music, and sound, exploring intimacies across continents and empires.

Asma Mataich is a student in the Research Master of Anthropology, Utrecht University, and junior researcher affiliated to the Department of Media and Culture Studies, Utrecht University, the Netherlands.

Hemmo Bruinenberg is the co-founder and co-director of the Common Frames Foundation, the Netherlands.

Kinan Alajak is PhD Candidate at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Their research interests are critical data and AI studies, transition studies, and social practices. As part of their most recent work on technologies of policing in the context of asylum procedures, they published in *Forced Migration Review* (2024), and *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (2025)

Koen Leurs is Associate Professor in Gender, Media and Migration at the Department of Media and Culture Studies, Utrecht University, the Netherlands. His research interests are migration and youth culture, co-creative methodologies and ethics. He recently co-edited *Doing Digital Migration Studies* (Amsterdam University Press, 2024) and the *Handbook of Media and Migration* (Sage, 2020) and published the monograph *Digital Migration* (Sage, 2023).

**Navigating belonging through digital spaces and digital storytelling:
A study of Turkish diasporic youth in London**

EBRU BASER

(SOAS University of London, United Kingdom)

Digital technologies play a role to maintain ties with homeland and to create belongings and identities for diasporic persons. Ponzanesi (2020, p. 982) states that “digital media make physical distance shrink through digital proximity, creating new forms of affective relations and belonging”. Digital technology use for diasporic purposes may reinforce the self-expression or communication forms enabling diasporic persons, including children and youth, to draw the self, to construct identity or to negotiate the multiple nature of belonging in digital spaces, while preventing the sense of being minority somewhat. Hence, it is significant to study the children and youth living in diaspora and their experiences with digital technologies, since technology may enhance not only the visibility of diasporic persons (Madianou, 2019) but shape belongings and identification whereby their ethnic diversity, cultural hybridity and multicultural lives (Tanyas, 2016).

This study explores the role of digital technologies in enhancing language skills, sense of belonging, and social cohesion with homeland among 106 second-generation Turkish diasporic children born and raised in London. Through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, focus groups and informal dialogues, the study investigates how bilingual users in digital spaces handle tensions of belonging, identification, and social cohesion with homeland by telling their digital stories. This study aims to provide ethnographic insights from diasporic children and youth regarding bilingualism, social cohesion and cultural framing by focusing on digital stories.

The findings reveal that digital technologies and the internet serve as significant means for the participants to consolidate their sense of belonging with homeland, despite the dichotomy experienced as second-generation individuals. The study also highlights nuances in the effectiveness of digital technologies in enhancing participants' Turkish language skills, while bilingualism in digital spaces enables them to reach out, comprehend, and create diverse digital content. In conclusion, digital technologies could help diasporic children deal with tensions of belonging, identification, and social cohesion with homeland to a certain extent by enabling them to create digital narratives and share their stories about homeland in digital spaces.

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Tanyas, B. (2016). Experiences of otherness and practices of othering: young Turkish migrants in the UK. *YOUNG*, 24(2), 157-173.

Ebru Baser is final year PhD researcher at SOAS University of London. Her research focuses on Turkish diasporic children and their digital media use. Her project attempts to discover how Turkish diasporic children use digital media, and what skills, experiences and engagement forms they develop. She conducted ethnographic research for data collection. She has been holding two master's degrees, which are MA (Akdeniz University) and MSc (Brunel University of London). In addition, she assisted her supervisor in project, which was 1001 project of TUBITAK, No: 114k364 focusing on “TV Viewing among Conservatives in Turkey: Identity, Popular Taste and Boundaries funded by TUBITAK.

Session 4 (Room M-133)

Beyond stereotypes: Digital self-representation and identity negotiation among young descendants of Turkish labor migrants in Germany

ZEYNEP ALTUNDAĞ

(Freie Universität Berlin, Institute for Communication and Media Studies, Germany)

Media and political discourses in Germany have long framed people from Turkish migration contexts using negative stereotypes. Early representations focused on the so-called "guest worker problem," which later evolved into broader concerns about the "Turkish problem" and, more recently, the "Muslim problem" (Yurdakul 2009). These discourses have reinforced exclusionary perceptions of non-European migrants, particularly those with Muslim backgrounds (Shooman 2014). In contrast, social media platforms offer underrepresented groups the freedom to share their experiences in ways that challenge stereotypical narratives and express identities that are often closely tied to, or in some cases even more liberated than their offline selves. This interdisciplinary study integrates theories of media representation (Hall, 1997) and narratives concerning people from Turkish migration contexts, including their media practices (Trebbe et al., 2010). The framework is further grounded in acculturation theory (Berry, 1997), social and cultural identity approaches (Tajfel, 1981), and migration studies, with a particular focus on Turkish migration to Germany (Abadan-Unat, 2011). Methodologically, the study employs a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design, beginning with six semi-structured focus groups (n = 32), followed by a quantitative online survey (n = 117), and an audiovisual component (n = 9) using multimedia tools. Findings reveal that participants predominantly express bicultural identities. Social media is crucial for connecting, information gathering, and political engagement across German, Turkish, and global contexts. Participants demonstrate political awareness but largely prefer passive content consumption. Despite perceived discrimination, they display resilience, characterized by self-confidence and critical awareness. This paper highlights how social media enables disadvantaged youth to navigate identities, challenge stereotypes, and engage with cultural and political discourses.

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- Yurdakul, G. (2009). *From guest workers into Muslims: Turkish immigrant associations in Germany*. Cambridge Scholars Press.

Zeynep Altundağ is a research assistant in the Division of Media Analysis and Research Methods at the Institute for Communication and Media Studies, Freie Universität Berlin, where she is currently completing her doctoral thesis. Her dissertation explores how young people of Turkish migrant descent in Germany use social media to navigate their identity, acculturation and self-representation. Her research interests include Turkish migration to Germany, social media, ethnic youth, media use, representation, and acculturation.

Narratives from their social media:

Understanding perceived self-deservingness among migrants in Türkiye

OZEN BAS¹, EMEL OZDORA¹ AND SAFAK KILICTEPE²

(¹Bilkent University, Türkiye; ²Kırşehir Ahi Evran University, Türkiye)

Türkiye has been the primary destination for Syrians since 2011, as well as for other migrant groups from Afghanistan and Africa. Today, more than 3.2 million officially registered migrants in Türkiye have become a diasporic community, living amongst the host population yet remaining socially distant and excluded, almost by an invisible border. Extant research on public opinion in Türkiye reveals an increase in anti-immigrant attitudes. Studies indicate that the range of negative attitudes toward migrants can be explained by intergroup threat theory (Stolle et al., 2008). Yet, there has not been substantial research in Türkiye about how intergroup threat theory could explain the attitudes among different migrant groups and identity formation. Given Türkiye's declining political and economic conditions and a host community that views outsiders as the source of intergroup competition for scarce resources, an in-depth understanding of contrasting attitudes towards different migrant groups by local populations and those of migrant populations is needed.

Social media platforms offer a discursive arena where users can (re)form their identities. This study employs a novel conceptual approach by investigating how different migrant groups perceive each other's deservingness of access to resources (De Coninck & Matthijs, 2020). Through 30 in-depth interviews and social media scroll-back interviews using snowball sampling, we explore how migrant groups in Türkiye form their identities by reflecting on their perceived level of deservingness. Social media scroll-back interviews help explore the "historical digital traces, collected over years of social media use" (Møller & Robards, 2019, p. 106). This innovative reflexive methodological approach will reveal how different migrant groups in the Global South create hierarchies amongst themselves, shaping their gendered, racial, ethnic, and religious identities, which could lead to stratification in accessing resources. Adopting a community-based research approach, we aim to examine intercultural attitudes, discourses, relationships, and dialogue among migrant communities as shaped and redefined through social media.

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Ozen Bas (PhD, Indiana University) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication and Design at Bilkent University, Türkiye. Bas studies political communication: cognitive and participatory effects of emerging media use on different sociodemographic groups. Her work focuses on the content and use of media messages to inform citizens and political participation.

Emel Ozdora (PhD, University of Florida) is an associate professor at the Department of Communication and Design at Bilkent University, Türkiye. She worked as a communication specialist for UNICEF Turkey before transferring to academia. Her research interests include organizational communication, public relations, and social advocacy. She is currently working on a research project funded by the University of Chicago on healthcare provision to refugee and migrant communities in Turkey.

Safak Kilictepe (PhD, Indiana University) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Kırşehir Ahi Evran University, Türkiye. Kilictepe's research interests include medical anthropology, science technology and society studies, politics of reproduction, reproductive technologies, traditional and complementary medicine, gender, race, and ethnicity. Her work explores the ways in which knowledge on the body and medicine is shaped, and, in turn, questions how inequalities are produced and reproduced.

Identity construction through stance-taking practices in a virtual exchange

MAHNAZ SHIRDEL AND MARKO SIITONEN

(University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

This study explores identity construction through stance-taking in a Virtual Exchange (VE) between university students of languages from Finland and Iran. Prior research suggests that such exchanges tend to emphasize commonalities over differences, which can constrain meaningful intercultural learning (Ware & Kramersch, 2005; Helm & Baroni, 2020). Drawing on a constructionist approach to identity, the study views identity as co-constructed in interaction, with stance-taking, particularly alignment and affiliation, playing a central role (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). A qualitative analysis was conducted on a 66-minute recorded Skype discussion where participants exchanged views on superhero movies. Conversation Analysis (CA) was employed to examine how students used stance-taking and how they invoked or resisted social categories. Findings show that frequent alignment among participants supported smooth turn-taking, reinforced in-group cohesion, and fostered rapport. In contrast, rare moments of disalignment or disagreement allowed individuals to express more distinctive identities and highlighted cultural nuances. Group-level identities also emerged through shared critiques of external groups, such as stereotyped views of American media. However, excessive alignment risked missing opportunities for open dialogue, as students appeared to avoid conflict or disagreement and exploration of differences views and experiences (Belz, 2003). This reinforces the argument that while VEs are valuable tools for fostering connection, they must be intentionally designed to stimulate critical dialogue and self-reflection (Ware & Kramersch, 2005; Helm & Baroni, 2020). This study contributes to understanding identity as fluid and interactionally achieved within online intercultural settings. It suggests that educators and VE designers incorporate training on stance-taking and provide mentoring to navigate sociopolitical and contextual constraints (O'Dowd, 2023). Future research could investigate how guided disaffiliation and structured reflection might enhance intercultural learning outcomes.

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Helm, F., & Baroni, A. (2020). Researching emotions and attitude in virtual exchange. In A. Oskoz & M. Vinagre (Eds.), *Understanding attitude in intercultural virtual communication* (pp. 166–195). Equinox.

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Ware, P., & Kramersch, C. (2005). Toward an intercultural stance. *Modern Language Journal*, 89(2), 190–205.

Mahnaz Shirdel is a doctoral researcher in the Department of Language and Communication Studies at the University of Jyväskylä's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Her research focuses on identity formation and intercultural communication in technology-mediated interactions. Mahnaz's recent open-access publication, "Identity gap formation: an exploration of participant experiences in a virtual exchange program," appeared in *Digital Culture & Education* (2024). Leveraging qualitative methodologies in her doctoral dissertation, Mahnaz investigates how virtual exchange participants communicate and shape their identities. Her research contributes to advancing telecollaborative pedagogies aimed at fostering 21st-century skills.

Marko Siitonen is Professor of Intercultural and Technology-Mediated Communication and Head of the Department of Language and Communication Studies at the University of Jyväskylä. He holds a PhD in Speech Communication and leads the international Master's Programme in Language, Globalization and Intercultural Communication (LAGIC). His research explores the interplay between communication and technology, focusing on online communities, virtual teams, and identity construction in digital environments.

Panel 1 (Room M-218)

(De)constructing neglected supranational and local discourses on (im)migration: a reflexive, multi-stakeholder perspective

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(¹Vrije University Brussel, Belgium; ²Charles University, Czechia; ³University of Groningen, The Netherlands; ⁴London College of Communication, Great Britain)

Discourse and communication on (im)migration constitute a major topic of interest in the Global North. Political and media discourses have been extensively studied, mostly identifying victim and threat tropes (Van Gorp, 2005). However, the discourses of various international (e.g., intergovernmental organisations, the EU, international NGOs) and local (local NGOs, migrants' perspectives) actors have been largely overlooked. Little research on institutional actors has identified discursive strategies such as depoliticisation (Cosso & Gobin, 2008) and smoothening of discourses (Monte & Oger, 2015), while the voices of protagonists themselves remain often silenced. Regarding media actors, the focus has been mainly on traditional media while digital media platforms are mostly neglected. This panel therefore responds to various calls to approach 'representational strategies on migration from a multi-stakeholder perspective' (d'Haenens & Joris, 2020, p. 437). This enables us to investigate how various relevant (but largely neglected) actors reproduce or counter particular hegemonic migration representations and discourses. By examining representation strategies from a multi-stakeholder perspective, we can identify distortions by balancing multiple viewpoints and bringing divergent perspectives together to make evidence-based recommendations for change (d'Haenens & Joris, 2020, p. 438). In doing so, this panel emphasises the need for reflexivity in migration research, acknowledging the positionality of both researchers and actors involved. It integrates diverse methodological approaches, including Discourse Analysis, ethnographic methods, digital media analysis and participatory research, to critically assess how migration narratives are shaped, negotiated and contested. By combining these -distinct but complementary- perspectives, this panel contributes to the decentering of migration studies.

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Monte, M., & Oger, C. (2015). La construction de l'autorité en contexte. L'effacement du dissensus dans les discours institutionnels. *Mots. Les langages du politique*, 107, 5–18.

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Individual abstracts

Decentering Media and Migration Studies. A “PIGS” perspective on migrant women's digital practices **Claudia Minchilli**

This presentation seeks to untangle the complex relationship between digital media practices and migration by focusing on one of Europe's geographical and discursive peripheries, Italy. Through an analysis of the digital practices of Somali, Romanian and Turkish migrant women living in Rome, this work aims to disrupt the prevailing myth of Europe (Balibar 1991) as a

unified, hegemonic space by addressing the epistemological and methodological limitations within digital media and migration studies (Leurs 2023). These fields, traditionally dominated by perspectives rooted in North-Western Europe and North America, often produce universalising theories that fail to account for the situated, context-specific experiences of migrant communities in Southern Europe. Hence, by positioning the South of Europe at the centre of my epistemological and methodological reflections, this presentation advocates for decentering migration studies at the intersection with digital media studies. It challenges dominant discourses and conceptual frameworks that are shaped by unequal power relations between Europe's center and peripheries. Specifically, this presentation approaches the so-called "PIGS" countries —Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain— as critical vantage points (Dainotto 2007). The term "PIGS" has been used pejoratively by Northern European countries to emphasise economic and social disparities within the European Union, reflecting broader discursive dynamics of marginalisation and subordination. This decentered approach questions *who* can define the concept of 'margins,' revealing its porous, unstable, and historically contingent nature. It situates migrants' digital practices within broader social, economic, and cultural dynamics (Minchilli and Ponzanesi 2023) that contribute to hegemonic constructions of European identity and its 'others,' rooted in capitalism and colonial histories. Ultimately, this presentation disrupts dominant narratives around digital connectivity and migration, offering new directions for both fields of study.

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Beyond victim and hero representations? A comparative analysis of UNHCR's Instagram communication strategies for the Syrian and Ukrainian crises

David Ongenaert

The Ukrainian crisis has received substantial Global Northern policy support and favourable news coverage, contrasting sharply with Global Southern crises (Moallin et al., 2023). Nevertheless, refugee organisations can influence public perceptions through social media, which have hardly been investigated; this in contrast to media and political discourses on migration (Carrasco-Polaino, et al. 2018; Green, 2018). This study comparatively analyses UNHCR's Instagram communication strategies for the Ukrainian and Syrian crises (2022–2023). Applying a multimodal critical discourse analysis on UNHCR's Instagram posts (N=90), we discern interacting humanitarian and post-humanitarian appeals, involving inter- and intra-group hierarchies of deservingness, expanding research on humanitarian communication. While UNHCR primarily represents forcibly displaced Ukrainians as victims and highlights ideal victims, consistent with previous research (Harrell-Bond & Voutira, 2007; Bellander, 2022), it mostly portrays forcibly displaced Syrians as empowered individuals (Krause & Schmidt, 2020; Bellander, 2022). These representations partially counter common news narratives and can likely be explained by context-specific differences and objectives. Further, both humanitarian appeals often interact with post-humanitarian appeals, which are facilitated by Instagram affordances (Dumitrica & Hockin-Boyers, 2022). Overall, we argue that UNHCR's Instagram communication strategies largely reproduce humanitarian and post-humanitarian strategies. Following challenging institutional and crisis-specific contexts and dominant social media logics, UNHCR barely utilizes the platform's opportunities for more nuanced, contextualized representations. Decentering migration studies, this study contributes

to the literature on humanitarian and Instagram communication by providing in-depth, comparative insights into the largely unexplored social media strategies of refugee organizations for both Global Southern and barely examined Global Northern crises. It provides comparative crisis-specific and platform-specific insights and potential underlying causes and demonstrates that mainly humanitarian imageries, frequently in interaction with post-humanitarian imageries, are used on Instagram, which nuances the often-assumed importance of the latter on social media.

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- Dumitrica, D., & Hockin-Boyers, H. (2023). Slideshow activism on Instagram: constructing the political activist subject. *Information, Communication & Society*, 26(16), 3318-3336.
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Re-centering Ethnicity, Race and Migration in Digital Inclusion Policy Debates

Çiğdem Bozdağ, Rosa Dijkstra & Denise Mensonides

Digital inclusion is used to refer to equal chances of participation in the digital society. Research and policies on digital inclusion often focus on digital inequalities about gender, socio-economic background, education level, and disabilities (Helsper, 2021). The presentation will discuss how ethnicity, race, and migration are often absent from discussions in policies and debates on digital inclusion. Research on digital inequalities also predominantly adopts quantitative frameworks which make it difficult to address the complex dynamics through which race, ethnicity and migration background can create unequal conditions of participating in the digital society. Through a review of research on digital inclusion and migration and EU-based supranational policy papers on digital inclusion and digital inequalities, this communication will first discuss to what extent existing digital inclusion debates address race, ethnicity, and migration and how migration is conceptualised in them. Secondly, the presentation will offer a conceptual framework from an intersectional perspective of digital inclusion. It will argue that we can only understand the role of migration on digital inclusion by critically looking at the interplay of multiple factors such as gender, class and age (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins & Bilge, 2020). By presenting this intersectional framework, the communication will make a plea for going beyond a simplified skills-based notion of “inclusion” in digital contexts and focusing on critical questions in relation to ethnicity, race, belonging, and identity as well.

- Crenshaw K. W. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *The University of Chicago Legal Forum Volume 1989*, 139–167.
- Collins, P. H., & Bilge, S. (2020). *Intersectionality*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Helsper, E. (2021). *The digital disconnect: The social causes and consequences of digital inequalities*. Sage publications.

Migration management, a linguistic strategy to hide deterrence policies?

Valérie Mistiaen

Although migration is often presented as a normal phenomenon in discourse (Kalm, 2010: 32), Western states agree on the need to regulate and manage it. At times, they even see the world as being in a state of crisis (Drozdiak, 2017: xi; Angeli Aguiton, Cabane & Cornilleau, 2019: 9-10). This sense of permanent crisis enables governments to act swiftly, sometimes bypassing standard parliamentary procedures, and often infringing upon fundamental human rights principles (Geiger & Pécoud, 2010: 12). To justify their deterrence policies (Hess & Kasparek, 2017), they elaborate a worldwide discourse on international migration, in which management becomes the central focus. This communication proposes to deconstruct the language used in European legal texts on migration, as well as in UNHCR and IOM discourse, and to examine how it circulates between these supranational institutions. It explores language choices, such as avoiding negatively connotated terms like *deportation* in favour of a paradigm of re-prefixed terms (*readmission*, *resettlement*, *reintegration* and *relocation*). This linguistic shift smooths the discourse, deflecting attention from the real challenges. A Discourse Analysis of a substantial corpus of EU, UNHCR and IOM texts (totalling 8,666,408 words) implemented with Corpus Linguistics and balanced with civil servants' interviews enables the author to critically examine migration discourse. This study deconstructs how such language legitimises policies and reassures the public. Moreover, a reflexive approach acknowledges how discourse both shapes and is shaped by institutional actors, influencing their perceptions and responses to migration governance.

Angeli Aguiton S., Cabane L., & Cornilleau L. (2019). La fabrique et le gouvernement des crises. *Critique internationale*, 85(4), 9-21. DOI: 10.3917/cii.085.0009.

Drozdiak, W. (2017). *Fractured Continent: Europe's Crises and the Fate of the West*. WW Norton & Company.

Geiger, M., & Pécoud, A. (2010). The Politics of International Migration Management. In: M. Geiger, & A. Pécoud (Eds.) *The Politics of International Migration Management. Migration, Minorities and Citizenship* (pp. 1-20). Palgrave Macmillan.

Kalm, S. (2010). Liberalizing movements? The political rationality of global migration management. In: M. Geiger & A. Pécoud (Eds.) *The politics of international migration management* (pp. 21-44). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Hess, S., & Kasparek, B. (2017). Under control? Or border (as) conflict: reflections on the European Border Regime, *Social Inclusion*, 5(3), 58-68.

Digital third spaces and counter-migration discourses

Sara Marino

In my presentation I critically reflect on how the exercise of creativity at the border can offer opportunities for refugees to counteract, de-construct and resist predominant discourses on (forced) migration that usually portray them as either criminals or as agentless victims. To do that, I present findings from an exploratory research project titled *Digital Arts for Refugee Engagement* (DA-RE), which was undertaken by a multidisciplinary team of academics and practitioners based at Bournemouth University, University of the Arts London (UK), University of Chittagong (Bangladesh), Maltepe University and Gate of Sun production company in Turkey. The project explored the role of art and digital skills for the development of refugee youths' own creative agency. DA-RE's hypothesis was that when refugee youth's existing digital literacies are expressed in more artistic ways, it can be possible to generate a rich 'third space' for meaning-making where counter-narrative to 'othering' discourses at work in both their host communities and in the UK can be expressed and converted into social good. DA-RE's participants were Rohingya refugees based in the Kutupalang and Balukhali camps in Ukhia, a sub-district of Cox's Bazar, considered the world's largest refugee camp, and refugee youth participants living in Gaziantep, Turkey. The participants created a broad range of creative works including paintings, collections of poetry, films, YouTube videos, collections

of videography and photojournalism pieces. Reciprocal exchanges between the refugee youth in the two settings were in real time on Zoom, which allowed the participants to share experience across and between borders, and researchers to explore the development of a digital third space. This project will allow me to reflect more deeply on how art – broadly defined as practice and as performance – allows refugees to express their politically-charged identities in more creative ways, while acting as a tool of resistance and reaction against the increasing militarization and securitization of borders.

Valériane Mistiaen is a FWO junior postdoctoral researcher at VUB-Vrije Universiteit Brussel. She holds a PhD in Information and Communication (ULB-Université libre de Bruxelles) and in Communication and Media Studies (VUB). Her PhD research combines Discourse Analysis with Corpus Linguistics to study how denominations used to name people on the move in Belgian French- and Dutch-language media shape the public issue of migration differently in both linguistic communities of Belgium. Her current research focusses on how grammatical morphology carries ideology in state-induced return discourse related to migration. This research is conducted in French, Dutch, Spanish, and English.

David Ongenaert works as a postdoctoral researcher at The Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. He examines the discursive construction of peace, focusing on the Russian-Ukrainian war. He also works as a lecturer at the Department of Media & Communication at Erasmus University Rotterdam where he focused on inclusive education. David obtained a PhD in Communication Sciences from Ghent University in 2022. David is a co-chair of ECREA's International and Intercultural Communication Section, and a member of the advisory board of 'Journal of Global Diaspora & Media'.

Çiğdem Bozdağ is an associate professor at the Research Centre for Media and Journalism Studies at the University of Groningen and the PI of the NWO Vidi project DigiMig (2024-2028), focusing on digital inclusion and migration. Her research interests include media and migration, digital media use, digital literacy, digital inclusion, and media education in schools.

Rosa Dijkstra is a PhD candidate at the Research Centre for Media and Journalism at the University of Groningen. Rosa's PhD research is part of the DigiMig project, which explores digital inclusion through the lenses of the user, policy, and education. Within this project she focuses on socio-cultural patterns that influence digital inclusion among families with a migration history in urban and rural contexts in the Netherlands. Using an intersectional child-centered approach, her research examines how different children and parents engage with digital media, emphasizing intergenerational digital literacy exchange within families.

Denise Mensonides is a postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Media and Journalism Studies at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands. She has a degree in IT Law and a masters in pedagogical sciences. As a part of the DigiMig research project, her work explores how policymakers position and engage migrant communities in the development of digital inclusion policies. By combining intersectionality informed policy analysis with interviews with experts, Denise investigates which factors are decisive for policy public initiatives and provides insights into how these can be designed more inclusively.

Claudia Minchilli is Assistant Professor in the Centre of Media and Journalism Studies (CMJS) at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. She was previously a doctoral candidate in the ERC consolidator project 'ConnectingEurope' at Utrecht University. Her research focuses on the intersection of digital media, social inequalities and class dynamics among migrant women in Southern Europe.

Sara Marino is Senior Lecturer in the Communications and Media programme at London College of Communication. Her teaching is mainly focused on the theoretical and methodological challenges posed by digital media, and she is particularly interested in how media intersect with questions of social change, innovation and solidarity. Her teaching is informed by principles of vocational pedagogy and considers diversity and inclusion as the key drivers of her teaching practice.

Her main research focuses on the relationship between digital media, transnational spaces and migrant identities. In particular, she observes the social, cultural, and political implications of everyday practices of connectivity among European migrants, and how these ultimately shape diasporic identity and community formation.

Session 5 (Room M-648)

Gendering refugees' digital practices: On the potential and challenges of digitalisation for refugee women in the Netherlands

AMBER I. BARTLETT AND NOEMI MENA MONTES
(Radboud University, the Netherlands)

This research explores the relationship between digital competencies and offline inequalities for refugee resettlement in the Netherlands. While governmental and supranational organisations speak to the potential of digital platforms to foster inclusion for refugees, more critical scholarship points to the limitations, and caution that so called 'ICT solutions' may exacerbate existing inequalities (Mancini et al., 2019). This research will focus on 'the everyday digitally mediated migrant life' (Candidatu & Ponzanesi, 2022:4) to explore the interplay between offline inequalities and digital practices for refugee women resettling in the Netherlands. This research will first collect data from interviews and focus groups with refugee women living in the Netherlands, to explore the uses and outcomes of digital technologies, as well as the challenges they face in achieving such outcomes. In the second stage, informed by this data and co-creation methodologies, this research will produce a series of co-designed internet cafes, designed specifically for refugee women. It will explore the effects their intersecting marginalisation has on the complex ways they navigate the risks and opportunities of their use of ICTs (Bastick & Mallet-Garcia, 2022). Using co-creation methodologies allows this research to move beyond passive understandings of digitally excluded communities, to capture individuals' tactics (Smit et al., 2024) or assemblages' (Tour et al., 2023); the unique and personal constructions of resources, both offline and online, that individuals make use of to navigate and overcome digital barriers. This approach will highlight their active agency in navigating and reshaping digital landscapes and will contribute to innovative action-based approaches to knowledge production in the context of migration and digital communication. The outcomes of this study will contribute to a better understanding of the complex entanglement of offline and online inequalities, by exploring the ways in which marginalised communities are structurally excluded, while making use of the skills, knowledge and resources around them to overcome such exclusion.

Bastick, Z., & Mallet-Garcia, M. (2022). Double lockdown: The effects of digital exclusion on undocumented immigrants during the COVID-19 pandemic. *New Media & Society*, 24(2), 365–383.

Candidatu, L., & Ponzanesi, S. (2022). Digital Diasporas: Staying with the Trouble. *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 15(2), 261–268.

Mancini, T., Sibilla, F., Argiropoulos, D., Rossi, M., & Everri, M. (2019). The opportunities and risks of mobile phones for refugees' experience: A scoping review. *PLoS ONE*, 14(12), 1-24.

Smit, A., Swart, J., & Broersma, M. (2024). Bypassing digital literacy: Marginalized citizens' tactics for participation and inclusion in digital societies. *New Media & Society*, 00(0), 1-19.

Tour, E., Creely, E., Waterhouse, P., Pham, X., Henderson, M., & Wallace, M. (2023). Navigating Challenging Digital Literacy Practices: The Settlement Experiences of Adults from Migrant and Refugee Backgrounds. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 73(4), 422–441.

Amber I Bartlett is a PhD researcher at the Centre for Language Studies of Radboud University, the Netherlands, and is currently researching the role of refugee women's digital practices in their resettlement in the Netherlands. She is particularly interested in the impact of intersecting inequalities on digital literacy in an increasingly digitalising society, as well as the potential of participatory action research for social impact.

Dr. **Noemi Mena Montes** is an Assistant Professor at Radboud University and a researcher with RUNOMI. She holds a PhD in Political Communication and Migration. Her research explores migrant inclusion, digitalization, and intercultural dialogue, with a focus on gender, media narratives, and participatory methods. Noemi is also a researcher in the EU-funded DATAMIG COST program, co-coordinates the Summer School on Migrant Inclusion: Policies & Practices in the Age of Digitalisation and teaches in Radboud's Newcomers Program for asylum seekers and refugees. Bridging research, activism, and teaching, her work contributes to more inclusive, reflexive, and critically engaged approaches to migration, digital media, and intercultural communication.

**The changemakers and the losers:
Unpacking LGBTQ+ migrant's rhetoric of visibility and silence**

JON MARTIN LARSEN

(Kristiania University of Applied Science, Norway)

At the center of this presentation is 20 years of following LGBTQ+ migration to and from Turkey, mainly Iranians and the Turks themselves. I will reflect on past and present methodological and ethical dimensions of researching LGBTQ+ migration, their rhetoric and intercultural dialogue as traction for understanding LGBTQ+ migrants needs, identity formation and sense of belonging, particularly in Turkey. The first decade of 2000s, LGBTQ+ migrants in Turkey were changemakers who contributed constructively to develop more openness towards LGBTQ+ minorities in Turkish society (Larsen, 2007). However, after finding a temporary refuge and contributing to a rise in LGBTQ+ visibility and activism during the first decade of 2000 (Selen, 2020), my fieldwork reveals that Iranian LGBTQ+ have been severely ignored the last decade, as persecution and hate speech from Turkish authorities and population in general towards any LGBTQ+ are continuously on the rise (Selen, 2020, Selen 2025, Larsen 2025). Both international LGBTQ+ migrants and LGBTQ+ Turks themselves wish to flee to Europa or particularly Norway as a destination that has renewed promises to prioritize queer asylum seekers (Vadla, 2020) but admit that «We do not see them now», or reject them, leaving few other options than smuggler routes. Following this, I will also include prospects of a research project on queer migration along smuggler routes in a research cooperation between universities on Canary Island and Turkey.

Following interviews with LGBTQ+ and organizations, I'm sharing insight on the complexity of oppression and hostilities towards LGBTQ+ in their home countries or host-countries but also the opportunities that LGBTQ+ can bring a receiving country. I will also share reflections and recommendations on how to unpack LGBTQ+ migrants current self-censorship, and more critical their rhetorical silence (Glenn, 2004, Larsen 2025) towards local and national authorities and asylum institutions highlighting challenges in today's asylum system, humanitarian assistance and other outreach as well as communication surrounding LGBTQ+ minorities.

Glenn, C. (2004). *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence*. Southern Illinois UP.

Larsen, J.M. (2007). *The State of Turkey*. [Master's thesis] Cardiff University

Larsen, J.M. (2025). *The changemakers and the losers*, in Overton, L., Cianfarani, M., Rushton, A., Haorui, W., Dominey-Howes, D. and Leonard, W. (Eds). *Queering disasters, climate change and humanitarian crises*. Palgrave

Selen, E. (2020). 'The Public Immoralist': Discourses of Queer Subjectification in Contemporary Turkey. *International Journal of Communication*, 14, 5518-5536.
<https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/12033>

Selen, Eser. 2025. Intersectionality and Hate Speech: The Plight of LGBTI+ Citizens and Migrants in Turkey [Unpublished mimeo (publication in progress)]

Vadla, A. (2020, July 6). Regjeringen endrer retningslinjene: Vil prioritere skeive flyktninger. *Vårt Land*. <https://www.vl.no/nyheter/2020/07/06/regjeringen-endrer-retningslinjene-vil-prioritere-skeive-flyktninger/>. Last access: April 1, 2024

Jon Martin Larsen is a PhD Candidate in Communication & Leadership and Assistant Professor in Journalism at Kristiania University of Applied Sciences in Norway. He is also an experienced international journalist and humanitarian communications director who has been on missions all over the world in crisis, conflicts, wars and disasters, particularly in the Middle East and Turkey. His main research interest is absence and silence of minority groups towards societies and authorities.

Session 5 (Room M-648)

Negotiating gender, sexual, and cross-cultural identity: Chinese international students' pathway in Canada

SEBASTIAN YUXI ZHAO
(York University, Canada)

While online feminism activists started to resist inequality in Chinese society in recent years, women are more valued and supported in Canada with an equitable education environment, better career opportunities and the freedom to choose their future outside of the household (Ge & Durst, 2022). Moreover, many LGBTQIA+ students see less harassment in Canada's queer-friendly society and strong support from local communities and sexual health facilities (Poon et al., 2017; Sadika et al., 2020). Hence, this study analyzes the media factors that shaped the acculturation experiences of female and LGBTQIA+ students from China compared to cisgender male Chinese overseas students.

In 2023, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 Chinese international students at York University to understand their intercultural experiences in Canada, their digital media habits, their observations and experiences about gender and sexuality equality in China and Canada, and reasons for their post-graduation settlement plans in Canada or elsewhere. Recruitment was done through posters and snowball sampling, targeting marginalized groups. While York University professors and administrators helped disseminate the poster, interviewees also shared it on their social media platforms. Then, I used thematic analysis to code both interview transcripts and media content, identifying recurring themes and linking them to existing theories on Chinese international students.

Although participants had debates about feminism and multiculturalism in Canada, this study highlights the inclusive environment in Canada as a factor that attracts Chinese women and queer students. Students talked about the acceptance and support for the queer communities, which allow LGBTQIA+ students to not only accept themselves but also develop their community and future in Canada. Similarly, women also shared positive experiences in Canada regarding their career path and legal protections. In conclusion, by emphasizing the simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of feminist values as a component of Chinese identity, this study depicts the conflicted identities of Chinese international students in the digital era. It contributes to the inadequate research on queer and female experiences and identities of Chinese international students from a perspective of media studies.

Ge, L., & Durst, D. (2022). The auto-ethnographic inquiry of a female Chinese graduate student in Canada: Challenging, accepting, and transforming. *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education*, 14(1), 38–50.

Poon, M. K.-L., Li, A. T.-W., Wong, J. P.-H., & Wong, C. (2017). Queer-friendly nation? The experience of Chinese gay immigrants in Canada. *China Journal of Social Work*, 10(1), 23–38.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17525098.2017.1300354>

Sadika, B., Wiebe, E., Morrison, M. A., & Morrison, T. G. (2020). Intersectional microaggressions and social support for LGBTQ persons of color: A systematic review of the Canadian-based empirical literature. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 16(2), 111–147.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428X.2020.1724125>

Sebastian Yuxi Zhao is a PhD Candidate in Communication and Culture at York University. His area of research is digital media, intercultural communication, the Chinese diaspora, popular culture and identity studies. Link: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sebasxyzh/>

Session 5 (Room M-648)

From polymedia to civic engagement: Digital social inclusion among Australian Estonian communities in the wake of the Ukrainian war

KEIU TELVE

(University of Tartu, Estonia)

This paper examines the emergence of transnational social inclusion and digital civic engagement within Australian Estonian communities. Transnational civic engagement refers to how individuals participate in activities that cross national borders to support their country of origin, engage with previous local communities, or maintain deeper connections with their homeland. The study focuses on six months of ethnographic fieldwork and 45 in-depth interviews with Estonian migrants from two migration waves and three generations and their identity and purpose-finding explorations toward Estonia that nowadays often unfold in digital realms. Estonia, a nation with a remarkable online presence and one of the top three most advanced digital societies in the world (United Nations 2020). Estonia is an e-state with an exceptional diaspora policy, offering extensive e-services that provide its mobile citizenry ample opportunities to maintain ties with their country (Kumer-Haukanõmm, Telve 2017). The Ukrainian war, in particular, has activated Estonian communities worldwide, prompting them to find innovative ways to remain engaged from afar. At the same time, Estonia has emerged as a leading international advocate for Ukraine. The empirical data allows to observe the reflections of international political discussions on grassroot level and discover the layer of everyday activism. This paper presents an example of lived citizenship (Kallio et al. 2020) to highlight the active grassroots involvement manifesting within transnational communities. The empirical findings illustrate a wide range of transnational activities extending beyond private spheres. Individuals reestablish connections with their country of origin virtually, empowered by networks there. Transnational solidarity is evident through donations to various causes and is particularly visible when societies are experiencing political and social turmoil. Citizenship is highly valued and frequently exercised during travel, e-voting is common, and representation of Estonia in sports competitions showcases national pride. Additionally, engagement in businesses, investments, and information dissemination about Estonia highlights the ongoing, active presence of transnational communities in shaping the future of their homeland and Eastern Europe in wider scale.

Kallio, K. P., Wood, B., E., & Häkli, J. (2020). Lived Citizenship: Conceptualising an Emerging Field. *Citizenship Studies*, 24 (6): 713–729.

Kumer-Haukanõmm, K., & Telve, K. (2017). Eestlased maailmas. In T. Tammaru, K. Kallas, & R. Eamets (Eds.), *Eesti inimarengu aruanne 2016/2017* (pp. 72–79). Eesti Koostöö Kogu.

United Nations. (2020). E-Government survey 2020: Digital government in the decade of action for sustainable development. Available at: <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Reports/UN-E-Government-Survey-2020> (3.09.2025)

Keiu Telve is a Research Fellow in Ethnology at the Institute of Cultural Research, University of Tartu. She earned her PhD degree in Cultural Studies from the University of Tartu in collaboration with the University of Eastern Finland. She recently completed a postdoctoral research position at Edith Cowan University, Social Ageing (SAGE) Futures Lab, under the supervision of Professor Loretta Baldassar, where she focused on digital social inclusion and the role of virtual engagement. The aim of her current research project is to explore civic engagement in transnational communities in an info-communication technology (ICT)-rich era.

Language portrait by means of spoken word choreography: reflexive perspective on multilingual identity

OLGA NENONEN¹ AND ELIISA NENONEN²

(¹Tampere University, ²Theatre Academy of University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland)

Each multilingual person is unique and thus deserves to be carefully examined in terms of identity and sense of belonging. Speaker-centered approaches can provide a deeper understanding of linguistic diversity in a multilingual setting. The analysis of multilingual language users' language portraits (graphical representations of the linguistic repertoire in a body silhouette) helps to investigate their backgrounds, lived experiences, environment, thoughts, attitudes, and feelings (Wei 2011). While traditionally, language portraits are analyzed through drawings and follow-up interviews (Busch, 2006), our study introduces an innovative approach that merges art and applied linguistics. In our arts-based research project we use spoken word choreography to explore language portrait (for language and dance in spoken word choreographies, see Jusslin et al. 2024). The dancer has created the narratives based on her multilingual repertoire, during the artistic performance she recites and dances the narratives at the same time. Thus, the performance becomes "a tool for bending and playing, experimenting and creating, breaking boundaries, and finding new forms of embodied actions" (Anttila et al, 2019). As we observe the embodied artistic practice (dance), we explore the deeper meanings of languages in a life of a person, reflections on identity, and cultural complexity. The performer is a multilingual person living in Finland. Her multilingual repertoire includes Finnish, Russian, English, Swedish, Romanian and French. The artistic choices provide meaningful insights into perceived hierarchy of languages within her multilingual repertoire. We discuss significant roles of two mother tongues, and the importance of other languages. Furthermore, we address the feelings towards different languages, as well as the questions of identity and sense of belonging.

Anttila, E., Martin, R., & Nielsen, C. S. (2019). Performing difference in/through dance: The significance of dialogical, or third spaces in creating conditions for learning and living together. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 31, 209–216.

Busch, B. (2006): Language biographies for multilingual learning: linguistic and educational considerations. Cape Town: PRAESA Occasional Papers No. 24, 5–17.

Jusslin, S., Kaarla, L., Korpinen, K., & Lilja, N. (2024). Spoken word choreographies in additional language learning practices in upper secondary school: Entanglements between languaging-and-dancing. *The Modern Language Journal*, 108(3), 648–669.

Wei, L. (2011). 'Moment analysis and translanguaging space: Discursive construction of identities by multilingual Chinese youth in Britain', in *Journal of Pragmatics* 43, 1222–35.

Olga Nenonen (PhD in linguistics, University of Helsinki) is a university lecturer of Russian language and culture at the Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences at Tampere University, Finland. Her research focuses on child and adult language acquisition, and multilingualism. She conducts research in phonology, psycholinguistics, semantics and pragmatics.

Eliisa Nenonen (BA, dance pedagogy, Savonia University of Applied Sciences) is a professional dancer, dance teacher and a master pedagogy student from University of Arts, Helsinki (Theatre Academy). Her research includes entanglements between dance and language, embodied learning as well as cultural aspects of character dance.

Session 6 (Room M-133)

Identity crafting and grafting: The mediated artistic discourse of Hong Kong artists in self-imposed exile

JADE JIEWEN DENG

(University of Massachusetts-Amherst, United States of America)

In a globalized era witnessing mass migration across borders, exile and exiles have also become common. The contemporary governance of nation-states that emphasizes homogeneity and coherent narratives of citizenship and nationhood has sparked a series of post-national movements characterized by separatism, while the post-national space constructed by exiles may offer a political alternative to resolving the crisis of disjuncture between nationhood and statehood (Appadurai, 1993). However, in a highly connected digital age, exile's ambivalent features of immobility and transnationalism, isolation and cosmopolitanism may be sustaining and changing. Research on how exiled intellectuals engage in public conversations and re-imagine their identities through mediated cultural practices is insufficient.

Adopting the politics and poetics of migrant narratives as a theoretical framework for understanding exile storytelling (Leurs et al., 2020), this research takes the case studies of Hong Kong artists in self-imposed exile to the Netherlands and the UK. Hong Kong has been handed over from the UK to China since 1997, implementing the "one country, two systems" autonomy regime. From the Umbrella Movement in 2014, Hong Kong artists have been using art as a tool to criticize China's increasing encroachment on Hong Kong's autonomy. Repression and restrictions on the freedom of artistic expression are becoming pronounced in 2019, causing numerous artists to leave either voluntarily or forcibly for other democracies.

Through online-and-offline ethnography and multimodal discourse analysis of three different genres of projects, the mobile museum "Harcourt Road", the performance "As Far, As Exile" and the cultural and artistic symposium "ImagiNation Hong Kong in Exile", it argues that the aesthetic discourses articulated in exiled artists' mediated practices engage in political contestations and public meaning-making around displacement and identity struggles. Findings reveal that the artworks of exiled artists present the poetics of solidarity with community resistance histories in parallel times and spaces, resonance with human rights issues in other territories and connection with global Hong Kong diasporas, which crafts and grafts identities of exile subjects into elsewhere. This challenges the singular political imaginary representations of Hong Kong migrants in postcolonial and post-nationalist narratives. The use of social media serves to preserve cultural memory, circumvent political censorship in home countries and mobilize global Hong Kong diasporas and activists. Thus, this research contributes to transcending the paradigm of sufferingized exile and expanding the framework of exile narratives in creative activist approaches, contesting power discourse that may overrepresent an ethnic group.

Appadurai, A. (1993). Patriotism and Its Futures. *Public Culture*, 5(3), 411–429. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-5-3-411>

Leurs, K., Agirreazkuenaga, I., Smets, K., & Mevsimler, M. (2020). The politics and poetics of migrant narratives. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23(5), 679–697. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549419896367>

Jade Jiewen Deng is currently a PhD student in the Department of Communication at University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her research interests lie in everyday media representation of migrants and citizens, particularly in the context of post-colonial Hong Kong, border regimes, and social justice. Concretely, through the use of qualitative research methods, she focuses on the mediated identity construction of the displaced in relation to geopolitics. Her recent research attempts to combine interviews, network ethnography and arts-based methods to look into cultural and artistic activism of exiles.

Session 6 (Room M-133)

Community music and raising the visibility of black, racialized, and newcomer musicians

MIRANDA CAMPBELL, NALA HAILESELASSIE AND MAIA TARUC-PILLING

(Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada)

The music industries increasingly matter to local economies, placemaking, and creative industries economic development (Hesmondhalgh, 2013; Rana & Campbell, 2019, 2020). In Canada, the music industry serves as a vital cultural and economic cornerstone, not only reflecting the nation's diverse identity and artistic expression but also contributing significantly to its economic vitality through revenue generation, employment opportunities, and global cultural influence. However, the Canadian music industry maintains systemic barriers that reproduce inequality and discrimination, especially with regards to Black, racialized, newcomer, and immigrant musicians. Within the specific context of Canada, there remains a false tendency to believe these issues do not permeate its creative industries because of a storied history of so-called multiculturalism and acceptance, but in no uncertain terms, the Canadian context is very similar to the U.S.A. (D'Amico-Cuthbert, 2021). Meanwhile, community music programs have been documented to foster inclusive opportunities for participants to engage in music making, alongside providing platforms and supports to develop music industry careers (Campbell, 2021; Marsh, 2012; Rimmer, 2009, 2012). This paper presents findings from our collaborative "Mapping the Music Industries" research project, highlighting how our cultural mapping methodology (Duxbury, Garrett-Petts & MacLennan, 2015) expands what and who "counts" as a musician in the Toronto context. We will present process findings from our arts-based methods to convene and co-create with our research participants, including four community conversation sessions, River of Experience drawings, follow-up semi-structured interviews, participation observation with community programs, and a Music Summit event with one of our research partners, AfroWave TO. In our findings, we highlight tensions between the presence of vibrant diasporic music communities in Toronto and established funding and support models in Canada that often do not see or serve these diasporic communities. We discuss our methods as reflexive ways of engaging and raising the visibility of community music programs and the musicians they engage. We also highlight the role of community music programs in providing 1) inclusive models for learning 2) music business knowledge and 3) spaces for relational exchange and networking alongside 4) raising the visibility of Black, racialized, and newcomer music.

Campbell, M. (2021). Reimagining the creative industries in the community youth arts sector. *Cultural Trends*, 30(3), 263-282.

D'Amico-Cuthbert, F. (2021). "We don't have those American problems": Anti-Black practices in Canada's rap music marketplace, 1985–2020. *Canadian Journal of History*, 53(6), 320-352.

Duxbury, N., Garrett-Petts, W. F., & MacLennan, D. (Eds.). (2015). *Cultural mapping as cultural inquiry*. Routledge.

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Marsh, C. (2012). Hip hop as methodology: Ways of knowing. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 37(1): 193-203.

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Miranda Campbell is an Associate Professor in the School of Creative Industries at TMU. Her research focuses on creative employment, youth culture, and small-scale and emerging forms of creative practice. She is the author of [Reimagining the Creative Industries: Youth Creative Work, Communities of Care](#) and [How to Care More: Seven Skills for Personal and Social Change](#). Her book, [Out of the Basement: Youth Cultural Production in Practice and in Policy](#) was shortlisted for the Donner Prize for the best public policy book by a Canadian.

Nala Haileselassie is a multidisciplinary artist, curator and researcher from Toronto who recently completed her BFA in Film Studies. Working from the lineage of Black feminist film and experimental documentary, her research is focused on the living archive of Black people globally in relation to documentary ethics, authorship and archives.

Maia Taruc-Pilling (she/they) is a first year MA student in Culture and Communication. A musician herself, Maia is interested in researching the grassroots strategies developed by Toronto music communities to maintain rehearsal and performance spaces amidst the city's increasing gentrification.

Session 6 (Room M-133)

Walking to see: Exploring the benefits of datawalks to research race through space and engage with one's positionality

MÉLODINE SOMMIER¹, LIS CAMELIA², PALESA MASHIGO² AND DELIA DUMITRICA²
(¹University of Jyväskylä, Finland, ²Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands)

This presentation will discuss how datawalks, a method of mobility that provides information about oneself in relation to space and others, can be used to research race through one's embodied experience in space. Datawalks have often been used to shed light on experiences of minoritized rather than dominant groups, and as a collaborative research-participant experience rather than a self-ethnographic endeavor. This presentation will shed light on these gaps by showing how datawalks can be used for researchers to address their positionalities within race relations. Bringing together race, space and mobility offers a framework from which to challenge static understandings of what counts as race and instead unpack "how the fictional markers of race are summoned" in everyday settings (Nayak, 2007, p. 743). This study strives to engage with the complexities and nuances that come out from the process of researching race as a bodily activity that engages researchers and their positionalities within race relations. As a result, this study explores ways in which datawalks can serve as a creative tool of reflexivity for researchers to explore their positionality within race relations. With this in mind, this presentation explores the affordances of datawalks through two interrelated questions:

(1) How do datawalks help researchers recognize and experience race in and through space?

(2) How do datawalks contribute to engagement with one's positionality?

Drawing on the authors' own experiences of doing datawalks in pairs in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, in Spring 2024, this presentation will present four analytical dimensions (*seeing/not seeing, embodied experiences, hesitations and spaces of Whiteness*) to engage with one's experiences of race in and through space. The presentation will also offer clear concrete pointers on how to implement datawalks to maximize their benefits for researchers and participants. All in all, this presentation will point out the relevance of using datawalks as an in-situ and in-movement method to capture the shape-shifting materiality of race in cities and to draw connections to structures of Whiteness in academia.

Nayak, A. (2007). Critical Whiteness studies. *Sociology Compass*, 1(2), 737-755.

Mélodine Sommier works as an Academy Research Fellow and Senior Lecturer in Intercultural Communication at the University of Jyväskylä (Finland). Her work concentrates on the use of culture as a discursive and an interactional resource and outcomes regarding processes of in- and exclusion. Her research project on Racial Landscapes focuses on the way race and racism materialize in everyday urban spaces.

Lis Camelia is a PhD candidate at the department of Media and communication at Erasmus University Rotterdam. She currently explores the role of sport narratives in the negotiations of belonging within diverse (Dutch) cities. Particularly through the lens of locality, diverse cities and post-colonial theory.

Palesa Mashigo is PhD candidate and lecturer in the Department of Media and Communication at Erasmus University, Rotterdam. Her current project explores race, racism and inclusion in professional European football. Palesa's research interests include critical race theory as it pertains to media representation, media policy and institutional inequality.

Delia Dumitrica is an Associate Professor in Political Communication at Erasmus University Rotterdam. Her research focuses on two main areas: digital activism; and, everyday forms of (digital) nationalism.

Panel 2 (Room M-218)

Reel Borders: reflections from a collaborative and interdisciplinary research project

KEVIN SMETS¹, SILVIA ALMENARA-NIEBLA¹, LENNART SOBERON¹, IRENE GUTIÉRREZ TORRES^{1,2} AND NADICA DENIĆ³

(¹Vrije Universiteit Brussel, ²Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, ³Universiteit Amsterdam)

Respondents: İlke Şanlıer (Çukurova Üniversitesi Adana) and Amanda Paz Alencar (Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam)

This panel brings together researchers from the Reel Borders project, a 5-year project funded by the European Research Council (Starting Grant) to study the interrelations between borders and film. In line with critical border studies, the project sees borders as social and cultural constructs that have very different meanings and material consequences for different societal groups. Film is seen as a particularly powerful medium to think about the many meanings of borders. The researchers in this panel have used various lenses to approach the relations between borders and film – from content analyses to visual anthropology and participatory filmmaking. The panel format is conceived as a conversation where the researchers share the results of several years of research as well as their reflections on a group project of this scale. This enables to shed light on some of the specific sub-studies and approaches, but also to draw broader conclusions about collaborative and interdisciplinary work amidst constantly shifting discourses and policies around borders and those navigating life on and across the borders.

Kevin Smets, PhD, is associate professor at Vrije Universiteit Brussel and PI of ERC Starting Grant Reel Borders.

Silvia Almenara-Niebla, PhD, is guest professor and postdoctoral researcher at Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Lennart Soberon, PhD, is postdoctoral researcher at Vrije Universiteit Brussel and artistic coordinator at KASKcinema.

Irene Gutiérrez Torres is filmmaker and PhD researcher at Vrije Universiteit Brussel and Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.

Nadica Denić, PhD, is lecturer in media and culture at University of Amsterdam.

Aspirational place-making and digital practices of refugees in the Netherlands

AMANDA PAZ ALENCAR¹, CAMILA SARRIA SANZ² AND JABER MAWAZINI³

¹Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands; ²Independent researcher; ³Universiti Sains Malaysia

While much has been written about the experience of human displacement and the trauma of exile, our understanding of how refugees (re)build a sense of place is underemphasized. The literature on refugee integration has mainly focused on the outcomes of integration policies as well as on the perspectives of host societies regarding what is expected of refugees in the integration process. In this article, we propose the notion of *aspirational place-making* to analyze the agency of refugees in negotiations of possible futures and aspirational places in the face of structural challenges of integration within the host community. We argue that refugees turn to digital practices to conceive aspirational places and create their own pathways to belong. The outcomes presented in this study derived from in-depth case study examinations of refugees' lived experiences and aspirations in the Netherlands. This study analyzes *aspirational place-making* through three digital practices that describe the participants' quest for reclaiming control over their futures, time, and dreams: (1) digital learning, (2) digital social participation, and (3) digital social support. It is precisely such a quest what makes these digital practices the means for *aspirational place-making*; they are inherently subjective and respond to the unique trajectories of each participant. The use of digital technology for learning became a way through which participants avoid direct contact with government integration processes that hinder their dreams and add more hardships and challenges. This strategy helps them navigate social barriers imposed by legal systems that limit refugees' aspirations for higher education. Digital social participation emphasizes the relational aspect of participants' aspirations and the complex, evolving role of technology in facilitating social connections in diverse contexts like the Netherlands. Ultimately, digital social support shapes *aspirational place-making* as refugees seek recognition and belonging. While we have identified the subjectivities affecting the effectiveness of digital tools in the integration of newcomers in the Netherlands, a systematic understanding of how digital practices relate to *aspirational place-making* and navigating a new socio-cultural landscape is still needed. A broader perspective is crucial to transform the current integration approach, which often limits newcomers' choices. Our findings reveal tensions in migrants' ability to express their voice and identity online, primarily due to distrust in social media and concerns about government surveillance. These challenges impede their digital aspirations, such as activism and storytelling, emphasizing the need to investigate how *aspirational place-making* interacts with state surveillance, which may further restrict refugees' rights.

Amanda Paz Alencar is an Associate Professor in the Department of Media and Communication at Erasmus University Rotterdam, specializing in media, migration, and intercultural communication. Amanda is also the co-founder of [Translocal Lives](#), a digital hub dedicated to investigating how technology shapes migration experiences through research, education, and collaborations. Her research examines how communication technologies influence the mobility and sociocultural integration of refugees in Western Europe, South America and East Africa. Amanda has been involved in numerous international research projects and has published extensively in journals such as *International Journal of Communication and Media, Culture & Society*.

Camila Sarria Sanz is a communication designer and media researcher passionate about education, science communication, and technology. She holds a Master's in Media, Culture, and Society and is co-founder of Quantica Education, a social entrepreneurship school in Colombia. Her work blends storytelling, participatory methodologies, and lean-startup principles to design high-impact, community-centered programs.

Jaber Mawazini holds a Master's in Arts and Cultural Sociology from Erasmus University Rotterdam. His master thesis focused on two pillars: first, it addressed social inequalities on the basis of class and race-ethnicity in (cultural) consumption. Second, it interpreted the cultural practices of Syrian refugees through analyzing their food habits and music in the Netherlands as a host country. Jaber has collaborated on multiple research projects focused on refugee integration. Aside from research, he has been actively involved in refugee issues since 2017, serving as an advisor for the municipality of Amsterdam's sounding board group and other organizations working directly with refugees.

Session 7 (Room M-218)

Empowering refugee women through participatory integration: Toward inclusive education and social belonging

NOEMI MENA MONTES AND LIA KLEUSKENS

(Radboud University, the Netherlands)

Refugee women worldwide face intersecting challenges during resettlement, including language barriers, restricted access to education and employment, digital exclusion, and cultural dislocation. This study presents a participatory, longitudinal intervention model designed to foster educational inclusion, digital empowerment, and intercultural competence among refugee women navigating new societal systems. While grounded in a case study from the Netherlands, the framework offers broader relevance for integration efforts across diverse national contexts.

Informed by Critical Race Feminist Theory (Lenette, 2019) and Participatory Action Research (PAR), the intervention centers the lived experiences of refugee women as co-creators of knowledge and change. A participatory needs assessment guided the co-design of tailored activities—language and digital literacy workshops, intercultural communication training, and mentorship programs—that reflect the realities and aspirations of participants. The integration of Braiding Theory (Delgado Bernal & Alemán Jr., 2017) further supports the blending of multiple identities, knowledge systems, and culturally responsive methodologies.

Peer mentoring, involving collaboration between refugee women and university students and staff, emerged as a key strategy for building social capital, emotional support, and navigational knowledge within educational and professional systems. The researcher's role, redefined as a relational facilitator, highlights the importance of trust, reciprocity, and ethical care in participatory frameworks.

Mixed-method evaluation—drawing on interviews, focus groups, participatory workshops, and confidence self-assessments—demonstrates the potential of holistic, inclusive models to foster empowerment, mutual learning, and sustainable community networks. The findings offer critical insights for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to design more equitable, responsive integration strategies. This study advocates for participatory, co-created approaches as transformative tools in addressing the complex realities of refugee resettlement globally.

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Lenette, C. (2019). *Participatory Action Research: Ethics and Decolonization*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190845683.001.0001>

Noemi Mena Montes is an Assistant Professor at Radboud University and a researcher with RUNOMI. She holds a PhD in Political Communication and Migration. Her research explores migrant inclusion, digitalization, and intercultural dialogue, with a focus on gender, media narratives, and participatory methods. Noemi is also a researcher in the EU-funded DATAMIG COST program – Data Matters: Sociotechnical Challenges of European Migration and Border Control.

Lia Kleuskens is a researcher and advisor working at the intersection of gender, migration, human trafficking, and conflict-related sexual violence. She combines academic research with practice-oriented consultancy for NGOs and international organizations, including the United Nations. Her work focuses on strengthening the position of marginalized groups, particularly refugee and migrant women, and is grounded in a commitment to justice, healing, and structural change.

Session 7 (Room M-218)

Experiences of British hosts: Reflections on the hospitality practices for Ukrainian refugees

Yael Gordon

(The London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom)

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, over 6.74 million Ukrainians have fled their country, with 215,200 resettling in the UK through initiatives like the Ukraine Family and Sponsorship Schemes (Home Office, 2024). These schemes reflect a shift in UK refugee policy, placing responsibility on private citizens to host refugees with financial support (Burrell, 2022). Within this context, this research examines British hosts' perspectives on their encounters with Ukrainian refugees, starting online via platforms like Facebook and transitioning into domestic spaces. The study adopts a phenomenological approach, combining qualitative research and digital ethnography to explore how online platforms mediate these encounters. To achieve that, semi-structured interviews with 20 British hosts involved in the 'Homes for Ukraine' initiative were conducted, revealing the impact of hosting on their domestic lives. Participants were recruited via Facebook and interviewed through Teams, with each interview lasting 45 minutes. The data were analysed using content analysis to explore the emotional, practical, and reciprocal dimensions of hosting. The theoretical framework centres on power dynamics within hospitality, drawing on Derrida's (2000) concept of hospitality, which defines the host's control over conditions, and Silverstone's (2013) view of hospitality as a moral interaction with strangers. Migration literature often frames hospitality as conditional, positioning refugees as 'othered' (Kyriakidou, 2021) and emphasizing power dynamics in the domestic sphere (Berg & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2018). Specifically, British hosts encouraged refugees to leave Ukraine, demonstrating the transnational nature of hospitality (Birger, Tarshish, & Nouman, 2024).

Preliminary findings indicate that British hosts formed strong emotional bonds with refugees, often referring to them as 'family' or 'friends.' More interestingly, the hosting experience generated meaningful change within the domestic sphere. This study offers a novel positioning of the refugee through the hosts' gaze—it positions the refugee as both vulnerable - seeking accommodation - and influential - impacting the hosts' lives in significant ways. The study contributes to migration and media studies by analyzing the shift from virtual to physical hosting and exploring how technology mediates these encounters, and it calls for a deeper understanding of the encounter between the two sides of the dyad, with an intersection between hospitality, migration, and media.

Berg, M. L., & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E. (2018). Introduction to the issue: Encountering hospitality and hostility.

Migration and Society, 1(1), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.3167/aim.2018.010101>

Birger, L., Tarshish, N., & Nouman, H. (2024). Expanding the boundaries of hospitality: The relationship between Ukrainian refugees and their hosts. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 50(16), 3942–3958. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2024.2359684>

Burrell, K. (2024). Domesticating responsibility: Refugee hosting and the Homes for Ukraine scheme. *Antipode*, 56(4), 1191–1211. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12839>

Derrida, J. (2000). Hospitality. *Angelaki: Journal of Theoretical Humanities*, 5(3), 3–18.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09697250020019465>

Kyriakidou, M. (2021). Hierarchies of deservingness and the limits of hospitality in the 'refugee crisis'. *Media, Culture & Society*, 43(1), 133–149. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443720960928>

Silverstone, R. (2013). *Media and morality: On the rise of the mediapolis*. John Wiley & Sons.

Yael Gordon, PhD is a Guest Teacher and a Visiting Fellow at the Department of Media and Communications, The London School of Economics and Political Science, UK. Her research areas are the refugee voice and refugees' representations in various media outlets: film, television, and social media. Her current research explores the encounter between Ukrainian refugees in the UK and their British hosts, who provide them with temporary homes. Dr. Gordon graduated with her PhD in 2021 from University of Southampton, UK, followed by a Postdoctoral Fellowship at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel.

Session 7 (Room M-218)

Rohingya refugees and Bangladesh: Balancing security with humanity

SAZZAD HOSSAIN

(Chang'an University, China)

Bangladesh continues to face challenges balancing national security with humanitarian responsibilities as a result of the Rohingya refugee crisis. Since 2017, Bangladesh has accepted over 1.1 million Rohingya refugees fleeing violence in Myanmar, providing temporary refuge despite limited resources. While this open-border policy demonstrates Bangladesh's commitment to human rights, it has generated considerable security, economic, and social pressures. As the influx of refugees strains Bangladesh's infrastructure and law enforcement, this study examines the tension between national security concerns and humanitarian aid. Recent reports from the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) indicate that approximately 30% of the local population in areas hosting refugees expresses worries about rising crime and instability associated with the camps. The presence of extremist elements, such as the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), has also contributed to an increase in security incidents, accounting for 15% of the militancy in border regions. 65% of Bangladeshi respondents to this study view the refugee crisis as a threat to national security. A majority of 55% believe that international pressure on Myanmar is essential for long-term solutions. The data illustrate the complex public perception in Bangladesh, where concerns over national safety and resource allocation balance the humanitarian response. A coordinated international response is necessary to address the crisis' global dimension. The study highlights the UN and ASEAN for their role in pressuring Myanmar to create safe and voluntary repatriation conditions. Bangladesh requires increased diplomatic and financial support from the international community to reduce strain on the country's resources and security systems. In the end, the paper promotes a comprehensive strategy that takes into account Bangladesh's human rights commitments as well as its security requirements. Bangladesh can manage long-term impacts of the crisis with global cooperation and support while remaining a beacon of humanitarian assistance. Bangladesh and the global community both need a diplomatic, balanced solution to the crisis, as the situation becomes more urgent.

Sazzad Hossain is a Doctoral Fellow at Chang'an University, China, specializing in the Cold Chain logistics in humanitarian crises area, with a particular focus on the Rohingya refugee crisis in developing country like Bangladesh. As a Belt and Road Scholar holding an MBA and Chartered Business Administrator (ChBA) qualification, his research critically examines the dual imperatives of delivering humanitarian aid while mitigating security challenges in host communities. With professional experience in finance and logistics across crisis-affected regions, he has contributed to the operations of various private and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). An engaged academic, he actively participates in international conferences, advancing discourse on ethical governance, resource equity, and sustainable solutions for protracted displacement in South Asia. His work has been published in several international journals, reflecting his commitment to rigorous, policy-relevant research. Currently, he is investigating influencing factors of AI adoption in cold chain logistics firm in developing countries, further broadening his expertise in crisis management and development economics.

Session 8 (Room M-648)

ABCeuta: Exploring colonial and gendered dynamics at the Moroccan-Spanish border through autoethnographic participatory filmmaking

IRENE GUTIÉRREZ TORRES

(Universiteit Brussel, Belgium and University Carlos III of Madrid, Spain)

This paper explores the potential of autoethnographic participatory filmmaking through a feminist lens in the co-creation of knowledge about and from borderlands. It analyses *ABCeuta: The Alphabet of the Border*, a webdoc comprising 26 autoethnographic participatory films on the experiences of forced immobility among 13 Moroccan women living in Ceuta and working in undeclared domestic service—a microcosm of the 2,000 cross-border workers trapped on both sides of the Moroccan-Spanish border following Covid-19 re-bordering measures. The analysis draws on a participatory filmmaking workshop I conducted in Ceuta in winter of 2022, involving autoethnographic practices based on first-person oral and written narratives, reflexive interviews, testimonial voice-over recordings, and workshop filmed sequences. The analysis has a two-fold aim: first, to interrogate how autoethnographic participatory filmmaking exposes the intersection of gendered labour and the logic of 'colonial difference' at the Moroccan-Spanish border; and second, to illustrate how the *ABCeuta* films cinematically embody rebordering processes while simultaneously fostering debordering tactics through cross-border corridors rooted in women's transcultural collaboration. In doing so, it advances the implementation of autoethnographic participatory filmmaking in border and migration studies.

Irene Gutiérrez Torres is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and PhD candidate at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and University Carlos III of Madrid (UC3M). Her work explores migration and bordering dynamics through participatory filmmaking. She is a researcher in the projects *Reel Borders* (European Research Council Starting Grant #948278) and *Institutional Documentary and Amateur Cinema in the Colonial Era: Analysis and Uses* (Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, PID2021-123567NB-I00). Her films have been showcased at renowned festivals and art venues, including the Berlinale, Rotterdam IFFR, MoMA Documentary Fortnight and Lincoln Center. Merging artistic innovation with social engagement, her work sits at the intersection of cinema and border/migration research.

Session 8 (Room M-648)

Fragments of displacement and self-representation in *Purple Sea* (2020)

FATMA OZEN

(York University, Toronto, Canada)

The Mediterranean has become a heavily surveilled and militarized border where refugees are subjected to state control, humanitarian voyeurism, and media spectacle. Traditional representations of migration often reinforce these dynamics by portraying refugees as passive subjects of crisis. However, *Das Purpurmeer/Purple Sea* (2020), directed by Amel Alzakout and Khaled Abdulwahed, disrupts this visual regime by offering an intimate, first-person perspective of forced migration, filmed by Alzakout herself while adrift in the Mediterranean. Instead of using a detached and observational lens, the film immerses viewers in the fragmented, sensory experience of displacement. This research explores how *Purple Sea* operates as a sensory ethnography of migration, where embodied filmmaking techniques and self-representation reconfigure the politics of visibility. The film also raises critical questions about how sensory and participatory filmmaking methodologies challenge dominant ways of perceiving migration.

Drawing on sensory ethnography (Pink, 2009) and participatory filmmaking (Lassiter, 2005; Ruby, 2000), this study analyzes *Purple Sea* as an alternative mode of migration storytelling. Sensory ethnography emphasizes embodied and immersive experiences, which the film achieves through its unsteady, submerged camerawork, disjointed framing, and ambient underwater soundscapes (Pink, 2015). The film also aligns with participatory and self-representational practices, as Alzakout documents her near-drowning experience, shifting storytelling power from external observers to migrants themselves (Ruby, 2000). Methodologically, this research conducts a sensory visual analysis of the film's aesthetics—examining how visual distortion, blurred frames, and fragmented sounds create a visceral experience of displacement.

The study finds that *Purple Sea* functions as a counter-archive of migration, resisting dominant representations that frame refugees through victimhood or state surveillance. The film's unsteady, intimate camerawork disrupts the stabilizing gaze of the state, immersing the viewer in the disorienting physicality of forced migration. The blurry, submerged footage and distorted soundscapes do not merely depict displacement but reproduce its embodied disorientation, forcing audiences to feel rather than observe migration. Through its participatory approach, *Purple Sea* reclaims the act of looking, shifting it from a voyeuristic gaze to a self-representational experience.

By blending sensory ethnography with participatory filmmaking, *Purple Sea* redefines how migration can be represented, not as a spectacle to be consumed but as a lived, embodied experience. The film's radical approach disrupts conventional narratives of displacement by foregrounding migrant subjectivity, rejecting stabilizing frames, and immersing the audience in the precarious materiality of migration.

Lassiter, E. (2005). *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography*. University of Chicago Press.

Pink, S. (2009). *Doing Sensory Ethnography*. SAGE Publications.

Pink, S. (2015). *The Future of Visual Anthropology: Engaging the Senses*. Routledge.

Ruby, J. (2000). *Picturing Culture: Explorations of Film and Anthropology*. University of Chicago Press.

Fatma Ozen is a PhD student in Cinema & Media Studies at York University in Canada. She holds an MA in Cultural Studies from Trent University in Peterborough, Canada. Her research interests include migration & diaspora studies, gender & sexuality, digital media (specifically on-demand streaming platforms), and transnational cinema. In addition to her academic studies, she has been actively working at film festivals since 2018.

Session 8 (Room M-648)

Counter-silhouettes: Alice Diop's *Nous* and the cinematic reimagining of European belonging

Fragments of displacement and self-representation in *Purple Sea* (2020)

ALEXANDRE DIALLO

(School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, France)

United in Diversity? Race, Audiovisual Belonging, and the Counter-Silhouette in Alice Diop's *Nous*

The European Union's motto, "*United in Diversity*", expresses a vision of shared identity rooted in cultural and linguistic pluralism. But this vision is not neutral. While it gestures toward inclusion, it can also obscure how diversity is framed, controlled, or even weaponized to enforce cultural conformity and national loyalty. In today's Europe, these tensions play out not only in political institutions but in everyday life—especially for racialized communities who are rendered both hypervisible and invisible in national narratives. This paper turns to cinema—and specifically to Alice Diop's *Nous* (2021)—to examine how cultural production can resist these exclusionary frames. Drawing on Laugier's (2022) view of popular culture as a moral and epistemic tool, I argue that film does not merely *represent* diversity, but enacts it: it makes visible the lived complexity of forms of life that lie outside dominant categories. *Nous* provides a striking counter-narrative to France's racial and social hierarchies. Set along the RER B commuter line that connects the Parisian suburbs to elite centers, the film explores how mobility, race, and belonging are unequally distributed. To analyze its intervention, I propose the concept of the counter-silhouette: an audiovisual strategy that refuses essentialism and centers lived, relational experience. Building on Fanon, Mbembe, and Lorde, I show how Diop uses the counter-silhouette in three key ways: first, to reframe Blackness through quiet, familial scenes; second, to expose how the *banlieues* are constructed as zones of exception; and third, to inscribe her own authorship into European cinematic traditions, reclaiming both aesthetic and political space. Finally, I situate *Nous* within broader diasporic and digital counter-publics, exploring how its circulation across festival networks and online platforms enables alternative narratives of European identity and belonging to emerge.

Centre Pompidou. (2022, February 11). Alice Diop autour de "Nous" [Film screening and discussion]. Centre Pompidou. Retrieved from

<https://www.centrepompidou.fr/en/program/calendar/event/XpPhMhA>

European Union. (n.d.). EU motto: United in diversity. European Union. Retrieved [11/03/2025] from https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/symbols/eu-motto_en

Saqué, S. (2024). *Résister*. Payot-Rivages.

Mbembe, A. (2013). *Critique de la raison nègre*. La Découverte.

Fanon, F. (2008). *Black skin, white masks* (C. L. Markmann, Trans.). Pluto Press. (Original work published 1952).

Lorde, A. (1984). Poetry is not a luxury. In *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches* (pp. 36-39). Crossing Press.

Laugier, S. (2023). Popular cultures, ordinary criticism: A philosophy of minor genres. In R. Kearney & M. Littlejohn (Eds.), *Thinking film: Philosophy at the movies*. Bloomsbury.

Alexandre Diallo is a member of two think tanks (Sport and Citizenship, L'Observatoire des images), for which he has co-written publications and taken part in public debates on gender inequality and racism. Alexandre is also an art critic, contributing regularly for French literary journal *Revue Esprit*. Alexandre holds an MPhil in International Economics at University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, a Master in Management from ESCP and an MPhil in Social Sciences from EHESS.

Session 8 (Room M-648)

Borderscapes and mediascapes: Hardening borders from the perspective of cybercultures of Finnish-Russian transnationals

TEEMU OIVO

(Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland, Finland)

The Finnish-Russian border was an active site of transnational exchanges before it was gradually closed in 2022–2023. This closure occurred through a series of events beginning with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which led to the freezing of cooperation and exchanges, culminating in what was perceived as a hybrid operation in the form of instrumentalised migration in late 2023. This paper is based on a study that explores the border realities in times of declining and securitised border mobility through the lenses of borderscapes, mediascapes, and cybercultures. The concept of borderscapes is utilised in border studies to explore alternative perspectives on borders and the expansion of border processes into new spheres (Brambilla, 2015). Together with transnational mediascapes (Appadurai, 1990), they provide new perspectives on the landscapes of globalisation.

Current paper presents the border- and mediascapes within the cybercultures of Finnish-Russian transnationals. This involves scrutinising the specific group norms and conventions relating to information exchanges, group identities, and their policing on digital platforms. How are border policies experienced, reasoned, challenged, represented, and problematised? What kinds of practical problems and solutions are presented? Considering research ethical questions and the research setting, I have applied an unobtrusive auto-netnographic approach to avoid disrupting the autonomously generated organic interaction between Finnish-Russian transnationals while documenting and representing it in an ethically sustainable way.

In the selected online discussion groups most members are Soviet-born individuals who have resided in Finland for a considerable time. They have also members from different origins, countries of residence and points of view, but the underlying assumption is that they share a somewhat similar background and opposing Finland's border and security politics. While opposing views are tolerated to a degree, moderators police group coherence accordingly. More generally, people use these groups as platforms to enquire, find, share, and reflect on related information.

Dr. **Teemu Oivo** specialises in discursive belonging related to Russianness, as well as information dissemination and the social consumption of information in Russian and transnational Finnish-Russian media spaces. His postdoctoral research at the University of Eastern Finland addresses the practices and perceptions of digital borders in Russian-European contexts. Moreover, Oivo is part of the Academy of Finland project 'Transnational Death' and serves as a visiting researcher at the Aleksanteri Institute of the University of Helsinki.

Detained migrants and technology: Researching the inside from outside

MIRIANA CASCONI

(Södertörn University, Sweden)

Migrants' digital media practices guarantee ubiquity, mobility and digital presence in their transnational lives (Elliott & Urry 2010; Alinejad 2019), yet I wonder what happens when migrants and their habitual media practices are forced to stop, when the Connected Migrant (Diminescu 2008) is no more. This paper focuses on two types of media technologies present in detention centres: the old generation phones distributed upon arrival in the facilities, after the confiscation of smartphones by the police, and the return to official paper-based communication, reflecting on the validity of these media practices terms of inclusion and participation. Detention and its governance, as well as the (semi-)disconnection imposed on migrants, emerge as part of a technique of control (Griffiths 2014; Drangland 2021) and show European detention centres as Waiting Institutions, where the challenge lies in the artificial concept of deportability (De Genova 2002; Gibney 2008; Khosravi 2018). The study is based on face-to-face interviews with detained migrants conducted between 2022 and 2024 in Sweden. However, given the restrictions on access received from Swedish institutions, the paper reflects on alternative tactics adopted, such as collaborative relationships with voluntary associations, lawyers and artists' groups, and the writing of ethnographic vignettes (Mahadevan 2012; Bloom-Christen, Grunow 2022) as a method of doing research on the inside, although remaining on the outside.

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- Mahadevan, J. (2012). Translating Nodes of Power through Reflexive Ethnographic Writing. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography* 1 (1), 119-131.

Miriana Cascone is a PhD student in Media and Communication Studies at Södertörn University. Her research project explores media practices and the role of technology in a context where migrants' access to media infrastructures is limited and controlled by the authorities and in a regime of immobility and waiting. Her research interests are in the field of migration, the interaction with communication, biometric and surveillance technologies, and transnationalism. Miriana is particularly interested in the implications that technologies have on migration management in a broader context, exploring regimes of deportability, exclusion and vulnerability produced by state-actors.

Session 9 (Room M-133)

ANOMALIA: An AI-empowered methodology to foster original migrant narratives through content creation

IVÁN SÁNCHEZ-LÓPEZ

(Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain)

Numerous authors argue that the potential of digital media strengthens community bonds by facilitating self-expression and the exchange of information. Digital spaces allow interests, affinities, and identities to converge through storytelling, fostering creativity and development by promoting engagement, motivation, emotional connection, and the empowerment of individuals and communities (Sánchez-López, 2020). However, these systems—often driven by popularity, power, and influence—risk marginalizing minority or vulnerable groups. Such communities frequently face limited visibility, misrepresentation, or exposure to inaccurate and misleading information. Increasingly, they also become targets of mockery and hate (Lilleker & Pérez-Escolar, 2023). In response, the ANOMALIA Project proposes an intervention to foster original migrant narratives through multimodal storytelling and creativity. Following Acomi et al. (2023), narrative generation becomes a tool to address social inequalities and dismantle prejudices. The primary goal of the project is to implement a Participatory Action Research approach, with an AI empowered methodology to create original - migrant - stories. The results (in form of media content) offer perspectives and approaches that diverge from traditional Western frameworks, solidifying alternative narratives, counter-narratives, and original narratives. The creative process empowered participants by allowing them to reclaim their narratives, promoting self-expression, confidence, and ownership of their stories in digital spaces. Workshops fostered emotional connections and solidarity both online and offline, while also confronting backlash and hate. Project ANOMALIA highlights how participatory storytelling can be a powerful tool to address systemic inequalities and redefine public discourse. The AI-empowered PAR approach provides a replicable method for future interventions aimed at supporting marginalized communities through storytelling and digital creativity.

Acomi, N., Acomi, O., Akceviz, O., Akilli, N., Anlar, E., Arevalo-Martíner, H., Arisoy, P., Dinc., M. N., Koca, I., Kurt, H., Marzano, F., Nur-Arkarcay, Y., Ochoa-Siguencia, I., Pellegrino, A., Yucel, Ö. & Zorzi, S. (2023). Creativity and Arts in Digital Social Innovation. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8052835>

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Iván Sánchez-López is a senior Ramón y Cajal researcher at the UOC. His work explores storytelling within the broader field of communication, focusing on three key areas: media and formats, empowerment (particularly in relation to education and inclusion), and creativity (encompassing both artistic and media expressions). These areas are interconnected through a unifying framework inspired by Eco's concept of semiological guerrilla. ANOMALIA Project promotes dissident creation by minoritized or vulnerable groups, through a critical appropriation of AI, in order to question and propose alternatives to harmful and dominant social dynamics. Ayuda RYC2023-044777-I, financiada por MICIU/AEI /10.13039/501100011033 y por el FSE+.

Session 9 (Room M-133)

Digital pathways to employment: School-to-work transition of international graduates in Lithuania

SUAT AKSU

(Institute of Sociology, Lithuania)

As global labour markets evolve, digitalisation is reshaping how young people with migration experience navigate employment, cultural integration, and professional identity-building. In Lithuania, international graduates face distinct challenges in transitioning from higher education to the workforce, including limited local networks, visa restrictions, and employer biases (Han, Gulanowski, & Sears, 2022). Digital platforms offer new opportunities for graduates to find jobs, connect with mentors, and build networks. However, the increasing reliance on digital labour markets presents both opportunities and inequalities. While online spaces can empower young professionals, they also reinforce barriers linked to digital access, cultural capital, and algorithmic gatekeeping (Blackmore & Rahimi, 2019; Castells, 1996). This research examines how digital platforms influence the employment outcomes, integration experiences, and career aspirations of non-EU graduates in Lithuania, contributing to broader discussions on digital migration, economic participation, and intercultural communication.

This study applies Bourdieu's theory of capital (1986) to analyse how digital, social, and linguistic capital shape job-seeking outcomes. Granovetter's strength of weak ties theory (1973) is used to explore how online networking influences career success, while Castells' network society theory (1996) contextualises the digitalisation of employment. Qualitative narrative interviews were conducted with non-EU graduates from Lithuanian universities, analysing their digital job-seeking strategies, networking experiences, and employment barriers.

Employment Barriers: Graduates relying on online job searching platforms had mixed outcomes, with algorithmic filters and employer preferences limiting local job access.

Multilingualism: Multilingual graduates accessed wider international opportunities, benefiting both themselves and Lithuania's internationalisation efforts. However, those lacking Lithuanian proficiency faced restricted job prospects in local industries.

Rise of Platform Work: Many young professionals turned to platform work and remote employment, bypassing local hiring barriers but remaining disconnected from Lithuania's workforce. While digital tools create alternative employment pathways, linguistic, social, and structural barriers persist. Strengthening measurements of digital job-seeking support, employer engagement, and language training could enhance Lithuania's ability to retain and integrate skilled international graduates.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.

Blackmore, J., & Rahimi, M. (2019). How “best fit” excludes international graduates from employment in Australia: A Bourdieusian perspective. *Journal of Education and Work*, 32(5), 436–448.

Han, Y., Gulanowski, D., & Sears, G. J. (2022). International student graduates' workforce integration: A systematic review. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 86, 163–189.

Suat Aksu is a sociologist and holds an MSc in Sociology of Education. He is a PhD candidate at the Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences, Institute of Sociology, Department of Employment and Social Welfare Research in Vilnius, Lithuania. His research interests are labour migration, school-to-work transition, youth work and social policy. Besides, he has excellent knowledge of EU funds by designing grant proposals and coordinating the granted projects since 2018. He is the director of a non-profit organisation, Suatas Project Academy that provides non-formal education, research and training activities and organises the Suatas Talks podcast series to share educational content.

**Information resilience in hostile media environments:
The case of Asian immigrant diaspora in Hungary**

TRIANTAFYLLOS GKARAGKANIS

(Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania and CY Cergy Paris Université, France)

The European Union (EU) information ecosystem has not managed to escape the implications of disinformation narratives on migration. As such, research on identity and intercultural dynamics is essential to understand how Asian immigrants operate in hostile media environments. Hungary has gathered a lot of attention from social science scholars due to its discursive exclusion characteristics and anti-migrant narratives. More specifically, the immigration policy factor remains restrictive, while rights, such as access to healthcare, are not granted equally to Hungarian citizens and newly arrived migrants. Taking all this into account, this study explores the media-related complexities that members of the Asian diaspora face in the capital city, Budapest, and how they perceive and react to media representations that reinforce social exclusion.

By implementing a fieldwork plan in the first quarter of 2025, the study unveils the dominant narratives in online media portrayal of migrants reaching Hungarian soil and how Asian immigrants feel and act under this media context. Moreover, the qualitative research is based on feedback received from focus groups organized in-person in collaboration with a local NGO. The discussed themes included stigmatization, counter-narratives, and intercultural communication channels. Thanks to this initiative, the study aspires to answer the following questions; how do participants assess the portrayal of migrants with non-European roots in the Hungarian online media, and which coping mechanisms do they utilize to navigate in this socially and politically polarized and preserve their sense of belonging?

The multidisciplinary framework embedding intercultural communication and diaspora studies is operationalized to address the complexities traced in Hungarian society. Initial results from the focus group discussions indicate their will to fulfill their sense of belonging in small-sized networks with trusted members. Ultimately, this study can be the breeding ground for endorsing research contributions on the significance of online media representations in sociopolitical contexts with anti-migrant sentiment.

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Illés, É. (2019). The representation of migration in the Hungarian context. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5(2), 203-218.

Karim, K. H. (1998). *From ethnic media to global media: Transnational communication networks among diasporic communities* (pp. 1-24). University of Oxford. Transnational Communities Programme.

Oh, D. C. (2016). Reconsidering ethnic media research: An argument for a diasporic identity framework. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 24(5), 264-275.

Triantafyllos Gkaragkanis is a Joint PhD Researcher in Communication Sciences at Babeş-Bolyai University and CY Cergy Paris Université (EUTOPIA Cotutelle Doctoral Fellow). In his doctoral research, he delves into the digital media representations on migration and integration in Europe (2015-2024) and analyses their impact on immigrant communities from the Global South in three EU Member States; France, Greece, and Hungary. Thus far, he has presented at international conferences, sharing his findings on online hate speech and migrant-led critical media discourse. Before his doctoral studies, he worked as a Consultant at the International Migration Division of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Session 10 (Room M-218)

Digital transnationalism: Maintenance of social, cultural and emotional links

SVIATLANA KARPAVA¹ AND ANASTASSIA ZABRODSKAJA²

(¹University of Cyprus, Cyprus; ²Tallinn University, Estonia)

According to Lam (2014), many transnational families and children maintain their social, cultural and emotional links with their native countries through transnational literacy, which are multimodal communicative practices that transcend national boundaries (Compton-Lilly et al., 2019). Previous research on digital literacy and inclusive education showed that transnational awareness as well as valuable resources for learning and development can be cultivated by diverse situated social practices and the use of digital technologies and cultural connections across borders (Wang, 2019).

Digital media spaces enable children and young people with transnational migration background to maintain relations with family, friends, and other networks across borders. Their language, literacy, and identity are not bound to a single national context but are shaped by ongoing movements and connections across territorial boundaries (Kwon, 2022). More research is needed on digital transnationalism, multiliteracy and multimodality with respect to immigrant and transnational families.

This study examined the perspectives of 18 transnational families in Cyprus and Estonia with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, who were interviewed by the researchers. It focused on digital transnationalism, multiliteracy, and multimodality, as well as the role of digital communication in transnational families and its contribution to maintaining social, cultural, and emotional connections among family members and relatives, along with the challenges, needs, and opportunities they face.

Thematic analysis of the transcribed interview data revealed that most of the families do acknowledge the affordances of multimodal communication with other family members who stay in a different country. Digital communication allows them to keep string ties with their relatives and friends, maintain their heritage language and culture, form identities and sense of belonging to the community. Digital family spaces allow to develop and support multilingualism and multiliteracy as well as social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and diasporic activism.

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Kwon, J. (2022). *Understanding the transnational lives and literacies of immigrant children*. Teachers College Press.

Lam, W.S E. (2014). Literacy and capital in immigrant youths' online networks across countries. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 39(4), 488–506. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2014.942665>

Wang, X. (2019). Observing literacy learning across WeChat and first-year writing: A scalar analysis of one transnational student's multilingualism. *Computers and Composition*, 52, 253–271

Sviatlana Karpava is Assistant Professor in Applied Linguistics/Multilingualism and Coordinator of the [MA in TESOL programme at the Department of English Studies, University of Cyprus](#). Her area of research is applied linguistics, second/third language acquisition, bilingualism, multilingualism, sociolinguistics, teaching and education. Link: <https://www.ucy.ac.cy/dir/en/cb-profile/skarpa01>

Anastassia ZABRODSKAJA is Professor of Intercultural Communication and Head of the [Communication Management Master's programme](#) at Tallinn University Baltic Film, Media and Arts School. Her primary research interests are identity, language contacts, linguistic landscape and intercultural communication. Profile in the Estonian Research Information System: https://www.etis.ee/CV/Anastassia_Zabrodskaia/eng

Session 10 (Room M-218)

‘Creating our seat at the table’ – Analyzing the epistemic formation of counterpublics in the Instagram series *Sitzplatzreservierung*

ANA-NZINGA WEIß

(Institut für Medienforschung, Universität Rostock, Germany)

In international comparison, Germany has rather hesitantly discussed racism in public debates (Salem & Thompson, 2016). This public disengagement with racism was interrupted in the summer of 2020, when German traditional mass media reacted to worldwide Black Lives Matter protests following the killing of Afro-American George Floyd. However, traditional mass media were soon met with public criticism. Especially on social media platforms, content creators started to publish formats complementing, critiquing, or countering traditional media’s engagement. One of these initiatives was *Sitzplatzreservierung* (translating to ‘seat reservation’), a series of videos published on Instagram in which Black Germans talk about their everyday experiences with racism.

Against the hegemonic resistance to critically talk about racism, *Sitzplatzreservierung* marked a novel account of publicly approaching the topic. A common concept used to describe endeavors that collectively share non-dominant discursive claims is the one of counterpublics. Squires (2002) critiques that this broad conceptualization, does no longer serve to ‘distinguish amongst marginal publics and their activities’ (p. 460). *Sitzplatzreservierung* particularly highlights the importance of the epistemic dimension of counterpublics: Black Germans claim a seat at the table as knowers of their lifeworld beyond the hegemonic norm. I argue that focusing the epistemic formation of counterpublics can add more nuance to their conceptualization and their relation to the dominant public sphere. My argument is based on the philosophical paradigm of social epistemology and the theoretical presumption that knowledge is produced socially, in interactions with other people, instances, systems, etc. (Goldman & Whitcomb, 2011, pp. 11–12). Accordingly, counterpublics can be viewed as producing ‘nondominant forms of knowledge’ (Jackson & Foucault Welles, 2015, pp. 933–934) that challenge the assumption of a universal, objective, unmarked and disembodied knowledge in dominant publics. To illustrate my claim, I present the results of my Critical Discourse Analysis of all 14 videos published under *Sitzplatzreservierung*.

- Goldman, A. I., & Whitcomb, D. (Eds.). (2011). *Social epistemology: Essential readings*. Oxford University Press.
- Jackson, S. J., & Foucault Welles, B. (2015). Hijacking #myNYPD: Social Media Dissent and Networked Counterpublics: Hijacking #myNYPD. *Journal of Communication*, 65(6), 932–952. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12185>
- Salem, S., & Thompson, V. (2016). Old racisms, new masks: On the continuing discontinuities of racism and the erasure of race in European contexts. *Nineteen Sixty Nine: An Ethnic Studies Journal*, 3(1), 1–23.
- Squires, C. R. (2002). Rethinking the Black public sphere: An alternative vocabulary for multiple public spheres. *Communication Theory*, 12(4), 446–468.

Ana-Nzinga Weiß is a research associate at the Institute for Media Research at the Universität Rostock and is doing her PhD at the Institute for Journalism and Communication Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. Her PhD research is funded by Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement of the European Union. Her research interests include media and social inequality from a Critical Race Theoretical research perspective, epistemic hierarchies as well as participation and socio-cultural change in hybrid media systems.

Online networks of migrant women from Turkey: Community building and politics of representation

YAGMUR ERDOGMUS, CARLA MOLEIRO AND SUSANA BATEL
(Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL), Portugal)

This paper explores how migrant women from Turkey navigate gendered identity and solidarity through digital platforms, focusing on a public woman-to-woman Instagram page formed and maintained by women from Turkey (20,000+ users). Analyzing 130 posts using pragmatic discourse analysis (Batel & Castro, 2018), the study examines how transnational subjectivities are discursively and affectively constructed in a space shaped by gendered experience, cultural familiarity, and transnational mobility. Identity is approached as an embodied and situated process, while solidarity is conceptualized as a discursive and affective relation shaped by shared migratory experience and cultural-linguistic proximity (Wetherell, 2008). Drawing on feminist ethics of care (Tronto, 1993) and transnational solidarity (Gould, 2007), the analysis highlights how digital features—such as hashtags, tagging, and co-sharing—mediate collective storytelling and platform-specific belonging. These practices facilitate affective support, knowledge exchange, and coordination of mobilizations, such as online grief sessions after earthquakes and political organizing in diaspora cities during Turkish elections, demonstrating the online/offline nexus of transnational solidarity. These solidarities are shaped by broader sociopolitical dynamics where dominant narratives and exclusions—based on ethnicity, ideology, or sexuality—also surface. The platform’s selective engagement with certain global struggles, alongside relative silences on others, illustrates how visibility and solidarity are conditioned by geopolitical contexts and emotional proximity. This reflects how all solidarities—digital or embodied—are situated within sociohistorical hierarchies and affective investments, including the emotional labor and technocultural decisions involved in moderating content and sustaining group cohesion. Drawing on the author’s insider perspective, the analysis reflects on how dual positionality informed ethical reflexivity and interpretation. The study contributes to feminist migration scholarship and critical discursive psychology by framing digital solidarity not as a fixed identity or political stance, but as a relational, affective, and situated practice. It offers a psychosocial account of how rootedness and movement shape digital forms of care, connection, and representation across transnational contexts.

- Batel, S., & Castro, P. (2018). Reopening the dialogue between the theory of social representations and discursive psychology for examining the construction and transformation of meaning in discourse and communication. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 57(4), 732–753. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12259>
- Gould, C. (2007). Transnational Solidarities. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 38(1), 148–164.
- Tronto, J. C. (1993). An Ethic of Care. In *Moral Boundaries*. Routledge.
- Wetherell, M. (2008). Subjectivity or Psycho-Discursive Practices? Investigating Complex Intersectional Identities. *Subjectivity*, 22(1), 73–81. <https://doi.org/10.1057/sub.2008.7>

Yagmur Erdogan is a PhD researcher in social psychology, adopting interdisciplinary approaches to study gender and migration. Her current work focuses on digital networks, consequent online/offline mobilities and gendered negotiations of migrant women from Turkey in transnational contexts. She draws on critical discursive and intersectional methods to explore identity, belonging, and solidarity. Alongside academic research, she has experience in humanitarian settings, providing psychosocial support for displaced populations. She aims to generate research that bridges theory and practice, contributing to more inclusive policies and interventions that center the voices of marginalized communities.

Carla Moleiro holds a PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Initially, she specialized in Clinical Psychology at the University of Lisbon, and as a psychotherapist at the Portuguese Association of Cognitive-Behavioral and Integrative Psychotherapies. She is currently a researcher and the director at the Center for Psychological Research and Social Intervention (CIS), working on mental health and diversity, including ethnic minority, migrant, refugee, sexual and gender minority (LGBTI+) clients.

Susana Batel is an integrated researcher at the Centre for Psychological Research and Social Intervention, with a fellowship granted by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology. Her research adopts a critical perspective to look at the relation between representation, identities, power, discourse and communication, and social change, namely regarding public participation in environmental issues, and responses to renewable energy and associated technologies. She is co-editor of the journal *Papers on Social Representations*.

Session 10 (Room M-218)

Postdigital flows.

Transnational labor migration and data center infrastructures in the Netherlands

LAURA CANDIDATU

(Utrecht University, the Netherlands)

Critical scholarship emerging in the last two decades, part of the so-called infrastructural turn in media studies prompted a renewed examination of the social and cultural dimensions of media infrastructures (Parks and Starosielski 2015; Parks, Velcova and Ridder 2023; Larkin 2008). This work highlights the co-constitution of infrastructures and the socio-cultural milieu in which they operate. Furthermore, this scholarship emphasizes the human labor involved in maintaining infrastructures and recognizes the ordinary and mundane side of infrastructures, as they intersect with everyday life cultures. Simultaneously, theorizations of the postdigital moment (Berry 2016; Stigler 2016) show how digital technologies do not stand separate from culture and sociality as they are deeply enmeshed in the fabric of our daily lives. In this view, the digital emerges as an infrastructure (Dijstelbloem 2021; Barns et al. 2017; Leurs 2019) and, like other infrastructures, becomes a product of invisible effort that oftentimes relies on unequal labor efforts. Furthermore, such infrastructures are deeply implicated in transnational labor regimes marked by invisibility and differential inclusion (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013). This paper brings together these insights with Social Reproduction Theory (Bhattacharya 2017; Mezzadri 2019) to critically examine data centers in the Netherlands as emblematic postdigital infrastructures. Starting from this material site, this paper explores how these infrastructures depend on often invisible infrastructures of care, logistics, and maintenance that are primarily sustained by migrant labor—especially Eastern European seasonal workers engaged in construction, facility services, logistics, and peripheral sectors. By exploring these linkages, the paper emphasizes the foundational role of socially reproductive migrant labor, challenging thus dominant anti-migration discourses and expanding the infrastructural critique to include the crucial yet invisible dimensions of transnational migrant labor.

Barns, E., Cosgrave, E., Acuto, M., & McNeill, D. (2017). Digital infrastructures and urban governance. *Urban Policy and Research*, 35(1), 20–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08111146.2016.1235032>

Berry, D. M. (2014). Post-digital humanities: Computation and cultural critique in the arts and humanities. *Educause*, 49(3), 22–26.

Bhattacharya, T. (Ed.). (2017). *Social reproduction theory: Remapping class, recentering oppression*. Pluto Press.

Dijstelbloem, H. (2021). *Borders as infrastructure: The technopolitics of border control*. MIT Press.

Larkin, B. (2008). *Signal and noise: Media, infrastructure, and urban culture in Nigeria*. Duke University Press.

Leurs, K. (2019). Migration infrastructures. In K. Smets, S. Witteborn, M. Georgiou, & K. Leurs (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of media and migration* (pp. 91–102). SAGE.

Mezzadra, S., & Neilson, B. (2013). *Border as method, or, the multiplication of labor*. Duke University Press.

Mezzadri, A. (2019). On the value of social reproduction: Informal labour, the majority world and the need for inclusive theories and politics. *Radical Philosophy*, 2(4), 33–41.

Parks, L., Velcova, J., & De Ridder, S. (Eds.). (2023). *Media backends: Digital infrastructures and sociotechnical relations*. University of Illinois Press.

Parks, L., & Starosielski, N. (Eds.). (2015). *Signal traffic: Critical studies of media infrastructures*. University of Illinois Press.

Stiegler, B. (2016). *Automatic society, Vol. 1: The future of work*. Polity.

Laura Candidatu is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Media and Culture Studies at Utrecht University, affiliated with the Graduate Gender Program where she coordinates the BA minors in Gender and Postcolonial Studies. Her areas of expertise include gender and diaspora, media and migration, and digital ethnography. Her work takes an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the everyday practices of migrant people at the intersection of digitality, mobility, and governance. She has published extensively on feminist methodological approaches to digital media, digital diasporas, and migrant mothering. She has published on feminist methodologies for digital media, digital diasporas, and migrant mothering.

Session 11 (Room M-648)

(De)constructing peace. A discourse-theoretical analysis of peace discourses on the Russian-Ukrainian war

DAVID ONGENAERT

(Charles University, Czechia)

The ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war has profound national, regional and international implications. Since 2022, the war has caused more than 30.000 civilian casualties (OHCHR, 2024), 11.6 million forcibly displaced Ukrainians (UNHCR, 2023) and massive infrastructural damage (Pavlik, 2022). It has also ignited intense discursive struggles across different media platforms. Multiple studies have examined Russia's and Ukraine's social media warfare practices. Some have identified the presence of large-scale Russian propaganda campaigns and the key role of bots (Geissler et al., 2023), while others found relatively limited disinformation (Caprolu et al., 2023; Pierri et al., 2023). However, peace discourses have barely been researched (Moses et al., 2023), even though they can substantially shape public relations, news, public perceptions and policy responses (Jabri, 1996; Keen, 1986). Current, limited research has identified two types of peace discourses: the photo-negativistic articulation of peace (i.e., peace defined by the absence of war) and the autonomous articulation of peace (i.e., peace as social harmony, economic equity, social justice and desirable) (Carpentier & Kejanlioğlu, 2020). Nevertheless, more and more structural research into mediated peace discourses is necessary and arguably particularly relevant for the Russian-Ukrainian war, which is expected to last for many years, with increasing militarization (Hayoz & Stepanenko, 2024), peace negotiations doomed to failure (Fischer, 2022) and the absence of a global peace movement (Lichterman, 2022).

Acknowledging these trends, this study examines how different actors discursively construct peace in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Drawing on and contributing to Carpentier and Kejanlioğlu's (2020) model of war and peace discourses, I am currently examining which peace discourses key Russian and Ukrainian news agencies construct in their news releases. This involves Russian state-run and private news agencies (TASS and Interfax, respectively) as well as Ukrainian state-run and private news agencies (Ukrinform and Interfax-Ukraine, respectively). These form important news sources on and signifiers of the Russian-Ukrainian war (Moses et al., 2023) and can thus shape and influence broader peace discourses. For this purpose, I will apply a discourse-theoretical analysis (DTA) (Carpentier, 2010, 2017; Carpentier & De Cleen, 2007) on their English news releases during two 'critical discourse moments' (2023 Ukrainian counteroffensive: June-August 2023; the 2025 peace negotiations for the Russian-Ukrainian conflict: January-April 2025). DTA forms rather a reflexive, critical state of mind with various interpretations instead of an explicit, systematic, reproducible research method (van Dijk, 2013). In order to improve the reliability and validity of my results, I will discuss transparently and reflexively our made choices, decisions and underlying motivations in the research process, and use extensive sets of discursive criteria (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Joye & Maesele, 2022; Mortelmans, 2020). I will analyse approximately 1000 news releases, including the involved images.

David Ongenaert works as a postdoctoral researcher at The Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. He examines the discursive construction of peace with a focus on the Russian-Ukrainian war. David is a co-chair of ECREA's International and Intercultural Communication Section, and a member of the advisory board of 'Journal of Global Diaspora & Media'.

Session 11 (Room M-648)

Ambivalent discourses of recognition in relation to Ukrainian displacement in Europe

ROB SHARP

(University of Sussex, United Kingdom)

It has now been approximately three-and-a-half years since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. As of July 2024, when data collection for this paper took place, some 6.17 million displaced Ukrainians were registered across Europe according to the UNHCR (UNHCR, 2024). Alongside more formal evaluations of Ukrainian integration, including access to healthcare and accommodation, qualitative research into the experiences of displaced Ukrainians has considered their experiences of legal (in)security, experiences of motherhood, alongside individuals' experiences of interactions with state and civil society organisations (Rock, 2025; Karimi & Byelikova, 2024; Maxwell *et al.*, 2024; Rock & Yanaşmayan, 2024). Building on this growing body of work, this paper seeks to conceive of these various institutional regulative dimensions of Ukrainian refugee experience in terms of the politics of recognition, through a multidimensional framework. I consider recognition, and its opposite, misrecognition, relationally and discursively, through emotional, rights-based and solidaristic components, drawing on the work of German philosopher Axel Honneth, and scholars who have prominently expanded on his work (e.g. van Leeuwen, 2007; Allen, 2021; Benjamin, 2018; Butler *et al.* 2021; Fraser, 2003, and Petherbridge, 2013). Within this framework, this paper's methodological contribution lies in its use of ethnographic data alongside participatory photography, map-making and interviews relating to two participatory workshops held in May 2024 in ZK/U Berlin and Collegium Civitas in Warsaw with 15 displaced Ukrainian women in both cities. Working alongside the displaced Ukrainian artists Dasha Podoltseva and Elena Orap, this participatory approach explores how participants expressed and experienced solidarity, recognition and misrecognition in ways that aligned ambivalently with the two cities' contingent geographies, infrastructure, architectures and histories alongside their recent memories of displacement. The work sits within a broader corpus of data relating to how communication around solidarity has changed among civil society and cultural institutions over time in each of these cities, as communicated and expressed within 40 interviews conducted in the spring of 2024 with Ukrainian, German and Polish actors in a range of organisations that offered solidarity to displaced Ukrainians in Germany and Poland. Again, a framework of solidarity through recognition is employed to contextualise justificatory articulatory strategies among these interviews, encompassing emotional, legal, and sociocultural dimensions of solidarity. Crucially, this considers how the onset of solidarity fatigue is manifested in these environments, with solidarity fatigue defined as a sense of psychological or physical exhaustion experienced by those expressing solidarity – support around a shared horizon of values—again, following Honneth (1996).

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Rob Sharp is an Assistant Professor in Media and Cultural Studies. His book *Refugee Voices, Performativity and the Struggle of Recognition* was published by Routledge in 2024. His work has been published in the *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, *Journalism Studies*, the *International Communication Gazette* and *Media, War and Conflict*, and his work has been funded by the British Academy/Leverhulme Trust, Arts Council England (ACE) and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). He specialises in media and migration, voice, the politics of recognition and participatory methodologies alongside journalism practice and theory.

Session 11 (Room M-648)

Volunteerism and community media after October 7 in Israel

ANNA SMOLIAROVA

(The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel)

Volunteerism is widely recognized as a mechanism for fostering belonging and community cohesion (Horsham et al., 2024). It facilitates meaningful social interactions, enabling individuals to connect with others who share similar values (Russel et al., 2019). Such connections are critical in diverse or marginalized communities, including immigrant populations, where volunteerism can empower individuals and strengthen their identification with the host society (Khvorostianov & Remennick, 2017). While volunteering is closely tied to a sense of belonging (Lehner et al., 2022), a general feeling of attachment to a community does not always lead to active participation (Gieling et al., 2019). This paper examines the emergence of citizen news media initiatives as a response to the war in Israel, analyzing how belonging served as a trigger for volunteerism. Following the events of October 7th, 2023, two Russian-speaking citizen news media initiatives - Mesusa and Hopescrolling - emerged on Telegram to meet the informational and emotional needs of Russian-speaking Israelis. Drawing on interviews with founders and volunteers, this study investigates the motivations, organizational structures, and community impact of these initiatives. Both projects, each with approximately 30,000 followers, relied on volunteer-driven journalism but pursued different goals. Mesusa prioritized high-quality, verified journalism to combat the spread of unverified content, while Hopescrolling focused on disseminating positive news, emphasizing resilience, volunteerism, and solidarity. The study demonstrates how crises can catalyze the creation of volunteer-driven platforms, providing spaces for community building and identity negotiation. Volunteers in these initiatives strengthened their sense of belonging by actively contributing to community needs, reaffirming connections to both their cultural heritage and the larger Israeli society. By exploring the volunteers' motivations and experiences, the paper highlights the role of volunteerism in fostering trust, solidarity, and agency. This research contributes to the fields of identity formation and belonging by illustrating how crisis-driven volunteerism in citizen media can serve as a catalyst for community cohesion and dual identity negotiation. It provides insights into how collective identity is forged and sustained in transnational contexts, offering a framework for understanding the interplay between media, volunteerism, and belonging in diverse populations.

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Anna Smoliarova, PhD, is a researcher at the DAAD Center for German Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. After defending her doctoral thesis in political science in 2014, she focused on Russian-speaking diaspora media, media consumption among Russian-speaking migrants worldwide, and their global communication via social media platforms. In 2013 – 2022, she held the position of associate professor at the Department of International Journalism at St. Petersburg State University, Russia. Since September 2022, she has been part of international research teams in Israel. Her research interests include global communication, migration studies, international journalism, and public diplomacy.

Session 11 (Room M-648)

Global social witnessing

KAZUMA MATOBA

(Witten/Herdecke University, Germany)

Seeing people's suffering on the news—children in famine in countries across Africa or a grief-stricken mother holding her lifeless child in Palestine—many people feel empathy and compassion. These kinds of tragedy are a frequent occurrence in our world today, but the impression they leave is not permanent, because the overwhelming stream of such news has desensitized many people to the world's pain and suffering. These kinds of everyday passive attitudes are deeply rooted in an individualistic dualism: I (subject) and the world (object) are separated. Through global issues, such as climate change and the refugee crisis, however, many people have begun to realize that we are in fact connected to each other. Thus, we can testify to the suffering of other people with a belief that we are not separate from them. Instead, 'we' and 'they' are parts of a greater system. This kind of cognitive and emotional observation can be referred to as empathy, which has been studied intensively in past years in psychology and neuroscience (cf. Bateson, 1991, 2009). However, there still is a critical question remaining: Is empathy enough? We and the world are interrelated, but in the "lived world" (Nishida, 1911) we are still fragmented and do not experience our interconnection as such. I might see myself as a separate closed system and cannot recognize a larger transcendental system in which 'I' (subject) and the world (object) are interconnected, as "history is repeating and there's nothing we can do about it" (Trilling, 2018). In my presentation 'global social witnessing' which was originally proposed by Hübl (2020) will be presented as an educational tool for awareness-based systems change. The first part of the presentation will highlight three philosophical and psychological foundations of 'global social witnessing' as a contemplative educational tool: (1) bearing witness, (2) relational responsibility, and (3) whole-system awareness. The second part will focus on the digital learning platform, "Becoming a Global Witness" from an Erasmus+ project. Lastly, it will cover the experiences of some students who attended the seminar "Becoming a Global Witness in the Calais' Jungle" at Witten/Herdecke University.

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Kazuma Matoba studied linguistics and international relations at Sophia University in Tokyo and received his Ph.D. in communication studies from the University of Duisburg, Germany. After postdoctoral research at the University of the German Federal Armed Forces in Munich and the United Nations University in Bruges, Kazuma has been Professor of the Research Unit on Collective Trauma Integration at the University of Witten/Herdecke in Germany since 2022.

Some useful links

Tallinn Airport

To and From the Airport

Public Transport in Tallinn

Taxi & ridesharing in Tallinn

DIGITAL TALLINN

Visit Tallinn

Between Helsinki and Tallinn onboard a ferry

Weather forecast in the Internet

Visit Narva

How to get to Narva by bus

Visit Tartu

How to get to Tartu by bus

Tallinn and Tartu Bus Stations

Living in Tallinn as a Foreigner: What To Expect

Safety guidelines

Crime levels in Tallinn are low but take sensible precautions as you would elsewhere: be vigilant for pickpockets in crowded places, do not leave your belongings unattended, and drink in moderation.

If you do need to report a crime, you can do so by contacting the emergency number 112, submitting a written report in person to the nearest police authority, or by e-mail to the relevant prefecture. You can find the necessary forms and instructions on the webpage of the [Estonian Police and Border Guard Board](#).

When using taxis, prefer official service providers who have a licence from the city of Tallinn or use one of the many ridesharing apps available. Read more about taxi services from our [corresponding transport section](#).

Pharmacies

Pharmacies are usually open from 10:00-19:00. Two of them stay open all night:

- [City centre \(Südameapteek\): Tõnismägi 5](#), tel. +372 644 2282
- [Lasnamägi \(Südameapteek\): Vikerlase 19](#), tel. +372 638 4338.

Pharmacies in shopping centres are usually open from 9:00-21:00.

The abstracts in this Abstract Book follow authors' style and grammar without editing.

