

International Symposium  
“Migrations: Interdisciplinary Perspectives”  
(Vienna, July 1-3 2010),

**Invited Panel:**  
**“Media Representations of Migrants and Migration”**

**1. Aims**

Contributions to this invited panel present a combination of theoretical and empirical approaches to representations of migrants (as individuals or groups) and migration (as a wider phenomenon) in the media. We are willing to explore similarities and differences between the nationally specific and transnational representations at the times of accelerated socio-political change when ardent anti-immigration debates are prevalent across the public spheres in most of the European countries. Fuelled by public fears of globalisation and insecurity, those debates cut across the traditional political divisions (left and right), both mainstream (national and regional) and minority media as well as both classic media (press, broadcast media) and new media genres. The panel draws on the speakers’ extensive research work in the area of media representations of migration and offers a set of country-specific analyses as well as of transnational comparisons.

**2. Organisers**

- Brigitta Busch, Professor of Applied Linguistics, Dept. of Linguistics, University of Vienna ([brigitta.busch@univie.ac.at](mailto:brigitta.busch@univie.ac.at))
- Michał Krzyżanowski, Senior Research Fellow, LAEL, Lancaster University ([m.krzyzanowski@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:m.krzyzanowski@lancaster.ac.uk))

**3. Invited Speakers**

- Brigitta Busch, University of Vienna, Austria ([brigitta.busch@univie.ac.at](mailto:brigitta.busch@univie.ac.at))
- Monica Colombo, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy ([monica.colombo@unimib.it](mailto:monica.colombo@unimib.it))
- Valeria Letizia Cuman, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy ([valeria.cuman@unimib.it](mailto:valeria.cuman@unimib.it))
- Karina Horsti, University of Helsinki, Finland ([khorsti@mappi.helsinki.fi](mailto:khorsti@mappi.helsinki.fi))
- Majid KhosraviNik, Lancaster University, UK ([m.khosravini@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:m.khosravini@lancaster.ac.uk))
- Michał Krzyżanowski, Lancaster University, UK ([m.krzyzanowski@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:m.krzyzanowski@lancaster.ac.uk))
- Brankica Petković, Peace Institute – Ljubljana, Slovenia ([brankica.petkovic@mirovni-institut.si](mailto:brankica.petkovic@mirovni-institut.si))
- Petra Pfisterer, University of Vienna, Austria ([petra.pfisterer@gmx.at](mailto:petra.pfisterer@gmx.at))
- Ruth Wodak, Lancaster University, UK ([r.wodak@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:r.wodak@lancaster.ac.uk))

**4. Discussant**

- Anne-Marie Fortier, Lancaster University, UK ([a.fortier@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:a.fortier@lancaster.ac.uk))

## **5. Outline**

### **Part I: Saturday, 03 July 2010, 11:00 – 12:30 (Chair: M. Krzyżanowski)**

- Opening and Welcome – B. Busch and M. Krzyżanowski (5 min)
- Paper 1 – *Media and Migration: Exploring the Field* – B. Busch and P. Pfisterer (20 + 5 min)
- Paper 2 – *Migrants Forever* – B. Petković (20+10 min)
- Paper 3 – *Arguing about Cultural Differences: A Case-Study of Anti-Muslim Discourses in Italian Press* – M. Colombo and V.L. Cuman (20 + 10 min)

### **Part II: Saturday, 03 July 2010, 13:30 – 15:00 (Chair: B. Busch)**

- Paper 4 – *Undocumented Migrants and Asylum Seekers in the News: Balancing the Frame of Threat through Victimization of Migrants* – K. Horsti (20 + 10 min)
- Paper 5 – *Changing or Not? Dynamics of Discursive Representations of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the British Press between 1996 and 2006* – M. KhosraviNik, M. Krzyżanowski and R. Wodak (20 + 10 min)
- Discussant Comment: A-M. Fortier (15 min)
- Final Discussion and Closing (15 min)

## **6. Abstracts**

### ***Media and Migration: Exploring the Field***

Brigitta Busch and Petra Pfisterer (University of Vienna)

Under the condition of increased migration and mobility, of diversification and multidirectionality of communication flows, the notion of a dominant national public sphere conceived – through multiple exclusions on the basis of gender, race, class and language – as homogenous and multilingual is being challenged by a fragmentation into complex configurations of sometimes overlapping and sometimes mutually exclusive spaces of communication with their particular policies of representation. In the media as in many other domains the de-centring of the nation state as the organising principle has become a reality, but nevertheless the state still provides an important framework for political participation and negotiation of power relations. Therefore it seems important to examine media policies and media practices with regards to migration on all scales, the transnational and the trans-local as well as the national and the local.

In this contribution we will map some of the relevant areas of interest: media policies as politics of inclusion or exclusion; questions of ownership and equal access to means of media production; training for journalism and communication professions; diversity policies in the media; representation in regulatory bodies; analysing stereotypes and discriminatory discourse in media texts; awareness of diversified audiences; media practices in trans-cultural contexts.

### ***Migrants Forever***

Brankica Petković (Peace Institute, Ljubljana)

The paper will reflect application of the categories of migrants and migrations to the communities and individuals belonging to nations of former Yugoslavia and living in Slovenia, and will connect it to their media representations. It will also outline relevant media and political discourses on the Balkans in the context of the EU enlargement to the countries of former Yugoslavia. The paper will discuss media representation of communities and individuals belonging to nations of former Yugoslavia and living in Slovenia by comparing the cases and patterns of their portrayal in national media in 1990s with some more recent media practices.

***Arguing about Cultural Differences: A Case-Study of Anti-Muslim Discourses in Italian Press***

Monica Colombo and Valeria Letizia Cuman (University of Milano-Bicocca)

Issues relating to cultural, religious and 'racial' difference are currently prominent in European and Italian public discourse on migration. Muslims constitute the group whose difference is regarded as most threatening and Islam is often depicted as a dangerous cultural 'other'. In this scenario, the press plays a crucial role in legitimizing anti-Muslim discourses through the ways in which it represents diversity. Press discourses should be regarded as serving the function of affecting the public sphere by demanding either Muslims' cultural and political assimilation or their expulsion.

This paper aims at analysing the ways that Muslims are represented in Italian national newspapers. A case study is conducted dealing with the murder of Hina Salem, a 21-year-old female Pakistani killed by her father in Brescia in 2006. Italy's highest court, the Court of Cassation, has recently released the reasons for upholding the 30-year jail sentence given to Mohammed Saleem for murdering his daughter bringing it back to "a distorted, pathological sense of parental possession" rather than religious and cultural reasons. Nonetheless, the crime was generally framed by the press as a result of a clash of cultures. Two weeks of press reporting were sampled and analysed adopting an integrated analytical approach which combined content- and discourse-analytic strategies. The corpus includes 101 articles which appeared in 10 different newspapers (right/left-wing, centre, catholic, etc.). Quantitative lexical analysis was initially used to systematically explore similarities and differences in the texts and to assess key themes in the newspaper reporting of the episode. Significant differences emerged in the lexical composition of discursive representations. Qualitative discourse analysis allowed for an in-depth examination of the ways cultural differences were depicted in these texts. Discourse studies allowed going beyond the more traditional, content-analytical analysis of 'images' of the 'others', and probed deeper into the linguistic and discursive properties of texts. The analysis focused on the referential and predicational strategies which underpinned the constructions of identities and on the argumentation strategies employed to justify the inclusion/exclusion of Muslims on all social, economic, and political levels.

***Undocumented Migrants and Asylum Seekers in the News: Balancing the Frame of Threat through Victimization of Migrants***

Karina Horsti (CEREN, University of Helsinki)

Media coverage of immigration plays a role in the creation of national imaginary and identity. However, since immigration and asylum policies are increasingly shifting to supranational decision making in the European Union, the issue should also be analyzed from the perspective

of Europeanization. In this presentation I discuss the old and new identities constructed in the news coverage of asylum seekers and refugees by analyzing Finnish news in the context of Europeanized public debate. Particularly, I scrutinize how the typical frames of “threat” and “victim” relate to one another. Does victim frame balance the frame of threat?

Previous research on news of asylum seekers stresses frame of threat. However, a closer textual analysis shows the diversity in news journalism. Illegality and problems make the most recurrent theme in Finnish news related to asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. In addition to presenting the migrants as “threats” to social order, the migrants are typically framed as victims, and in some cases as heroes who survive difficult conditions. Therefore, to capture a wider story of how these uninvited migrants are framed, we need to enlarge the perspective to analyse mediatisation of the topic, and thus not only consider news but other genres, social media, and online journalism. For instance, in reportage genres migrants are often quoted, named and given a social status compared to the routine news coverage where they are framed in more non-personified fashion. Victimization tends to be connected to gender and culture. Some migrants, like women, children and people who adapt to Western or Finnish lifestyles, are accepted for public victim role as objects of charity and public campaigning.

Organizations who support migrants tend to promote victim framing in their anti-racist agenda. Moreover, journalists hope to balance their reporting through victimization. However, these two frames – threat and victim – are compatible rather than conflicting. Increase of immigration control is presented as a solution to both problems.

### ***Changing or Not? Dynamics of Discursive Representations of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the British Press between 1996 and 2006***

M. Khosravinik, M. Krzyżanowski and R. Wodak (LAEL, Lancaster University)

Our presentation reports on a longitudinal study of the ways in which refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants (RASIM) are represented in the British newspapers. Carried out at Dept of Linguistics, Lancaster University, the study looked at how representations of RASIM changed in the period between 1996 and 2006. This period encompassed several major national and transnational developments (e.g. from French or British parliamentary elections to War in Kosovo or WTC 9/11) which significantly altered and radicalised public discourses on migration in general, and on refugees and asylum seekers in particular. Focussing on results of mainly qualitative (critical-analytic) but also quantitative (corpus-linguistic) analyses and their combination, the paper will highlight how despite some differences arising from the analysed papers’ divergent ideological viewpoints (conservative/liberal) and types (tabloid/quality), most of them constructed a largely similar public image of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants. In general, the paper will aim to show how the related and in most cases negative and deprecatory ways of representing RASIM still persist in the British press and are only recontextualised in new discourses related to changing socio-political conditions.

### **7. Organiser Contact**

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