ECREA Diaspora, migration and the media (DMM) // annual report 2018

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Section management
The management team was re-elected during the ECREA DMM business meeting, at the 7th European Communication Conference ECREA meeting in Lugano, 31 October – 3 November, 2018. This team was first elected during the ECREA DMM business meeting at the 6th European Communication Conference ECREA meeting in Prague, 9-12 November 2016. As of January 2019, ECREA DMM has 196 section members.

Recap ECC7 Lugano
The theme of ECC7, ‘Centres and Peripheries: Communication, Research, Translation’ resonates strongly with academic, societal, political and cultural discussions our section seeks to reflect upon and intervene in. Right after the peak of the so-called ‘European refugee crisis’ in 2015, scholarship on migration and refugees were also commonly presented outside of the ECREA DMM section. Thus, we have seen research on migrants, refugees and asylum seekers has become mainstreamed. Borders, securitization, humanitarianism, refugee selfies, refugee apps, transnationalism, diaspora, media and migration receive increasing attention. The broadening of the discourse on these themes is important, and has the potential to bring about social change, but the risk of de-politicization as a result of academic hype or mainstreaming is worrying. Discussions about migration and diaspora – based on a social justice agenda - continue to be pursued as the shared agenda in the section. There were 73 papers submitted for inclusion at the 7th ECC conference, and the section was allocated 8 panels (as well as 3 posters. With 43 papers presented, the acceptance rate for our section was 54.7%. Compared with the ECC5 in Prague, we’ve experienced a growth of 10% in the section, for Prague there were 64 submissions, and 7 panels allocated (acceptance rate of 55.5%). We would like to thank the reviewers who assisted us in evaluating proposals.

ECC 7: Awards
We handed out two paper awards, one for a junior and one for a senior scholar, which were supported by Sage and Intellect publishing. Yazan Badran (Communication Studies, CEMESO/imec-SMIT Vrije Universiteit Brussel) was selected for the Young Scholar best paper award for his paper “Strategies and (survival) tactics: The case of Syrian oppositional media in Turkey”. Ricarda Drüeke and co-authors Anita Moser & Elisabeth Klaus (University of Salzburg and Mozarteum Salzburg, Program Area Contemporary Art and Cultural Production, Salzburg, Austria) were selected for the Senior Scholar best paper award for their paper “Questioning boundaries of disciplines? Media images and artistic discourses of refugees and migration”. Jeffrey Patterson received an honourable mention in the category of emerging scholars for his paper “We Live Here, and We Are Queer!: Young Gay Connected Migrants. Transnational Ties and Integration in the Netherlands”

Proceedings ECREA DMM section workshop 2017 “Migration and communication flows”
Vice-chair Irati Agirreazkuenaga was the local conference host for the ECREA DMM workshop held 2-3 November, 2017 at the University of the Basque Country in Bilbao, Spain. The theme of the conference was “Migration and communication flows: rethinking borders, conflict and identity through the digital”. Several proceedings of the have now come out. A selection of seven papers presented was published in 2018 in a special issue on “Global identity and conflict through diaspora media” in Crossings: Journal of Migration and Culture Volume 9, Number 1, 1 April 2018 (edited by section member Ola Ogunyemi).
Another selection of 6-7 articles, will be published in a special issue on the theme of ‘Migrant Narratives’ in the European Journal of Cultural Studies (edited by the section board).
In addition, Koen Leurs and Kevin Smets are currently finalizing the SAGE Handbook of Media and Migration they are co-editing with the ECREA DMM section co-founder Myria Georgiou (LSE), Saskia Witteborn (Chinese University of Hong Kong) and Radhika Gajala (Bowling Green State University). This 50+ volume will feature work by several members of the section. The handbook is expected to be released in November 2019.
ECREA DMM section workshop 2019: “Digital fortress Europe”
Under the guidance of Kevin Smets, ECREA DMM co-chair and the local conference chair the ECREA DMM section will organize a 2-day workshop in Brussels, Belgium on 30 and 31 October 2019 at the Palace of the Academies - Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts, Brussels, Belgium. The title of the workshop is “Digital fortress Europe. Exploring boundaries between media, migration and technology.”

Rationale
The two-day conference intends to be a forum to reflect on the relations between media, migration, and technology. These relations demand our fullest attention because they touch on the essence of what migration means in societies that are undergoing democratic challenges. Research shows that media and technologies play a vital role for people who migrate, but that the same media and technologies serve to spread xenophobia, increase societal polarization and enable elaborate surveillance possibilities. With its intensifying anti-migration populist discourses, humanitarian border crises and efforts to secure borders through technological solutions, the European context provides a pulsating scene to examine such deepening relations. Taking place in the heart of Europe’s political capital, this conference aims to critically reflect on what the much-debated notion of “Fortress Europe” means in the digital age and how it can guide our future thinking on media and migration. As such, scholars of media, communication, migration and technology will be stimulated to contribute to critical discussions on border politics and migration debates. The thematic focus of this conference is on media, migration and technology and all their possible linkages and intersections. While significant attention goes to digital technologies and social media, the organizers do aim for a broad focus that also includes traditional media, and aspects of media production, organization, consumption, representation and policy.

Keynote speakers include Professor Payal Arora (Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands), Professor Huub Dijstelbloem (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands) and Professor Myria Georgiou (LSE, UK).

The program also includes a book launch and a public event, as well as two PhD masterclasses on the day before the conference.

There will be an ECREA DMM PhD Masterclass on finding your voice as a researcher, under the guidance of Prof. Myria Georgiou and Dr. Donya Alinejad. There will also be an ECREA International & Intercultural Communication (IIC) section PhD workshop with Dr. Kate Wright.

Organizing networks and support
The conference is organized by the European Communication Research & Education Association’s (ECREA) Diaspora, Migration & the Media (DMM) section in collaboration with the ECREA’s International & Intercultural Communication (IIC) section, the Young Scholars Network of ECREA (YECREA), the Netherlands-Flemish Communication Association (NeFCA) Intercultural Communication & Diversity working group. The conference also receives support from the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts (KVAB) and the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO).

Organizing committee

- Kevin Smets, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, ECREA DMM vice-chair
- Yazan Badran, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
- Paola Condemayta Soto, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
- Koen Leurs, Utrecht University, ECREA DMM chair
- Irati Agirreazkuenaga, University of the Basque Country, ECREA DMM vice-chair
- Melis Mevsimler, Utrecht University, ECREA DMM young scholars representative
- Leen d’Haenens, KU Leuven
- Alexander Dhoest, University of Antwerp
- Stijn Joye, Ghent University
- Elke Mahieu, Ghent University, ECREA IIC young scholars representative
- David Ongenaert, Ghent University, ECREA IIC young scholars representative

In 2019, Sage and Intellect have committed to continue their support of ECREA DMM section junior and senior scholar awards.

Future publication plans
Supported by ECREA DMM a new journal under the title of ‘Global Diaspora and Media’ will be established and published by Intellect. Section member Ola Ogunyemi will be the lead editor, and ECREA DMM co-chair Irati Agirreazkuenaga and ECREA Young scholar representative Melis Mevsimler will join the editorial board of the newly to be established journal.