

## **Mediating Migration and Security Issues: What Roles Can Mass Media Play?**

**Agboola, Abdulhameed Kayode<sup>1</sup> and Omale, Gloria Eneh<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Information and Media Technology, School of Information and Communication Technology, Federal University of Technology, Minna  
a.agboola@futminna.edu.ng

### **Abstract**

This paper expands the scope of studying mass media in relation to migration and its attendant security issues by addressing new forms of media deployment in the interest of regulating migration flows around the countries of the world. Beyond constructing mass media representations of minorities and migration processes, this paper argues that mass media have new roles to play when it comes to targeting potential migrants in preventing mobility across borders. The main sources of data for the study included a review of existing secondary data on information and communication technologies use. However, as a guiding steps, this paper proffers answers to the following questions, (a). In what ways can the mass media influence migration? (b). What efforts are mass media making in addressing potential migrants as audiences in order to discourage migration? (c). What roles do media play in dealing with migration as a security matter? (d). What forms of educative information are media providing to potential migrants about perceptions of unwanted migrants by their host countries? (e). Do mass media create awareness in migrants as to possible threats to the security of their intended migration countries? The paper concludes that the mass media have significant roles to play in discouraging and restraining illegal migration and its attendant security threats it poses to their intended host countries. The paper recommends that potential migrants should be informed and educated on proper modalities for migration and discourages them on illegal migration and its attendant dangers and threats to the security of intended host countries.

**Keywords:** Illegal migrants, mass media roles, media deployment, migration and security threats

### **Introduction**

Human migration is one of the greatest issues facing today's society. Driven by violent conflict, social strife, poverty, and political turmoil, migration creates questions about the distribution of jobs, space, and resources, the cost of education and health care, and the security of national borders. It also challenges preconceived notions of nationality and belonging, as well as community traditions and culture. Migration, though, is only a symptom of many problems plaguing societies around the world, and because of its significant social impacts, it will continue to be a concern at the forefront of international discussion.

In this millennium, not a single area of the world goes unaffected by human migration, nor has any nation gone untouched by flows of migration in the past. Once the hub of emigration, Europe is now facing one of the most dramatic episodes of immigration in modern history as millions of immigrants flee conflicts in the Middle East or search for economic opportunities outside of Africa. Across the Atlantic, the United States struggles with its own immigration issues, as it tries to secure its southern border against illegal migration from Latin America. The migration

crisis is a worldwide phenomenon and a megatrend of the 21st century, evidenced by the 244 million migrants who were accounted for in 2015 (United Nations, 2016, cited in Dzilenski, 2017).

Table 1: International Migrants, 1970 – 2015

**International migrants, 1970–2015**

Year	Number of migrants	Migrants as a % of world's population
1970	84,460,125	2.3%
1975	90,368,010	2.2%
1980	101,983,149	2.3%
1985	113,206,691	2.3%
1990	152,563,212	2.9%
1995	160,801,752	2.8%
2000	172,703,309	2.8%
2005	191,269,100	2.9%
2010	221,714,243	3.2%
2015	243,700,236	3.3%

Source: UN DESA, 2008 and 2015a.

Overall, the estimated number of international migrants has increased over the past four-and-a-half decades. The total estimated 244 million people living in a country other than their country of birth in 2015 is almost 100 million more than in 1990 (when it was 153 million), and over three times the estimated number in 1970 (84 million; see Table 1 above) (International Organisation for Migration, 2018, p.15). While the proportion of international migrants globally has increased over this period, it is evident that the vast majority of people continue to live in the country in which they were born. Most international migrants in 2015 (around 72%) were of working age (20 to 64 years of age), with a slight decrease in migrants aged less than 20 between 2000 and 2015 (17% to 15%), and a constant share (around 12%) of international migrants aged 65 years or more since 2000 (cited in International Organisation for Migration [IOM], 2018, p.15).

Unsurprisingly, global news media have focused heavily on the rapidly emerging flows of migration over the past decade, simultaneously chronicling global human migration and its wide-reaching consequences. The coverage of news media has driven migration to the forefront of regional, national, and international news on a daily basis. As a cornerstone to free and democratic societies around the world, journalism strives to educate citizens on current public affairs and issues in order to create informed participants and voters in public discussion (Aalberg, Aelst, and Curran, 2010). Journalism empowers communal dialogue by shaping out perception of events, as suggested by agenda setting and framing theories. The news media, and the journalists who construct it, are critical components to the public's understanding of the issues facing international

leaders, policymakers, and their own communities. The global migration crisis has dominated headlines as more and more journalists bear witness to the experiences of millions of migrants and of the hundreds of communities they are arriving in. For those living outside of destination countries, the media's construction of immigration issues is crucial to the public's understanding of these topics because the public's lack of firsthand experience.

A report by Threadgold (2009) highlighted that the print and broadcast media in the UK cover only a very narrow range of migration stories, primarily focusing on asylum seekers, refugees, illegal immigrants, and migrant workers. The media use a "template" to frame stories about migration. These frames generally conflate all migration with asylum, make the migrant the victim and the object and show migration as a problem. There is a focus on number and statistics (particularly on figures that imply a burden on scarce public resources), on political debates on immigration and on language that evokes the theme of "invasion." Stories on immigration are often unconsciously collocated in the news with reports of "foreign threats" (for instance, war, drugs, crime, or terrorism) implying a connection between the two. The media contributes to a perception that immigration is in perpetual crisis, which influences policy monitoring and reform. There is a symbiosis between media and policy: politicians, media, and academics provide the language for talking about immigration and thus set the agenda and frame the stories. A certain policy focus is transmitted from government to media. The stories that the media then produce feed back into policy discourse. In addition to driving policy, "media panics" also influence academic research on media coverage of migration. The result has been research that centres on print coverage of asylum seekers and refugees rather than on research across various media that provides a more comprehensive view of migration coverage in the UK (Threadgold, 2009).

However, the objectives of this paper is to argue for new roles that the mass media have to play when it comes to targeting potential migrants in preventing mobility across borders and it examines how national news media framed these narratives for their audiences. In order to achieve these objectives, this paper provides answers to the following guiding questions; In what ways can the mass media influence migration? What important roles do media play in the sense of addressing potential migrants as audiences in order to discourage migration? What roles do media play in dealing with migration as a security matter? What forms of educative information are media providing to potential migrants about perceptions of unwanted migrants by their host countries? Do mass media create awareness in migrants as to possible threats to the security of their intended migration countries? The paper concludes that the mass media have significant roles to play in discouraging and restraining illegal migration and its attendant security threats it poses to their intended host countries.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### *Social Responsibility Theory*

Scholars have highlighted that the idea that emerged from the Hutchins Commission report of 1947 formed what is known today as the Social Responsibility theory of the press. The hub of the Social Responsibility theory is that the media should be used for the public good. It emphasized the need for an independent press that scrutinizes other social institutions and provides objective, accurate news reports. Though it canvasses for the freedom of the press, such freedom, places

obligation on the press; it should be responsible to society for carrying out certain essential functions of mass communication in contemporary society (McQuail, 1987).

Social Responsibility theory calls on the media to be responsible for fostering productive and creative "Great Communities" (Baran and Davis, 2003, p.109), and it suggests that media should do this by prioritizing cultural pluralism- by becoming the voice of all the people - not just elite groups or groups that had dominated national, regional or local culture in the past. It also points out that the media, in carrying out their obligations, must adhere to the highest ethical standards.

McQuail (1987, p.16) summarized the basic principles of Social Responsibility Theory as follows:

1. To serve the political system by making information, discussion and consideration of public affairs generally accessible.
2. To inform the public to enable it to take self-determined action.
3. To protect the rights of the individual by acting as a watchdog over the government.
4. To serve the economic system; for instance, by bringing together buyers and sellers through the medium of advertising.
5. To provide "good" entertainment, whatever "good" may mean in the culture at any point in time.
6. To preserve its own financial autonomy in order not to become dependent on special interests and influences.

In a nutshell, social responsibility is ethics that guide any action, be it in media or other organizations that put an obligation towards environment, society, culture and economy. The media like any other sector should not harm, but should promote environment and socio-cultural aspects in relation to the economy of the place. Just exactly, the media is saddled with the responsibility of creating awareness about the rights of every migrants, both regular and non-regular migrants, in our society.

### **Mass Media and Theory of Migration**

Relating from reports of several research studies, Piotrowski (2013) mentioned that, the mass media, which can be defined as information spread by technological channels aimed at a large anonymous audience, have long been of interest to social scientists. Many studies have documented their influence on individual attitudes and behaviours. While mass media influences have been linked to other demographic behaviour, such as fertility limitation, less is known about their effect on migration. Media influences have both a structural and ideational component that affect migration directly by shaping the self-identity of consumers, and indirectly by providing new sources of information and options.

Theories of rural out-migration identify a range of determinants affecting an individual's desire to migrate, including economic, social, and cultural factors. Economic theories focus on market forces, and include neoclassical, human capital, and new economics of migration models. The neoclassical model highlights wage differentials between regions as a primary determinant of migration. It views migration as the result of a cost-benefit analysis made by individuals deciding where to move in order to maximize their expected lifetime earnings (Piotrowski, 2013).

Human capital models focus on skill differentials affecting productivity in urban versus rural labour markets. According to this view, migrants who are young, better educated, less risk averse, and more achievement-oriented are positively selected into migration. New economics of migration models describe migration as a response to absent or imperfect capital, securities, and futures markets. This perspective views migration as part of a joint strategy between migrants and rural farming households aimed at maximizing household utility through risk diversification and investment (Stark, 1991). Relative deprivation theory, a variant of the new economics of migration perspective, argues that household migration decisions are influenced by relative, as well as absolute, income considerations. Households that experience a perception of relative disadvantage vis-à-vis their peer group (due to inequalities in resource holdings) will be more likely to send migrants.

Network and cultural models describe social mechanisms that perpetuate migration, once started (Massey, 1987). Migrant networks connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin. Network ties develop that increase the likelihood of movement by lowering the costs and risks associated with migration and by increasing the expected net returns to migration (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino and Taylor, 1993). Migrants at destination represent important sources of social capital for prospective migrants, providing information about jobs, housing, and other opportunities. Over time, as the number of social ties between sending and receiving areas grows, more people migrate, and migration emerges as a mass phenomenon. Networks are maintained by an ongoing process of return migration, where migrants regularly go home for varying periods each year and settled migrants return to their communities of origin (Massey, 1987).

Cultural explanations of migration describe the diffusion of cultural artifacts from migration sending to receiving areas, and the development of normative and institutional changes that make migration a permanent feature of community life. Both are associated with the concept of “transnational social fields”, which suggests that values, behaviors, and attitudes from sending and receiving societies combine to create a new, largely autonomous social space that transcends national boundaries.

The diffusion perspective is associated with the notion of social remittances, which refers to ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving to sending communities. Social remittances represent a local level form of cultural diffusion emanating from migrants who return to live in or visit their community of origin. Social remittances also come from interchanges of letters, videos, cassettes, and telephone calls between migrants and non-migrants. Through exposure to social remittances, those living in sending communities begin to adopt features of foreign behaviors and lifestyles into their self-identity, including the desire to migrate.

Another perspective focuses on a “culture of migration,” which refers to the development of normative expectations in migration-sending communities that encourage migration (Kandel and Massey, 2002). In communities characterized by long-standing and high rates of migration, individuals begin to valorize foreign wage labor and its associated behaviors, attitudes, and lifestyles. As migration behavior extends throughout a community, it eventually becomes normative, and migration becomes a rite of passage into adulthood. Normative expectations put

considerable pressure on young people to migrate, and those not attempting it are seen as indolent, un-enterprising, or undesirable as marriage partners (cited in Piotrowski, 2013).

## **Methodology**

This discursive paper is based on content analysis of secondary library data. According to Asemah, Gubawu, Ekhareafo and Okpanachi (2012) content analysis is an analysis based on the manifest content of the mass media message. Wright (1986) describes content analysis as a research technique for the systematic classification and description of communication content according to certain, usually predetermined categories (Cited in Asemah *et al*, 2012). Ajala (1999) also defines content analysis as the systematic objective and quantitative procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information. Looking at the meaning of content analysis, it can be used in research project that seeks to describe and explain communication.

Therefore, this paper reviewed literature on Information and Communication Technologies use by migrants when they are in their host countries. The main sources of data for the study included a review of existing secondary data on information and communication technologies use by migrants to make deductions and inferences about ICTs use by migrants.

## **Result of the Findings**

### **Mass Media Influences on Migration**

Mass media, like social remittances, are another source of exposure to ideas and lifestyles that spread via diffusion, inducing ideational change in self-image. In poor countries, newspapers, radio programs, movies, and television shows are typically produced in cities or are imported from abroad (Barber and Axinn, 2004). They represent a significant source of urban or Western ideas, practices, and lifestyles that contrast sharply with rural vernacular culture. In developing regions newly exposed to outside influences, these ideas and images (like other forms of cultural diffusion) are especially powerful agents of social change that have an influence on local practices and self-concepts (Johnson, 2001).

For instance, movies and television programs glamorize consumerism and positively portray characters that experience social mobility and achievement. Poor rural farmers, who come in contact with images depicting lifestyles that differ considerably from their own, may begin to develop a sense of relative deprivation and a desire for modern amenities (Johnson, 2001). As a consequence, they develop attitudes favorable to migration, which they believe to be a means of alleviating their relative deprivation (Mai, 2005). Like the culture of migration, notions about the desirability of modern or urban lifestyles and amenities can come to dominate community norms.

In the event that an attitudinal change leads to actual migration, the media represents a direct behavioral influence. This is analogous to the neoclassical economic model of migration, whereby people move to areas where they expect higher earnings (or a better lifestyle or more amenities). Similar to information provided through a migrant network, the media can also induce direct behavioral changes by increasing knowledge about new opportunities. For example, a rural villager who learns of employment potential in a nearby city from reading a newspaper or from listening to the radio may migrate there in search of a specific position. Furthermore, it has been

suggested that television can play an important role in the pre-arrival acculturation of immigrants who view foreign media before arriving in a given country (Rumbaut, 1997).

Despite their similarities, the influence of mass media differs from other migration determinants in important ways. Although the media shapes cultural meanings and represents a source of information, it contrasts with social remittances or social network contacts. While the latter are transmitted between close social contacts, the former is usually disseminated in an impersonal way (Curran and Saguy, 2001). Another difference between media and other factors is that, unlike network and cultural determinants, the media does not necessarily develop as a consequence of expansion of migration streams.

Instead, much like educational or economic factors, the media can represent an influence that affects migration perceptions independent of the stage of migration development within a community. For instance, the building of a movie theatre near a rural village may attract media consumers, whose movie watching can encourage migration. However, it is also possible that migrants, through movement to areas with different media profiles, can develop a taste for forms of media that are not available in the migration sending region. Returning or visiting migrants may bring back and disseminate media technology (e.g. radios, television sets, newspapers), encouraging others to migrate. Also, media images and perspectives may become more salient and meaningful if they are similar to accounts of returning migrants (Curran and Saguy, 2001). Media influence, therefore, must be understood as a function of availability, ownership, and consumption.

In order for the media to impact behavior, some form of it must be available. In developing regions, the mix of available media types changes over time. It is likely that preferences for existing media types change to reflect the availability of new forms of media. For example, in the absence of other media types, inexpensive and technologically simple forms of media, such as newspaper or radio, are likely the preferred sources for news and information (although for the former, acceptance may depend on the literacy rate). As more sophisticated and visually appealing forms of media become available over time (such as television and movies), their popularity spreads and preferences for them develop.

Availability alone is not sufficient for media to change attitudes and behaviors. Only those who consume media by watching television, listening to the radio, or reading a newspaper can be affected by it. While consumption of media is usually linked to ownership, one need not own media technology in order to consume it. For instance, it is likely that those who are the first to own a new form of media technology, like a television set, attract groups of peers who themselves do not own the media, but are nonetheless eager to consume it and are therefore subject to its effects (Johnson, 2001 cited in Piotrowski, 2013).

### **Roles of Media in Discouraging Potential Migrants**

The prominence of migration as a public policy issue and newsworthy topic has perhaps never been more pronounced. Migration is increasingly seen as a high-priority policy issue by many governments, politicians and the broader public throughout the world. Its importance to economic prosperity, human development, and safety and security ensures that it will remain a top priority for the foreseeable future. This is becoming more pronounced at the national level as the focus on migration intensifies, but it is also evident at the international level. Incremental

advancements in international cooperation on migration have taken a further step with States committing to agree a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018.

Barely a day goes by without multiple media reports – whether in traditional or newer forms of media – focusing on aspects of migration, frequently on negative aspects. While this may reflect, in part, the changing nature of migration in certain regions of the world, it is important to be aware how media and news are constructed and produced – news reporting continues to place greater emphasis on “bad” news. Social media is widely acknowledged as a forum that provides little or no filter, with the consequence that there tends to be much greater emphasis on opinion than on facts and analysis. Amid the often polarized political, public and media discussions and debates on migration, evidence, knowledge and balanced analyses that encompass historical insights as well as strategic implications appear to have little space or traction. Nonetheless, such aspects continue to be critical to developing a better understanding of the various forms and manifestations of migration, as well as how best to enhance its opportunities and benefits and respond to the challenges that it can present (International Organization for Migration, 2018).

The meaning of irregular migration is not always clear as there is no universally accepted definition. It is still often used interchangeably with ‘illegal migration’ even though ‘illegal migration’ is increasingly restricted to cases of smuggling and trafficking of persons (Lopez, 2015). For the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), irregular migration is movement of people that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries.

Campaigns to reduce irregular migration generally occur in countries of origin, aimed at deterring migrants from leaving. Understanding the decisions to leave is therefore a key part of success. The assumption is that a lack of accurate information generates irrational and risky irregular migration behaviours. If migrants were informed of the proper conditions of entry, they would be deterred from unlawful migration. Information campaigns are not intended to stop migration, but rather to inform of the risks and dangers of irregular routes, smuggling or trafficking (Pécoud, 2010).

International migration and asylum seeking are complex phenomena depending on a number of factors and conditions – social, political and economic – which go beyond national borders and jurisdictions, and are highly dynamic and interactive. The mediatisation and politicisation of migration and asylum serves to produce simple black and white accounts of such complex phenomena, subjugated to dominant discourses on who belongs, who is the national ingroup and who are the ‘aliens’, the ‘outsiders’. What remains untold however and unexplained are the positives stories of migration and asylum (that do not make headlines) as well as the ways in which news are constructed through specific media routines that tend to ignore the perspective of migrants and refugees themselves, and which actually de facto exclude migrant journalists from the media industry (Triandafyllidou, 2017).

### **Roles of Media in Dealing with Migration as a Security Matter**

In recent years, international migration has made its way to the forefront of the security agendas of several states, particularly in Europe and North America. The perception of immigration as a threat to security has developed alongside the rapid increase in the number of



immigrants worldwide: while there were approximately 191 million persons living outside their countries of origin in 2005, by 2010 this number had increased to an estimated 214 million (IOM, 2010). In the most general sense of the term, security refers to the absence of threats. The traditional approach to international security has focused primarily on military concerns. From this perspective, the state is the referent object needing protection from threatening forces, particularly that of war (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010).

The concept of societal security primarily deals with the issue of collective identity. As explained by Ole Waever (1993), societal security “concerns the ability of a society to persist in its essential character under changing conditions and possible or actual threats.” In relation to international migration, it refers to the ways in which members of a state perceive their cultural, linguistic, religious, or national identity to be threatened by immigrants. From this perspective, the national values of the receiving country is the referent object under threat (Weiner, 1993). It is immigration in general, whether voluntary or involuntary, legal or illegal, that constitutes this threat, as long as the immigrants pose a challenge to the identity of the receiving state through their different language, culture, or religion (cited in Tallmeister, 2013).

The supposed danger of immigration to the societal security of a state is not an objective and universal threat, but rather a subjective threat, dependent on the ways in which the receiving state defines itself (Weiner, 1993). For instance, while some states may view multiculturalism as undesirable, other states may pride themselves on their cultural diversity.

Another way in which immigration has been argued to pose a threat to a state’s national interest is through its impact on the state’s economy. Immigration has, and will continue to have, a significant economic impact on both the receiving country and the country of origin. While immigration has economic advantages and disadvantages, the expansion of the definition of security to encompass the economic sector has brought increased attention to the economic challenges caused by immigration, and immigration has, as a result, been labeled as a security issue. It is economic migrants as well as refugees and asylum seekers that are perceived to threaten the economic security of a state. Labour migration can be argued to pose a threat to the economic security of both the sending and the receiving state. According to this argument, the emigration of highly skilled and qualified workers from developing countries in the global South to developed states in the global North results in a “brain drain” in the sending country, as well as undesirable economic consequences in the receiving country (Guild, 2009).

In addition to societal and economic security, internal security has also emerged as an aspect of security which is threatened by immigration. The notion of immigration as a threat to internal security has been present since the 1980s (Huysmans, 2000). As highlighted by Huysmans, the Schengen Agreement and Convention of Dublin connected immigration to terrorism, international crime, and border control (Huysmans, 2000). Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, immigration has featured prominently on the counter-terrorism agenda; governments have tightened immigration policies, linking immigration with terrorist activities (Spencer, 2008).

In the United States, immigration immediately became a matter of national security. President Bush quickly put forth a strategy to combat terrorism through immigration policy, and the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service was included in the newly established Department of Homeland Security (Spencer, 2008). Similarly, immigration has been connected

with terrorism, immigration has also been related to increased criminality, resulting in the perception that immigration is a threat to public security. The issue of whether or not immigration actually results in increased crime rates is, again, an issue of perception versus reality. While the public has become increasingly concerned about high crime rates intensified by immigration and the threat that immigrants pose to public order, these concerns are empirically unsound (Wang, 2012). Contrary to popular opinion, several studies on a number of states have found no strong correlation between immigration and criminality.

It cannot be denied that in some states, there has been a connection between increased immigration flows and increased crime rates. There is, indeed, a trend showing that cities and countries that have high crime rates tend to have a higher immigrant population. For instance, a study found that in 2001, “the proportion of the prison population born abroad in Spain was twenty-five times higher than the proportion of immigrants in the population” (Westbrook, 2010).

News on migration are gathered when something sensational and worth reporting happens. And this is usually something ‘bad’ related to migrants or migration. Coverage on migration is often dictated by the more general political agenda and by for instance upcoming election campaigns. Nonetheless there are several journalists who are concerned about the quality and even-handedness of their reporting who go beyond the political agenda to cover issues that they see as worth reporting because people want to know more about them. The issues reported often cover personalised, emotion-laden stories that can interest a wider public (stories that show the ‘human’ and ‘everyday’ aspect of migration such as families reunited, children excelling in school, people fleeing conflict and losing their spouse, parent or sibling in the process, or of course also stories of trafficking and prostitution). Such stories include stereotypical accounts of migrants in general and women migrants in particular. They tend to conform to three stereotypical representations of the migrant (woman) as victim, hero or threat. While such representations can be positive they tend to highlight the personal (and highly gendered) dimension at the expense of the structural factors behind migrant integration and participation in the destination country and the real life issues they face. They thus tend to act against the normalisation of migration and its mainstreaming in terms of welfare, employment or general political participation issues (Hennebry, William, Celis-Parra and Daley, 2017, cited in Triandafyllidou, 2017).

### **Mass Media Educative Information on Irregular Migrants in Host Countries.**

Research in communication is now focusing on a new emergent uses of media in relation to migration that have so far received little academic attention: media deployments for the purposes of preventing, stopping but also more generally regulating cross-border migration and mobility, through old and new communication technologies but also through media technologies that are aimed at surveillance, identification and authentication. All of these uses, it will be argued, importantly shape contemporary migration regimes and the ability of migrants and those who facilitate their mobility to negotiate them. What is required for a consideration of some of these uses is a reconceptualization of the concept of media, in order to free it from its common-sense implications of communication technologies and “content” circulated for the purpose of communication as texts, images and sound. It is such an understanding that by and large dominates the literature on media and migration. Yet, if we think of media instead in a wider sense as sign technologies that allow individuals and organizations to construct, filter, store and transmit representations of mobile bodies beyond mass communicative purposes, quite different media

practices, infrastructures and informational/representational interests around migration can become visible, as will be shown in the second part of this essay (Kosnick, 2014).

In the field of media and migration, I therefore suggest looking beyond what has been described above as the “standard fare” of dominant research interests and turning attention to several recent developments of media deployment in the interest of regulating migration. The first examples continue in a sense the “classical” concerns of media and migration research in that they discuss mass-media production intended to communicate particular “messages” concerning the dangers of migratory flows to particular audiences. However, the target audiences of these messages are not so much the lawful residents and citizens of destination countries but rather those deemed at risk of embarking on migration projects in transit countries and countries of origin. Both governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) acting on their behalf have started to use mass media to reach out to potential migrant audiences and discourage them from embarking on their journey. Media representations have thus become a factor with which to directly intervene in migration flows, by providing particular and often gendered narratives of danger and tragic failure with regard to border crossings, and by purporting to depict the harsh realities that await undocumented migrants in their destination country (Castel, 1993).

While such governmental initiatives have attracted some attention – not just among their primary intended target audiences, but also in mass-media reporting reaching audiences in “destination countries” – other, much more consequential uses of media technologies for the regulation of migratory movements across borders have thus far received even less critical attention among migration studies scholars. These forms of media use have to do not so much with the communicative politics of representation intended to influence minds, but rather with the informative politics of representation meant to gather data that can unambiguously establish the identity of border-crossing individuals and assess their level of desirability, legitimacy or “threat”. The contemporary policing of borders increasingly relies upon information technologies that mediate representations of bodies in order to build up databases and produce individual profiles used to manage the cross-border flow of people. Such uses of media are becoming more ubiquitous, forming part of both commercial and governance strategies of managing bodies and populations at the beginning of the 21st century (Horst, 2006).

In the past few years, governments and related agencies in Europe and the United States have developed new strategies to prevent potential migrants from trying to leave their places of origin in the first place. This is a “hearts and minds” approach in the sense that it forms part of a repertoire of new border-control measures that have direct communicative dimensions. State-funded media campaigns aiming to deter potential migrants in their countries of origin are proliferating, often with the help of NGOs. Study has shown a wide range of efforts by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to employ deterrence “information” campaigns in parts of Central and Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia and Central America (Kosnick, 2014).

The point of such campaigns is to convince potential migrants that it is better not to embark on the journey, as attempted in a television campaign that the Spanish government launched in Senegal in 2007. The TV campaign showed drastic images of washed-up male corpses along Spanish beaches, and a tearful African mother and father mourning the death of their sons, full of remorse for not having deterred their children from embarking on the journey. The famous

Senegalese singer Youssou N'Dour lent his voice to the campaign, telling potential migrants that they are “the future of Africa” and pleading with them not to leave (Kosnick, 2014).

Apart from TV ads, the Spanish government and IOM simultaneously started a broad campaign advertised in print magazines and on public buses in Senegal. Images on buses showed for example a young man holding a small child against the backdrop of the Senegalese flag, with a text below stating “it makes no sense”. Images largely focused on the grief of family members left behind and the intergenerational impact of young men leaving the continent (Kosnick, 2014).

Pictures in print magazines were of a more drastic nature, using images of capsized boats and dead bodies to illustrate the likely fate of those embarking on the journey across the Mediterranean Sea: “Don’t risk your life for nothing – you are the future of Africa.” Those who embark on the dangerous journey are likely to face death, the images announced, but the underlying narrative amounted to more than that. The dangers involved appear as naturally given: while the risk of death during the boat passage across the Mediterranean Sea has increased due to migrants having to resort to increasingly long routes in order to evade detection and forced return by border police and other state agents, the risk of death is attributed solely to the dangers of the sea and the ill-preparedness of migrants who enter overcrowded boats. The factors that propel Africans to risk their lives in order to seek a better future in Europe are not mentioned at all (Kosnick, 2014).

### **Mass Media Awareness Creation Campaigns in Migrants on Security Threats to Countries of Migration**

Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud (2007) hinted that information campaigns aimed at potential migrants in their countries of origin (and sometimes in transit countries) have been used by European states since the early 1990s (Cited in Oeppen, 2016). Information campaigns’ specific content and modes of delivery vary but normally include a combination of informing potential migrants about the procedural aspects of immigration/asylum in the destination country (including removals and deportations) and the risks of travelling through non-regularized channels, particularly the risks of being smuggled or trafficked. In theory, and according to the UNHCR’s guidance (2011), they should not be used to discourage people from seeking asylum where protection is needed, and should provide information about regularized migration routes where they exist. Information campaigns represent an interesting sub-section of migration management in the context of increasingly restrictive European migration regimes. It is hard to argue that providing information is detrimental to the potential migrant, especially if it purports to have the safety of the migrant as its priority; consequently, it is an area of migration management where migration policymakers can draw in NGOs and community organizations, as well as intra governmental partners such as Development Ministries, in ways that would be impossible for more control-orientated activities (Pécoud, 2010).

A number of practice-orientated reports provide guidelines on how to design and operate information campaigns (UNHCR, 2011). Browne (2015) provides a useful summary of what is thought to be best practice, including using multiple media techniques to convey the information in an engaging way, and targeting the whole community in recognition that family and social networks are often highly influential in shaping migration aspirations and decisions. However, it

is important to note that even those who promote information campaigns as an important migration management tool are not clear on how to evaluate what makes a successful campaign.

In addition, Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud (2007) mentioned that, the basic narrative of information campaigns aimed at discouraging migration is that, if potential migrants can be made aware of the risks, particularly the risks of travelling outside regularized channels (for example, with a smuggler), they will not migrate. Consequently, migration is represented as almost exclusively negative, with little chance of success for the migrants involved (Cited in Oeppen, 2016). Yet, clearly, people do continue to migrate, and take great bodily and financial risks to do so. Does this mean that the information campaigns have failed to reach the right target audiences? Perhaps, however, as suggested by a number of empirical studies, is that migrants are already aware of the risks outlined by information campaigns but decide, for various reasons, to migrate anyway (Alpes and Sørensen, 2015).

In some cases, it is easy to see why, despite knowledge of the risks, people would leave: for example, those fleeing war and persecution, for whom the alternative is an even higher risk of death or injury, or those to whom the poet Warsan Shire refers in her poem, Home: ‘You have to understand, that no one puts their children in a boat, unless the water is safer than the land’. However, this does not explain why people from ‘relatively safe’ countries also take on the risks of irregular migration. Empirical work with migrants and potential migrants does shed some light on this.

For example, Carling and Hernández-Carretero’s (2011) research with Senegalese ‘boat migrants’ suggests that a) potential migrants may consider themselves already experts in the potential risks, especially if they have sea-faring experience; b) they may distrust the campaigns, especially if they suspect that these are driven by the goal of preventing migration; and c) they may decide that the improved opportunities available – if successful – justify the risk.

Meanwhile, Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud (2007) discussed the existence of ‘migration cultures’, whereby migration becomes a normative act, to be undertaken whatever the risks, similar to Monsutti’s (2007) findings regarding the social practice of migration as a ‘rite of passage’ for young Afghan men. They suggest that the ‘objective knowledge’ provided by information campaigns cannot counteract the ‘migratory disposition’: the idea that migration is a way to escape the ‘stagnation’ of everyday life (Cited in Oeppen, 2016).

Another example, the ‘Migration Aware’ campaign, implemented in the second largest city in Nigeria (Ibadan), was funded by the European Union with a budget of 200.000 euros (Van Bommel, 2015). The aim of this campaign was to ‘fill the information gap that prevents potential migrants from making an informed decision on whether to embark’ by the distribution of information ‘on the realities of the journey, the destination country and alternatives to irregular migration.’ The project was not intended to ‘actively dissuade migration but to provide objective information without prejudices’ (Baker and Massey, 2009). One way of conveying this message was by printing posters that illustrate the risks and dangers of irregular migration.

Van Bommel (2015) highlighted that, potential migrants are warned about engaging with people smugglers, the risk of drowning or dying in the desert or even the possibility of being attacked by pirates while at sea. Apart from this printed material, a ‘drama-documentary’ called

'Dead End: Illegal Migration was shown in universities and community halls. The issues addressed in this film are the risks and dangers of the journey, but also the hardship one should be prepared for once Europe has been reached. Examples are disappearing in the criminal circuit, low-paid jobs and potential deportation whilst in Europe. Interestingly enough, the disseminated information largely consists of fearful imagery while no mention of legal channels or suggestions for staying put are given even if this was one of the objectives (Van Bommel, 2015).

## Conclusions

In conclusion, the scope of the mass media has gone beyond the conventional media conceptualisation, thus with the advent of new media of communication channels in migration networks, and the virtual infrastructure of media-rich, synchronous and relatively open contacts is actively transforming the nature of these migration networks and thereby facilitating migration. Interpersonal ties in migrant networks are reducing the costs and risks of migration through the exchange of information, resources and assistance. Migration network theory assumes that people go to places where they already have contacts. However, with the internet and all other social media that it encompasses, it is easier to revive or make new contacts, providing access to an extensive pool of informal information and thus widening the horizons for aspiring migrants.

## Recommendations

The paper proffers the following recommendations; that the mass media should:

- 1) informed and educated potential migrants on proper modalities for migration and discourages them on illegal migration and its attendant dangers and threats to the security of intended host countries.
- 2) use the informative tone that describes the facts and the general news writing style that emphasizes recent events in order to report about immigration.
- 3) include voices in their articles that are mainly from official sources such as the government.
- 4) frame the news about immigration in terms of "illegal" and "threat".

## References

- Aalberg, T., Aelst, P. and Curran, J. (2010). Media systems and the political information environment: A crossnational comparison. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 15(3), 255-271.
- Ajala, V. (2002). *Scholarly Writing Guide for Researchers*. Ibadan, Maybest Publishers.
- Alpes, J. and Sørensen, N. (2015). Migration risk campaigns are based on wrong assumptions. *DIIS Policy Brief* May 2015. Danish Institute for International Studies.
- Asemah, E.S., Gujbawu, N., Elchaneafu, D.O. & Okpanachi, R.A. (2012). *Research Methods and Procedures in Mass Communication*. Jos: Great Picture Press.
- Barber, J.S. and Axinn, W.G. (2004). New Ideas and Fertility Limitation: The Role of Mass Media. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 66, 1180–1200.
- Baker, B. and Massey, S. (2009) *Irregular Migration. Filling the Information Gap*. Coventry: University of Coventry.

- Baran, S. J. and Davis D. K. (2003). *Mass communication theory: Foundations, ferment, and future*. Belmont (USA): Thomas-Wardworth.
- Browne, E. (2015). *Impact of Communication Campaigns to Deter Irregular Migration*. Applied Knowledge Services.  
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/.../HQ1248.pdf>
- Carling, J. and Hernández-Carretero, M. (2011). Protecting Europe and protecting migrants? Strategies for managing unauthorised migration from Africa. *The British Journal of Politics and international relations*, 13(1), 42-58.
- Dzilenski, E. (2017). Crossing the Border: The Framing of Global Migration by National News Media. *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 8(1), 14-22. Retrieved from  
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/57f4/aac50520462c6e6044d4491c67398cd26793.pdf>
- Curran, S. and Saguy, A.C. (2001). Migration and Cultural Change: A Role for Gender and Social Networks? *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 2(3), 54-77.
- Guild, E. (2009). *Security and Migration in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hennebry, J., Williams, K., Celis-Parra, D. and Daley, R. (2017). *Mis/Representations of Women Migrant Workers in the Media: A Critical Solution*, UN Women. Retrieved from  
<http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2017/mis-representation-of-women-migrant-workers-in-the-media-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3112>
- Horst, H. (2006). "The Blessings and Burdens of Communication: Cell Phones in Jamaican Transnational Social Fields." *Global Networks* 6(2), 143-159. Retrieved from DOI: 10.1111/j.1471-0374.2006.00138.x
- Huysmans, J. (2000). "The European Union and the Securitization of Migration." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 39(5), 751-777.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2018). *World Migration Report 2018*. The UN Migration Agency, IOM: Geneva. Retrieved from  
[https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2018_en.pdf)
- Johnson, K. (2001). Media and Social Change: The Modernizing Influences of Television in Rural India. *Media, Culture and Society*. 2001; 23, 147-169.
- Kandel, W. & Massey, D. (2002). The Culture of Migration: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis. *Social Forces*, 80(3), 981-1004.
- Kosnick, K. (2014). Mediating Migration: New Roles for (Mass) Media. *The French Journal of Media Studies*. Para 1-37. Retrieved from <https://journals.openedition.org/inmedia/761>
- Lopez, L.E. (2015). *Early warning models for irregular migration* (GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report 1241). Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham. Retrieved from <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=1241>

- Mai, N. (2005). The Albanian Diaspora-in-the-Making: Media, Migration, and Social Exclusion. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(3), 543–561.
- McQuail, D. (1987). *Mass communication theory: An introduction*. London: SAGE publications.
- Massey, D.S. (1987). Understanding Mexican Migration to the United States. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 92(6), 1372–1403.
- Massey, D. S., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A. and Taylor, J. E. (1993). Theories of international migration: A review and appraisal. *Population and Development Review*, 431-466.
- Oeppen, C. (2016). Leaving Afghanistan! Are you Sure? European Efforts to Deter Potential Migrants Through Information Campaigns, *Human Geography*, 9(2), 57-68.
- Pécoud, A. (2010). ‘Informing Migrants to Manage Migration? An Analysis of IOM’s Information Campaigns’. In M. Geiger & A. Pécoud (Eds.) *The Politics of International Migration Management*. Palgrave Macmillan. Retrieved from <http://www.freelists.org/archives/colombiamigra/062013/pdf4LDT5DyS9G.pdf#page=194>
- Peoples, C. and Vaughan-Williams, N. (2010). *Critical Security Studies: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Piotrowski, M. (2013). Mass Media and Rural Out-Migration in the Context of Social Change: Evidence from Nepal. *International Migration*, 51(3), 169-193. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3724225/>  
doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2435.2010.00627.x
- Spencer, A. (2008). “Linking Immigrants and Terrorists: The Use of Immigration as an Anti-Terror Policy.” *The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution* 8(1), 1-24.
- Stark, O. (1991). *The Migration of Labor*. New York, NY: Basil Blackwell.
- Tallmeister, J. (2013). Is Immigration a Threat to Security? E-International Relations Students. Retrieved from <https://www.e-ir.info/2013/08/24/is-immigration-a-threat-to-security/>
- Threadgold, T. (2009). *The Media and Migration in the United Kingdom, 199 to 2009*. Transatlantic council on Migration. A Project of the Migration Policy Institute. Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/TCM-UKMedia.pdf>
- Triandafyllidou, A. (2017) ‘Media Coverage on Migration: Promoting a Balanced Reporting’, in McAuliffe, M. and M. Klein Solomon (Conveners) (2017) *Ideas to Inform International Cooperation on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, IOM: Geneva.
- UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *UNHCR Global Trends 2011: A Year of Crises*, 18 June 2012. Retrieved from <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4fdecce2.html>



- Van Bommel, S. (2015). *Informing potential migrants about the risks of unauthorized migration: The perception of risk among prospective migrants in Ghana*. Thesis for the Master of International Relations: University of Amsterdam
- Waever, O. (1993). "Societal Security: The Concept." In: Waever, O., B. Buzan, M. Kelstrup and P. Lemaitre, eds. *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*. London: Pinter Publishers, pp.17-40.
- Wang, X. (2012). "Undocumented Immigrants as Perceived Criminal Threat: A Test of the Minority Threat Perspective." *Criminology* 50(3), 743-776.
- Weiner, M. (1993). "Security, Stability, and International Migration." *International Security* 17(3), 91-126.
- Westbrook, R. (2010). "Immigration and Crime in Catalonia, Spain: What's the Connection? Towards a Theory on Immigrant Crime." Claremont-US Undergraduate Research Conference on the European Union: Vol 2010, Article 10, 101-119. Retrieved from <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/urceu/vol2010/iss1/10/>.