

Gender, Migration, and the Media

Edited by Myria Georgiou

New York: Routledge, 2013. 154 pp.

ISBN: 9781138844902.

A Book Review by

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Migration and the patterns of migration have been the focus of research across various disciplines and areas in the social sciences. Both in Canada and internationally, the Metropolis projects have spawned an impressive and thorough array of detailed studies on immigration and its impact in various aspects, which were seen as policy priorities based on research conducted in the previous decades. In the Canadian Metropolis project these were: citizenship, social, cultural, and civic integration; economic and labour market integration; family, children, and youth; housing and neighbourhoods; justice, policing, and security; and welcoming communities: the role of host communities in attracting, integrating, and retaining newcomers and minorities. This focus on migration and diversity with an emphasis on policy driven research mirrors the objectives of the International Metropolis project, a global and international project, which is very broad in its geographic scope with partners from North America, Asia-Pacific, Europe, as well as Africa and Latin America. The gendered processes of migration and experiences of gendered migration have also been the focus of study by multiple scholars in Canada and elsewhere.

Gender, Migration, and the Media combines and examines the gendered processes of migration through the lens of media in a unique and compelling way. This book is an edited collection by Myria Georgiou with chapters from ten scholars. It is a reprint of a special edition of the journal of *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, volume 35, issue 5. This volume provides a very interesting European perspective and combines theoretical as well as empirical approaches and studies, with contributions spanning many countries in the European continent. It enhances our understanding of this area of research by giving us a new and fresh perspective based on research across Europe, adding to the body of knowledge on this area, which may be located in other parts of the world. Interestingly, all the authors and contributors are academics in various parts of Europe with the exception of one author, who is from the United States.

The book is organized into two sections. After the introduction by Myria Georgiou, there are two parts. Part one is titled “Conceptual and Policy Interrogations” and part two is titled “Engendered Diasporic Mediascapes”. Myria Georgiou, in the introduction, poses some very relevant questions after contextualizing and setting the tone for the book and outlines the scope of the book. She talks about the feminization of migration and the discourse around

multiculturalism and control of borders. The editor Georgiou then goes on to ask some thought provoking questions about the role of media in discussing these issues. She also asks very pertinently if “alternative and community media challenge hegemonic discourse of ethnic and gender stratification” (2013: 2). She further interrogates media use in the context of marginalization and exclusion at the social and political levels. Myria Georgiou states that answering such questions means that the study of media has to involve understanding media production consumption and representation.

In part one, the chapters focus on presenting various conceptual and theoretical frames of reference, which help to locate the way gendered migration and media play out. In chapter two, Sarikakis presents the silencing and immobilization of migrants through a loss of communication rights in the context of criminalization of migration laws. Sarikakis further adds that this has to do with the securitization as well as the feminization of migration. Titley’s contribution looks at the transnational media practices of Chinese and Nigerian migrants in Ireland, examining it in the context of integration governance narrative, which is managed through “domopolitics” or a themed securitized politics of home. The concept of social capital and its use by Turkish women in Netherlands and Flanders in Belgium as related to media use was the focus of chapter four by Christine Ogan and Leen d’Haenens. Chapter five by Isabelle Rigoni rounds off the conceptual discussion in part one with a very relevant and useful discussion about intersectionality as a conceptual tool when examining cultural production in ethnic media.

In the second part of the book, the chapters provided a range of insights into media consumption and use. Chapter six, written by the editor Myria Georgiou, is a study of soap opera consumption by transnational Arab women in London and examines the concepts of critical and cultural proximity. Chapter seven by Miyase Christensen examines the online communication and media use of Turkish women in Stockholm, locating this in a discussion of identity belonging and transnationalism. Chapter eight by Olga Guedes Bailey examines African women’s (both refugee and immigrant women) sense of agency and belonging through a collective forum that they organized, and this was in the context of the UK. The final chapter in the book, by Asli Tunc and Ariana Ferentinou, looks at Turkey and Greek Orthodox minority women and their perception of their identities due to the impact of satellite broadcasting.

While the chapters in the book collectively provide a deep and variegated understanding of media use and consumption of diasporic women in multiple spaces in the European continent, the organization of the book into the two parts and the sequence of chapters under each section were somewhat puzzling. Thus, for instance, in at least two of the four chapters in part one, which was on conceptual and policy interrogations, the theoretical discussions were grounded in specific contexts of particular empirical studies. Similarly, in the second half titled “Engendered Diasporic Mediascapes”, which has four empirical chapters, the theoretical or conceptual discussions were also present. In other words, the decision to separate chapters and place them in the two sections seemed somewhat arbitrary. A reader could almost be led to believe that it might be an artificial separation, as the book is a reproduction of the special issue of a journal. Also, in the second half, the chapter on African immigrant women’s agency in the context of the United Kingdom was a chapter that stood out in terms of the content being very different from all the rest, since it was about the development of a grassroots community organization. The chapter on intersectionality, which is a strong chapter linking theoretical and conceptual foundation, could have been placed right in the beginning after the introduction, since it is seen as a central conceptual tool as well as an overarching theoretical frame to study gender migration and media.

Nevertheless, the strengths of this volume lie in the fact that almost all the chapters combine complex theoretical analyses and strong empirical analyses based on a range of methodological orientations. Hence, collectively the chapters make a huge and very important contribution to the study of gender migration and media, and the book has clearly carved a niche for itself in the body of knowledge in this area.

This book can definitely be a useful addition to a special topics course in a graduate program in communication and media studies, providing a range of different studies conducted in the European context, and providing a balance between both conceptual and empirical discussions. In sum, the editor Myria Georgiou and the chapter contributors have made a very useful and interesting contribution in this volume.

About the Reviewer

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Citing this book review:

Jaya, Peruvemba S. (2015). [Review of the book *Gender, migration, and the media*]. *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition*, 8(2), 145-147.