

Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations

Special issue January 2012

Diasporic Identities, Media, Public Space

The Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations will launch a special issue dedicated to the theme: 'Diasporic Identities, Media, Public Space.' This issue is scheduled to appear in January 2012.

Background

The special issue 'Diasporic Identities, Media, Public Space' will gather studies approaching the diasporic phenomenon in relation to mediatization practices and the configuration of public sphere. The issue seeks to explore various visibility patterns of diasporic identities and any complementary theme is considered relevant as long as it allows insight into various aspects of this problem.

Recent analyses on diaspora underline the importance the media, the internet and communication technologies at large have in the formation and manifestation of transnational communities (Tsagarousianou, R., 2004; Aksoy, A., Robins, K., 2000; Diminescu, D., Pasquier, D., 2010). Mass media and the internet redefine the imagery of distance and proximity with the country of origin by integrating daily practices from that country in a 'here and now' perspective. Recent studies discuss the migrant's condition as an actor in multiple communities, affiliation networks and public cultures. The concept of 'diaspora' is enriched with a variety of readings in the context of globalization, transnational mobility and expansion of new communication technologies (Brubaker, R., 2005). Diaspora signifies communities and individuals who settle temporarily in a country of destination, whose mobility has professional, economic or cultural reasons, who participate in a variety of 'parallel and competing networks' (Giorgiou, M., 2006), many of which connected with the country of origin.

The main questions around which this issue is built refer to the media construction of migrant's image and the highlight of emerging practices of diasporic identity manifestation: are various forms of migration and, subsequently, various types of diasporic actors mediatized as 'distant' phenomena (at best retrieved in a media-political agenda) or, on the contrary, do the media put forward various nuanced images about the *diasporic experience*, by approaching this theme as a *public issue*? We are interested in analyses of the way national, transnational, ethnic media cast light on *diasporic practices and identities* so that they become relevant as public issues.

Transnational mobility influences the identitarian sensibility of the migrant; it also contributes to the development of *cosmopolitan* attitudes and practices in various daily interactions. Individuals' banal cosmopolitanism can in time trigger communitarian imagery that breaks away from local cultural paradigms as individuals accept alternative modernization paths. Therefore, how do the media build migrants' 'worlds'? In this perspective, it is highly interesting to look into the mediation practices the media use to move from 'narrations' and 'cases' to the construction of a type of social actor – for instance, an actor with critical competence, a party to various systems.

Furthermore, how is mediation built between diasporic actors and the national public, respectively ‘us’ and ‘them’? L. Chouliaraki (2008) refers to the capacity of media discourse to create *cosmopolitan sensibility* in the public, who reflect on the *significance* of the event, rather than simply ascertain facts.

Special attention is given to the phenomenon of intra-EU migration (Balabanova, E., Balch, A., 2010) or ‘the new diaspora’, a conventional term used in media discourse in post-communist countries to refer to the migration of the workforce, following the liberalization of movement of labor in the EU. In these countries workforce migration has become a permanent theme on the media and political agenda. The theme of Romanians abroad, for instance, is constantly approached in the governmental and electoral political discourse, legitimizing public policies and institutional reconfigurations. Consequently, ‘features’, ‘policies’ and ‘discourses’ appear - various ‘communication contracts’ and governing logics in approaching the diasporic phenomenon. How is ‘moral distance’ from the diasporic community symbolically negotiated depending on debate topics and strategic interests of participants in the debate? Are social actors of intra-EU migration ‘globally’ mediatized as an emerging social category or do they gain visibility as distinct identities, social actors with biographies, trajectories and distinctive reflexivity?

Other research tracks are: the way in which mobility and workforce occupation policies at European or national level are liable to become themes for public debate (through media or institutional discourse) and the *frames* by means of which such themes are open to public debate. How does the migrant’s experience become a reference point, a relevant case or an argument invoked by various public actors in order to propose new themes on the public agenda? Do they start from the migrant’s case or, more generally, from the mobility phenomenon, to discuss themes related to legal or institutional, local or European frameworks? How do the media reflect these debates?

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Diasporic spaces, media representations, public issues;
- Media discourse, ‘moral distance’, cosmopolitanism;
- Migration, europeanization and European public sphere;
- Mobility, labor force and public policy debates;
- Migration, diasporic identities, media frames;
- Migration and political communication: branding nations, cultural identities, diaspora policies ;
- Migration, mobility, new media;
- Diasporas, collective memory and history;
- Ethnic media and transnational media reporting on diasporas.

Guidelines for authors

The studies, written either in English or in French, will be sent to the coordinators of the special issue by **November 15, 2011**. Articles will be submitted to blind peer review; participants will be notified about results and possible revision by **December, 15**. The final version of the papers should be sent by **January 15, 2012**. Authors will receive final notifications by **January 22, 2012**.

All contributions will be submitted in electronic Word format (Times New Roman, 12, 1½ lines); all graphics or maps will be sent in .jpeg or .tiff format; tables and figures will be numbered. References will be given in the text, in brackets (author, year, page). The abstract, of around 200 words, will be followed by 4-6 key words. Articles should have between 35,000-50,000 characters (with spaces).

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About the Journal

The Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations (<http://journalofcommunication.ro>) is a an interdisciplinary, academic journal which publishes scholarly contributions from the broad area of communication studies, from public relations research, as well as from other related fields. RJCPR is indexed in two international research databases: EBSCO and ProQuest, and it is included in the B+ category in the ranking system of the Romanian Council of Higher Education Scientific Research (CNCSIS). All articles published in the Journal are submitted to blind peer review. The Journal is published by *comunicare.ro Publishing House* (<http://www.editura.comunicare.ro>).