

## Radio and the anti-geopolitical ear: imaginative geographies of a Syrian family's migration to Europe on BBC Radio 4

Alice Watson

To cite this article: Alice Watson (2024) Radio and the anti-geopolitical ear: imaginative geographies of a Syrian family's migration to Europe on BBC Radio 4, *Social & Cultural Geography*, 25:5, 775-794, DOI: [10.1080/14649365.2023.2165700](https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2023.2165700)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2023.2165700>



© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 11 Jan 2023.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



Article views: 995



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)



Citing articles: 2 [View citing articles](#)

RESEARCH ARTICLE



# Radio and the anti-geopolitical ear: imaginative geographies of a Syrian family's migration to Europe on BBC Radio 4

Alice Watson

School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

## ABSTRACT

This paper examines imaginative geographies of forced migration and refugee settlement in a BBC radio series that follows and gives voice to a Syrian family as they journey to Europe. Originally broadcast on BBC Radio 4 between 2015 and 2017, the episodes have since been repackaged as a podcast on BBC Sounds. The paper answers Horton's (2019) call for greater engagement with media and popular culture by foregrounding radio as an understudied medium with the capacity to shape listeners' geographical imaginations. It explores how this series, presented by Manveen Rana, broke new ground through its journalistic-ethnographic form, eyewitness reporting and amplification of refugee voices, and analyses how two imaginative geographies of journey and settlement are constructed through sounds and the spoken word. The paper concludes by theorising radio as a slow medium and demonstrating how Rana's journalism pushes beyond Toal's (1996, p. 171) 'anti-geopolitical eye' to evidence an anti-geopolitical ear: that is to say, Rana encourages a way of listening to Europe's migration 'crisis' that disrupts discursive framings of refugees as 'victims' or 'threats' by recasting the family as tangible and relatable human beings. This finding has significant implications for media reporting on migration and scholarship on journalistic storytelling and the construction of geographical imaginations.

## RESUMEN

Este artículo examina geografías imaginativas de la migración forzada y el asentamiento de refugiados en una serie de radio de la BBC que sigue y da voz a una familia siria en su viaje a Europa. Transmitidos originalmente en la BBC Radio 4 entre 2015 y 2017, los episodios se han vuelto a empaquetar como un podcast en BBC Sounds. El artículo responde al llamado de Horton (2019) a un mayor compromiso con los medios y la cultura popular al destacar la radio como un medio poco estudiado con la capacidad de dar forma a la imaginación geográfica de los oyentes. Explora cómo esta serie, presentada por Manveen Rana, abrió nuevos horizontes a través de su forma periodístico-etnográfica, informes de testigos oculares y amplificación de las voces de los refugiados, y analiza

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 26 April 2022

Accepted 30 November 2022

## KEYWORDS

'radio'; 'imaginative geographies'; 'listening'; 'migration'; 'refugees'; 'anti-geopolitical ear'

## PALABRAS CLAVE

'Radio'; 'Geografías imaginativas'; 'Escuchar'; 'Migración'; 'Refugiados'; 'Oído Anti Geopolítico'

## MOTS CLEFS

radio; géographie imaginaire; écoute; migration; réfugiés; écoute anti-géopolitique

**CONTACT** Alice Watson  [alice.watson@ouce.ox.ac.uk](mailto:alice.watson@ouce.ox.ac.uk)  School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

cómo se construyen dos geografías imaginativas de viaje y asentamiento a través de sonidos y la palabra hablada. El artículo concluye teorizando la radio como un medio lento y demostrando cómo el periodismo de Rana va más allá del 'ojo anti geopolítico' de Toal (1996, p. 171) para evidenciar un oído anti geopolítico: es decir, Rana fomenta una forma de escuchar a la 'crisis' migratoria de Europa que interrumpe los marcos discursivos de los refugiados como 'víctimas' o 'amenazas' al reformular a la familia como seres humanos tangibles e identificables. Este hallazgo tiene implicaciones significativas para los reportajes de los medios sobre la migración y la erudición sobre la narración periodística y la construcción de imaginaciones geográficas.

#### RÉSUMÉ

Cet article étudie la géographie imaginaire de la migration forcée et de la réinstallation des réfugiés dans une série radiophonique de la BBC qui suit et donne la parole à une famille syrienne pendant leur voyage vers l'Europe. Diffusés pour commencer sur la Radio 4 de la BBC entre 2015 et 2017, les épisodes ont été regroupés en un podcast disponible sur BBC Sounds. L'article répond à la demande d'Horton (2019) pour plus d'engagements avec les médias et la culture populaire avec une analyse de la radio qui est un médium insuffisamment recherché et qui a la capacité de former l'imagination géographique de ses auditeurs. Il explore la façon innovante par laquelle cette série, présentée par Manveen Rana, a ouvert de nouveaux horizons avec son format « ethno-journalistique », son témoignage radiophonique sur le terrain, et l'amplification des voix des réfugiés, et dissèque la construction des deux géographies imaginaires du voyage et de la réinstallation par les sons et la parole. En conclusion, l'article avance la théorie que la radio est un médium lent et démontre comment le journalisme de Rana progresse au-delà de la « vision anti-géopolitique » de Toal (1996, p. 171) pour mettre en évidence une écoute anti-géopolitique: c'est-à-dire, Rana favorise une manière d'écouter la « crise » migratoire européenne qui déraille les discours stigmatisants sur les réfugiés en tant que « victimes » ou « menaces », car elle présente la perspective d'une famille composée d'êtres humains tangibles et familiers. Ces observations ont des implications importantes pour la couverture médiatique de la migration ainsi que pour les recherches sur la narration journalistique et l'imagination géographique.

## Introduction: Situating radio in popular culture and geography

*Hundreds of thousands of Syrians are on the move, fleeing the conflict in their country. This is the story of the Dhnie family, who after living in Jordan as refugees for two years, decided to seek a new life in Europe ...*

These are the words of journalist, Manveen Rana, as she introduces 'A New Life in Europe: The Dhnie Family', a 25-part documentary broadcast on BBC Radio 4's lunchtime news and current affairs programme, the *World At One* (WATO), between October 2015 and April 2017. Rana's introduction foregrounds the series' striking editorial focus on the Dhnie family as they travel from Turkey to Germany. Contrary to media coverage which frames migrants and refugees as 'helpless victims' or 'spectral threats' (Crawley et al., 2016), Rana characterises the Dhnie family as human beings with the potential to reappear in audiences' geographical imaginations as 'people like us' (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017). Listeners become well acquainted with the family through ground-level reportage that records the granularity of migration from the perspective of refugees who are named and given a voice. Rana invites listeners to hear their story, imagine the spaces and places they pass through, and reflect on the lived experience of Europe's migration 'crisis'.

The series is a compelling case study through which to respond to Horton's (2019) call for greater geographical engagement with media and popular culture. Whilst Radio 4 might not initially seem an obvious choice – given the station's stereotypical connotations of highbrow programming and middle-class appeal – the size of its audience confirms its status in British broadcasting, media, and culture. Radio 4 is the UK's pre-eminent 'speech-based news, current affairs, and factual network' and commands the largest listenership for a non-music radio station with 10.6 million people tuning in weekly (BBC Radio 4, 2017; BBC, 2020). WATO is one of Radio 4's four daily news programmes, alongside the morning *Today*, afternoon *PM*, and evening *The World Tonight*, and enjoys a weekly audience of 3.5 million listeners (BBC, 2016). The series has also been repackaged as a podcast on the audio streaming platform, BBC Sounds, which reaches a weekly audience of 3.7 million (BBC Media Centre, 2021). The podcast includes an additional 26th episode, originally broadcast on Radio 4's *Archive Hour* in May 2017, in which Rana revisits the Dhnie family after the WATO series had aired. These listenership statistics frame Radio 4 and its podcasts as popular sites of knowledge production that warrant attention and analysis by geographers. Examining Rana's series matters, not only because Radio 4 is a popular space of broadcasting that claims to produce journalism in the public interest but because the imaginative geographies it articulates have the power to shape how listeners understand, imagine, and engage in the world.

Although Pinkerton and Dodds (2009, p. 16) recognise that listening to Radio 4 'is an important daily ritual for many citizens in the United Kingdom', the station and its broadcasting are largely absent from geographical scholarship. Radio as a medium has received relatively little attention compared with visual media, such as television, film, photography, video games, graphic novels, and social media (Rose, 2016; Dittmer & Bos, 2019). This is not to discount research on sound (Gallagher & Prior, 2014; Gallagher et al., 2017), music (Smith, 1997), and radio geopolitics (Pinkerton, 2008; Weir, 2014), but rather to suggest that geographers have privileged the visual. This is surprising given radio is an

inherently geographical medium: crossing spaces, connecting and giving meaning to people and place, occupying spaces of broadcasting and reception, and shaping listeners' geographical imaginations (Pinkerton, 2014). It is also perplexing given the medium's ubiquity and enduring popularity. As Peters (2018, p. 4) observes, 'radio has been sorely absent, with audio-visual communications – television and increasingly the internet – dominating examinations. Radio – old, outdated almost – seems less worthy of our attention'.

Similarly, no geographers have examined representations of migration in radio broadcasts, focusing instead on print and photographic journalism. Whilst media coverage of Europe's migration 'crisis' is diverse and place/time specific, studies have highlighted how European news articles and images promote fear and hostility, and undermine moral proximity between citizens and refugees (Holmes & Castañeda, 2016; Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017). They demonstrate how migrants and refugees are portrayed in binary terms – as 'victims' or 'villains', 'entrepreneurs' or 'threats' – and situated in narratives that erase histories and geographies of empire, conflict and displacement (Mayblin & Turner, 2021). The erasure of refugee voices further obscures the identities of those being represented and reproduces Orientalist tropes of difference and otherness (Malkki, 1996; Georgiou, 2018). Whilst recent work has explored how refugees have used technologies, like smartphones, to self-articulate their experiences (Godin & Doná, 2016; Gillespie et al., 2018), representations of migration in mainstream radio broadcasting remain underexplored.

This paper therefore joins efforts to amplify radio, sounds and listening in geography. It connects the medium of radio with Said's (1978) theoretical concept of imaginative geographies, defined as 'representations of other places, of peoples and landscapes, cultures and natures, that articulate the desires, fantasies, and fears of their authors' (Gregory, 2009, pp. 369–370). Said (1978, p. 55) coins the term in *Orientalism* to capture how cultural media, such as novels, photographs, and travelogues, imbue space with meaning and 'figurative and imaginative value'. This paper argues that radio, too, participates in the 'universal practice' (Said, 1978, p. 54) of representing spaces, places, and people through sounds and voices. It therefore challenges the discipline's 'characteristically visual appropriation of the world' (Gregory, 1994, p. 16) by engaging with audible popular culture.

The category 'radio' obscures different genres and programme formats with the capacity to shape geographical imaginations in interesting and divergent ways. Although beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth distinguishing between music and speech radio, and noting that within the latter, there are a plethora of broadcasting formats, styles and tones (Crisell, 1994). Radio 4 exemplifies this diversity with magazine-style programmes like *Woman's Hour*, dramas such as *The Archers*, and interactive call-ins such as *Any Answers?*. Radio invites geographers to reflect on temporal rhythms of broadcasting (from daily to annually), the positioning of listeners (as either active or passive), and its consumption in particular spatialities (from the kitchen to the car). This paper focuses on a news series broadcast episodically on Radio 4's WATO and explores its production of imaginative geographies of migration.

It begins by detailing the methodology before proceeding through a three-step analysis that: first, reflects on the series' production together with its journalistic-ethnographic form and eyewitness reporting, which underpin Rana's ground-level, serialised account of migration; second, examines an immersive, place-based imaginative geography of the

family's fragmented, multi-directional journey to Europe, which invites listeners to reflect on lived experiences of displacement; and third, explores an intimate and personal imaginative geography of the family's settlement in Germany, which offers a nuanced account of seeking asylum post the 'spectacle' of arrival. The paper details how these two imaginative geographies – of journey and settlement – are constructed through sounds and the spoken word, and have the potential to re-cast the family as human beings with voices and stories to tell. It also reflects briefly on Rana's retrospective use of Twitter to publicise the broadcasts and animate imaginaries through photos of the family. These three strands of analysis come together in the conclusion, which theorises radio as a slow medium and demonstrates how Rana's journalism pushes beyond the ocularcentricism of Toal's (1996, p. 171) 'anti-geopolitical eye' to evidence an anti-geopolitical ear.

## Methodology

Two sources of primary data underpin the paper: namely, a semi-structured interview and 26 radio broadcasts. An interview was conducted with Rana to explore how the series was commissioned, recorded and produced. Muller (2012, p. 3) describes organisations in and outside of the media as 'black boxes' because internal processes, actors and ways of working are often concealed. Dittmer and Bos (2019, p. 63) agree noting the site of production remains underdeveloped in geography and popular geopolitics due to 'difficulties in contacting and communicating with media and cultural institutions'. This paper responds to calls to examine media production by interviewing Rana as the producer and presenter of the series.

26 radio broadcasts form a second source of primary data. The 25 episodes broadcast on WATO vary between 6 and 14 minutes in length, while the 26th episode from *Archive Hour* is 56 minutes in length. Audio poses a challenge to geographers researching radio as a textual and affective medium. The ephemeral nature of audio, invisible and ungraspable relative to material texts, perhaps explains why sound is comparatively neglected in geography (Gallagher et al., 2017). Downloading, digitally recording and transcribing each episode from BBC Sounds ensured broadcasts could be listened to and read simultaneously, enabling a detailed exploration of language, imagery and structure, as well as sounds, pauses and tone. This involved coding for particular words and themes, voices and locations, working back and forth between the recordings and written transcripts. Inspired by Toal's (1996) analysis of Maggie O'Kane's journalism from Bosnia in the 1990s, I paid close attention to Rana's discursive framing of migration, her positionality, and the people and places cited in broadcasts.

## The production and serialisation of radio journalism

The documentary's production and serialisation highlights its distinctiveness within news journalism. Unlike 'parachute journalists' who visit a location fleetingly, Rana travels with the family over a five-week period from Turkey to Germany, and later revisits them to explore their settlement in Frankfurt; a notable blind spot in media coverage which privileges 'spectacles' of departure and arrival (De Genova, 2013). Rana's positionality as a female journalist prompts reflection on the broader field of women in journalism, stretching from Martha Gellhorn – 'the grande dame of women war reporters' (Peretz, 2002) – to Christiane Amanpour, famously described by US President Bill Clinton as 'the

voice of humanity' (Peretz, 2002). This lineage situates Rana's broadcasting within a history of women reporting from 'the frontline' and is important context given how influential one woman's journalism – namely, Maggie O'Kane's – has been to theoretical developments in critical and feminist geopolitics (Toal, 1996; Hyndman, 2015). Rana's positionality as a British, BBC journalist also flags her privileged position relative to the Dhnies who are unable to cross borders freely. Yet her editorial decision to walk alongside the family contrasts with news coverage predicated on fleeting encounters and short reports.

The conception and structure of the series illustrate its innovation within BBC News. Rana admits getting her idea commissioned was challenging, not least because of the BBC's initial intention to use its network of foreign correspondents to meet the family at various points along their route. Rana's preference to travel alongside the family therefore marked a significant departure from conventional newsgathering. The series' design was also 'a leap of faith' and 'different way of doing news' as WATO had 'never done anything like this before' (Interview, 17.12.17). The episodic structure, which embedded Rana's standalone reports within the 45-minute news programme, means listeners were forced to tune in repeatedly for updates and narrative development. Serialisation, whilst common in drama, is unusual in news, facilitating rich characterisation over time and encouraging audiences 'to follow it, to want to know what happens to them next, and to care' (Interview, 17.12.17). Here, Rana recognises the power of broadcasting to elicit people's potential to care for others (Chouliaraki, 2013), which was arguably realised in the audience response WATO received through letters, social media engagement, and offers of donation and refuge. Although its repackaging as a podcast creates opportunities for listening on-demand, its original broadcast on Radio 4 represents an innovative way of producing news journalism and engaging audiences' capacities to care.

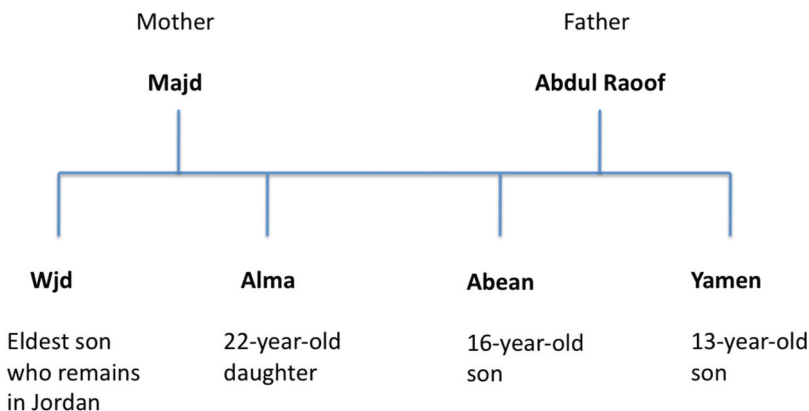
In her interview, Rana reveals she gathered recordings 'in the field' before returning to London to produce the series. Rather than sending reports back for broadcast in 'real time', Rana retrospectively curated the documentary for WATO. Throughout, Rana oscillates between an embedded participant and omniscient narrator reflecting later in the studio. The tone and inflection of Rana's voice makes clear to listeners when she is speaking to the family in situ or adding commentary, contextual reference points, and personal reflections recorded subsequently in London.<sup>1</sup> This mix of ambient sounds, spoken dialogue and recorded narration evokes the 'immediacy' of migration while simultaneously guiding listeners through Rana's thoughts and reflections.

Rana explains she constructed the series from 'hours of raw material' (Interview, 17.12.17). Editing and narration are powerful acts that determine who is seen or heard and in what capacity. The Dhnies' lack of input in this process reinforces Rana's power to mediate their experiences, which is not to negate the series' authenticity, but to acknowledge the partiality and selectivity of recordings. Imaginative geographies in the broadcasts must therefore be understood as 'spaces of constructed (in)visibility' (Gregory, 2009, p. 371) that do not reflect reality, but produce 'what will count as reality' (Butler, 2009, p. xiii). Rana affirms her authority when she admits, 'I know what the highlights are, I know what matters' (Interview, 17.12.17). However, the organic nature of production is captured in her admission that 'the editorial process was actually very audio-led' (Interview, 17.12.17); a reversal of production practices that insert audio into fully formed scripts. Rather, 'this was much more about just listening to the audio and letting that shape the

piece' (Interview, 17.12.17) hanging script, commentary and narration around recordings. Whilst it does not detract from Rana's editorial power, it hints at her desire to let the family's voices and experiences lead the narrative.

Rana's immersion in the Dhnie's everyday experiences of migration prompts reflection on the similarities and differences between ethnography and journalism. Like anthropologists, journalists 'in the field' engage with multiple actors, triangulate sources, traverse multiple scales of analysis, and embark on clandestine journeys. Observing these overlaps during anthropological research in the Euro-African borderlands led Andersson (2017, p. 98) to conclude 'the reporter had turned ethnographer and vice versa'. Rana's decision to travel with the family resonates with mobile ethnographies that challenge a 'sedentarist metaphysics' and illustrate the dynamics of decision-making across space and time (Malkki, 1992, p.3; Schapendonk & Steel, 2014). Whilst Andersson (2017) distinguishes between the journalistic quest for a 'scoop' and ethnographic pursuit of understanding, the two are not mutually exclusive, as researchers seek to tread new ground by filling a research 'gap' and journalists seek to inform and educate audiences. This is reflected in Rana's ambition to enhance 'understanding of the migrant crisis [...] digging in and getting to grips with what's happening' (Interview, 17.12.17), and speaks to the BBC's Reithian mission to inform, educate and entertain. This is not to suggest academia and journalism are the same, but rather to reflect on the documentary's striking journalistic-ethnographic form, which uses the experiences of a family to illuminate the geopolitics of migration, and reflects an awareness that 'the lives of others are worthy storytelling material' (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017, p. 1174).

Rana never discloses in the broadcasts how she met or recruited the family. She explains in my interview that the family's eldest son, Wjd – who remained in Jordan to complete his education – was her translator on a previous BBC assignment in Lebanon and mentioned his family's intention to journey to Europe. Whilst concealing their recruitment from listeners masks an important dimension of the production process, Rana reveals to me that she had not met the rest of the family before recording them. Remarkably, the documentary's opening scene in Izmir therefore mirrors the listener's first encounter with the Dhnie (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Author's tree diagram of the Dhnie family.



## Imaginative geographies of the journey to Europe

In the first 15 broadcasts, Rana constructs an immersive, place-based imaginative geography of the family's journey from Turkey to Germany. Re-scaling migration through the eyes of refugees reverses the media's 'view from Europe', which frames migration as a problem to be solved (Crawley et al., 2018, p. 2). Rana resists this state-centric perspective by privileging the human scale, recognising the power of personal stories to capture audience attention and counter geopolitical scriptings of Europe's migration 'crisis'. Although the documentary begins in Turkey, the family's journey began when they fled Daraa in Syria prior to settling in Jordan. The series therefore opens at a transitional stage when the family has decided to end their protracted displacement and travel to Europe.

Contrary to listener expectations of continuous mobility, the family's journey is punctuated by periods of waiting. Sitting in Izmir train station surrounded by their luggage, 16-year-old Abean describes a lived reality of stasis, noting 'we are still waiting for the smugglers'. Waiting is a recurring theme and rather than editing out these periods of immobility, Rana presents a nuanced soundscape that juxtaposes migration with inertia. Editorially, it provides her with an opportunity to enquire about the family's reasons for migrating. Abean, who is fluent in English, interprets for his parents and his translations overlay them speaking Arabic: 'They are saying that their life is over in Syria, there is no future for who is staying there. It's a war zone now, there is no more education or study and there is no more safety for people inside there. You might die any minute'. This emphasis on a lack of education resonates with daughter Alma who reveals, 'if I have the opportunity to study, I'm gonna do anything actually. This is why I am here, risking my life, to complete university, have a job, see my life'. Although their onward migration from Jordan blurs neat distinctions between migrants and refugees, Alma emphasises the mortal risks of doing so in the absence of safe and legal migration pathways. The family's middle-class status increases their capability to migrate while Alma's desire to study and 'see life' reinforces her agency and aspirations (De Haas, 2011). Onward migration does not undermine their refugee status, but captures a self-determination to rebuild their lives where they have the greatest opportunity to do so.

Imaginative geographies of the family's journey to Europe are first animated by soundscapes of smuggling, which frame migration as a complex web of power-relations that dictates who can move, how and when. Rana offers an insight into the economics of smuggling noting that each family member has been asked to pay \$1,200 for a boat from Turkey to Greece and given paper codes as a financial insurance policy:

*Rather than paying the smuggler directly, the money is kept in trust with the middleman at what's known locally as the insurance office. When the family arrives in Greece, they call the office and give them their secret code to confirm that they've arrived. At which point the insurance office will release the money to the smuggler.*

Smuggling is represented as an organised business model that operates between a smuggler, middleman, and refugee. Whilst airwaves are filled with tropes of smugglers as exploitative 'villains' who prey on vulnerable 'victims' (Crawley et al., 2018), Rana examines smuggling through the eyes of the family who see them as necessary service providers. She adopts a ground-level, eyewitness perspective, documenting their preparations and observing how smuggling is embedded in the local economy and

landscape. Listeners hear the family wrapping their money and passports in clingfilm and learn from Rana that businesses ‘sell everything you could possibly need’; confirming Crawley et al.’s (2018, p. 86) analysis that smuggling is ‘highly visible in the towns, cities, and villages along the main transit routes’. Rana renders this geography ‘visible’ for listeners through imagery and place-based sounds that invite them to imagine Izmir in their mind’s eye.

To overcome Rana’s absence from the sea crossing, Abean uses his phone to record the family’s boat journey and update Rana on their progress: ‘Sending voice message because we don’t want anyone to hear us. We’re on the move . . .’. His voice notes compensate for Rana’s absence which, although unsurprising given the ethics of journalistic safety, offers a stark reminder that borders are gateways for some but barriers to others (Rumford, 2008). Rana juxtaposes his recordings with omniscient narration:

**Rana:** *‘The messages were short and muffled, as his phone had been sealed in preparation for the sea, as he explained . . .’*

**Abean:** ‘I don’t know if you can understand me, maybe because I’m talking through a balloon?’

**Rana:** *‘He has a point. The last message arrived at six forty am. Their location showed them at sea, not far off the Turkish coast . . .’*

Abean’s messages are immersive, amplified by sounds of the engine and passengers praying, and encourage listeners to ‘suspend disbelief – to imagine that they are in the place where the recording was made’ (Gallagher & Prior, 2014, p. 275). Rana’s ominous declaration, ‘After that, nothing’, adds to a sonic atmosphere of unease and she later learns their boat was turned back by the Greek coastguard.

Contrary to media coverage that presents migration as a linear and continuous movement of people towards Europe (Mainwaring & Brigden, 2016), the family’s journey is punctuated by numerous false starts, changes of direction, and temporary emplacement. Three days after arriving in Bodrum for another attempt, they discover there is no boat and, having spent all their money, are forced to sleep on the street. Listeners hear the family taking bus rides to different locations in Turkey, making plans to walk, rather than sail, to Greece, and call smugglers who emerge as critical gatekeepers to mainland Europe:

**Rana:** *‘After three weeks of continually trying to get to Greece, tensions are running high, whilst morale is plummeting’.*

**Alma:** ‘I am very, very tired’.

**Abean:** ‘Disappointed’.

**Rana:** ‘Disappointed, yeah?’

**Alma:** ‘I lost my hope. Lost everything’.

Unlike journalism that silences refugees, the family articulates their thoughts and feelings, which encourages listeners to share in their emotional, as well as physical, journey.

In the following episode, a jubilant message from Abean marks an unexpected change in fortune: 'We're in \*expletive\* Greece!'. The bleeped out exclamation prompts self-irony from Rana who quips, '*Turns out, it's a sort of elation that can't quite be contained in Radio 4 appropriate language*'. Abean's update is accompanied by map locations and a selfie, which Rana retrospectively tweeted on the day of broadcast (Figure 2).

Although not straightforward examples of citizen journalism due to their mediated positioning in WATO, the inclusion of Abean's selfie and audio recordings highlight room for self-representation within BBC broadcasting. Photos help publicise the series and engage audiences, and also reveal interesting overlaps between radio and social media, creating a mixed-media experience for listeners who can use images as visual prompts to their geographical imaginations.

The selfie marks an important shift in the series from soundscapes of sea to land crossings. In Samos, Rana finds the family asleep on the harbour and describes Yamen's red jumper adorned with the logo, 'Belvedere Primary School, Shrewsbury'. The juxtaposition is unsettling, as Rana reflects: '*it's odd to think a child sitting in Shropshire must have worn it once [...] now, it's the only thing that kept Yamen warm through the night*'. This observation illustrates how Rana mobilises an 'anti-geopolitical eye' (Toal, 1996, p. 171), a way of seeing and style of reporting that subverts geopolitical scriptings of migration by



**Figure 2.** Photo taken by Abean and tweeted by Rana.

focusing on and personalising refugees. Toal's (1996, p. 182) concept is based on O'Kane's newspaper reports from Bosnia, which challenge geopolitical discourses of separation and distance by writing 'not about an 'over there' but about a [...] 'here and now'. Rana mirrors O'Kane's 'ground-level travelling eye' (Toal, 1996, p. 175) which scrambles distinctions between 'us' and 'them', and prompts reflection on 'our' entanglement with refugees. This ability to establish a 'moral proximity' (Toal, 1996, p. 175) is evidenced in Rana's broadcasts from Europe's internal land borders:

We're walking across a really dusty field. There's one man with a torch and we're just running to catch up with him. My god, there are little kids as well. These children are really tired and thirsty. One of them is clinging on to an old water bottle dragging all their belongings with them [...] It's pitch black, we're going through a bit of forest now, the only bit of light is a couple of phones, but everyone's batteries are running low ...

Her breathless narration as they walk through Greece towards Macedonia is accompanied by sounds of crickets chirping, which evoke a sense of place. The pronoun 'we' signals Rana's identification with the family, while references to darkness and phone light reinforce how refugees are forced to move covertly. Like O'Kane, Rana draws attention to women and children, countering media narratives that privilege single men. She adopts an empathetic positionality, observing children 'having their nappies changed – they're that young. And it's [...] twelve-thirty at night. And they look hungry and tired'. Highlighting the banality of a nappy change collapses distance by invoking the intimate and familiar, and exposes the difficulties of completing rituals of daily life on the move. It similarly emphasises the ordinariness, rather than the exceptionality, of refugees (Hyndman, 2007). Geopolitical discourses have been critiqued for framing women and children as passive and vulnerable (Dalby, 1994), but Rana documents gendered experiences to illustrate how women encounter and negotiate different challenges. This gender-sensitive gaze – and ear – unsettles disembodied scriptings of migration whilst avoiding constructions of women as disempowered victims.

Imaginariness of Europe as a safe haven are undermined by soundscapes of exploitation that reinforce the securitisation of migration. At the Greece/Macedonia border, Rana records 'a riot' between refugees and police, and uses short staccato sentences to convey heightened drama:

They're forcing their way through, they're just charging ... across. They've broken down the barricades and all the tents in front of the police van have gone down [...] all you can see is the dust cloud from ... this stampede of Syrian refugees just marching across [...] there's an enormous tide of them now ... there's no stopping it.

Dynamic verbs construct a sonic atmosphere of chaos, tension and pressure, amplified by cheers and whistles that transport listeners imaginatively to the border. Although Rana uses the water metaphor 'tide' perhaps uncritically, she goes on to expose the brutality of police 'beating people with batons and shields', which frames Europe as an unwelcoming space of violence and confrontation. Like O'Kane, Rana privileges the human 'category of experience' and a 'low-flying empiricism' (Toal, 1996, p. 178), which enacts a feminist geopolitics by privileging people, rather than states, as units of analysis (Hyndman, 2015). The personal, rather than geopolitical, is the register through which migration is recorded, subverting state-centric narratives by exposing the corporeal effects of European border practices.

Rana's ethnographic journalism reveals the cost of crossing continents. She suggests the journey 'has become all about endurance' as the family arrive in Serbia and are forced to queue at night for papers. Abean reveals it is 'boring, as always, waiting' as Rana describes the scene in front of her:

There are also long lines of people waiting to charge their phones [. . .] nobody has slept much for the last few nights. And they are already anxious about Hungary, the next step in the journey. The whole tent shakes every time a coach arrives with more people to register, which seems to happen every twenty minutes throughout the night. There are babies crying all around us and people are ill and coughing after the dust storms in Macedonia. Everyone is on edge. And everyone seems to be arguing.

Embedded alongside the family, Rana is able to connect with them interpersonally and shares Abean's feelings of exhaustion and weariness:

**Abean:** 'I'm losing it, literally, I'm losing it'.

**Rana:** 'I found that, I felt like I was hallucinating at one point yesterday'.

**Abean:** 'I think that was a true test about how long can human beings stay awake. I think at the end people were starting to be paralysed, they can't move their fingers, their hands [. . .]'.

**Rana:** '*After five weeks of travelling, the journey has taken quite a physical toll on the whole family. Apart from the sleep deprivation, everyone has lost weight. They're badly sunburned and 16-year-old Abean, who's been responsible for much of the organisation, is alarmed to find his hair turning grey.*

Whilst emphasising the physical impact of displacement risks reproducing tropes of vulnerability and victimhood, Rana skilfully strikes a balance between showcasing the challenges of migration and the Dhnies' determination and resilience to circumnavigate the state and reach their destination. After four hours of queuing, the family receive their papers and spend the night travelling by bus to the Serbian capital. Rana notes this is 'the fourth night in a row and the sixth in a week without a bed' and, although the bus is warm, it provides temporary comfort as it 'spits them out into the centre of Belgrade'.

The final episodes before Germany document the family's progress along the Balkan route from Serbia to Hungary and Austria. Rana leaves the family to cross the Serbia/Hungary border and flags unequal hierarchies of citizenship and mobility: '*As a British citizen, I have to walk back and pass through official border controls*'. Shortly she receives a message from Abean saying they have been detained in a Hungarian camp. Gazing through 'wire fences', Rana observes 'rows of tents' and an eerie silence. Images texted from Abean enable Rana to see inside the camp, a 'gloomy and bare' interior with 'metal bed frames'. But soon after Rana updates listeners on the family's incarceration, Abean reveals they have been transported to a detention centre to be fingerprinted. Again, Rana subverts state-centric narratives by reporting on the geopolitics of Europe's migration policy from the family's perspective. In reference to the Dublin regulation which dictates that asylum seekers should remain in the first European country they enter, she notes fingerprinting is 'exactly what they feared, and it increases their chances of being returned to Hungary if they're refused asylum elsewhere'. On being released, however, they

consider themselves lucky to be able to board a train to Austria and Germany, their final destination.

### Imaginative geographies of 'a new life' in Germany

An intimate and personal imaginative geography of the family's settlement in Germany is constructed in the final 12 broadcasts which shift in focus to explore the experience of claiming asylum in Europe. Refugee settlement receives little media attention compared with borders, camps and maritime search and rescue efforts, which produce a visual economy of humanitarian crisis and emergency (Giannakopoulos, 2016). Rana challenges this trend by recording the family as they forge a 'new life' and adjust to European customs, laws and norms. In her interview, Rana reveals it was a deliberate decision to revisit the family in Frankfurt and continue following their story when 'the headlines stopped' and 'cameras packed up' (Interview, 17.12.17).

Waiting is central to the family's experiences in Germany. After five weeks on the move, the Dhnies are housed in a sports hall in Frankfurt and Abean vocalises the uncertainty surrounding the timeframe and outcome of their asylum and housing application:

All we have to do is just to wait now, in a very comfortable place. Tomorrow . . . it may be after tomorrow, it may be after a week, they'll move us to apartment . . . say for a while, for a month, maybe more, till they move us to a house. We're done. We want to live happy now.

Abean's testimony captures a sense of limbo as the family await decisions and 'life to begin' (Hynes, 2009, p. 110). Refugees are stripped of agency as their future place of homemaking is determined by local authorities, which Hynes (2009, p. 115) suggests reflects 'policy-imposed liminality'. Unequal relations of power are similarly reflected in the temporary spaces chosen to house refugees. Although living in a sports hall poses challenges, Rana re-frames the family's protracted displacement as 'agency-in-waiting' (Ehrkamp, 2017, p. 819). Majd is so disillusioned with pre-packaged meals she has taken to buying her own ingredients, whilst Abean declares, 'I went by myself to a school. I tried to talk to the Principal'. These acts of self-sufficiency offer a striking counterpoint to media framings of refugees as passive and without agency.

Rana records a rarely heard account of a refugee family's relocation. After three months of waiting, Alma's excitement is palpable, 'we can't wait to see it [. . .] I wish, I hope . . . we are dreaming!', whilst Abean imagines 'a real apartment [. . .] a bed where I can sleep without hurting every muscle in my body'. However, their dreams are dashed on arrival. Listeners hear German volunteers greet the family, 'Now you're safe . . . Now it's a new house', together with the Dhnies' growing disappointment at being allocated a single room and shared kitchen in university accommodation. Rana's skilful commentary illustrates how refugees are expected to perform particular roles: *'The volunteers had probably been expecting a group of grateful, relieved refugees and, after three months of living on a crowded basketball court, the family had been expecting a real home. Both are left disappointed'*. Mutual disappointment stems from competing expectations and, by recording this encounter, Rana demonstrates how refugees are required to 'enact particular scripts' (Hyndman, 2010, p. 454). The Dhnies' unwillingness to perform the 'grateful refugee' produces disappointment among volunteers who are unable to fulfil their role as caregivers (Schwöbel-Patel & Ozkaramanli, 2017). Majd admits, 'I don't . . . feeling

anything', whilst Alma reflects, 'This is good for single men, not for families [...] it's hell'. Simplistic expectations of thankfulness are undermined by the scope of the series which enables listeners to, in Rana's words, 'understand why it was disappointing' (Interview, 17.12.17). Instead, the broadcasts offer a nuanced account of settlement and hospitality that unsettles tropes of refugees as passive, grateful recipients.

This audible atmosphere of disappointment is swiftly replaced by a euphoric portrait of the family settling into a one bedroom flat rented from their German friends, Michael and Paula. Listeners are encouraged to imagine its interior as Alma describes the living room sofas on which her parents and brothers sleep, and their own spacious kitchen. Majd reveals, 'I'm very happy here', and slips into German to emphasise her appreciation, 'my kitchen, mein küchschén'. Rana perceptively observes, '*a fixed address at last has brought with it further signs of permanence, rooting the family into German life*', and tweeted photos of their flat prior to broadcast (Figure 3).

Despite an audible shift towards hope and stability, the series challenges neat distinctions between an 'old' and 'new' life by referencing transnational connections with Syria. The family's eldest son Wjd visits Frankfurt on a week's visa and brings a laptop which enables them to watch footage of their former home. Wjd reflects: 'we are from a ... middle class family, we ... had everything we wanted. I used to go to a good university, my sister as well. My brothers went to very good schools and we had several houses, we used to go on vacations ... every now and then ... we were happy'. The family's past socio-economic status invites Radio 4 listeners to relate to them as 'people like us'. However, memories provoke divergent views between parents and children, and recall how perceptions of and attachments to 'home' can differ between first and second



Figure 3. Rana's tweet depicting the family in their new flat.

generation migrants (Boccagni, 2017). Alma acknowledges, 'there is a memory in Syria', but reasons, 'sometimes we have to forget our memories and start thinking about our futures'. Her pragmatism resonates with Abean who complicates territorially rooted belonging: 'this silly idea of belonging to this piece of land and being happy in it [...] without anything useful – that does not work'. Their responses contrast with father Abdul Raouf who insists, 'my roots are there, can't live elsewhere'. These differing views scramble straightforward definitions of 'home' and 'belonging', and evidence how radio can create space for nuanced, intergenerational conversations.

This potential for radio journalism to expand the scope of debate around migration is realised when Wjd reflects on what it means to be a refugee:

You don't know what a refugee is because you've never been a refugee and [...] it's not easy to leave your house in the middle of the night sometimes, lose everything you had. Not only the things that you loved but sometimes the people you loved. Suddenly you live in a different country, and you take handouts while you were working and had your ... life. It's ... not easy. I don't think anyone can understand being a refugee. No matter what we explain.

The format of radio means Wjd appears to address listeners directly and prompts reflection on 'our' comparative privilege as European citizens not faced by sudden statelessness. He challenges perceptions of migration as a choice and hints at a sense of shame driven by reliance on 'handouts' and the generosity of others. Whilst media representations often explore how Europeans perceive refugees, Rana records the family's self-perceptions of becoming refugees, challenging coverage that reduces refugees to 'bare humanity' by enabling the family to share their feelings and reflections (Malkki, 1996, p. 390).

Just as Wjd explores what it means to be a refugee, Abean juxtaposes life in Syria with Frankfurt:

I'm seeing my life progressing right now - better than what I saw in Syria. Like, after the war started, you don't think for next week, you think only for the next hour. Cause you have no idea if you will stay alive for the next day. But here, you can think what you will do. Like for next month I will start swimming course, I'm going to the library to get a book to read.

Abean's precarity in Syria contrasts with his newfound freedom in Germany. These banal observations about swimming and reading collapse imaginaries of 'us' and 'them' and encourage listeners to identify with Abean through shared hobbies and interests. The narrative space of a longform documentary creates opportunities for self-expression that flesh out refugees as people with biographies, dreams, and aspirations (De Haas, 2011).

By contrast, settlement in Frankfurt renders Abdul Raouf immobile and mute as he imprisons himself in the flat and is forced to communicate through his children. Abdul Raouf's inability and unwillingness to speak German slowly isolates him from his family and community, as Rana explains:

*Now that Abdul Raouf doesn't go to German classes anymore, he doesn't have much reason to leave the flat. He gets lost if he goes out alone, so now he spends most of the day lying across the couch in the kitchen, chain-smoking and staring out of the skylight like a caged bird. He hasn't adjusted to German society as well as the rest of the family, but this is the first time that it's really mattered.*



Rana reflects on the geopolitics of refugee settlement from the perspective of Abdul Raouf. The conditionality that the family's residency permit will only be renewed if they learn German and adapt to local customs adds weight to his decision to remain at home. Abdul Raouf's despondency contrasts with Yemen's future-orientated outlook: 'me and Abean we can [...] guide the future [...] But there's no time for him'. Listeners similarly hear Abean losing patience, 'me, I'm adapting with the German culture. I'm accepting it, I'm taking it and I'm leaving my old culture'. Challenges of integration therefore appear age dependent, as the children are more willing and able to adapt and learn a new language; differences perhaps amplified by varying responses to post-traumatic stress.

The strain of settling in Europe is reinforced by the breakdown of Majd and Abdul Raouf's marriage. Listeners hear the couple arguing in Arabic as both feel isolated, frustrated and left behind. This audible discontent is verified by Majd who confesses, 'I'm not happy because I don't have anything here, I don't live my personal life, I totally devoted to my children'. In response, Rana reflects, '*in securing their children's future in Germany, it seems Majd and her husband might have lost sight of their own*', and later confirms they have formally separated. Although listeners are left with hope and optimism for the children, the documentary ends on an anxious note for their parents. Rana asks Abdul Raouf what he misses most and Abean translates his reply: 'He missed everything; his friends ... the land ... his house ... the working ... his environment, like his society, he missed everything. And he wants to die there'. Memories of Syria overshadow his 'new life' in Germany and echo Sayad's (1999) 'double absence' among migrants who feel geographically absent and psychological distant from 'host' societies. This final scene reinforces the emotional and psychological challenges of displacement as listeners hear Majd crying in the background. Abean's closing words, 'she doesn't know if she's laughing or crying', confirm that although the family's journey to Europe may be over, significant challenges remain on European shores.

## **Conclusion: Radio and the anti-geopolitical ear**

This paper has engaged in a three-step analysis that explores Radio 4's '*A New Life in Europe: The Dhnje Family*', and its construction of imaginative geographies of forced migration and refugee settlement. The paper challenges the ocularcentrism of geographical enquiry by foregrounding radio as an understudied space of knowledge production. It shares Horton's (2019) concern that geography has tended to overlook – or perhaps, not tune into – large swathes of popular culture, privileging visual media and ways of seeing over audio media and ways of listening. Studying radio journalism is therefore part of the effort to redress this imbalance and explore the 'affecting, life-changing, identity-defining, power-laden geographies' produced through sound (Horton, 2019, p. 265).

Analysis of an interview and 26 broadcasts demonstrates that Rana's radio journalism has striking echoes of O'Kane's reportage from Bosnia. She adopts a similar 'anti-geopolitical eye' (Toal, 1996, p. 171) that witnesses a story first-hand and works to establish a moral proximity between listeners and refugees; focuses on ordinary people who are personalised, named, and given a voice; disrupts state-centric discourses through visceral, personal and sensorial reportage; and offers a situated, embodied view that collapses imaginaries of strangeness and otherness by evidencing the human

consequences of displacement. Although Rana's broadcasts stop short of being 'justly angry' (Toal, 1996, p. 179) due to professional guidelines around balanced and impartial BBC journalism, they reflect an unmistakable commitment to personalise refugees and 'give voice to the victims' (Toal, 1996, p. 173). Her decision to travel with the family and record their journey in situ chimes with O'Kane's 'courageous ability to get to the key sites of war' and document its impact through the register of human experience (Toal, 1996, p. 173). Just as O'Kane's dispatches 'fight against the social production of distance and moral indifference' (Toal, 1996, p. 182), Rana's broadcasts invite recognition of refugees, not as abstract 'Others', but as 'real' people with histories, geographies and biographies.

However, Rana's fundamental decision to audio record, rather than write about, the family speaks to a sonic sensibility that recognises the power of radio to capture migration through sounds and voices. Rather than turning to politicians, policymakers, or 'experts' for comment and analysis, Rana brings a family's story to the BBC's popular airwaves and into the geographical imaginations of its millions of listeners. Amplifying their voices is significant given that Chouliaraki and Zaborowski (2017, p. 1) highlight the potential for journalism to lead to 'a triple misrecognition of refugees as political, social and historical actors [...] outside the remit of "our" communities of belonging'. By contrast, Rana produces reportage that enables refugees to 'appear as a speaking and acting subject' (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017, p. 1174) which evidences her anti-geopolitical ear: that is to say, she encourages a way of listening to Europe's migration 'crisis' that disrupts discursive framings of refugees as 'threatening outsiders' or 'vulnerable victims' and invites listeners to imagine the Dhníe family as tangible, recognisable and relatable human beings.

Rana's anti-geopolitical ear therefore operates on a slightly different wavelength to O'Kane's anti-geopolitical eye. Rana is sensitive to different stimuli – most notably the affective power of spoken, rather than written, testimonies of migration – and their potential to connect with audiences. She communicates through a different medium, recognising the distinctive qualities of radio and practice of listening, and offers a different way of 'doing' news through a family-centered, episodic, narrative-led production. The editorial decision to broadcast across nineteen months invites listeners on an audible journey with the family and demands repeated engagement with their story. Moreover, tracing migration through a familial lens challenges geopolitical discourses of separation and difference by encouraging listeners to reflect on universal identities as parents and children, brothers and sisters. Indeed, Rana's relentless characterisation of the family as named and fleshed out individuals highlights shared roles, challenges and aspirations between audiences and refugees. It is a representation that articulates 'a grammar of common humanity' and 'politically link[s] the fates of 'us' and 'them'" (Hyndman as cited in Jones & Sage, 2010, p. 317). This is reinforced by continuing to follow the Dhnies' story as they navigate a 'new life' in Germany, which situates refugees within 'our' realm of everyday experiences, and illuminates the connections, rather than disjunctures, between 'our world' and 'theirs'.

Radio emerges from this analysis as a slow medium that departs from the immediacy of the visual by encouraging sustained reflection and introspection from listeners. This is not to say all radio journalism distances itself from heightened drama and 'spectacle', but rather to highlight its capacity for longform storytelling and identify a reflective impulse that comes out of Rana's episodic reporting. Migration similarly emerges not just as

a spatial movement from one geographic location to another, but as a possible catalyst for self-reflection, feeling and attachment among listeners in 'host' societies. These findings hold significant learnings for media reporting on migration, particularly as the focus moves from Syria to Ukraine, and for geographers interested in the power and potential of journalistic storytelling. Radio's predication on sounds and the spoken word shifts our attention 'from the observing eye and toward expressive speech' (Clifford, 1986, p. 12) and prompts reflection on how geographical imaginations are shaped by the sonic, as well as visual, realm.

## Note

1. In this paper, Rana's commentary is distinguished from in situ recordings through italicisation.

## Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Alex Hastie and Robert Saunders for inviting me to contribute to this special issue. Thank you also to the editor and anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful and insightful comments.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## References

- Andersson, R. (2017). From radar systems to rickety boats: Borderline ethnography in Europe's 'Illegality industry'. In A. Elliot, R. Norum, & N. B. Salazar. (Eds.) *Methodologies of Mobility: Ethnography and Experiment* (pp.88–108). Berghahn.
- BBC. (2016). *Thanks for listening #RAJAR figures show #wato audience is up 161,000 on last year. Weekly audience now 3.52m. Up to 1.67m a day.* Twitter [tweet], February 4th. <https://twitter.com/BBCWorldatOne>
- BBC . (2020). *BBC group annual report and accounts 2019/20.* <https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/annualreport/2019-20.pdf>
- BBC Media Centre. (2021, July 30). Listeners were obsessed with line of duty, football and festival music mixes on BBC sounds this quarter. BBC. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/2021/bbc-sounds-q2>
- BBC Radio 4. (2017). *About radio 4.* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/help>
- Boccagni, P. (2017). *Migration and the search for home: Mapping domestic space in migrants' everyday lives.* Palgrave Macmillan.
- Butler, J. (2009). *Frames of war: When is life grievable?* Verso.
- Chouliaraki, L. (2013). *The Ironic spectator: Solidarity in the age of post-humanitarianism.* Polity Press.
- Chouliaraki, L., & Stolic, T. (2017). Rethinking media responsibility in the refugee 'crisis': A visual typology of European news. *Media, Culture, and Society*, 39(8), 1162–1177. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443717726163>
- Chouliaraki, L., & Zaborowski, R. (2017). Voice and community in the refugee crisis: A content analysis of news coverage in eight European countries. *International Communication Gazette*, 79(6–7), 613–625. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048517727173>
- Clifford, J. (1986). Introduction: Partial Truths. In J. Clifford & G. E. Marcus (Eds.), *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography.* (pp.1–26). University of California Press .

- Crawley, H., Duvell, F., Jones, K., McMahon, S., & Sigona, N. (2018). *Unravelling Europe's 'migration crisis': Journeys over land and sea*. Policy Press.
- Crawley, H., McMahon, S., & Jones, K. (2016). *Victims and villains: Migrant voices in the British media*. pdf.VictimsandVillains\_CMYK\_5mm.pdf. Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations
- Crisell, A. (1994). *Understanding radio* (2nd ed). Routledge.
- Dalby, S. (1994). Gender and critical geopolitics: Reading security discourse in the new world disorder. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 12(5), 595–612. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d120595>
- De Genova, N. (2013). Spectacles of migrant 'illegality': The scene of exclusion, the obscene of inclusion. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36(7), 1180–1198. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2013.783710>
- De Haas, H. (2011). The determinants of international migration: Conceptualizing policy, origin, and destination effects. *International Migration Institute (IMI) Working Paper Series*, 32, 1–35. <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/migpractice/docs/225/Determinants.pdf>
- Dittmer, J., & Bos, D. (2019). *Popular culture, geopolitics, and identity* (2nd ed). Rowman and Littlefield.
- Ehrkamp, P. (2017). Geographies of migration I: Refugees. *Progress in Human Geography*, 41(6), 813–822. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132516663061>
- Gallagher, M., Kangieser, A., & Prior, J. (2017). Listening geographies: Landscape, affect and geotechnologies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 41(5), 618–637. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132516652952>
- Gallagher, M., & Prior, J. (2014). Sonic geographies: Exploring phonographic methods. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38(2), 267–284. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132513481014>
- Georgiou, M. (2018). Does the subaltern speak? Migrant voices in digital Europe. *Popular Communication*, 16(1), 45–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15405702.2017.1412440>
- Giannakopoulos, G. (2016). Depicting the pain of others: Photographic representations of refugees in the Aegean Shores. *Journal of Greek Media and Culture*, 2(1), 103–113. [https://doi.org/10.1386/jgmc.2.1.103\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jgmc.2.1.103_1)
- Gillispie, M., Osseiran, S., & Cheesman, M. (2018). Syrian refugees and the digital passage to Europe: Smartphone infrastructures and affordances. *Social Media + Society*, 4(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118764440>
- Godin, M., & Doná, G. (2016). "Refugee voices," new social media and politics of representation: Young Congolese in the diaspora and beyond. *Refuge*, 32(1), 60–71. <https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40384>
- Gregory, D. (1994). *Geographical Imaginations*. Blackwell.
- Gregory, D. (2009). Imaginative Geographies. In D. Gregory, R. Johnston, G. Pratt, M. J. Watts, & S. Whatmore (Eds.), *The dictionary of human geography* (5th ed.). (pp.369–371). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Holmes, S. M., & Castañeda, H. (2016). Representing the "European refugee crisis" in Germany and beyond: Deserving and difference, life and death. *American Ethnologist*, 43(1), 12–24. <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12259>
- Horton, J. (2019). Where's Elvis and Trump? Where's Gozilla and Gaga? Where's Bowie and Beyoncé? Popular cultures in social and cultural geography, 2000–2020. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 20(2), 265–274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2018.1559346>
- Hyndman, J. (2007). Feminist geopolitics revisited: Body counts in Iraq. *The Professional Geographer*, 59(1), 35–46. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9272.2007.00589.x>
- Hyndman, J. (2010). Introduction: The feminist politics of refugee migration. *Gender, Place, and Culture*, 17(4), 453–459. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2010.485835>
- Hyndman, J. (2015). Critical Geopolitics: Deconstructing the old and reconstructing anew. *Progress in Human Geography*, 39(5), 666–667. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132514563001>
- Hynes, P. (2009). Contemporary compulsory dispersal and the absence of space for the restoration of trust. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 22(1), 97–121. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen049>
- Jones, L., & Sage, D. (2010). New directions in critical geopolitics: An introduction. *GeoJournal*, 75(4), 315–325. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-008-9255-4>
- Mainwaring, C., & Brigden, N. (2016). Beyond the border: Clandestine migration journeys. *Geopolitics*, 21(2), 243–262. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2016.1165575>

- Malkki, L. (1992). National geographic: The rooting of peoples and the territorialization of national identity among scholars and refugees. *Cultural Anthropology*, 7(1), 24–44. <https://doi.org/10.1525/can.1992.7.1.02a00030>
- Malkki, L. (1996). Speechless emissaries: Refugees, humanitarianism, and dehistoricization. *Cultural Anthropology*, 11(3), 377–404. <https://doi.org/10.1525/can.1996.11.3.02a00050>
- Mayblin, L., & Turner, J. (2021). *Migration studies and colonialism*. Polity Press.
- Muller, M. (2012). Opening the black box of the organization: Socio-material practices of geopolitical ordering. *Political Geography*, 31(6), 379–388. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2012.06.001>
- Peretz, E. (2002). The girls at the front. *Vanity Fair*, June. The Girls at the Front | Vanity Fair
- Peters, K. (2018). *Sound, space, and society: Rebel radio*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pinkerton, A. (2008). A new kind of imperialism? The BBC, cold war broadcasting and the contested geopolitics of South Asia. *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 28(4), 537–555. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01439680802310324>
- Pinkerton, A. (2014). Radio. In P. Adams, J. Craine, & J. Dittmer, (Eds.) *Ashgate research companion to media geography* (pp.53–67). Routledge.
- Pinkerton, A., & Dodds, K. (2009). Radio geopolitics: Broadcasting, listening and the struggle for acoustic spaces. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33(1), 10–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132508090978>
- Rose, G. (2016). Cultural geography going viral. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 17(6), 763–767. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2015.1124913>
- Rumford, C. (2008). Introduction: Citizens and Borderwork in Europe. *Space and Polity*, 12(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562570801969333>
- Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. Penguin, Reprint 2003
- Sayad, A. (1999). *La double absence: Des illusions de l'émigré aux souffrances de l'immigré*. Seuil.
- Schapendonk, J., & Steel, G. (2014). Following migrant trajectories: The im/mobility of Sub-Saharan Africans en route to the European Union. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 104(2), 262–270. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2013.862135>
- Schwöbel-Patel, C., & Ozkaramanli, D. (2017). The construction of the grateful refugee in law and design. *Queen Mary Human Rights Review*, 4(1), 1–10. <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/law/humanrights/media/humanrights/news/hrlr/2018/Christine-Schwo%C3%8C%C2%88bel-Patel-and-Deger-Ozkaramanli.pdf>
- Smith, S. J. (1997). Beyond geography's visible worlds: A cultural politics of music. *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(4), 502–529. <https://doi.org/10.1191/030913297675594415>
- Toal, G. (1996). An anti-geopolitical eye: Maggie O'Kane in Bosnia, 1992-93. *Gender, Place, and Culture*, 3(2), 171–185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09663699650021873>
- Weir, P. (2014). Radio Geopolitics. *Geography Compass*, 8(12), 849–859. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12184>