

Abstracts

Friederike Herrmann: The Myth of the Porridge Boiling Over. Narratives in the Media Coverage of Refugee Issues during Autumn 2015

Narratives are patterns of representation that produce sense and meaning and at the same time shape our perception and understanding, thereby setting a limit to them. Social discourse is often considerably influenced by explicit or implicit narratives. The article examines a situation in the coverage of refugees in autumn 2015 and shows how it evoked the feeling of being overwhelmed and powerless. This situation produced a narrative that attributed, in a simplified manner, the responsibility for the crisis and consequently also the power to solve the problems to the German Chancellor. The global perspective of this issue was marginalized in the narrative, opposite developments and causes for the events were hardly mentioned. In this kind of self-centered outlook the human fate of the refugees disappeared from the narrative and it became possible to regard them as just another technical problem, like flooding that needs to be controlled. From a media ethical and also a professional point of view, it would be very desirable for journalists to be able to identify and deconstruct such narratives.

Petra Hemmelmann/Susanne Wegner: Refugee Debate as Reflected in the Media and Political Parties. An Overview

The “refugee crisis” in 2015 placed the media and the political sphere under pressure to take action. As of late summer in particular, the subject of immigrants became a decisive theme of journalistic coverage and political debate. As central societal players, the ways in which both the political field and the media communicated, with regard to this subject, exerted a strong influence on public opinion. The first part of the essay provides an overview of the reporting patterns and thematic focal points concerning refugee coverage during the past year. In the second part, Facebook postings made by political parties between August and October on the subject of refugees are examined.

Thomas Bohrmann: International Migration in Movies. Ethical Notes on the Cinematic Presentation of a Global Problem

The topic of migration is not only present in daily media coverage, but also in actual European movie productions. This article introduces some of these movies and attempts to delineate, what message they spread and what position concerning refugees they occupy. In general the movies plead for a humanitarian dealing with migrants, who are not just anonymous numbers, but individuals with names and a specific biography. Despite being fictional, the stories are told in an authentic way.

What they show is occurring daily on the edges of Europe. The article calls for an educational use of the presented films, in order to clarify the reasons for migration and to raise awareness towards a reasonable social and political treatment of refugees.

Ernst Fricke: The Dilemma of the Media – A Constitutional Mandate

The incidents which occurred on New Year's Eve in Cologne have sparked a public debate concerning the mentioning of the nationalities of those suspected of involvement. With regard to the balancing of legally protected interests, in the right-consideration between the general personal right of the aggrieved party and the right of freedom of the press, both European and German constitutional law must be observed. The German press code sets these tasks in order to solve such situations in an open and unbiased manner. What may be permitted by law, need not be ethically right. Each balance of interest refers to the individual case.

Anna Leonie Heiliger: The German-speaking Catholic Blogging-Scene. Variety and Potential of Religious Communication in the Internet

Extensive research has been undertaken on the subject of blogging. However, the Catholic blogging-scene has essentially remained disregarded. The central research goal of this paper addresses the question of whether a missionary potential on the part of German-speaking bloggers exists. To that end a qualitative online survey was conducted under the 355 German-language blogs with a Catholic profile, in which 59 bloggers participated. According to the study results, the predominantly highly educated bloggers judged the missionary work positively. However, for those questioned, the primary aspect remains the enjoyment of the media format for preaching the faith.