



Rui Alexandre Novais & Carlos Arcila Calderón (Eds.), (2024), *Representations of Refugees, Migrants, and Displaced People as the 'Other'*. Londra: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 317.

Değerlendiren: Recep Baydemir

“The narratives presented herein are not static; they mirror the dynamic nature of a world where borders are crossed, cultures intermingle, and identities morph. The ‘other’ is not a monolithic entity but a complex interplay of personal narratives, political and societal perceptions, and media representations.” (p.3).

Today, when forced migration movements have increased dramatically and the phenomenon of migration has become one of the most controversial issues in global politics, the representation of migrants, refugees and displaced persons in media, politics and cultural narratives directly affects not merely individual perceptions but also institutional policies and social relations. As a matter of fact, today, the forms of representation that millions of people who have been forced to leave their homes due to wars, political instability, economic inequalities and environmental disasters are exposed to show that these individuals are ‘othered’ on the discursive plane (Breen et al., 2006; Kakenmaster, 2016; Huot et al., 2016; Fielder & Catalano, 2017; Strani & Szczepaniak-Kozak, 2018; Himmel & Baptista, 2020). Othering narratives repeated in media content and political discourses create a regime of representation that ignores the subjectivity of migrants while presenting them as ‘homogeneous’, ‘passive’ and ‘perpetrators of crises’ (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Holmes & Castañeda, 2016). In this context, *Representations of Refugees*,



Asst. Prof., Kırşehir Ahi Evran University, recep.baydemir@ahievran.edu.tr



<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6263-5242>



DOI: 10.12658/D0427
insan & toplum, 2026; 16-3: 249-252.
insanvetoplum.org

Migrants, and Displaced People as the 'Other' (2024), edited by Rui Alexandre Novais and Carlos Arcila Calderón, makes an important contribution to the literature in this field by examining the ways in which migrants are constructed as the 'other' with an interdisciplinary approach. On the one hand, the book analyses how the media talk about refugees and migrants; on the other hand, by deciphering the ideological, cultural and political codes underlying these representations, it reopens the concept of 'otherness' to discussion at both theoretical and empirical levels.

Apart from the introduction, the book consists of three main chapters. The first part of the book (pp.13-106) critically addresses the phenomenon of 'othering' by analysing the representation of migrants, refugees and displaced persons in the news media. This chapter discusses how migrants are discursively positioned through print and digital news content published in different countries. The studies in this section explain with examples how immigrants are represented in different contexts and try to show that these representations reproduce both cultural and political prejudices.

The second part of the book (pp.107-198) extends the discussion on the representation of refugees and migrants beyond the news media and focuses on different forms of media such as social media, cinema, political discourse and visual culture. The chapter attempts to show how social perceptions of migration are shaped not only by news texts but also by the influence of visibility, humour, politics and digital technologies. Each study in the chapter makes important contributions to the processes of marginalisation in different geographical and cultural contexts.

The third and final part of the book (pp. 199-312) aims to go beyond dominant, stereotypical and reductionist narratives of migrant and refugee representations. The contributions in this section foreground 'subjectivised', 'resisting', 'narrating' and 'transforming' individuals instead of 'passivised' or 'victimised' migrant figures in media representation. The topics covered in this part of the volume include alternative media practices, journalistic experiences, artistic forms of expression and poetic narratives.

When we look at the study as a whole, we can say that this compilation makes a remarkable contribution to the literature in terms of its multi-layered, interdisciplinary and critical approach to the representational forms of migration and forced migration phenomena. One of the strengths of the work is that it discusses the representations of migrants with more complex and multidimensional narratives, rather than addressing them only in the duality of victimisation or criminalisation. Through both discourse analyses and visual analyses, it is revealed how media contents are intertwined with cultural codes and political ideologies (see: Hall, 1997; Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017). Moreover, another strength of the study is its methodological

innovation and diversity of data. Indeed, the methodological approaches used in the work are not limited to content or discourse analysis. Different methodological approaches such as visual analysis, comparative media studies, field research, poetry analysis, and analyses of artistic production are successfully blended in the study.

On the other hand, although the book claims to offer a global perspective on representations of migration, it is worth noting that some regions are represented in a more limited way in terms of geographical distribution. In particular, regions such as South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, where migration movements are intense, are only indirectly addressed; academic voices directly from these regions are not given enough space. For example, Turkey is only represented in the context of the field of cinema (pp.125-142) and local perception research (pp.247-262), with no broader analysis of migrant representation in the media. This imbalance unfortunately weakens the work's claim of global representation (pp.3-11).

Undoubtedly, both the quantitative increase and the central position of phenomena such as forced migration, refugees and displacement on the political agenda necessitate a more in-depth examination of the politics of representation in these areas. From this perspective, we can say that this book fills an important gap in the existing literature by approaching migration studies from the perspective of media, cultural representation and marginalisation. One of the most important contributions of the book to the field is that by examining the function of the concept of 'othering' in media representations in different contexts, it allows us to rethink this concept not only as an ideological concept but also as a cultural practice. Following the path opened by Said's (1978) critique of orientalism, the book, in line with Hall's (1997) representation theory, reveals with empirical data how immigrant and refugee figures are discursively constructed and how the boundaries of society are drawn through these representations. In this respect, the book shows that the process of marginalisation offers important clues not only to the 'foreigner' but also to the identity of the *host society*.

Moreover, the fact that the book has both a critical and transformative character is another important feature that distinguishes it from similar studies. In particular, examples such as poetic narratives, artistic productions and alternative media practices in the third chapter show that migrants can be represented not merely as passive objects but also as subjectivising individuals (pp. 219-232; pp. 279-298). This approach is in line with contemporary literature arguing that representations of migrants should not be limited to reductionist and traumatising narratives (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Holmes & Castañeda, 2016).

In conclusion, we can say that this volume is an original work that offers both theoretical and empirical contributions to the multidimensional analysis of how refugees, migrants, and displaced people are positioned in media and culture. With its breadth ranging from discourse analysis to artistic narratives, this book adds depth to the field and offers a critical awareness of the relationship between media representations and social exclusion. With its theoretical and methodological contributions, the book creates a qualified research area that intersects many disciplines such as communication studies, cultural studies, political science and sociology.

References

- Breen, M.J., Haynes, A. and Devereux, E. (2006). Fear, framing and foreigners: The othering of immigrants in the Irish print media. *International Journal of Critical Psychology*, 16, 100-121.
- Chouliraki, L., & Stolic, T. (2017). Rethinking media responsibility in the refugee 'crisis': A visual typology of European news. *Media, Culture & Society*, 39(8), 1162-1177.
- Chouliraki, L., & Zaborowski, R. (2017). Voice and community in the 2015 refugee crisis: A content analysis of news coverage in eight European countries. *International Communication Gazette*, 79(6-7), 613-635.
- Fidler, G. E., & Catalano, T. (2017). Othering others: Right-wing populism in UK media discourse on "new" immigration. In *Representing the other in European media discourses* (pp. 234-207). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Hall, S. (Ed.) (1997). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Sage, in association with The Open University.
- Himmel, R., & Baptista, M. M. (2020). Migrants, refugees and othering: constructing Europeanness. An exploration of Portuguese and German media. *Comunicação e sociedade*, (38), 179-200.
- Holmes, S. M., & Castañeda, H. (2016). Representing the "European refugee crisis" in Germany and beyond: Deservingness and difference, life and death. *American Ethnologist*, 43(1), 12-24.
- Huot, S., Bobadilla, A., Bailliard, A., & Laliberte Rudman, D. (2016). Constructing undesirables: A critical discourse analysis of 'othering' within the Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act. *International Migration*, 54(2), 131-143.
- Kakenmaster, B. (2016). Belonging in a new home: Discursive othering of Latin American immigrants in US print media. *Clocks and Clouds*, 7(1), 64-101.
- Novais, R. A., & Arcila Calderón, C. (Eds.). (2024). *Representations of Refugees, Migrants, and Displaced People as the 'other'*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism: Western Concepts of the Orient*. Pantheon.
- Strani, K., & Szczepaniak-Kozak, A. (2018). Strategies of othering through discursive practices: Examples from the UK and Poland. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics*, 14(1), 163-179.