

# SCHEDULE

## DAY 1 October 27th

10.00-10.30 Welcome coffee and tea

10.30- 12.00

Welcome:

**Prof. Nick Couldry**, Head of Media and Communications Department, LSE

Keynote speech:

**Prof. Paul Frosh**,  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
"Indifference and Agitation:  
Ethics of Mediation in a Culture of Distraction"

12.00-13.00 Lunch break

13.00 – 15.00

Panel One:

Ethical Challenges in Global Communication

**Prof. Nick Couldry**, LSE: "Hospitality or Care?"  
**Prof. Lilie Chouliaraki**, LSE: "Ethical Styles in  
Global Communication"

15.00-15.30 Coffee break

15.30-17.30

Panel Two:

Post-Colonial Narratives across Media Forms

**Hamid Naficy**, NU: "Public Diplomacy  
Mediawork —The Exercise of Soft Power  
Between Iran and the West"  
**Shakuntala Banaji**, LSE: "Theoretical Fictions:  
The Ethics of Adult 'Digital Imaginaries' for  
Indian Children and Youth"  
**Wendy Willems**, LSE: "Provincialising  
Habermas: Decolonising the Public Sphere in  
Theory and Practice"

18.00 Dinner at Cooper's Restaurant

## DAY 2 October 28th

10.30-12.00

Keynote speech:

**Prof. Nick Vaughan-Williams**,  
University of Warwick  
"Reflections on European Border Security and  
the '2015 Mediterranean Migration Crisis'"

12.00-12.30 Coffee break

12.30- 14.30

Panel Three:

Challenges of Mediated Mobilities

**Prof. Robert Hariman**, NU: "Art and Agony:  
Why Photojournalism Has to Fail"  
**Prof. Myria Georgiou**, LSE: "Refugees in Dig-  
ital Europe: A Space of Visibility or Invisibility?"  
**Prof. Rafal Zaborowski**, LSE: "Refugees in  
the Press: Narratives across and beyond  
Borders"

14.30-15.30 Lunch break

15.30-17.30

Panel Four:

Mediation under Duress versus Plenty

**Prof. Kate Baldwin**, NU: "'Jazz on the Ribs':  
The Ethics and Aesthetics of Media  
Resistance in a Culture of Scarcity"  
**Prof. Dilip Gaonkar**, NU: "Urban Duress and  
Aesthetic Plenitude: The Case of Jitish Kallat"

Pub drinks/Informal dinner

>>> This symposium is set to reflect on key moral and political challenges in the field of media and communications today: human mobility, movements and social change, post-colonial reflexivities and global governance. Each of these challenges has its own socio-cultural contexts and implications, yet all share an interest in contemporary configurations of global inequality, human agency and media technologies.

This event is a part of the Northwestern University-London School of Economics Initiative. The funding for this event is generously provided by the Buffett Institute for Global Studies and the Center for Global Culture and Communication (CGCC) at Northwestern University.

 [www.communication.northwestern.edu/global\\_communication](http://www.communication.northwestern.edu/global_communication)

 [www.facebook.com/centerforglobalcultureandcommunication](https://www.facebook.com/centerforglobalcultureandcommunication)

**PAUL FROSH** teaches in the Department of Communication and Journalism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research spans visual culture, media aesthetics, consumer culture and national conflict, media witnessing and moral concern. His books include *The Image Factory: Consumer Culture, Photography and the Visual Content Industry* (2003); *Meeting the Enemy in the Living Room: Terrorism and Communication in the Contemporary Era* (2006, in Hebrew, edited with Tamar Liebes); and *Media Witnessing: Testimony in the Age of Mass Communication* (2009, edited with Amit Pinchevski). He is currently engaged in a large scale investigation of iconic photographs and Israeli collective memory.

**NICK VAUGHAN-WILLIAMS** is Professor of International Security and Head of Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick. From 2016 to 2019 he holds a Philip Leverhulme Prize in Politics and International Studies. His most recent single-authored research monograph is *Europe's Border Crisis: Biopolitical Security and Beyond* (Oxford University Press, 2015). His earlier book *Border Politics: The Limits of Sovereign Power* (Edinburgh University Press, 2009) was Gold Winner of the Association for Borderlands 2011 Book Award. He is also co-author of *Everyday Security Threats* (Manchester University Press, 2016) and *Critical Security Studies* (Routledge, 2014).

### “Indifference and Agitation: Ethics of Mediation in a Culture of Distraction”

This paper approaches the ethics of mediation through two seemingly contradictory propositions. The first questions the assumption that moral sensibility has a necessary basis in audience attentiveness and intense involvement with the representations of others. While accepting the potential ethical power of singular images of suffering and the attention they demand, it focuses on the work of the moral ground of low-intensity habituation to strangers created by long-term, routine, ambient forms of mediated connectivity, as well as by the powerful combination of singularity and generalizability that characterizes modern audio-visual media. It proposes that the extreme case of ‘inattentive’ or ‘indifferent’ relations to media – where media are to hand but are not avidly attended to, like the television left on in the background – is key to reconceptualizing relations with media as forms of (increasingly perpetual) accompaniment and companionship. Modern media, it argues, are a moral force because they act as an everyday, institutionalized social procedure for encountering the presence of strangers in our intimate spaces without arousing our fear or hostility, placing strangers within a lived habitat of those we experience as being like us.

At the same time, however, the paper will also discuss how such ambient forms of mediated companionship – and the ‘indifferent’ moral relations they sustain – are put under pressure by the intensification and extension of embodied relations between users and contemporary media. Particularly significant here are the aesthetics of digital interfaces and the default condition of sensorimotor agitation that they inculcate: the constant alertness of the hand on the mouse or touch screen and the eye tracking the moving cursor. Given the possibilities for ethical and communicative response to digital representations of others’ suffering, by our own fingers and through simple and almost cost-free gestures (clicking, swiping, posting, forwarding, embedding, commenting), not attending to, engaging with or acting on them becomes a moral choice performed in minutely embodied contact with others’ depicted worlds. Do we now need to account for a novel historical situation – an ‘ethics of kinaesthetics’ – where the burden of ethical response to distant others has been extended to the vicissitudes of our wandering gaze, the tips of our fidgeting fingers, and the minute, restless movements of our cursor-selves?

### “Reflections on European Border Security and the ‘2015 Mediterranean Migration Crisis’”

This talk will address three main questions: 1) What spatial formations and modes of governance, mediation, and representation are reflected in dominant constructions of ‘the 2015 Mediterranean migration crisis’? 2) How are these dynamics experienced by diverse ‘irregular’ populations performatively produced by apparatuses of border security? and 3) What are some of the key conceptual, political, and ethical challenges we need to be engaging with and how to best approach them? In reflecting on these questions Vaughan-Williams draws on some of the arguments of his recent book, *Europe's Border Crisis: Biopolitical Security and Beyond* (Oxford University Press, 2015), and the interim findings of fieldwork conducted in Malta as part of a current SRC-funded project entitled ‘Crossing the Mediterranean Sea by Boat’ (PI: Vicki Squire, Co-Is: Angeliki Dimitriadis, Maria Pisani, Dallal Stevens, and Nick Vaughan-Williams).

Vaughan-Williams's overall argument is that in order to be able to map and conceptualise existing and emergent geographies of power in the context of the management of ‘irregular’ flows, we would do well to return to the concept of the border and the question of the contemporary nature and location of the borders of Europe. One of the primary issues at stake, as he sees it, is that the concept of the border – and its increasingly complex relationship with concepts of sovereignty, territory, and the nation-state – is a key tool in any attempt to map the unbinding of Europe today, and yet borders are themselves undergoing a series of transformations, (dis)locations, and deferrals (or ‘unbound’). There are four key themes on this topic that he would like to suggest are in need of further engagement: a) The need to problematise and disaggregate what has been retroactively packaged and communicated in mainstream policy and media contexts as ‘the 2015 Mediterranean migration crisis’; b) The diversification of European bordering practices as spatial and temporal technologies of power, the rise of ‘compassionate borderwork’, and the medicalisation of border security that create new opportunities to govern migrant and refugee populations; c) The concomitant crisis of humanitarian critique whereby the ethical resources to which we might turn for engaging critically with these violent practices have been appropriated by the various authorities associated with those practices; and d) The need for alternative imaginaries apposite to the European borderscape and the insights and limitations of the biopolitical paradigm as it relates to geopolitical frames.



## THE ETHICS OF MEDIATION

### A NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY- LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS SYMPOSIUM

27-28 OCTOBER, 2016

TOWER 3, 7TH FLOOR,  
SILVERSTONE ROOM

LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS