

## **Media and Conflict Memory: An Interdisciplinary Workshop**

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**Topic:** Memory activism after conflict

**Proposal:** Migrations, media, and memory activism: ongoing dialogues in a multidisciplinary project in Portugal

Luiza Lins, Rosa Cabecinhas, Julia Alves Brasil & Isabel Macedo

(University of Minho, Portugal)

### **Abstract**

There are many reasons why people migrate - historical, economic, cultural, political, and social factors that have a major impact around the world. Therefore, migration represents one of the most challenging issues of our time. In the Portuguese context, conflicts related to the colonial past are unavoidable when it comes to current migration experiences. For a long time, the propagation of myths and stereotypes legitimized colonialism and falsified the social and cultural realities of the once-colonized peoples, also portraying colonialism as a positive enterprise that supposedly brought them progress and civilization (Licata et al., 2018, Mbembe, 2015). The media play an important role in this context, as they impact the way we remember, forget, and represent conflicts. Besides, hegemonic media narratives often perpetuate social stereotypes that might lead to negative attitudes and discrimination practices towards specific groups. On the other hand, alternative media can be a key tool in combating the underrepresentation of such groups. Residents and citizens of migrant background associate colonial continuities with the persistent racism and discrimination they permanently face and with the struggle for social recognition of their status as citizens deserving equal rights and respect in European societies (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). The participation of migrants in media production, in the construction of their own narratives, is part of the so-called “mnemonic activism” that presupposes the understanding of memory as a crucial form of transformation of society (Gutman & Wüstenberg, 2022), appealing to the “duty of memory” (Levi, 2011), that is, to the “ethical responsibility of never forgetting” (Sousa et al., 2022, p. 11) certain historical events. In this communication, we intend to present ongoing dialogues in a multidisciplinary project in Portugal, “MigraMediaActs”. This project examines narratives about migration that circulate in the public spheres in Portuguese language in order to contribute to a greater visibility of people who occupy a place of otherness in the Portuguese national context. We use different methodological strategies to study digital narratives, films, and social movements. One of the project’s tasks, for example, promoted a mapping and analysis of Portuguese alternative digital media. Another task involves the analysis of the publicly funded Portuguese-language film production in the period from 2018 to 2022, and aims to reflect on the media production of minority groups, collectives or social movements. These analyses invite us to a memory work that critically reflects on the continuities of colonialism as a form of social relationship, which translates into the colonality of power, being, and knowledge, which remain alive in different contexts of our everyday lives (Quijano, 2005). Thus, we highlight the importance of the media as a privileged arena in the contestation of the multiple axes of exclusion. The greater visibility of these productions and the expansion of dialogues about their contents can contribute to the combat of the asymmetric circulation of stories and memories, fostering social change.

## References:

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