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# TV ON THE RADIO/RADIO ON TELEVISION

## EUROPEAN TELEVISION HERITAGE AS A SOURCE FOR UNDERSTANDING RADIO HISTORY<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Radio is only to a limited extent a 'blind medium'. Visual and material aspects have long played a role in the way the medium has acquired meaning. While print has become a common source for radio history, audiovisual material – such as is preserved on the *EUScreen* portal with extensive metadata and potential for context – offers potential not just for understanding the evolution of television, but rather the entire mass-media ensemble. This article explores the possibilities and problems of using *EUScreen* as a source for a comparative and transnational history of radio, looking in particular at the visual iconography and narrative structures of audiovisual material found on the portal.

**Keywords:** radio history, broadcasting history, media historiography, domestication, media production and gendered labour, international broadcasting, audiovisual sources.

<sup>1</sup> Besides being a personal and intellectual inspiration to the authors, Sonja de Leeuw also directly inspired this essay with a suggestion to the **Transnational Radio Encounters** project that *EUScreen* could serve as a source for exploring transnational histories of radio online. During her 2016–17 Research Fellowship at **the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision** in Hilversum, Berber Hagedoorn also studied audiovisual representations of historical news events in digitized and linked collections, including the representation and imagination of radio in different audiovisual sources.

You know me only from sound, from voice, from music – but have you ever seen me?<sup>2</sup>

## 1 Radio: An ‘Invisible’ Medium?

To imagine radio as an ‘invisible medium’, as Lewis and Booth’s seminal 1989 volume called it,<sup>3</sup> one must actually be *blinded* to it. Although sound – ambient and ephemeral – is radio’s signature element, the material and visual aspects of radio nevertheless form a core part of the way in which the medium has acquired and made meaning since its inception. As commentators at least since Bertolt Brecht have pointed out, radio did not arrive fully formed any more than any other technology. Rather, its form as a point-to-mass system as well as its meanings were shaped within the ideological structures of nation-states and empires, into which radio as a new medium was adopted.<sup>4</sup>

Initial reflections on radio as a ‘blind’ or ‘invisible’ medium from the 1950s and 1960s have described the medium’s imaginative power as ‘it *cannot be seen* other than inside the mind of the listener’,<sup>5</sup> often in relation to *darkness*. For instance, radio producer Jim Harmon argued in 1967 how radio drama was unprecedented in its ability to explore and exploit ‘that purity of darkness, that blank slate of imagination’,<sup>6</sup> whilst radio and television director Donal McWhinnie described radio’s imaginative power in 1959 as ‘(f)or the world of visual detail which the listener creates is a world of limitless dimension; they exist in a world which is largely dream. The radio performance works on the mind in the same way that poetry does; it liberates and evokes.’<sup>7</sup> Informative and factual radio content has been described as asserting a similarly ‘imaginative’ power.

With the genuinely invisible nature of radio signals themselves, as well as the remote nature of most transmitters (Paris’s Eiffel Tower being one notable exception<sup>8</sup>), capturing radio’s meanings within these ideological structures has often been the work of visual media: exhibitions, posters, newspaper adverts, maps, programme guides, films, and more recently, online and digital visual media. These media forms have all been variously mobilized to visualize the ‘invisible’ aspects of radio. These dynamics between the sounds, sights and materialities of radio have continued into the current digital era. In this context, Michele Hilmes describes the new *essence* of radio as ‘sound work’ – that is, all of the work that goes into the production and distribution of sound content, while at the same time asserting that in the digital age, ‘radio is a screen medium: we access it through screens both mobile and static, using tactile visual and textual interfaces’.<sup>9</sup>

The relationship between radio and television has generally been considered as a one-way flow of influence from radio to television. Indeed, the fact that radio broadcasting put down much of the groundwork for television forms a substantial part of Andreas Fickers’ argument that television, upon its arrival in Europe, represented a ‘conservative revolution’ from a material, institutional and programming and discursive perspective.<sup>10</sup> From a material perspective, despite the ‘interpretive flexibility’ of the medium,<sup>11</sup> television has followed radio’s technical path into a broadcasting

2 *Uw Onbekende Huisgenoot* (‘Your Unknown Housemate’), KRO, 1954, ‘03:10–‘03:17.

3 Peter M. Lewis and Jerry Booth, *The Invisible Medium: Public, Commercial and Community Radio*, Macmillan Education UK, 1989.

4 Bertolt Brecht, ‘The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication’, in: N. Strauss and D. Mandl, eds, *Radiotext(e), Semiotext(e)*, (1932) 1994, pp. 12–17; Guy Starkey, ‘Radio Studies: The Sound and Vision of an Established Medium in the Digital Age’, *Sociology Compass*, 6, 11, 2012, pp. 845–855, doi:10.1111/j.1751-9020.2012.00499.x.

5 Martin Shingler and Cindy Wieringa, *On Air: Methods and Meanings of Radio*, Bloomsbury, 1998, p. 78.

6 Donal McWhinnie, *The Art of Radio*, Faber and Faber, 1959, p. 37, quoted in: Richard J. Hand and Mary Traynor, *The Radio Drama Handbook: Audio Drama in Context and Practice*, Bloomsbury, 2011, p. 37–38.

7 Jim Harmon, *The Great Radio Heroes*, McFarland and Company, 1967, p. 80, quoted in: Richard J. Hand and Mary Traynor, *The Radio Drama Handbook: Audio Drama in Context and Practice*, Bloomsbury, 2011, p. 37–38.

8 Rebecca P. Scales, *Radio and the Politics of Sound in Interwar France, 1921–1939*, Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 26–27.

9 Michele Hilmes, ‘The New Materiality of Radio: Sound on Screens’, in: Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio, eds, *Radio’s New Wave: Global Sound in the Digital Era*, Routledge, 2013, p. 44.

10 Andreas Fickers, ‘The Emergence of Television as a Conservative Media Revolution: Historicising a Process of Remediation in the Post-War Western European Mass Media Ensemble’, *Journal of Modern European History*, 10, 1, 2012, 49–74.

11 William Uricchio, ‘Television’s First Seventy-Five Years: The Interpretive Flexibility of a Medium in Transition’, in: Robert Phillip Kolker, ed, *The Oxford Handbook of Film and Media Studies*, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 286–305.

model of transmission, and very explicitly took up the – both real and imagined – place in domestic space that radio had conquered decades before. In fact, in doing so, television even followed radio's path from a more public medium listened to collectively in public spaces, to a private medium largely associated with private homes. These *material legacies* from radio were aided in no small part by the speed with which television was quickly grafted on to the institutional basis of radio broadcasting, which was for the most part developed and embedded in Europe in the same public service institutions and infrastructures as radio.

So radio has told us much about television - but what can film and television tell us about radio? The literature that explores the *visual meanings* of radio is dominated by studies that focus on the moment of its arrival of a mass medium from the turn of the twentieth century onward.<sup>12</sup> This has both intellectual and practical reasons. On an intellectual level, the moments of initial design and social embedding are of course the core moments when the meanings of a technology become fixed, often in relation to other media in the 'mass-media ensemble'.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, it stands to reason that before the general public actually owned radio sets, people became acquainted with the medium via other media, including visual advertising and other visual and print sources. On a practical level, much like in the early years of television, a good deal of early radio was transmitted live – meaning that the actual sound sources for early radio tend to be thin on the ground and, up until recently, somewhat difficult to access. Visual and print sources thus play a perhaps disproportionate role in our understandings of the early decades of radio, but this attention falls off considerably where sound documents are available. For their part, literature that *draws on visual sources* to explore the transformation of radio into a portable device that formed part of a burgeoning youth culture, tends to focus on advertising, and in particular popular press.<sup>14</sup> Television programmes and other audiovisual forms such as newsreels, on the other hand, are very seldom considered as sources.

## 2 The Limits of Invisibility: Taking the Long View

Therefore, in this essay, we present an *alternative perspective*: by exploring the potential of digitized television heritage – specifically, audiovisual archival materials on the **EUScreen portal** – as sources for comparative research and for understanding radio history. While embracing the 'long view' of this process that the *EUScreen* portal enables, the bulk of this analysis focuses on the 1950s and 1960s – not the moment of radio's social embedding, but rather of television's. Precisely during the times when television began to take over the position of radio as a leading informative medium in households (and simultaneously, prompting the explicit transformation of radio into a primarily a background medium), television also became a place where this movement was documented and imagined. As Yuliya Komska argues:

(T)he intersections between the two media merit more attention than they have received to date. Images did not instantaneously supplant sound; television did not simply replace radio. Neither did the two merely coexist on parallel tracks, or compete for the advantage in the same markets. For some time after their histories first overlapped, they continued to intersect with and to produce representations of one another.<sup>15</sup>

12 Carsten Lenk, *Die Erscheinung des Rundfunks: Einführung und Nutzung eines neuen Mediums 1923–1932*, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1997; Steve J. Wurtzler, *Electric Sounds: Technological Change and the Rise of Corporate Mass Media*, Columbia University Press, 2007; Michael Windover and Anne F. MacLennan, *Seeing, Selling, and Situating Radio in Canada 1922–1956*, Dalhousie Architectural Press, 2017.

13 Andreas Fickers, *Der Transistor als technisches und kulturelles Phänomen: Die Transistorisierung der Radio- und Fernsehempfänger in der deutschen Rundfunkindustrie 1955 ... und Technikgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, GNT-Vlg, 1998.

14 Specifically in Europe: Andreas Fickers, *Der Transistor als technisches und kulturelles Phänomen*; Mel van Elteren, 'Radio in Het Televisietijdperk', in: Huub Wijffjes, ed., *Omroep in Nederland. Vijfenzeventig Jaar Medium En Maatschappij, 1919–1994*, Waanders, 1994, pp. 105–37; Stefan Kursawe, *Vom Leitmedium zum Begleitmedium: die Radioprogramme des Hessischen Rundfunks 1960–1980*, Böhlau, 2004; Daniel Lesueur, *Les Années Transistor*, Aléas Editeur, 2009; Christoph Hilgert, *Die unerhörte Generation: Jugend im westdeutschen und britischen Hörfunk 1945–1963*, 1st ed, Wallstein Verlag, 2015.

15 Yuliya Komska, 'Sight Radio: Radio Free Europe on Screen, 1951–1965', in: Anna Bischof and Zuzanna Jurgens, eds, *Voices of Freedom—Western Interference? 60 Years of Radio Free Europe in Munich and Prague*, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2015, p. 57.

We argue that digitized television content can provide rich audiovisual sources to explore the *imagining* and *documenting* of this phase in radio's history. The *EUScreen* portal offers free online access to thousands of items of audiovisual heritage, with clips that provide an insight into the social, cultural, political and economic events that have shaped the twentieth and twentieth centuries, **selected by broadcasters and archives from all across Europe**. As well as chronicling important historical events, the *EUScreen* portal allows different users – academics, teachers, media professionals, media artists, general users – to explore television programmes that focus on everyday experiences. The portal was built by a **consortium** of European audiovisual archives, public broadcasters, academic and technical partners. The materials on the *EUScreen* portal are thus *pre-selected* by these professional institutions with a focus on specific historical topics, resulting in *curated, high quality* content. We were then able to create a collection of relevant videos on the *MyEUScreen* homepage, by means of the simple search query 'radio'. **MyEUScreen** is a personal and interactive homepage as part of the *EUScreen* portal, where users can save and share bookmarked ('favourite') content, make audiovisual collections, create video posters, and add media annotation or audiovisual annotation to videos, in the form of 'in-clip' or 'in-item' bookmarks.

In taking *EUScreen* and its digitized audiovisual materials as a source (and where relevant, pointing to connected audiovisual sources on other online media archives), we place emphasis on *visual representations* and *narrative constructions*. In contrast to the pure focus on radio sound as 'blinded', *EUScreen* allows what might be called a (productively) 'deafened' approach to radio history, which we argue partly enables this type of *transnational comparative research* by supporting at least an initial enquiry that is less dependent on language skills (although the *EUScreen* portal does overcome some language barriers by translating metadata descriptions, and offering subtitles and multi-language search). Following our initial reflections on *EUScreen* as a research tool and research corpus, we carry out a comparative audiovisual analysis of selected cases representing, documenting and imagining radio as a (background) medium in relation to television's social embedding in the 1950s and 1960s. By paying particular attention to general visualizations of the medium radio in audiovisual materials, especially factual and informative content, we were able to tease out visualizations of (1) 'behind the scenes' and 'making of' practices, including radio professions and gendered division of labour, (2) domestic contexts, and (3) broadcasting overseas and beyond nations. Finally, we offer a reflection on digitized television heritage on *EUScreen* as a source for comparative research and for understanding radio's long history, suggesting how *EUScreen's* aggregation of film reels and television content allows for a 'longer' view on the way radio has been visualized and narrativized through news, short films and informative television programmes.

### 3 Building the 'Big Picture' of Radio on the Small (EU)screen

At the time of writing this article, the simple search query 'radio' **generates hits on 816 videos** on the *EUScreen* portal, apart from images, documents and audio. By far not all of these hits were relevant to the inquiry at hand, or to radio at all. In some cases, the hit appeared because 'radio' was part of the name of an institution on the *EUScreen* portal, such as 'Radio Télévision Suisse' (which also accounts in part for the disproportionate representation of Francophone videos in the raw sample: 194) or compound terms such as 'radio telescope'. Using *EUScreen's* filter by decade produces a breakdown in the raw sample an unsurprising breakdown there are relatively small returns for the 1930s (12 results) and 1940s (19 results), middling for the 1950s (50) 1970s (94) and 1990s (105) and two 'spikes' the 1960s (154 results) and the 1980s (132 results). These 'spikes' are arguably the most important decades in the transformations of radio – though the extent to which *EUScreen's* video content currently reflects those changes is questionable. Some of the most important aspects in the transformation of radio in the 1960s are under-represented or thematised. Notably the advent of offshore broadcasters in the North and

Baltic Seas<sup>16</sup> is entirely absent, while the end of the era gets a brief mention as part of the first television programmes from the **former Dutch offshore broadcaster Veronica in 1976**, after their offshore activities were finally banned and they joined the public service system.<sup>17</sup> In the 1980s content, there is very little that seems to talk about or represent the increasing commercialization of radio. However, the free radio movement, the other important institutional development at this time, does begin to take on a presence: appearing in clips from **Switzerland** as well as in an overly sceptical account from the public service broadcaster in **Belgium**.

The extent to which fitting radio material is easily findable depends largely on the quality of description in the metadata. The link when the word is in the title makes it obvious, but through scene-by-scene descriptions, as provided by the INA in this **1959 French newsreel on 'Youth Style'**, allows us to find where radio is located within newsreels not devoted to it. Here, indeed, we see the transistor radio appear as the first of a number of audio style accoutrements ('0:55-'1:20) to the growing youth consumption culture. Similarly, we are led to an RTÉ TV news spot **Alone at Christmas** (1964) where the social function of the radio in maintaining social contact is underlined. At present, sifting through such hits to discover their relevance is time consuming, but is precisely the kind of work that new digital tools for content extraction can make possible. From the raw selection, we were able to generate a non-exhaustive collection of 67 video assets, stored and shared amongst both authors using the *MyEUScreen* homepage tool, which formed the core of this study.

## 4 Behind the Scenes: Visualizing Radio Professions and Gendered Labour

One of the classic ways of 'visualizing' radio is taking viewers '*behind the scenes*', to show how radio productions are made. This is often a showcase of technical competence. However, such visualizations not only give insight into *production practices*, but are also interesting in terms of *gendered labour* and *broadcasting*. The KRO film ***Uw Onbekende Huisgenoot*** ('Your Unknown Housemate', 1954), a never-aired promotion film for the KRO, plays with the 'invisibility' of radio and its cosy domestic embedding, even while it takes listener/viewers 'behind the scenes' at the KRO. Interestingly, this is done by beginning with an invisible voice of the radio - conflated with the institution of the KRO - describing where radio appears in society (see further under 'domestication' below). This voice is then shown as belonging an elderly man with a guitar, a personification appearing first in a radio station behind a microphone, then magically appearing in a domestic sphere, to explain to the family, somewhat paternalistically, what goes on behind the scenes.<sup>18</sup> The radio station is portrayed above all as a high-tech place, with multiple shots of programme activity intercut with male recording engineers and directors turning knobs at consoles, issuing orders and taking care of the enormous technical work that the voice over stresses repeatedly. At the same time, however, the programme also shows the radio station as a limited site of female professionals, though their roles are, to a large extent, coded according to gender norms.<sup>19</sup> We see women singers at various

16 Daniel Lesueur. *Pirates des ondes*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2002; Alexander Badenoch, 'Between Rock and Roll and a Hard Place: 'Pirate' Radio and the Problems of Territory in Cold War Europe', in: Alexander Badenoch, Andreas Fickers and Christian Henrich-Franke, eds, *Airy Curtains in the European Ether: Broadcasting and the Cold War*, Nomos, 2013, pp. 303–326.

17 For more on Radio Veronica, see: Van Elteren 'Radio in het televisietijdperk'. Sadly, the video on *EUScreen*, while listing scenes about the offshore station, begins later in the sequence described so this history is absent here.

18 Personifications of radio have also been seen as women, portraying radio as a somewhat ambiguous 'object of desire'. See Brian Currid, *A National Acoustics: Music and Mass Publicity in Weimar and Nazi Germany*. University of Minnesota Press, 2006, pp. 51–53; Karin Falkenberg, *Radiohören: Zu Einer Bewusstseinsgeschichte 1933 Bis 1950*, Institut für Alltagskultur, 2005. p. 101.

19 On women's roles in broadcasting in this era, see among others Alexander Badenoch, *Voices in Ruins: West German Radio across the 1945 Divide*, Palgrave, 2008, pp. 131–145; Kristin Skoog, 'The "Responsible" Woman: The BBC and Women's Radio 1945–1955'. PhD, University of Westminster, 2010.

points (usually in ensembles), as well a telephone operator ('06:17), the host of children's programme ('06:42), the co-host of a record request programme ('09:12) a piano player ('10:20), maker of school programmes ('16:18), voice actress in a drama written by a woman writer (*Nodeloos Avontuur* ('Needless Adventure') by H  l  ne Swildens, broadcast December 18th 1951, ('23:34-'25:50)).



Video 1. *Your Unknown Housemate*, KRO 1954. Go to the [online version](#) of this article to watch the video.

The Dutch advertising film *Here's Hilversum... The AVRO* (1950) forces us to take a 'deafened' approach as laid out above. This is a promotional film for the Dutch broadcaster AVRO (General Union Radio Broadcaster) and is primarily about its radio activities: however, its soundtrack, like for several news and film reel items on *EUScreen*, is actually missing.<sup>20</sup> While not 'personifying' the radio symbolically as either male or female, the clip nevertheless has strong gendered attributes that underlines the ideological underpinning of radio programming. Here, women are less visible, throughout the entire clip, men are almost the only ones shown at the microphones, until the end sequence when a woman is seen recording a piece of radio drama (man doing the directing). Such a visualization did not necessarily reflect the actual makeup of the AVRO's programme activities: when this video was made, the famous Dutch feminist and co-founder of the International Archives of the Women's Movement, now Atria, **Lilian Posthumus-van der Goot** (1897–1989) had her long-running (1936–1952) show 'a short talk from woman to woman' there.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> It is impossible to say how many, as the presence of sound is not one of the search filters on the *EUScreen* portal. In our corpus on radio, it is the only clip from the post-war era with no sound, however.

<sup>21</sup> Marjolein Zaal, 'Van Vrouw Tot Vrouw: De Vrouwenrubrieken van de AVRO Onder Leiding van Dr. W.H. Posthumus-van Der Goot, 1936–1952,' Master Thesis (Doctoraal), Leiden University, 1992.

*Openbare Omroep* (Public Broadcast) (1966) which presents the Belgian VRT's public broadcasting building at the Place Flagey square in Brussels, is a more straightforward 'behind the scenes' documentary, showcasing the generic bustle of an office space over the technical power and know-how of the station. People pushing telephones and paper dominate, with roles between men and women much less visually defined. The moment of focus on technology features a montage of recording technologies ('01:36-'02:02), and while the voiceover suggests this is strongly technical work ('How many technicians spin the records?') the technologies do not look considerably different from that of home technologies – particularly the gramophone record, but also the ¼' tape - plus the operators themselves are barely shown. Indeed, only when the documentary turns to television (circa '02:05), do broad banks of technical equipment become strongly foregrounded - and among the technicians a woman is clearly visible ('03:27). Curiously, about the most consistently gendered technology on display throughout is the typewriter, which is only shown being operated by women.



Video 2. *Public Broadcast*, VRT 1966. Go to the [online version](#) of this article to watch the video.

In a Czechoslovakian **film reel** from 1961, radio's behind-the-scenes activities are visualized in the context of overseas broadcasting: including office work, telephone conversations, the hustle and bustle of office work (such as collecting and reading letters – and even gifts – from listeners), to the work of radio news readers in the studio. Parts of the video underline sharp contrasts in production practices – for instance, activities such as typing or sorting out letters are exclusively performed by women, whilst carrying out discussions on the phone is delegated to male employees. However, large portions of the clip do show



creative practices carried out by both men and women in a more or less equal manner, such as technical practices, reading letters, the creative practice of speaking to listeners in a radio studio, and research. This department for the international broadcast of the Czechoslovak Radio at this time broadcasted 30 hours a day in twelve languages, with a large listener response: every year about 50 thousand letters were delivered from all over the world.



Video 3. *The Czechoslovak Newsreel 25*, CT 1961. Go to the [online version](#) of this article to watch the video.



Figure 1a-f. Different technical and creative professions performed by women in a 1961 Czechoslovakian radio studio.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Source: *The Czechoslovak Newsreel 25*, CT 1961 (0:00–1:29).



Figure 1a-f. Continued

We can extend the above analysis to *self-reflective practices* of television and radio professionals in relation to their own production practices, including production and contextual documentation, via audiovisual and written texts and activities (internal, semi-internal and publicly accessible), such as internal reports.<sup>23</sup> Sometimes such internal reports were also '*visualized*' in discussions on television as they related to larger discussions in society, specifically on the role and representation of women in/on radio and television, and in jobs at these institutions. In an **RTÉ Late Late Show special looking at the representation and portrayal of women in the media** from 1980, a panel and the studio audience discuss how women are represented and portrayed in and on Irish radio and television. A report submitted to the RTÉ Authority by a committee led by Senator Gemma Hussey is the starting point for the discussion. Introductory remarks from the report are read out aloud on television:

*It has been a decade of change for women (...) women's roles are being reassessed at every level of society, in the home and at work, in sport and in school, in the law and in politics. And what has been the role of the media (radio and television) in this process of social change? (It) can be to reflect changes that are taking place in society, to mirror reality and record what is happening. It can do more than that, it can facilitate and nurture change, it can prepare people for change through education, discussion of the issues, and by adoption of the changes itself.' (...) 'But through neglect, passivity, and reinforcement of the status quo, the media can retard change, it can frustrate the very movement towards new attitudes and new ways of thinking, needed for change to take place. And Ireland's National Broadcasting Station has regrettably adopted the latter role in its response to the changing status of the women in Ireland today.'* (our emphasis)

Such a report and its discussion on television, which is concerned with the way women are shown and used on TV and radio in Ireland, and in decision-making jobs at the institution RTÉ, contextualizes historical concerns in relation to gendered labour and gendered representation in/on radio and television, as well as televisual reflections on TV and radio's production and representational practices.

<sup>23</sup> Berber Hagedoorn and Bas Agterberg, '**The End of the Television Archive as We Know It? The National Archive as an Agent of Historical Knowledge in the Convergence Era**, *Media and Communication*, 4, 3, 2016, 162–175.



Video 4. *Women in the Media*, RTÉ 1980. Go to the [online version](#) of this article to watch the video.

Whilst for instance news programming and film reels would often foreground **prominent male radio personalities and figure heads**,<sup>24</sup> the visualization of such 'behind the scenes' activities and related concerns and considerations gives further insight into the **'hidden professions'** and gendered labour division related to radio's production practices. Here, the real 'work' of what is meant to sound effortless, is made visible.

## 5 Radio's Powers of Domestication

In offering visions of radio production as a gendered practice, many of the portrayals of radio, including the 'behind the scenes' documentaries also thematize the domestic ideologies of radio - ironically at a point when they were beginning to shift in the post-war era. In *Here's Hilversum... The AVRO* discussed above, though mostly shot 'behind the scenes,' the opening sequences portray radio's work of synchronization of an 'imagined community' and everyday 'normality' one that is largely determined by the comings and goings of men from the domestic sphere.<sup>25</sup> A montage of shots alternating between clocks and men at telephones and microphones, before finally cutting ('02:07) to a domestic interior and a decidedly middle-class husband at wife at breakfast, where the radio's time signal sends the man off to work. A series of shots of people entering the workplace then brings the drama back to the AVRO - behind the scenes as a workplace.

24 NB: The clip is not on the *EUscreen* portal, but on *Open Images*.

25 Especially the coming five years after the Second World War, this 'normalizing' function of radio was still strong. See: Alexander Badenoch, *Voices in Ruins: West German Radio across the 1945 Divide*, Palgrave, 2008, p. 44ff.

The opening scenes of *Uw Onbekende Huisgenoot* ('Your Unknown Housemate') (1954) discussed above show more strongly the shifting position of radio from a domestic medium to one implicated in various forms of 'mobile privatization'.<sup>26</sup> The voice-over personification begins by extolling the fact that it is everywhere from the city to small towns and villages 'even at the most remote farms' ('00:57-'01:07) - along with a montage of scenes from such places. As these last words come, the camera first shows a long shot of a field with a rustic thatched-roof house in the background - and then pans down to a woman in a field in modern clothing on a blanket and tuning in a late-model portable radio. The voice and montage pick up again, listing and showing not domestic places, but various places outside the home, rendered private space by the radio: 'I accompany you on your vacation trips, keep you company at your workplace or factory, or wherever, alone, you sit out your time' ('01:13-'01:25). Summing up this mobility of domestication, the voice-over declares: 'Everywhere, I am your housemate'. The film cuts from the front of the KRO building and then only at this point shows radios in domestic spaces, finally arriving in a middle-class home ('02:02-'02:28) ('but with you, I feel at home'), where men are reading and women are keeping their hands busy with various forms of needlework. It is within this sphere, and to this family, that the personification of radio appears in the flesh, at that then stands in for the national (and in this case Catholic) family.<sup>27</sup>

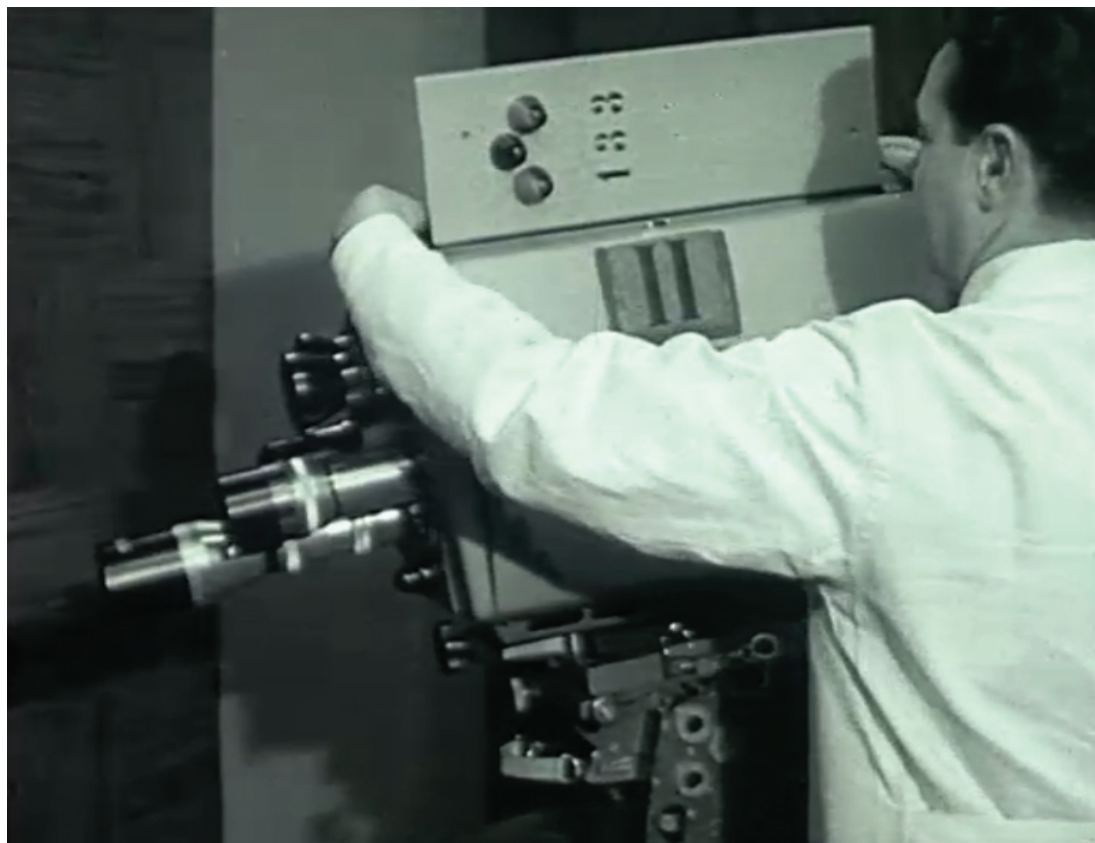
In an Austrian clip for school television titled '*Radio-Television*' (1966) presenting a history of television, radio appears as mostly *a step towards television*. The English title, which created the search hit, seems to be something of a mistranslation: the original German title *Rundfunk-Fernsehen* would perhaps have been better rendered as 'television broadcasting'. But to an extent, this mistranslation captures the uncertainty around the two terms, and points to the genealogical imagination of television as radio with pictures, captured also in Dutch in the term *beeldradio* ('image radio') and in the German word *Bildfunk* which was used during the development phases of television. In the opening sequence of the clip ('00:50-'01:05), television 'quotes' itself with a close-up on a television set. The title '*Rundfunk Fernsehen*' (Figure 2) is echoed in the picture on the television screen ('Österreichischer Rundfunk: Fernsehen') and the voiceover announcement from the television set ('This is the Österreichischer Rundfunk with its television programme'). This a subtle shift of meaning from the programme's title: *Rundfunk* here marks the name of the *institution*, and *Fernsehen* specifies the medium itself. Thus, while the title of the programme seems to sketch a general development of a technology, it is immediately ideologically bound up with the national institution.



Figure 2. The original title *Rundfunk Fernsehen* is echoed in the picture on the television screen 'Österreichischer Rundfunk: Fernsehen'.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, Routledge, (1974) 2005, p. 19.

<sup>27</sup> Source: *Radio-Television*, ORF 1966, 29 March ('00:56).



Video 5. *Radio-Television*, ORF 1966. Go to the [online version](#) of this article to watch the video.

The ‘mistranslated’ title further highlights the extent to which radio is portrayed in the clip as simply being a *stepping stone* on the way to television. Such a narrative is inadvertently signalled in the clip’s opening, as the close-up of the television is followed by the now-classic counter-shot of a television’s-eye view of a (remarkably small) sitting room (Figure 3). This is not the suburban home from the parallel world of American television,<sup>28</sup> but what appears to be the relatively tight quarters of a post-war urban dwelling. Just visible in the shadows behind the family – notably absent is a ‘father’ figure, whose ideological place during the hours of school television is at work, and thus outside the home – is the household’s radio. The radio can be *seen* but is literally relegated to the *background* behind the household members/viewers, who are watching the television set. This domestic establishing sequence then serves to set up a discussion of the evolution of television (in which radio is a short transitional phase (‘03:50-’04:20) before the ‘real’ experience of distant pictures could be achieved). This narrative that is also pointedly ‘domesticated’ into a national narrative with a strong emphasis on German-speaking inventors, as well as Austrian actor and director Leopold Hainisch (1891–1979), who tells of his work at the Reichssender Paul Nipkow in the 1930s.

## 6 A Different Vision of International Airwaves

Especially in the the post-war era, one of the recurring visions of radio currently on the *EUscreen* portal is as an *international* medium, with multiple features on shortwave and international broadcasting. Both in Western and

<sup>28</sup> Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America*, University of Chicago Press, 1992, ch 4.



Figure 3. Television's-eye view of a small living room.<sup>29</sup>

Eastern Europe, this was a key aspect of broadcasting that took on new importance in the Cold War era.<sup>30</sup> Not surprisingly, either, most traces of the most famous Cold War radio Radio Free Europe in the former Soviet bloc are **from 1991** after the collapse of the communist regimes, with the exception of a mention of the station as a harmful influence in a **Czechoslovak news segment on protests in October 1989**. Beyond the Cold War, shortwave broadcasting took on a new and multi-layered importance, embraced by UNESCO among others as a peaceful means of international understanding and global development,<sup>31</sup> not to mention continuing for many countries, including Britain, France and the Netherlands, a complicated connection to (former) colonial holdings.<sup>32</sup> As Komska argues, overseas broadcasters relied in particular on *visualizations*. Not necessarily for their own audiences, but for the 'home' audiences for whom their voices (supposedly speaking for the nation) were not familiar – or, in the case of foreign languages services, even intelligible.<sup>33</sup>

*EUscreen* offers a rare but valuable glimpse at a different vision of the international airwaves beyond the now-standard Cold War combat paradigm in the Czechoslovakian **film reel** from 1961 discussed above. As outlined, this video follows a somewhat classic trajectory for behind-the-scenes, and in particular overseas broadcasting, videos. It begins with close-ups of office work: first typing (entirely done by women), then telephone conversations, and then finally the work of speakers in a radio studio, making announcements in a number of languages.

Its composition strongly resembles a compilation in the context of **the 10th anniversary of the Dutch 'Wereldomroep'** (Radio Netherlands Worldwide, 1955).<sup>34</sup> The clip includes houses of the transmission masts in Huizen, broadcasts in various languages, a van of the 'Wereldomroep', and footage of the extensions of new transmission masts in Lopik. We see many identical elements, including the stacked-up letters and montage of

29 Source: **Radio-Television**, ORF 1966, 29 March ('01:16).

30 On how the Cold War affected both Eastern and Western broadcasting landscapes see Alexander Badenoch, 'Behind the Ironic Curtain: Surfing the Western Airwaves between "Pirate" Radio and Public Service'. *SPIEL* 2, 1, 2016, 65–90.

31 George Arthur Codding, *Broadcasting Without Barriers*, Unesco, 1959.

32 Marie Gillespie and Alban Webb, *Diasporas and Diplomacy: Cosmopolitan Contact Zones at the BBC World Service (1932–2012)*, Routledge, 2013.

33 Yuliya Komska, 'Sight Radio: Radio Free Europe on Screen, 1951–1965', p. 62.

34 NB: The clip is not on the *EUscreen* portal, but on *YouTube*.

languages. Comparing the two newsreels also highlights a strong contrast with the Czechoslovakian film reel: namely the relative absence of high technology in the latter: no transmitters underline the strength of the signal, no engineers turning unidentifiable knobs in transmission control rooms suggest technological prowess, no banks of reel-to-reel tape players accent the vast content or production of the station. As such, the clip actually erases most elements that could be seen as competition in the airwaves with the West. Instead, the clip highlights other elements: global connection and cosmopolitan competence. The emphasis comes to lie on the vast amount of correspondence, complete with folkloristic 'souvenirs' from other nations. The montage of announcements in foreign languages also creates a view of a country that is open to the world, but at the same time, staying in place. The clip's closing shots, not of the world, but of antennas on the roof overlooking Prague seem not so much to present international broadcasting as reaching out, but as bringing in other countries - as a kind of tourism in reverse.



Video 6. Broadcast for 10th anniversary of the Dutch 'Wereldomroep', Radio Netherlands Worldwide. Go to the [online version](#) of this article to watch the video.

*EUscreen* also offers something of a bookend to this broadcast: a Dutch television report on **Czechs in the Netherlands** who had fled the country after the crushing Prague Spring in 1968. It opens with a sequence of a Dutch organization looking for housing for Czechoslovakians who had fled, pointing out that Dutch families often wanted to return the hospitality they had received as tourists. The report is also interestingly polyglot - in the end, a Czech family is interviewed in German, with no subtitles provided. The radio then makes an appearance from 10:35, shows the family listening to illegal radio reports from their home country on small transistor radios - showing a kind of mirror image to the hunted listeners of Radio Free Europe shown in information campaigns in the West.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Richard Cummings, *Radio Free Europe's 'Crusade for Freedom': Rallying Americans Behind Cold War Broadcasting, 1950–1960*, McFarland, 2010; Yuliya Komska, 'Sight Radio: Radio Free Europe on Screen, 1951–1965'.

## 7 Broadcasting Beyond Nations

The comparative perspective that *EUscreen* affords shows both *visual* and *narrative conventions* around radio. The slippery position of radio transmitters between centre and periphery, and indeed between the national and the transnational, is highlighted in a **newsreel** about the opening of the RAI transmitter in Caltanissetta, Sicily in November 1951. The video establishes the eventful nature of the news item with images of important figures, including the Italian Minister of Telecommunication Giuseppe Spataro, arriving at the station and making speeches. These visuals are then slowly intercut with shots of the technology: first the giant antenna, the highest human-built structure in Europe at the time it was built (1965), then a map, showing its placement in Sicily.

The visuals are at best vague about the geographical reach and intent of the radio station. In fact, the antenna ultimately served not only its immediate region, but also reached much of the Mediterranean, including Spain and North Africa. To a certain extent it was a kind of counter-pole to the long-established international transmitter in the Adriatic port of Bari, famous since the 1930s for its Arabic broadcasts<sup>36</sup> – and shown briefly **in this 1962 newsreel** ('03:16-'03:29) with tell-tale static sounds, also as a site of the radio receiver industry. In spite of this potential importance outside of national territory, the newsreel itself highlights for a domestic audience the new transmitter's role in shoring up radio's *territorial* function, saying it will 'solve the radio problems of Sicily and large parts of Calabria'. Comparing this video with the other clips on international broadcasting that feature montages of voices and languages also underlines the extent to which the clip actually *silences* the 'voice' of the station. Following a montage of scenes building up to a view of speakers in the studio, the clip stops just before they begin to speak, and thus avoids the politics of accent and dialect in claiming the airwaves over Southern Italy as national territory.



Video 7. *Implementing and developing radio in Sicily*, LUCE 1951. Go to the **online version** of this article to watch the video.

<sup>36</sup> See Callum A. MacDonald, 'Radio Bari: Italian Wireless Propaganda in the Middle East and British Countermeasures 1934–38', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 13, 2, 1977, 195–207.



Finally, a clip celebrating the 5th anniversary *Deutsche Welle TV* offers us in visual imagery a review of the beginnings of DW-TV, after taking over RIAS-TV (Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor, Broadcasting in the American Sector). Deutsche Welle-TV has been on air since April 1st 1992. Its opening makes the transition clear: focussing on a classic-model radio, in which 'television' pictures begin to appear – converting it visually into a TV set. From there, the scenes that make up its first minute take up a familiar pattern: the grand opening of the new institution; a tracking shot in through a building to show broadcasters at work; this is then followed by shots that emphasize the technology. Here the transmitter antennas are replaced by rockets, as satellites and their footprints represent the global reach. The montage of languages is seen but not heard in an infographic. While focussing on television, this clip, too, follows and documents many of the same narrative and visual conventions used for international broadcasting.



Video 8. 5 years DW-TV, Deutsche Welle 1997. Go to the [online version](#) of this article to watch the video.

## 8 European Television Heritage as a Source for Understanding Radio History

Radio has been described as a 'resilient medium' – including in the digital era. Research from the ECREA Radio section have argued that as newer media (like, importantly, television) have challenged radio's once dominant position as a 'means of simultaneous communication with large and unseen audiences', the medium has *adapted* to those challenges over its long history.<sup>37</sup> In this essay, we explored *EUScreen* (and where relevant, pointed to connected materials on *YouTube* and *Open Images*) as a source of information regarding radio's long history. The essay has positioned itself as a 'bottom-up approach' using audiovisual media on the *EUScreen* portal as a source for visual representations and

<sup>37</sup> Madalena Oliveira, Grażyna Stachyra and Guy Starkey, eds, *Radio: The Resilient Medium. Papers from the third conference of the ECREA Radio Research Section*, Centre for Research in Media and Cultural Studies, University of Sunderland, UK, 2014.

narrative constructions. Our analysis has teased out visualizations of domestic contexts, ‘behind the scenes’ and ‘making of’ practices, radio professions and gendered division of labour, and broadcasting overseas and beyond nations. We have done so across different countries in Europe and different timelines, specifically relating to representing, documenting and imagining radio as a (background) medium in relation to television’s social embedding in the 1950s and 1960s. *EUscreen*’s potentialities underscore that transnational, comparative research in this respect *is* possible, and also offers deeper reflections on how digitalization can help with some of the ‘problems’ of doing this type of research.

Our analysis has also created opportunities for source criticism, especially regarding both *availability* and *absence* on the *EUscreen* portal. Taking the discussed limitations into account, we have been able to explore the visual meanings of radio by means of transnational sources that have imagined its history for broad and diverse audiences, but also have documented its practices – including sources that have never been aired, like the KRO promotional film *Uw Onbekende Huisgenoot* (‘Your Unknown Housemate’, 1954). In addition to our previous reflections on availability, and the limited availability of sources from/on certain periods of radio’s long history on *EUscreen*, the portal is also a ‘living’ archive in the sense that content may disappear - for instance, the Swedish Royal Library’s recently removed its content from the portal, thus costing access **a segment introducing Melodiradio**, the first major radio programming effort from a public service broadcaster to address the commercial competition from offshore broadcasters.<sup>38</sup> Such archival content can contribute important alternative perspectives to other representations of pirate offshore broadcasting practices. But even in their ‘invisibility’, however, the fact that the metadata is retained on *EUscreen* alerts researchers to the presences of such sources and in so doing opens, rather than closes, research opportunities.

As a prime example of digital humanities research work, the curated, pre-selected collection on the *EUscreen* portal (with the *MyEUscreen* personal and interactive homepage as a tool for collecting, documenting and annotating sources) aids in the analysis and contextualization of more complex datasets, taking important first steps in helping to diminish the risks of comparative work – which are carrying comparisons too far by over-selection, simplification, generalization or obsession<sup>39</sup>, as well as to a certain degree overcoming language barriers by translation of metadata descriptions, subtitles and multi-language search. Researchers should still take ‘enthusiastic caution’<sup>40</sup>, but real possibilities for such comparative work in the digital age are being exposed, helping to identify meanings in a larger cross-cultural dataset and providing rich, detailed and complex interpretations.

Although digital television heritage is increasingly recognized as a rich object for analysis, there is a scarcity in researching audiovisual cultural memory from a European comparative perspective<sup>41</sup> and television as a constellation of dynamic, cross-media storytelling practices.<sup>42</sup> Using digital humanities tools like *EUscreen*, researchers are now able to develop methods that include *and* venture beyond the understanding of practices by public service broadcasters and archival institutions in local contexts. The study of audiovisual sources and their use in the new media landscape (which for both radio and television can include very recent, previously broadcast, online and digital sources) can then help to construct new discourses of audiovisual media, including, as we have shown, radio history.

Radio in the digital age is venturing from a sound only, verbal medium, to a visual medium, too – think of in the digital era for instance webcasting on the internet, and the use of graphic interfaces for the distribution of digital

38 Alexander Badenoch. ‘In What Language Do You like to Sing Best?’ Placing Popular Music in Broadcasting in Post-War Europe’, *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d’histoire*, 20, 5, 2013b, 848; Alf Björnberg, ‘Blacklists and Hitlists: Public Service Radio and Musical Gatekeeping,’ in: Alf Björnberg and Thomas Bossius, eds, *Made in Sweden: Studies in Popular Music*, Routledge, 2017, pp. 31–33.

39 Jane Chapman, *Comparative Media History: An Introduction: 1789 to the Present*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2005.

40 Jane Chapman, *Comparative Media History: An Introduction: 1789 to the Present*.

41 Notable exceptions are: Jonathan Bignell and Andreas Fickers, *A European Television History*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008; Andreas Fickers and Catherine Johnson, *Transnational Television History: A Comparative Approach, Media History*, 16, 1, 2010, 1–11; and multi-media, cross-European research into’s television and radio’s history and culture in *VIEW* such as Jerome Bourdon and Berber Hagedoorn, *VIEW: Journal of European Television History and Culture*, 2, 3, ‘European TV Memories’, 2013.

42 See for instance Berber Hagedoorn, book review Kay et. al, eds. *The Past in Visual Culture: Essays on Memory, Nostalgia and the Media, Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 1, 3, March 2018.

radio content.<sup>43</sup> In line with more contemporary reflections on television as a dynamic, ‘multi-platform’ and hybrid memory practice in the current age of convergence,<sup>44</sup> and the visualization of radio as a medium *itself*, the authors wish to urge *EUScreen* to take up a more *multi-media approach* to the collecting, curating and contextualization of audiovisual sources – to able to keep performing this important function in the digital age.

## Biography

Alexander Badenoch is the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision Professor of Transnational Media at the Free University of Amsterdam, and Assistant Professor in Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Utrecht. He was researcher on the HERA collaborative research project **Transnational Radio Encounters**, and part of the team of the award-winning online listening and exhibition platform **Radio Garden**. He is President of the **Studienkreis Rundfunk und Geschichte**, the German broadcasting history society, and co-coordinator of the **Women’s Radio in Europe Network (WREN)**. He is author of *Voices in Ruins: West German Radio Across the 1945 Divide* (2008), and co-editor, with Golo Föllmer, of *Transnationalizing Radio Research: New Approaches to an Old Medium* (forthcoming 2018) and with Andreas Fickers and Christian Henrich-Franke, of *Airy Curtains in the European Ether: Broadcasting and the Cold War* (2013).

Berber Hagedoorn is Assistant Professor Media Studies at the University of Groningen. Hagedoorn specialises in Media and Cultural Studies and working with digitized audiovisual heritage, and studies the representation of mediated events, participatory media, multi-platform storytelling and cultural memory. She is Vice-Chair of the **ECREA Television Studies thematic section**, organizing cooperation for European research and education into television’s history and future as a multi-platform storytelling practice. Her Digital Humanities experience includes the European Best Practice Networks **VideoActive** and **EUScreen**, her 2016–17 Research Fellowship at **the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision** in Hilversum studying audiovisual representations of historical news events in the context of **DIVE+**, which builds an innovative approach for the exploration of digital heritage via linked online collections, and currently her CLARIAH Research Pilot **Narrativizing Disruption** (with dr. Sabrina Sauer), which studies how users of the media archive and audiovisual sources use and create narratives to understand media events, and how exploratory search supports such narrative generation. Hagedoorn has published in amongst others *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, *Studies in Documentary Film*, *Rundfunk und Geschichte*, *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis* and *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* (<https://berberhagedoorn.wordpress.com>).

43 Johan Cavalcanti van Haandel and Fernando Ramos, ‘The use of transmedia storytelling in the radio universe’, *Radio, sound and Internet*, Proceedings of Net Station International Conference, 2015, 200–208.

44 Berber Hagedoorn, ‘**Television as a Hybrid Repertoire of Memory: New Dynamic Practices of Cultural Memory in the Multi-Platform Era**’, *VIEW: Journal of European Television History and Culture*, 2, 3, 2013, 52–64.