

# Media and migration

## A review of the field

**Liza Hopkins**

**ABSTRACT:** *The interrelationships between media and migration is not a new field of study, but it is a rapidly growing and not unproblematic one. The migration process itself generates a reliance on mediated forms of communication. Yet, while, traditionally, public service broadcasting has addressed an audience that was imagined on the national scale, society in immigration countries is becoming increasingly heterogeneous. At the same time, massive advances in the technology of communication have opened up transnational communication channels of a speed, scale, and level of accessibility never seen before. Technological advances, changes in regulatory regimes, and increasing audience demand are also fundamentally transforming the patterns of production, distribution, and consumption of media content. This paper examines how these three processes are combining to drive change in global media and communications patterns, and considers the implications for such changes on the democratic ideal of the public sphere.*

### Introduction

The study of the interrelationships between media and migration is not a new field, but it is a rapidly growing and not unproblematic one. The process of physically moving one's place of residence generates a reliance on mediated forms of communication with family, friends, and neighbours as well as a dependence on mediated communication for news and information about occurrences of interest in the homeland. This is particularly acute for those

*Liza Hopkins, Institute for  
Social Research, Swinburne  
University of Technology,  
Hawthorn, Victoria,  
Australia.*

whose migration routes take them far from the country of origin, as well as those whose journeys are forced through civil war, political repression, religious intolerance, and other forms of civil instability in the homeland. While mass migrations occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, particularly following the colonial paths outwards from Europe to the new world, it is in the sixty or so years following the end of World War II that an accelerating path of global mass migratory movements has really begun. More than 190 million people moved country in 2005 (IOM, 2008, p. 2), in a complex network of global flows, between north and south, east and west, into, out of, across, and between the developed and the developing worlds. The impact of such shifting populations on both the sending and receiving countries should not be underestimated. While the visually and physically most apparent impacts of these migration flows may be felt in the everyday world of seeing strangers on the street, it is in the mediated environment of both national and transnational communication that migrants and non-migrants make sense of the rising tide of diversity.

In an electronic age, the power of the media cannot be underestimated. We are saturated by media sounds and images throughout most of our waking hours, whether passively—through viewing advertising hoardings or hearing talkback radio in a taxi—or more actively—by choosing to turn on the television, radio, or computer, or by opening a newspaper or magazine. Traditionally, Western-style democracy has depended on having a citizenry informed of current events to keep control over government power, so that the media plays a vital ‘watchdog role’ in providing the people with enough information to keep the government answerable (Denemark, 2005, p. 232). An increasingly media-savvy audience, however, can no longer be considered as simple consumers of information and entertainment, but as active participants in a two-way dialogue, contributing and constructing content in a variety of ways. This is not a new phenomenon, of course, as ‘letters to the editor’ pages have long featured in print media and, more recently, talkback radio has proved to be a popular forum for community input. But, with the rise of the Internet and the diversification of broadcast options, more open, unfettered spaces have become accessible for online citizens to create content, add their voices and opinions to others’, and provide alternative views of what constitutes news and current affairs in the global society (Green, Holloway, & Quin, 2004, p. 89).

Academic media studies have largely been based on a broadcast model of media distribution. Within this broadcast model, television,

in particular, but also, especially earlier, radio, addressed a national society and culture. Broadcasting, especially public broadcasting, was fundamentally connected to the ideas of governance in the nation state. This model, however, looks increasingly anachronistic in much of the world, especially in immigration countries such as Australia, Canada, the United States, and Great Britain (Tay & Turner, 2008, p. 71). Thus, more recent media studies have begun to modify this model through notions such as Cunningham's public 'sphericules', counter-publics, transnational publics, and so on (Tay & Turner, 2008, p. 72). In such models, audiences are seen to be fragmenting, as media content choice multiplies. This trend privileges diversity and disrupts the time flow of traditional broadcasting through the development of a range of viewing and reading platforms. Commercial media producers are responding to this by diversifying their delivery platforms and delivering to diversified taste/niche audiences. Thus, broadcasting begins to cater to membership in multiple communities, rather than any singular national one. This paper examines the changing landscape of both national and transnational media in a globalising world and critically assesses the current state and future directions of media research in such an environment. It also takes a series of case studies from Australia, Britain, and Europe as examples of the kinds of issues increasingly arising in immigration countries as they begin to grapple with the changing media and technology landscape of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Migrants and media in a global environment**

The history of migrant media is a long and intricate one (Askew & Wilk, 2002; Chalaby, 2005; Cottle, 2000; Dissanayake & Wilson, 1996; Karim, 1998, 2003; Naficy, 1999; Price, 2002; Sinclair & Cunningham, 2000), both from the perspective of migrants, adapting to their changed mediascape through the production and consumption of minority-language media, homeland media, and diasporic media, and for the mainstream media in the receiving country, as it adapts to a changing notion of the audience within a national imaginary (Anderson, 1999). In the contemporary situation of massive migration flows and concomitant technological advances in media and communications means, globalisation becomes a key trope for the examination of migrant media.

While globalisation is itself a contested term (see, for example, Appadurai, 1996; Beck, 2006; Morley & Robbins, 1995; Sassen, 2003; Sparks, 2007), I take Sassen's model of globalisation as the transborder activities that connect multiple local processes and actors in globalised

ways (Sassen, 2003, p. 2) as a useful starting point for understanding the production, transmission, and consumption patterns of migrant media forms. Yet it is also clear that the existence of multiple transnational interactions across national borders does not do away with the importance of the nation state as a site for the production and reproduction of social power.

Thus, there exists an inherent tension between a perceived need for national unity, coherence, and homogeneity, and the right to diversity, plurality, heterogeneity, and, above all, resistance to the imposition of mainstream or majority cultural norms. Such tension may be experienced through the complex interplay between increasingly fragmented media sphericules catering to increasing numbers of niche audiences and a culturally homogenising mainstream media. As Silverstone and Georgiou explain:

*it is through these various media that our relations with others, both neighbours and strangers, are facilitated, or, indeed, denied. Within and between families, neighbourhoods, nations and global space, such media enable the transmission and sharing of images and ideas, meanings and motivations. Relationships are created and sustained. Prejudices likewise. The media, both large and small, private and public, are absolutely crucial to the management of everyday life. This ubiquity and dependence is... self-evident. It is mostly taken for granted. (2005, p. 434)*

Yet this ubiquity of the media also needs to be examined. In many countries, only a minority of the audience are watching free-to-air services, while everyone else is watching subscription services, often from other countries (Tay & Turner, 2008, p. 74). In such countries, only a fraction of what is available originates from the home country, even on free-to-air services. Satellite services serve a regional or global rather than a national audience. As television becomes delinked from the nation, content is increasingly market driven, rather than having a defining social role (Tay & Turner, 2008, p. 74). Moreover, what exists as minority media (e.g., satellite television) across much of the globe is actually mainstream media in the home country (Silverstone & Georgiou, 2005, p. 434), with all the national identity markers that that might entail. As Gillespie notes in her influential study of television and ethnicity, audiences in London, though locally specific in many respects, are also influenced in their cultural choices by the range of cosmopolitan and diasporic media available to them (1995, p. 3).

Clearly, both production and consumption of media content are shaped by much more than simply ethnicity or migration history but also include material, social, and individual parameters. Yet the media, particularly the mainstream media in countries of immigration, 'often create boundaries for inclusion and exclusion, and eventually for participation in a "common culture"' (Madianou, 2005, p. 522). This has a direct effect on the Andersonian imagined community of the nation state (Anderson, 1999). It also raises the problem of the representation of minorities in mainstream media and the proliferation of alternative images across a range of delivery platforms.

## **Identity and representation in the imagined community**

A conflict appears to be arising between the older public service view of broadcasting as providing information and entertainment for all, nationally based and based on nation building, and a newer, free-market, fragmenting and specialised, pay-per-view service ideology (Moores, 2005, p. 31). Such newer forms of broadcasting can be national, transnational, subnational, or highly localised (Moores, 2005, p. 32). The old model assumed a cultural commonality among a singular imagined audience. But:

*[i]f this was ever the case historically, then it appears to be less and less evident in the current period, because of an increasing fragmentation and dispersal of audiences. New commonalities might well be emerging from these shifts, but they do not usually conform to the old shape of bounded national community envisaged by public service broadcasters in Western Europe. (Moores, 2005, p. 33)*

On the flip side of the emergence of such new commonalities is the creation of new categories of those who are excluded. As an example of the 'othering' that occurs in the mainstream media, we can take as a case study the depictions of Islam and Muslims in the multicultural West. Such depictions in the Australian media, particularly the printed press, have recently been analysed to investigate the effects of language and content choice in news articles relating to Islam. The researchers found that '[t]he arrival of asylum seekers from the Middle East on Australian shores amid this heightened sense of insecurity has led some commentators to assume a connection between terrorism and Muslims. As a consequence, there appears to have arisen a disturbing sense that Muslims are un-Australian and that Islam poses

a threat to the Australian way of life' (Akbarzadeh & Smith, 2005, p. 2). This is reflected in the choice of language used to represent Islam, as well as the preponderance of stories relating to negative portrayals of Muslims. These portrayals conflate 'Muslim' identity with terrorism, violence, extremism, political instability, denigration of women, and general backwardness. Thus '[t]he essentialist depiction of Muslims and Islam constructs them as the Other; as immature, even backward ethnic or foreign groups who need to be managed or tolerated in "our" country' (Akbarzadeh & Smith, 2005, p. 5).

Audience research in Britain has found that Muslim respondents believe that non-Muslims would be influenced by the negative portrayal of Muslims in the media, that some Muslims may also be negatively influenced, and that media coverage is responsible for Islamophobia in the community (Poole, 2001, p. 80; 2002, p. 236). As with the Australian case, British media discussion of global Islamic events very often leads to a discussion of fundamentalism at home, reifying a link between the two (Poole, 2002, p. 70). Moreover, Muslims are not seen as normal Britons and therefore do not appear in normal news stories (Poole, 2002, p. 99). But British Muslims are mainly known to non-Muslims through the media; thus, media define the meaning of 'Muslims within' and provide audiences with their 'ways of seeing' (Poole, 2002, p. 240), as 'social meanings are produced in the interaction between text and audience' (Poole, 2002, p. 188). Yet, in contrast to the findings of research with Australian Turks, whose cultural identity overrides religious identity (Hopkins, 2008, p. 62), researchers are finding that religion is a more salient identity marker for young Muslims in Britain than is ethnicity (Poole, 2002, p. 224).

Yet, even in the face of such blatant 'othering' practices, audience studies suggest that the migrant mediascape does not represent a simple rejection of the mainstream and a preference for purely transnational content. Rather:

*Diasporic communities sustain and partly depend for their shared sense of identity on transnational communications. But the national and local context where diasporic populations live is equally important for the construction of meanings of community and identity, especially as inclusion, exclusion and participation in the broader society are largely grounded in national and local space. (Georgiou, 2005, p. 490)*

## **The migrant response—consuming transnational media**

Exclusion of minority groups from the mainstream of national media generates two obvious response strategies. One is to import more acceptable media from the homeland or elsewhere, or what I am here calling transnational media. The other is to create locally based media that can act as an alternative to the other commercially and publicly available offerings. Such local media, when combined with transnational media creates what can be called the diasporic mediasphere. Both of these strategies have been employed by migrant groups at least since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the establishment of ethnic presses in the new world and the importation of media products such as newspapers, books, and magazines in minority languages contributing to thriving small-scale circulation patterns within local ethnic communities. Even into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, such patterns were reproduced through the importation and circulation of electronic media products, such as videotaped films and television programs from the country of origin and audio tape recordings of radio broadcasts or other forms of public speech. Yet the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a sudden, rapid technological shift in transport and communication means that has dramatically altered the speed, scale, and cost of transmitting media content across national borders and, indeed, across the globe.

The spread of the Internet and the arrival of accessible satellite television transmissions have fundamentally changed the way many migrants of the first, second, and even subsequent generations receive access to their preferred media content. Thus, since the introduction of satellite television from their homelands, many immigrant communities in Europe and elsewhere have taken to watching it frequently. Turkish migrants can make a useful case study here, since much research on their media habits has been conducted in Britain, Germany, Holland, and Australia.

In Germany, for example, recent research has found that approximately 70% of German Turkish homes have a satellite dish for Turkish commercial channels, and more than 85% can receive TRT-INT direct from Turkey. Commercial media in Germany increasingly target Turkish speakers with radio, television, and print in German, Turkish, and German-Turkish. The impact of this media proliferation has been a cause for concern to the mainstream and is taken as evidence that Turks are marginalising themselves (Çağlar, 2002, p. 181). At the same time, research into transnational television viewing in the Netherlands found that, by as early as 1995, 50% of Turkish families had satellite

television access. The Turks were therefore early and fast adopters of satellite broadcasting, as well as frequent viewers (34 hours per week on average), and watched Turkish channels 80% of the time. The Turkish government station TRT was also available on Dutch cable, but people far preferred the commercial stations available by satellite (Milikowski, 2001, p. 125). This sudden popularity of Turkish television in the Netherlands, however, has become a source of anxiety for the mainstream of Dutch society, just as it has in Germany. Yet the Dutch researchers note:

*Now that eight years have passed since the first Turkish dishes were installed, it is evident that these fears have been unfounded. Turkish immigrants, though indeed watching a lot more television from their country of origin than immigrants from Morocco and Surinam, and identifying strongly with other Turks..., also take a closer interest in Dutch civic life and participate more actively in Dutch institutions.... It is not a matter of either/or, it seems. The explanation...is that civic interest and behaviour is a cultural resource in itself. (Milikowski, 2001, p. 128)*

In Berlin, 71% of Turkish radio audiences have been found to listen to Metropol FM, which broadcasts in both Turkish and German, while only 2% listen to Radio Multikulti (the multicultural, multilingual public broadcast service) (Çağlar, 2002, p. 185; Kosnick, 2007, p. 100). Metropol sees itself as a commercial entity, but it also functions both to unite the community and to foster multiple attachments with Germany, Europe, and Turkey (Çağlar, 2002, p. 185). Yet, in some ways, it identifies with Berlin as a city rather than the nation of Germany (Çağlar, 2002, p. 186). Some of this has come about through the discovery of German Turks as an advertising audience and consumer group, especially for specialised products, such as international telecommunications and Shariat banking (Çağlar, 2002, p. 189).

The response of the German and Dutch mainstream to this is the fear that access to homeland media leads to greater ethnification of Turks, or a stronger degree of ethnic identification and a lower degree of integration, by reinforcing the cultural differences between Turks and others (Aksoy & Robins, 2000, p. 344; Milikowski, 2000, p. 444). This is essentially a nationalist paradigm. Yet there are as many kinds of Turks as there are French, Germans, or Britons, and they are essentially ordinary. As Aksoy and Robins have shown so lucidly, mostly what migrant Turks



are doing with Turkish media is not simply being influenced by Turkish state nationalism, but 'working through the complexities of Turkish culture and identity now' (Aksoy & Robins, 2000, p. 345). Thus, for example, 'Turkish commercial satellite television helps migrants, and in particular their children, to liberate themselves from certain outdated and culturally imprisoning notions of Turkishness, which had survived in the isolation of migration' (Milikowski, 2000, p. 444).

Effectively, then, 'over the last 10 years, TRT—as the agent ... of the Turkish state—has been involved in a systematic strategy of cultural transnationalization' (Aksoy & Robins, 2000, p. 346) in Central Asia, Europe, then Australia/NZ, and now possibly the US. Such a strategy 'has aspired to connect together the imagined community of Turks at a global scale' (Aksoy & Robins, 2000, p. 346). When private channels later began to appear in the transnational satellite broadcasting realm, it was purely for business reasons; there was money to be made from advertising and through increased sales from newspapers owned by the same media companies as the commercial television channels (Aksoy & Robins, 2000, p. 349). Commercial broadcasters are, therefore, subverting the traditional nation-based community/identity-building role of media and reconfiguring it around commercially based interests (Georgiou, 2006, p. 69). The project of assimilation into the homeland imaginary is most evident in state-run satellite broadcasting to global diasporas (Georgiou, 2006, p. 70), yet, perhaps unsurprisingly, state-run channels are the least popular and least watched of all the channels available.

Meanwhile, in Turkey itself, the late 1990s saw a major opening up of television and other media sources to private and international interests. As Karanfil observes: 'With the pouring in of American action series, British dramas, Brazilian soap operas, game and quiz shows, news and current affairs programmes, and reality shows, Turkish audiences met with the global, local, traditional and national at the same time' (2007, p. 63). Thus, for diasporic Turks, the updated image of Turkey that comes through satellite television may bring disappointment about the changes happening 'at home', as globalisation of media industries means that Turkish content is no longer particularly Turkish; indeed, it is 'un-national' (Karanfil, 2007, p. 68). Viewing such content may bring the realisation that there is no 'home' to go back to, that the homeland has changed irrevocably in the meantime (Karanfil, 2007, p. 65). Far from immersing viewers in homeland culture, therefore, satellite television can, in effect, disengage viewers both from the homeland and from the host (Karanfil, 2007, p. 68).

Still, many older respondents report that watching Turkish television is like an addiction. They watch it frequently because they do not want to miss anything, even though they complain about the quality and the foreign influence on programming. In Karanfil's study, they also reported having become disengaged from local media (Karanfil, 2007, p. 66). Yet careful audience research has found that these self-reports may be misleading, in that local free-to-air services still continue to be watched, particularly for specific, locally relevant material (Hopkins, 2009, p. 27). In Australia, most long-term migrants have not returned to the homeland often, and are thus more fully disconnected from contemporary Turkish reality than are European Turks. Watching Turkish transnational television allows viewers to see Turkish culture as dynamic. This appears to be particularly intriguing for the second generation, whose experience is predominantly of the immigration country, and whose first-hand encounters with the parental homeland may well be limited to occasional family holidays and visits. The visions of Turkish youth available to Western-born youth on satellite television show that Turkish youth culture is closer to a globalised youth culture than it is to the culture of the parents' generation (Ogan & Milikowski, 1998, p. 14). Watching satellite television helps the second generation of immigrant youth understand who they are, both in relation to the parental generation and to their Turkish- and Western-born peers (Ogan & Milikowski, 1998, p. 15).

## **Producing diasporic media**

As well as being voracious consumers of imported or transnational content, diasporic communities have a long history of creating media by, for, and about themselves. Since the 1970s, migrants have been using two complementary strategies to establish their voices in the country of immigration. These strategies have included becoming involved in mainstream media to change it from within ('entrism') and working to establish alternative productions ('separatism') (Rigoni, 2005, p. 571). These alternative media include ethnic language presses, community radio broadcasting, some community television production, and, increasingly, online content. While the strategy of changing mainstream media from within appears to have met with comparatively little, or at least very slow, success, the establishment of separatist media production, particularly at the community level, has been remarkably successful.

The continued viability of a rich ethnic media in multicultural contexts, however, depends on either a continuing inflow of migrants from the

home country, or a second and third generation that is sufficiently educated in the home language to be able to consume media that is from the home country or produced in that language. There is also always a limited audience compared to the mainstream media and that audience is often more dispersed (Zhang & Hao, 1997, p. 4). Arguments continue to rage regarding the necessity of public funding for niche media productions, despite their comparatively low ratings beside mainstream media offerings. Yet the arrival of the Internet has fundamentally changed both the costs of and barriers to production, distribution, and consumption of alternative media voices.

Despite early utopian visions of a place-less global public forum in which all voices could be heard equally, the use of the Internet to disseminate information through transnational communities continues to follow well-established conventions of powerful economic and social relationships. Although, at first glance, national borders seem to be less obtrusive on the Internet than in earlier forms of networked communication, (national) culture still influences the topography of cyberspace (Halavais, 2000, p. 8). It appears that, far from being deterritorialised, online communications are firmly rooted in physical space, though perhaps reconfiguring that space in new and different ways. Research in the Netherlands has shown that territoriality continues to underline and shape virtual space in a transnational context (van den Bos & Nell, 2006, p. 216). The project found that, far from dissolving the influence of physical geography, immigrants' Internet use reflected and even reinforced existing territorial ties and were:

*subject to spatial regimes that accord centrality to territorial 'place'. Online interaction by Kurdish and Iranian immigrants demonstrates instances of spatiality that would be ill conceived if labelled 'deterritorializing'. Instead, they highlight territorial bounds to virtual space. (van den Bos & Nell, 2006, p. 217)*

Contrary to the utopian anticipations of many early observers, most people, it seems, now use the Internet for bonding rather than bridging forms of social capital. That is, the online communication networks that have evolved tend to replicate and perhaps supplement the relationships that exist offline, rather than to create new, unbounded virtual communities. The most common uses of the Internet in Australia in 2007 were communication (family and friends); consuming (buy, download); search (Google, overwhelmingly); and games (Ewing

& Thomas, 2008). Very few people use the Internet to meet or chat to new people in preference to people they already know (Mechant, 2007). Even those who do very often move the relationship offline as soon as it has been established (witness the success of Internet dating sites). Similarly, micro-level research with individual Internet users has found that migrant youth in western Sydney predominantly chat online with others in the local area, subverting the idea that the Internet is always a global or physically deterritorialised medium (Gibian, 2003, p. 47).

The Internet is also proving to be an increasingly important media distribution channel, as well as a personal communication tool. Increasingly, platform convergence allows for dispersed communities to access telephony, newspapers, magazines, radio broadcasts, television content, and a wide range of other news, information, and entertainment content online. The rise of blogging, social networking, interactive content, and file-sharing platforms allows families and friends to keep in touch in myriad ways. Thus, young second-generation migrant Australians use MySpace and Facebook to keep in touch with cousins who still live in their parents' homeland and other countries of migration, as well as their Australian-based friends and family. They are also competent, frequent users of online media, checking newspapers from the homeland, streaming radio, and, increasingly, downloading videos of preferred content.

### **Moving beyond the migrant mediasphere**

All of this means that the idea of a singular community migrant mediasphere is outdated. People are not confined in their consumption of particularistic media sphericules (Cunningham & Sinclair, 2000). Migrants in Australia are shown to watch more television, of both local and transnational origins, as well as being better connected through other kinds of media, than mainstream Australians of longer standing (Hopkins, 2009).

For many, if not all, minority groups in polyethnic societies, 'the "transnations" of diasporic communities do appear to be significant aspects of globalization processes' (Karim, 1998, p. 1). As globalisation has made it more difficult for nations to regulate cross-border information flows, it is also clear that there are emerging and increasing South-North flows and the development of dispersed regional hubs rather than the centralisation of production. A good global example is that of US soap operas that morphed into South American telenovelas,

and then emerged as a workable global format (Karim, 1998, p. 5). The quintessential example is the television program known in Australia as *Ugly Betty*. This program originated in Colombia and has now been exported, repackaged, and reproduced to suit local audiences in countries across the globe (Miller, 2007).

Yet, despite the rising tide of online content, television is still a heavily consumed resource in both mainstream and migrant households. Contrary to the idea that, once transnational satellite broadcasting is introduced, minority groups retreat from the mainstream mediasphere, more than 95% of respondents in Australian research reported that they or members of their household watch Australian free-to-air television, while two-thirds listen to English-language radio. A lower percentage (40%) reported listening to Turkish-language radio, either that produced in Turkey (available through the satellite television subscription), or that produced locally through the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) and/or community language stations. Newspapers are also heavily consumed by Turkish Australians, with 90% of respondents reporting that they or someone in their household reads an English-language newspaper regularly, even if it is just the local or community paper, and 66% read a Turkish-language paper, most of which are free or low-cost locally produced weekly papers (Hopkins, 2009, p. 28).

Thus, it seems clear that ethnicity and nationalism are only one part of identity and community make-up. Ang et al., in research conducted for SBS in Australia, rejected the presumption that media consumers can be divided into 'mainstream' and 'ethnic' audiences. Instead, they found:

*many commonalities in the way the 'mainstream' and Australians of culturally diverse backgrounds use media. We observed generational differences in their media habits that demonstrated that generation, more than linguistic or cultural background, predicted media use. (Ang et al., 2006, p. 41)*

Ang et al. also found that a contrast may be made between content-based media (entertainment and information) and interactive media (digital, interpersonal, communication based). This explains the move away from traditional media by younger audiences, particularly as they feel that the mass media organisations do not represent them:

*Among the themes that emerged were lack of authenticity, sincerity and veracity of the perspectives they were getting,*

*and concern about an incomplete sense of belonging where their hybrid lives were further variegated by media half-truths. These themes were expressed not only for news and current affairs ... but also for entertainment media and general popular culture. Criticism was levelled primarily at large mass media organisations and in relation to traditional mass media. By contrast, participants exuded confidence and loyalty for interpersonal and networking media such as mobile phones, text messaging and email. (2006, p. 45)*

### **Political implications of shifting media habits in the hybrid nation**

Global movements of people and the creation or re-creation of communities with shared ethnicity, language, culture, or religion in other countries have blurred traditional social and national identities. Instead, new networks of transnational identities are being established that cannot be contained within the nation-state (Sakr, 2001, p. 7). Satellite television, which follows the flows of diaspora, disrupts 'the traditional alignment between audiovisual broadcasting flows and spatially integrated nation states' (Sakr, 2001, p. 22). It is also seen as 'a vehicle of cultural globalization, favouring concentration of media ownership, enlargement of media audiences and homogenization of cultural production' (Sakr, 2001, p. 22).

Since television, for the moment, remains 'the primary source of information that people have at their disposal for shaping their opinions and for participating, therefore, to [sic] the democratic process' (Baldi & Hasebrink, 2007, p. 9), broadcasting is clearly integral to modern citizenship. Yet, as Baldi and Hasebrink describe, it is becoming obvious that multiplicity of viewing outlets or channels does not necessarily lead to diversity or plurality of sources. In fact, media convergence appears to deliver decreasing diversity and less money spent on production, while concomitantly more is spent on marketing (Baldi & Hasebrink, 2007, p. 10). This comes at a time when citizens are increasingly asked to express opinions on critical issues as part of the participatory democratic process (Baldi & Hasebrink, 2007, p. 11).

In multicultural societies, where minorities struggle both for representation and participation, media constitute a site of contested space. Australia and Britain have both made attempts at inclusive public service broadcasting, but research with migrant communities shows that these efforts do not extend far enough (Bailey & Harindranath, 2006, p. 305). In fact, as Bailey and Harindranath go on to say, '[t]he right of ethnic minorities to political participation includes

the rights of communication, information and representation, which are part of the wider debate on integration and inclusion in liberal democracies' (2006, p. 304). Yet the global spread of diasporic media from homeland centres of production may also have the effect of ending local community production in the new country, as small-scale community producers cannot compete financially with the commercial providers of homeland production (Karim, 1998, p. 12). This seems to be particularly so for local language radio, which has flourished for the past forty to fifty years of high immigration, but which sees no future for itself in the face of new online and satellite media services (Hopkins, 2007).

Nor is it only in the news and current affairs media that impacts on identity can be felt. Media content increasingly comes from across borders and cannot be verified first-hand. The way that the real is represented in broadcast media is also being changed by the rise of reality television and 'infotainment', which cut across old boundaries of fact and fiction (Doyle & Griffiths, 2006, p. 5). A telling example is in the arrival of satellite television in the Arab world, which has created a pan-Arab audience across numerous nations. Previously, free-to-air television broadcasts were created nationally for a national audience. Pay-TV services also create more competition for viewers and therefore stimulate the introduction of new formats, such as reality/competition shows. Thus, '[i]nstead of being a wholesale intake of a Western format, reality television shows in the Arab world are an illustration of a global format whose content is localized' (Khatib, 2006, p. 26). Thus, the globalisation of television is best understood not as simple cultural homogenisation, but as a two-way process of standardisation across broader distances and also diversification into localised niches.

In contrast to the broadcast environment, where information flows through a few-to-many model, providing information for a more-or-less mass audience, the online environment takes a very different model. Yet online participation is often about shaping identity and a sense of community as well as mere transmission of information. As Fenton notes, the Internet:

*has the potential to change the practice of democracy radically because of its participatory and interactive attributes. It allows all citizens to alter their relationship to the public sphere, to become creators and primary subjects, to become engaged in social production. In this sense the Internet is ascribed the powers of democratization. (2008, p. 43)*

Its anonymity and creation of non-geographic proximity also contribute to the breakdown of some kinds of social barriers. Research with participants in a Dutch Muslim online forum found that, although Islam is organised by ethnicity in the Netherlands (i.e., Turks go to the Turkish mosque, Moroccans to the Moroccan mosque, and Surinamese to the Surinamese mosque), the online participants were of all different ethnicities and both genders (Brouwer, 2004, p. 52). However, this presupposes familiarity with a shared language in written form, thus excluding the illiterate or those not familiar with the Dutch language.

### **Conclusion: From nations to networks**

In recent years, the twin forces of global migration flows and technological advancement in media and communication channels have clearly combined to force a radical redefinition of the role of the media in creating and refining national, cultural, and social identities. The implications of these shifts are still emerging and there remains much work to be done in observing and analysing such social changes as they continue to unfold. Yet a series of interlinked trends towards production and consumption of mediated content across and between nation-states clearly puts a strain on the old idea of the imagined nation (Anderson, 1999). Where traditional forms of shared identity were inclusive of a range of factors, such as language, culture, ethnicity, and religion, the increasingly heterogeneous make-up of today's nation-states means that national borders are becoming increasingly porous when it comes to identity boundaries. Today, identity markers such as religion and ethnicity cut across nations, languages, and social groups, disrupting the idea of a broadcast audience constituting a singular public sphere.

Indeed, the ideal of the Habermasian public sphere as a place for rational debate and argument among equals and a space in which 'public opinion' is formed can never truly exist in practice (Barker, 1999, p. 153). Instead, it seems, 'social inequality means that not only are citizens denied equal access to the public sphere, but also subordinate groups are denied participatory parity and the space to articulate their own languages, needs and demands' (Barker, 1999, p. 153). In practice, we need to accept the reality of multiple public spheres and multiple publics. In this current context,

*television...is vital to the construction of cultural identities because it circulates a bricolage of representations of class, gender, race, age and sex with which we identify or struggle*



against. That is, television is a proliferating and globalized resource for the construction of a cultural identity and a site of contestation over meanings. (Barker, 1999, p. 169)

It should be clear from this survey that accelerating global flows of bodies, goods, and information are creating a rapidly changing landscape of media producers, distributors, and consumers. Content is no longer tied to a national imaginary; hence, programs made in one country may be retransmitted intact, dubbed, or locally remade in the same format across the globe. Even as media becomes more pervasive, it simultaneously and paradoxically becomes more homogeneous in the main, while becoming more fragmentary at the margins. The effect of the proliferation of content, audiences, and publics is to generate new networks of affective relationships and linkages within, across, and between individuals and nations. There remains much fruitful work to be done on the way that these new relationships play out in the politics of identity.

## Acknowledgements

The research on which this paper is based was conducted while I was working on an ARC-funded post-doctoral fellowship entitled 'Community, identity and media use: Understanding the Turkish community in Australia'. I would like to thank Denise Meredyth and Julian Thomas for all their help and guidance with the project.

## References

- Akbarzadeh, S., & Smith, B. (2005). *The representation of Islam and Muslims in the media (The Age and Herald Sun Newspapers)*. Melbourne, School of Political and Social Inquiry, Monash University.
- Aksoy, A., & Robins, K. (2000). Thinking across spaces: Transnational television from Turkey. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 3(3), 343-365.
- Anderson, B. (1999). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Ang, I., Brand, J., Noble, G., & Sternberg, J. (2006). *Connecting diversity: Paradoxes of multicultural Australia*. Artarmon, NSW: Special Broadcasting Service. Retrieved January 1, 2009, from <http://www20.sbs.com.au/sbscorporate/media/documents/8243eweb2.pdf>.
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalisation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Askew, K., & Wilk, R. (Eds.) (2002). *The anthropology of media: A reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bailey, O., & Harindranath, R. (2006). Ethnic minorities, cultural difference and the cultural politics of communication. *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*, 2(3), 299-316.

- Baldi, P., & Hasebrink, U. (Eds.) (2007). *Broadcasters and citizens in Europe: Trends in media accountability and viewer participation*. Bristol: Intellect.
- Barker, C. (1999). *Television, globalisation and cultural identities*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Beck, U. (2006). *Cosmopolitan Vision*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Brouwer, L. (2004). Dutch-Muslims on the Internet: A new discussion platform. *Journal of Muslim Affairs*, 24(1), 47-55.
- Ça lar, A. (2002). Media corporatism and cosmopolitanism. In S. Vertovec & R. Cohen (Eds.), *Conceiving cosmopolitanism* (pp. 180-190). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chalaby, J. (Ed.) (2005). *Transnational television worldwide: Towards a new media order*. London & New York: I. B. Tauris.
- Cottle, S. (Ed.) (2000). *Ethnic minorities and the media*. Maidenhead & Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Cunningham, S., & Sinclair, J. (Eds.) (2000). *Floating lives: The media and Asian diasporas. Negotiating cultural identity through media*. St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press.
- Denemark, D. (2005). Mass media and media power in Australia. In S. Wilson, G. Meagher, R. Gibson, D. Denemark, & M. Western (Eds.), *Australian social attitudes: The first report* (pp. 220-239). Sydney: UNSW Press.
- Doyle, W., & Griffiths, M. (2006). Editorial: Caricature and an 'Ethics of Discomfort'. *Southern Review*, 39(1), 1-7.
- Dissanayake, W., & Wilson, R. (Eds.) (1996). *Global/local: Cultural production and the transnational imaginary*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ewing, S., & Thomas, J. (2008). CCI digital futures report: The Internet in Australia. ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation. Retrieved May 1, 2009, from <http://cci.edu.au/sites/default/files/pbrowne/AuDigitalFutures2008.pdf>.
- Fenton, N. (2008). Mediating solidarity. *Global Media and Communication*, 4(1), 37-58.
- Georgiou, M. (2005). Diasporic media across Europe: Multicultural societies and the universalism-particularism continuum. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(3), 481-498.
- Georgiou, M. (2006). *Diaspora, identity and the media: Diasporic transnationalism and mediated spatialities*. Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press.
- Gibian, J. (2003). 'They're all wog rooms': The online chat of culturally diverse teenage girls in Western Sydney. In M. Butcher & M. Thomas (Eds.), *Ingenious: Emerging youth culture in urban Australia* (pp. 47-66). Melbourne: Pluto Press.
- Gillespie, M. (1995). *Television, ethnicity and cultural change*. London: Routledge.
- Green, L., Holloway, D., & Quin, R. (2004). @ home: Australian family life and the Internet. In G. Goggin (Ed.), *Virtual nation: The Internet in Australia* (pp. 88-101). Sydney: UNSW Press.
- Halavais, A. (2000). National borders on the world wide web. *New Media and Society*, 2(1), 7-28.

- Hopkins, L. (2007). Hybrid Identity? Resisting the stereotype of Muslim-Australian. Paper presented at IAMCR - Media, Communication, Information Conference, Paris.
- Hopkins, L. (2008). Young Turks and new media: The construction of identity in an age of Islamophobia. *Media International Australia*, 128, 54-66.
- Hopkins, L. (2009). Citizenship and global broadcasting: Constructing national, transnational and post-national identities. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 23(1), 19-32.
- IOM (International Organization for Migration) (2008). *World migration 2008: Managing labour mobility in the evolving global economy*. Retrieved February 27, 2009, from <http://www.iom.int./jahia/jsp/index.jsp>.
- Karanfil, G. (2007). Satellite television and its discontents: Reflections on the experiences of Turkish-Australian lives. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 21(1), 59-69.
- Karim, K. H. (1998). From ethnic media to global media: Transnational communication networks among diasporic communities. *International Comparative Research Group Strategic Research and Analysis Canadian Heritage*. Retrieved July 15, 2009, from <http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/karim.pdf>.
- Karim, K. H. (2003). Mapping diasporic mediascapes. In K. H. Karim (Ed.), *The Media of Diaspora* (pp. 1-18). London & New York: Routledge.
- Khatib, L. (2006). Language, nationalism and power: A case study of Arab reality TV show *Star Academy*. *Southern Review*, 39(1), 25-41.
- Kosnick, K. (2007). *Migrant media: Turkish broadcasting and multicultural politics in Berlin*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Madianou, M. (2005). Contested communicative spaces: Rethinking identities, boundaries and the role of the media among Turkish speakers in Greece. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(3), 521-541.
- Mechant, P. (2007). Social software and social capital. Paper presented at IAMCR - Media, Communication, Information Conference, Paris.
- Milikowski, M. (2000). Exploring a model of de-ethnicization: The case of Turkish television in the Netherlands. *European Journal of Communication*, 15(4), 443-68.
- Milikowski, M. (2001). Learning about Turkishness by satellite: Private satisfactions and public benefits. In K. Ross & P. Playdon (Eds.), *Black marks: Minority ethnic audiences and media* (pp. 125-138). Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Miller, J. (2007). *Ugly Betty* goes global: Global networks of localized content in the telenovela industry. Paper presented at IAMCR - Media, Communication, Information Conference, Paris.
- Moore, S. (2005). *Media/theory: Thinking about media and communications*. London: Routledge.
- Morley, D., & Robins, K. (1995). *Spaces of identity: Global media, electronic landscapes and cultural boundaries*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Naficy, H. (Ed.) (1999). *Home, exile, homeland: Film, media, and the politics of place*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Ogan, C., & Milikowski, M. (1998). Television helps to define 'home' for the Turkish women of Amsterdam. *Journal of The World Association for Christian Communication*, 43(2), 13-22.

- Poole, E. (2001). Interpreting Islam: British Muslims and the British press. In K. Ross & P. Playdon (Eds.), *Black marks: Minority ethnic audiences and media* (pp. 67-86). Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Poole, E. (2002). *Reporting Islam: Media representations of British Muslims*. London: I. B. Tauris.
- Price, M. (2002). *Media and sovereignty: The global information revolution and its challenge to state power*. Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: The MIT Press.
- Rigoni, I. (2005). Challenging notions and practices: The Muslim media in Britain and France. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(3), 563-580.
- Sakr, N. (2001). *Satellite realms: Transnational television, globalization and the Middle East*. London & New York: I. B. Tauris.
- Sassen, S. (2003). Globalization or denationalization? *Review of International Political Economy*, 10(1), 1-22.
- Silverstone, R., & Georgiou, M. (2005). Editorial introduction: Media and minorities in multicultural Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(3), 433-441.
- Sinclair, J., & Cunningham, S. (2000). Go with the flow: Diasporas and their media. *Television and New Media*, 1(1), 11-31.
- Sparks, C. (2007). What's wrong with globalization? *Global Media and Communication*, 3(2), 133-155.
- Tay, J., & Turner, G. (2008). What is television? Comparing media systems in the post-broadcast era. *Media International Australia*, 126, 71-81.
- van den Bos, M., & Nell, L. (2006). Territorial bounds to virtual space: Transnational online and offline networks of Iranian and Turkish-Kurdish immigrants in the Netherlands. *Global Networks*, 6(2), 201-220.
- Zhang, K., & Hao, X. (1997). The Internet and the ethnic press: A study of network-based Chinese publications. Retrieved June 1, 2007, from [http://www.isoc.org/inet97/proceedings/G1/G1\\_2.HTM](http://www.isoc.org/inet97/proceedings/G1/G1_2.HTM).