

INTEGRATION, MULTICULTURALISM AND GLOLOCATISATION:MIGRANT-MINORITIES AND THE GERMAN MEDIA

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2009 was Germany's year of anniversaries marking historical landmarks , making it, as one media report said, "a truly German year". The first anniversary marked Germany's democratic rebirth, the 60th year of the promulgation of its *Grundgesetz* or Basic Law in 1949. Then followed the 20th anniversary of the collapse of the Berlin Wall (in 1989), that paved the way for German re-unification after forty years of painful separation, followed by a third much less celebrated anniversary. The Germans honoured the legendary Hermann -- Arminius to the Romans-- for his epic victory in the Teutoburg Forest against the Roman legions of Publius Quinctilius Varus in 9 AD , because that victory left Germania free of Roman control and allowed its fractious peoples to develop their distinct identity . So, the celebrations of Germany's democratic rebirth, its re-unification and its early distinctive origins all happened in a year, when most Germans, to quote Paul Kohtes, chairman of the Düsseldorf-based Identity Foundation, are "finally much more at ease with who they are."¹

A 2009 survey released by his Foundation showed twice as many Germans feeling 'very proud' to be Germans compared to eight years ago. Almost 73 percent said they should show more confidence about being German. The survey said that most Germans saw themselves as a nation of poets and philosophers like Goethe and Schiller, a nation that abides by law and has strong democratic tendencies. The success of managing a modern but relatively young democracy and a very buoyant economy has perhaps given Germans the confidence to put behind their Nazi past and look to a future where their great country would be Europe's role model in years to come. A Reuters journalist, reporting on these ceremonies, observed:

*"After six decades atoning for the crimes of the Nazis, Germans are rediscovering a sense of patriotism and are no longer ashamed to wave their flag and sing the national anthem. They are even daring to discuss bringing back a bravery medal—unthinkable a decade ago in a country which rejected militarism and turned fiercely pacifist. This non-aggressive self confidence, also evident in a more assertive foreign policy, is increasingly manifesting itself as Germany this year celebrates 60 years as a democracy and the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall."*²

¹ Interview with public broadcaster RBB, 21 May 2009.

² "After 60 years, Germans learn to love themselves" , Reuters Feature by Madeline Chambers, 18th May 2009

A German sociologist summed up the country's mood in 2009: "The German soul, bruised and discredited by the Nazi era, has to a large degree healed. We are seeing a normalization."³ Though Germans admit their "strong regional roots", and in being "more federal than national", there are clear signs of a new-found German patriotism, first evident during the 2006 Soccer World Cup. West Germany had won the World Cup in 1954, 1974 and 1990, and finished runners-up four times. During the 2006 Soccer World Cup, the united German team failed to emulate these stellar performances of the past, but Germans turned up in thousands in national soccer jerseys, waving national flags to root for the national team.

Though the country's commitment to the European Union remains strong, European parliament polls have produced lesser turnouts than national elections. The country's political leadership is more assertive than ever before – take Chancellor Angela Merkel's strong defense of the German car industry, or her Finance Minister Peer Steinbrueck's scathing attack on bank secrecy rules of Switzerland and Luxembourg. But it is precisely this surge in German nationalism that unnerves the country's large migrant-minorities, now just under a fifth of the country's population. Disturbing questions are raised about the future direction of German society – whether integration of the migrant-minorities is a failed project, whether multi-culturalism is a thing of the past and whether the resurgence of the extreme right is a possibility in future.

The "Other" Germany

Unlike European colonial powers like Great Britain or France, Germany did not face much migration of non-European populations before the Second World War. But that changed after the country's post-Marshall Plan "economic boom", to sustain which the Federal Republic of Germany was compelled to sign recruitment agreements with Italy (1955), Spain and Greece (1960), Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965) and Yugoslavia (1968). That led to a steady and continuous rise in Germany's migrant population, specially from Turkey. According to the "Statistisches Bundesamt" (Federal Statistical Office), the population of Germany now is just over 82 million, making it the 14th most populous country in the world. But more than 16 million people residing in Germany are of non-German descent (first and second generation, including mixed heritage). About seven million of these are foreign residents, the

³ Eugen Buss, a sociology professor at the University of Hohenheim, quoted in the Reuters Feature, 18th May 2009

remaining nine million are German citizens. So every fifth resident in Germany now is of non-German origins. The Turks are the largest non-German community, numbering around 3 million.

Germany's "changing color" problem mainly owes to the large scale migration from Turkey, though much smaller population flows have taken place from other Asian and African countries since the 1960s. France and Great Britain were used to such migration from their colonies over a much longer period, but for Germany, it is something that gained momentum merely sixty years ago. Studies by German research institutes highlight the "serious integration problems" of the Turks and other Afro-Asian settler communities. On the other hand, some studies indicate much better integration achieved by European migrants like the Italians, the Spaniards, and the Greeks, not to speak of the migrants from countries of the Baltic or the Balkans. The fact that the Turks and other Afro-Asian communities are mostly Muslims or from faiths other than Christianity are seen as compounding the problems of integration.

A 2009 study says that the population of Turkish descent is "poorly integrated" in German society compared to other immigrant groups.⁴ Education, considered a key indicator of integration, shows significantly low results for the Turkish settlers. Around 30 per cent have no school leaving qualification whatsoever, and just 14 per cent have passed university entrance exams, less than half the average of their German counterparts. The Turks are found to be experiencing high rates of unemployment and their women are found to be more frequently staying at home. When huge numbers of Turks were brought to Germany under the "*Gastarbeiter*" (guest workers) program during the 1950s economic boom, they were expected to return home one day, but that did not happen. The steady rise in Turkish population created a large self-sustained community with very little impetus to learn German or send children to schools. The study found little improvement over three successive generations, and a very low rate of intermarriage between ethnic Turks and Germans. Maria Böhmer, now Germany's minister for Migration, Refugees, and Integration, reacted to this study with a promise to "change the direction in integration politics."⁵ But Böhmer's cabinet colleague, the German Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, betrayed the ruling CDU government's unease over the sharp rise in migrant population when he linked "effective migration control" with "better integration." In his foreword to a recent German Interior Ministry publication, Mr Schäuble said:

⁴ Berlin-Institute for Population and Development Report, released in January, 2009

⁵ Deutsche Press Agentur report, 26th January 2009

“Over the past six decades, millions of people have found a new home in Germany. These immigrants played a big part in helping our country rebuild rapidly after World War II and achieve the exemplary economic growth that laid the groundwork for our prosperity today... In an ideal process of integration, after several years of legal residence, it is possible to become a naturalized citizen. But for integration to be successful, we must manage migration sensibly, because the ability of our society to accommodate integration is closely related to the scale of immigration.”⁶

(Emphasis mine)

Migrants, Minorities and Media

Integration of migrant-minorities – or the lack of it – has been a recurring theme in German public discourse. Issues related to it have been regularly reported in the German media (audio-visual, print and online) with varying degrees of importance. The German media’s coverage of migration and minority issues has also been studied by many German researchers, but rarely by someone from outside the country. This study by a non-resident *auslander* (foreigner) researcher seeks to focus on issues of migrant-minority representation in the German media, the media content on migrant-minority issues and the use or the lack of use of German media by the migrant minorities. It is based largely on “perception analysis” – a detailed examination of how German and minority media practitioners and decision-makers, politicians and intellectuals, common citizens and specialist media researchers view the key issues related to migrant-minorities and how they play out in the German media.

The primary data is considerable, drawn from 187 detailed interviews conducted over a three-month period (May-June-July 2009). Those interviewed include six senior German editors and three Turkish editors, 33 German and 14 non-German journalists of migrant-minority origin working for television, radio, print and online websites, 36 writers and academics, public intellectuals and media researchers of both German and non-German descent and 95 general citizens of both German and non-German parentage residing in Germany who consume media in varying degrees. Many, like leading German media researcher Kira Kosnick (of the Frankfurt University) were first interviewed through a detailed questionnaire mailed to them and subsequently in person during my visit to Germany. Some, like famous Turkish journalist-turned-writer Hilal Sezgin, were interviewed through the questionnaire followed by extensive Internet

⁶ “Migration and Integration: Residence Law and policy on Migration and Integration in Germany, Federal Ministry of Interior , April 2008

chat and e-mails. Some, like the Bayerischer Rundfunk *Chefredaktion Hörfunk* (chief executive) Mercedes Riederer or Ulrich Brenner, the *Schulleiter und Geschäftsführer* of Deutsche Journalistenschule in Munich, were interviewed only in person over fairly long hours. Some, like RTL TV editor-in-chief Peter Kloeppel could be interviewed only through the questionnaire because they could not spare much time.

But since mere “perception analysis” conducted over a rather small time-frame may miss out on the dynamics of the complex issues involved, this study has been supplemented by a critical analysis of existing media research on the subject. The media use patterns of both large, well-entrenched minorities like the Turks and relatively smaller minorities like those from South Asian countries have been compared after citizens from various migrant-minority communities were interviewed. This is to assess whether large minorities like the Turks can afford or prefer to live within self-sufficient community boundaries –physically and psychologically – and are therefore under less pressure to interact/integrate with Germans and use German media, compared to smaller minorities such as Indians or Pakistanis or Bangladeshis.

Size is a crucial variable in all studies of migrant minorities anywhere in the world – East or West. If migrant communities are small, they usually don’t threaten indigenous preponderance and “integrate” into the culture of the host society at both social and political level, though, as individuals, they may retain a longing for roots. But when such migrant communities grow large in numbers, they begin to live as communities by themselves and then start demanding financial and socio-political empowerment, language and cultural rights. That’s when the “changing colour” phenomenon is seen as a threat to host societies/indigenous populations. It is also seen as a threat by host societies/ indigenous populations. Ethnic Assamese or Tripuri tribes people in northeast India feel as much threatened by migrants of East Bengali origin, as ethnic Tibetans or Uighurs when faced by Han-Chinese transmigration from other parts of China. Ethnic Russians face similar wrath of indigenous communities in Central Asian Republics, which were once part of the great Soviet Union, as much as ethnic Germans faced in East European countries after the defeat of Germany in World War II or after the collapse of the Iron Curtain in the 1990s. So, there is nothing unusual about ethnic Germans feeling uneasy about the rising Turkish population in Germany or when South Asian software programmers are offered “Greencards” as if Germans, with a long tradition of science and technology, cannot handle infotech.

It is also not unusual for the German media, driven by market logic, to pander to stereotypes, either because the media decision-makers and journalists feel strongly about the undermining of

German language and culture or because they want to keep their core audiences happy by supporting – rather than challenging – their racial/cultural stereotypes. This happens all over the world – not the least in Turkey, when the Kurdish rebellion is suppressed with a heavy hand. It is now well known how the Turkish secret service used the Turkish diaspora media in Germany and Europe to launch a strong campaign to shut down a Kurdish Roj TV channel telecasting out of Belgium but with a satellite transponder hired from France Telecom. But the media does not merely provide a level playing field for a vibrant young democracy such as Germany's, a platform for divergent views to emanate across the racial and the religious divide. It also often influences the public discourse through its output. The media process, if carefully used or managed (though that is a value contradicting the basic tenet of free speech in democracy) can moderate tensions between host societies and migrant groups, despite the obvious differences of race, religion and culture.

So, critical media analysis is often an useful way of looking at the health of a country's democracy, at how concepts crucial to democracy such as multi-culturalism, freedom of speech and tolerance of diversity are playing out at the grassroots level of a society such as Germany's that has to live down its Nazi past and its sordid track-record of dealing with minorities and that now to come to terms with large scale migration that has happened in a rather short time. This study will also closely interrogate the German concept of "integration" largely through the prism of media analysis and in the backdrop of Germany's commitment to an European Union that's based on acceptance and not negation of diversity. Because Germany's success to emerge out of its militaristic past and project itself as a possible role-model of a modern liberal state in the European Union will be undermined, if it fails to effectively manage the aspirations of its own migrant minorities. How can a nation that fails to successfully promote multiculturalism and tolerance of diversity at home show the way forward to the European Union, which has thrived and grown through promotion of consensus to emerge as "easily the most popular and successful empire in history, because it does not dominate, it disciplines."⁷

"German media too German"

Migrant-minority representation in the mainstream German media has been an issue for a while. Theoretically, crucial issues of migrant-minority communities can be raised by journalists and editors from the majority community. But across the world, media experience suggests a close

⁷Parag Khanna, *The Second World : Empires and Influence in the New Global Order*, Random House , New York, 2008

linkage between effective exposure of migrant-minority issues and increased migrant-minority representation in mainstream media of host societies. That is why the BBC, Britain's public service radio-television-online platform, has decided to reflect the diversity of contemporary British society, not merely in programme content but also in its hiring policy. The corporation makes a conscious attempt to reflect the country's demographic reality in the ethnic composition of its staff -- at least ten percent of their staff are from migrant-minorities.

By contrast, broadcasters in the European Union have only recruited between 2 to 3 percent of their staff from migrant-minority background, though their population is around 8.5 percent of the total population of the European Union⁸. The situation in the print media is worse, unlike in Britain, where mainstream newspapers have a rich sprinkling of journalists from migrant-minority backgrounds. BBC performance audits have found a close linkage between (a) recruitment and effective use of broadcasters/ journalists from migrant-minority backgrounds (b) the depth and quality of reporting of countries producing large number of migrants for the host societies; and (c) the migrant's perception towards host societies and the host-populations perception towards migrants.⁹ A legendary BBC journalist says: "Our local reporters are our eyes and ears. Without them, we will hardly understand very complex realities".¹⁰

The representation of migrant-minorities in the German media is abysmally poor. All those interviewed during this study, including senior German editors and media executives admitted that one gets to see very few non-German faces on television, gets to hear still fewer such voices on radio (except in the now-waning inter-kultur programmes of public service radio) and get to see much less non-German bylines in German newspapers or magazines. Some German editors and journalists, however, insisted that this is "beginning to change". The editor-in-chief of a leading TV channel was one of them:

"More and more non-Germans and Germans with a migrant background are moving into journalism and mainstream media, but their representation is still much below the size of their populations in Germany. I don't think this is because of any bias in recruitment that exists in

⁸ Florence Marchal, "Diversity in the Media", in Interdependent (A Council of Europe publication), April 2002

⁹ I have access to these reports, but cannot make them public under terms of my BBC staff contract

¹⁰ Sir Mark Tully, BBC's former South Asia bureau chief, in a BBC reporters conference, 11th February 1998

German media houses. It is question of competence and meeting the recruitment criteria at the entry-level.”¹¹

But most non-German journalists working for mainstream German media interviewed during the study – and many German journalists and editors as well --- said “the pace of change was too slow” and it will quite some time before mainstream German TV, radio and print media will have enough representation from migrant-minority communities. The reality of migrant-minority representation in the German media has been aptly summed up by a senior German newspaper editor:

“German media, specially the print media, is still too German, even those who think left or liberal. They are very conservative in recruitment and employment policies. They tend to promote people who have classic German middle class background – proper university education, strong command over German language. Television is less conservative, so you are beginning to see some non-German faces or hear some non-German voices there. A TV screen looks good with different kinds of faces , it sells . That’s not true of newspapers and magazines.”¹²

The Berlin-based Tageszeitung made a conscious, and somewhat successful attempt to promote young journalists of non-German origin to broadbase their recruitment. But no other German newspapers or magazines followed the lead. What they did instead was recruit the odd Turkish reporter, specially after events like the 9/11 Twin Tower strikes to “check out what’s happening in the mosques”. Some of these hurriedly-recruited journalists from migrant communities, including a Turkish woman reporter who wished to remain anonymous, said they “felt like spies unleashed on their own community.” Most of them failed to retain their jobs and have switched professions. Turkish journalist-turned-writer Hilal Sezgin, who worked as cultural editor at the Frankfurter Rundschau (1999- 2005), blames the lack of migrant-minority representation in ‘national news and culture boards’ to the ‘lack of some kind of diversity program’ in German media houses. She said in an interview : *“We have two foundations now giving extra grants supports to migrant journalists (or those who want to become some), and one of our public channels made a big fuzz about inviting migrants to join them – as freelancers. But there were still no regular jobs to be given”.*¹³

Some sporadic efforts were made to increase the representation of migrant-minorities in the German media. Under the “On Air/ More Diversity in Media project” , Germany’s Adolf

¹¹ Peter Kloepfel, editor-in-chief , RTL Television, interviewed by questionnaire over Internet during this study

¹² Jochen Arntz , senior editor , Berliner Zeitung (1994-2007) and now Editor,News Analysis), Munich-based Süddeutsche Zeitung

¹³ Hilal Sezgin, Interview with the author by e-mail, 6th July 2009 after she had responded to the questionnaire

Grimme Institut offered twenty women from migrant background a seven month training course in journalism for radio and television, followed up by a year long experience placement. But finding regular jobs for them did not prove to be easy. A senior German editor admits entry for aspiring journalists from migrant background is tough:

“If someone from the migrant-minority background is there purely on merit, that’s it , but I admit there is no structure of support for them. There’s not a lot of them in our media, but their numbers are growing. That’s perhaps because some of them are achieving the level of competence needed at entry-level.”¹⁴

There are stray cases of non-Germans who have done very well in the German mainstream media, specially in television. Ranga Yogeshwar of Indian origin is very popular with different science related programs like “Quarks”. Cherno Jobatey is a popular anchor for the ZDF television channel’s morning show. Dunya Hayali, a journalist of Iraqi origin, has been presenting the ZDF’s prime-time news show. But such high-achievers of migrant-minority background are rare in German media. At the moment, only about three percent of the journalists in the entire German media industry are from migrant-minority background. Comparatively, offsprings of mixed parentage (usually a German mother or father) have better chances. One Munich-based journalist, the offspring of a Bengali father and a German mother, says why:

“I was a lucky guy . I was integrated into German society from the very beginning because my mother was German and my Bengali father was not too keen about his roots .I get a lot of backing from my German editors because they treat me as one of them, despite my dark skin and strange-sounding surname.. There could be a silent racism prevailing in some German publications who are politically on the right but that has not been the case in my newspaper.”¹⁵

It is somewhat different in the German entertainment business – music and film industry, where a lot of new non-German faces can now be seen. But in politics and hard news, men and women from a migrant background are still an exception. An editor of the Deutsche Welle explains why :

“Conservative Germans, specially older people, and I must say their numbers are considerable, have much reservations about foreign looking faces or names when they see or read news about Germany. So selling hard news with foreign sounding bylines or non-German faces is not easy for media houses. It is however different with entertainment shows, where exotic foreign looks and dresses work”.

The success of two Bengali sisters, Debarati Mandal and Namrata Mandal, in the 2009 finals of Germany’s popular *Next Showstar Contest* broadcast on the Pro Sieben Channel, is a case in

¹⁴ Christopher Keil , Editor, Media Issues, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, interview with author, 8th Jun 2009

¹⁵ Oliver Dasgupta , Online Editor , *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, interview with author, 8th June 2009

point. They brushed past a strong field of 585 contesting groups, *impressing* German judges with their traditional Indian costumes and Bollywood (Bombay film industry) songs. But, in news and current affairs, it has always been very difficult for non-Germans even if they spoke or wrote fluent German. An ARD journalist of Indian origin recounts her experience in presenting, along with a Pakistani man, the TV channel's prestigious "Weltspiegel" (literally World Mirror) programme, "as the two politically active exotics on the German telescope."

*"For years I was engaged in an ongoing battle with the commissioning editor of "Extra III" about presenting this political satirical programme. No, he argued, the German public would just not buy my interpretation of Lower Saxony's regional politics. How could I know anything about it, the way I looked?.... Another German colleague claimed he always got terribly confused when I referred to "us" on television. He never knew whether I meant "us, Indians" or "us, Germans..... During the conference "Journalism without Boundaries and Limits – 40 years of Weltspiegel" that took place in NDR/Hamburg in May 2003, a young Afro-German colleague posed a question to the high powered panel full of hoary and greenhorn foreign correspondents: "If, as was claimed, German media and society have changed then the way this society looks at itself and at the world should also change. Editorial staff policies and programmes, particularly "Weltspiegel" ought to reflect this. Take the instance of CNN or BBC-World. Their presenters and reporters come from Latin America, Arabia, Africa and Asia. Should not German Television as a public broadcasting institution want to emulate this?" This query, couched in such considerate terms, was arrogantly brushed aside by the young editor chairing the panel. "No one ought to be surprised if Germans were reporting for German Television!" . At the very least the multicultural and multiethnic composition of this society should be reflected in editorial office practice."*¹⁶

The obvious under-representation of migrant-minorities in the German media cannot be redressed unless more aspirants from these communities can join the prestigious journalism institutes after finishing school. The Munich-based Süddeutsche Zeitung, a liberal newspaper, has just one Turkish journalist, on its payroll. That is perhaps because the prestigious *Deutsche Journalistenschule* in Munich has had only five students from Turkish community in the last ten years. Its principal, Ulrich Brenner, insists that "on principle, there is no discrimination between Germans and non-Germans during entry" and that most non-German candidates cannot make it to his *Journalistenschule* because "they lack command over both spoken and written German."¹⁷ The Turkish-German journalist-turned-writer Hilal Sezgin admits that is a problem:

"Yes, I guess that's one of the reasons why there are so few (migrant-minority journalists) in the print media, and to be honest: I have worked as an editor for seven years and often worked with migrant writers, and it is a lot of extra trouble to put these non-mother tongue – texts into perfect

¹⁶ Priya Esselborn, Acting Editor, Deutsche Welle Hindi Service, interview with author, 18th June 2009

¹⁷ Navina Sundaram, paper titled "An Outsider's inside view or Insider's Outside view : Changing media perceptions of India on German TV (1957-2000)", made available to the author.

shape. But I think every channel could have some kind of support center for this. The German educational system, at the moment, doesn't seem able to bridge gaps in family background very well... Therefore it takes several generation to lift former migrants workers and their descendants to the average level".¹⁸

In the climate of linguistic puritanism in the German media, specially print media , it is not going to any easy for aspirants from migrant background to make it into the mainstream German media – or even to the Journalistenschules. In December 2008, the annual conference of the ruling Christian Democratic Union (CDU) voted for adding a new sentence to the German constitution: “The language of the Federal Republic shall be German.”¹⁹ German is anyway the only language used in government, trade and education. So why root for an amendment like this now was an obvious question.

This is not merely a show of sympathy for school-teachers and language purists but is also seen as a CDU sop to right-wingers who allege foreigners are taking over. German chancellor Angela Merkel rebuffed the idea and said it was “not important to put every last thing in the constitution.”²⁰ But there was strong support for the proposal within the CDU. A senior CDU leader representing “retirees” supported the proposal, saying “Language is the most precious jewel of culture and should be protected in the Constitution”.²¹ But the migrant-minorities were understandably alarmed, with the chairman of the Turkish Community association, Kenan Kolat blaming CDU politicians for “pandering to the latent fear of migrants.” Kolat said: “We interpret this idea as pressure to assimilate. It does not conform to democratic practice. That’s how migrant communities will perceive it.”²²

This whole debate about whether the German language is under threat was revived in 2008 when the new co-leader of the Green Party , Cem Oezdemir , who is of Turkish extraction but is born and bred in Germany, called for optional Turkish-language courses in public schools. German conservatives were outraged and insisted Turkish children must speak and write German. The

¹⁸ Ulrich Brenner, Schulleiter and Gesschaftsfuhrer, Deutsche Journalistenschule, Munich, interview with author , 10th June 2009

¹⁹ Hilal Sezgin, Interview with author by e-mail, 6th July 2009

²⁰ “Conservatives want German language protected in Constitution” , Deutsche Press Agentur report, 2nd December 2008

²¹ *Angela Merkel, interview to RTL television, at the site of the CDU annual conference in Stuttgart, 2nd December 2009*

²² *Otto Wulff, head of the CDU's national committee of retirees, quoted in Deutsche Press Agentur report , 2nd December 2009*

German language society VDS, welcomed the CDU resolution -- its secretary Holger Klatte saying that "now we hope German will be better taught in schools." But unless the German media, specially the print media switches to easier language, intake from migrant-minorities will continue to be low. The English print media press in UK, USA and India, have all switched to easier language, gaining new audiences amongst neo-literates and migrants alike. That is yet to happen in the German media, says a senior freelancer of Iranian origin:

*"The day we have a black or a Turk reporting from the German parliament, we will know Germany has come to terms with migrants and migration It doesn't matter whether you have Turkish roots and look obviously different or have a Polish background and blend in with Germans. There's been a general wariness about contact with other accents and cultures, and that's reflected on television."*²³

How soon this changes will happen in the German media is debatable, but many German editors and politicians are advocating for more recruitment from the migrant-minorities. The chief executive of South Germany's main radio station, Bayerischer Rundfunk, is one of them :

*" We need more journalists from the migrant communities, we need more stories about those communities in our output, we need more audience in those communities. More journalists from these communities would help us improve our understanding of minority issues. Otherwise we run the risk of creating ethnic and religious divides in German society, something we can ill afford."*²⁴

A leading minority lady presenter on German television agrees with radio chief executive:

*"It's a sign of normality when you have a person with an immigrant background casually reading the news or the sports results on a major network instead of being shown as a problem or an exotic stereotype."*²⁵

With integration debate now increasingly focussing on the role the media, especially television with its high-profile visibility and reach, the German government , specially the minister for Integration Maria Böhmer , has asked networks to recruit more journalists and TV presenters from immigrant minorities :.

"We have to make immigrants more visible in German television, "I keep hearing from immigrants that they don't see themselves represented by the public sector broadcasters. There isn't enough awareness of their experience of life, and there aren't enough immigrants in front of or behind the camera. For example, having a Turkish anchorwoman needs to become a normal

23 Kenan Kolat , interview to author, 11th June 2009

24 Minou Amir-Sehhi, a freelance with ARD TV , interview to author , 16th June 2009

25 Mercedes Riederer, *Chefredaktion Horfunk, Bayerischer Rundfunk, interview with author, 10th June 2009*

thing," she added. "We need more reporters who themselves know the immigrants' world and can convey it".²⁶

Prodded by the government, the German broadcasters, specially the public service television channels, are re-examining their policies on minority recruitment. Dunya Hayali, the presenter of Iraqi origin now presenting the prime-time ZDF news programme, admitted that her "immigrant background was an added qualification to her obvious journalistic skill" in bagging the top job at ZDF. Demographic pressures are also forcing public broadcasters, partly financed by TV licensing fees, to adapt to a changed viewership. Hailing Dunya Hayali's appointment, a media executive with the German public network WDR, said :

*"It's a sign to potential journalists who perhaps haven't trusted themselves to think that presenting a prime-time news show on a major network could be a job for a person with an Italian or an Iraqi name. Today every fifth person in Germany has an immigrant background, among the young generation in the big cities it's every second. We just have to take these viewers into account, otherwise we lose our right to exist."*²⁷

But the biggest problem for the networks, some media researchers say, is finding "competent enough" minority journalists. Lutz Michel, head of a media research institute in Essen, is one of them.

*"The pool of potential immigrant journalists is tiny, which shows that promoting diversity has just not been a priority for media networks. A combination of poor language skills, lack of an academic environment at home and insufficient educational qualifications prevent many from migrant-minority background to opt for a career in journalism."*²⁸

An OECD study last year found that children from immigrant families in Germany have fewer chances to succeed at school than in almost any other industrialized country. Only a coordinated effort by politicians, media companies and journalism schools to spot and train budding immigrant journalists is the only way to boost their presence in the mainstream national media. Another option is to induct promising journalists, specially reporters, from the diaspora media into German print or audio-visual media and provide them special language training to develop writing or presentation skills. But for that, one would need senior German editors to be able and inclined to monitor the diaspora media and respect the specific expertise of diaspora journalists. The BBC has achieved much success with this method of recruitment in its domestic outlets and World Service. Some of the language service journalists recruited have not been found suitable to broadcast for mainstream English outlets – but they have been used as producers or researchers for their area/ community expertise. Treating such journalists as "second class" after recruitment does not help.

Migrants, Minorities and Media Content

²⁶ Cherno Jobatey, interview with author, 17th June 2009

²⁷ Maria Böhmer German Minister for Integration, quoted in Deutsche Welle report, 25th April 2007

²⁸ Kira Kosnick, junior professor of cultural anthropology, Frankfurt University, interview with author, 17th June 2009

Gualtiero Zambonini, commissioner for integration at Cologne-based public network WDR, response to questionnaire

German public service radio took the lead in creating specific media content for migrant-minorities in the 1960s. The newly funded Regional Broadcasting Corporations produced thirty-minute capsules called “*Gastarbeitersendungen*” (guest-worker programmes) – first in Italian language in 1961, then in Turkish, Greek and Spanish programmes since 1964. In 1970, Serb-Croat programmes were also started. Listening to the “*Gastarbeitersendungen*” became a daily routine for large number of migrant families. The Association of the Public Broadcasting Cooperations (ARD) officially defined the function of these programmes as building a “bridge to home”. They reflected the public service mission of support to the cause of migrant integration, in which the public service media was given a definite role to play by the government. These programmes were very popular with the migrants until about the mid-1970s, when, according to the UNESCO, more than 75% of the migrant workers in Germany were listening to them.²⁹

However, there has been much change in the perception of the multicultural situation amongst a small number of German and migrant media producers, specially in the last decade. Third and fourth generations of migrant-minorities have lost interest in the old-fashioned “guest-worker” programmes. They have been looking to provide vibrant “bi-cultural socialisation and life-world.” Radio Stations like Radio Multikulti and Funkhaus Europa from the Regional Broadcasting Corporation in Berlin (SFB) and Cologne (WDR) have started broadcasting in upto 20 languages, with a mix of (world) music, cultural and political information on the homelands and issues of the migrant communities in Germany. Commercial radio has followed the public service radio in providing stand-alone media content for migrant-minorities. The Berlin based local Radio station Metropol FM and the Turkish-German TV station Aypa TV are examples of a new culture of multi-lingual broadcasting (Turkish/ German) based on strong multi-cultural values. These stations prepare media content specifically for a “hybrid audience.”

In German print media, the only novel experiment in providing multi-lingual, multi-cultural media content started with the publication of the newspaper *Percebe*. The articles of its team of Turkish and German journalists are aimed at attracting a bicultural audience. The language in which the paper is produced varies according to the topics. It is published as a weekly supplement of the leftist German newspaper “*Die Tageszeitung*” by an imaginative German editor-in-chief, Claudia Dantschke. But these multicultural projects meant for “hybrid” and ethnically diverse audiences is still not encouraging. These projects run into serious competition from TV Stations and newspapers produced in the migrant homelands like Turkey or by the community in Germany. The situation is further compounded by “the continuous ignorance of a majority of the German population and the German media sector towards multicultural issues.”³⁰

In the meantime, almost all the programmes meant for migrant audiences on public service radio have been cancelled. Apart from one programme of the Regional Broadcasting Cooperation in Cologne (WDR) there is not *inter-kultur* programme on German public radio anymore, programmes produced by migrants and for migrant communities highlighting issues of migrant communities. Another study argues that the media supply for migrants in Germany is “poor in quantity and quality and that this is due to unwillingness of German officials to concede migrants either full societal participation or integrity in cultural and communicative terms.”³¹ German media researchers are alarmed by huge cutbacks on the *inter-kultur* programmes in German media, specially radio. Kira Kosnick of Frankfurt University says :

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30 Jeannette Goddar, *Kontakt der Kulturen. Journalist*, Vol 8, 2001, pp. 10-13

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“Everything cannot be left to the market logic. Public service broadcasting must be there to perform crucial national tasks and integration of migrant-minorities is one such task that no commercial broadcaster will ever address. If the government hacks down on all inter-kultur kind of programmes just because they sound drab and old-fashioned, it is shirking its commitment towards multi-culturalism. These programmes must be remodeled to suit current migrant audience tastes but not cut out completely.”³²

Ulrich Raiser of Humbolt University has a three point suggestion -- (a) transformation of radio stations like Radio Multi-Kulti and Funkhaus Europa into national broadcasting services (b) innovative development of new programmes concerned with multicultural issues via a regulated proportional use of the public service fees for production of migrant programmes (c) a reasonable representation of media producers from migrant backgrounds in Inter-Cultural councils and senior decision-making levels of public broadcasting corporations by modifying existing legislations.³³ Raiser calls for fair coverage of migrant issues in mainstream German media , specially those related to Turkish and Muslim minorities, so that ethnic Germans are properly sensitized about these issues and the bridge between them and the migrant minorities, specially the Turks and other Muslim communities, is effectively bridged.

Studies by Gerhards (1993) and Ganter (1998) have shown the discrimination of non-European migrants is considerably higher in Germany compared to the the discrimination of European migrants. Therefore Ghettoisation of migrant groups and the move back into the own ethnic community is mainly linked to a still rather hostile reception of especially Turkish migrant in Germany. Media consumption along ethnic lines might enforce the tendency towards segregation and ghettoisation.

The German journalists and editors interviewed during this study also admitted that there is not enough content on minority issues in national papers, magazines, TV channels and commercial radio stations. All but two of them said coverage of sensitive minority issues was professionally inadequate. Some said the coverage was “sloppy” , atleast three German journalists working for mainline publications said the coverage was “slanted” and all but one said the content was not enough. So, there seems to be a consensus amongst German journalists and editors themselves that the coverage is not enough and could be much better in both quality and quantity. But one German social worker who works with a NGO involved in development projects in South Asia is particularly scathing in his criticism of the German press in the way it covers migrant-minority issues. He was not willing to be quoted by name – presumably because as a NGO organizer, he would not like to be on the wrong side of the press. But he was unusually critical of the German press coverage – or the lack of it -- of minority issues :

*“There are hardly any report in local dailies or local TV/radio on events of importance for the minorities. And the material that is carried fails to represent the minority aspirations – this is a huge shortcoming. I will not say that the German media in general demonises any particular minority community, but the yellow press, those who seek sensation, very often do that. And some of these papers have huge circulation, some of these channels have huge viewership”.*³³

³² Manfred Oepen , *Media, Migrants and Marginalization: The Situation in the Federal Republic of Germany*, paper presented at a Unesco-sponsored conference, Tampere, Finland, June 19-22, 1983.

³³ Kira Kosnick , interview with author at Frankfurt University , 17th June 2009

A senior writer with the Munich-based *Süddeutsche Zeitung* blamed both German politicians and journalists for being “insensitive to minority sentiments.” But he said magazines like *Der Spiegel* or *Der Zeit* did better and more informed reporting on minority issues whereas some dailies like *Bild Zeitung* were “very negative and unsympathetic to minorities”.

“If the politicians say something insensitive about minorities, the press also reports it. In 2000, the conservative contender Juergen Ruetters, who now heads the government in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany’s most populous state, campaigned with a slogan – Kinder Statt Inder (Children, not Indians). He was fiercely opposing a federal plan to attract more Indian infotech specialists and what Mr Ruetters wanted to say was that the government should instead train German young people. Now it is a typical conservative German position but the slogan was in real bad taste. However it was widely reported because Mr Ruetters happens to be an important politician and what he says makes news.”³⁴

But one culture page editor did not agree that the German press in entirety can be blamed for poor or insensitive coverage of minority issues. Many other German journalists take that position.

“It depends on the kind of media you are talking about. After 9/11, some media houses made great effort to project minority issues properly. There was some initial hysteria and Islamophobia after 9/11 and some papers and channels did play that up but many others stayed clear of such tendencies and provided balanced coverage. And at the moment, I don’t see any open demonisation of any minority, though some stereotyping do take place.”³⁵

By and large, there was a consensus amongst German editors and journalists in support of the need for better reporting of minority issues and the need to give them more airtime and print space. “This is one area our coverage needs to improve and become more professional and balanced” said the chief executive of Bayerischer Rundfunk .” We clearly need more and better stories on migrant communities in our mainstream coverage.”³⁶

Petra Steinberger , culture page editor , **Süddeutsche Zeitung** , interview with author, 8th June 2009

36 Mercedes Riederer, Chefredaktion Horfunk, *Bayerischer Rundfunk*, interview with author, 10th June 2009

Some say that German journalists need to be specially sensitized to minority issues so that they can look at them more fairly and “from the other man’s shoes.” And

³⁴ Ulrich Raiser, “Mapping Minorities and their Media : The National Context – Germany , accessed from LSE website : <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/EMTEL/Minorities/papers/germanyreport.pdf>

³⁵ A senior NGO organizer, interview with author, on condition of anonymity, 7th June 2009

³⁶ Holger Gertz, columnist and staff writer , *Süddeutsche Zeitung* , interview with author, 8th June 2009

few argue that this process should start at the Journalistenschulen, though those heading these institutions feel this “better left to the students.”

But those from the migrant-minority communities interviewed during this study – both journalists and common citizens – were unanimous in their opinion about the minority-related content in the German press. Most said that the coverage was “very slanted and biased” and had a strong majoritarian bias – some even said that a few papers and magazines are “very racist” in their approach to migrant-minority issues. The three non-German editors interviewed said the problem is much deeper than mere press coverage – Germans by and large, they all said, still do not accept that there’s has become a migration country and that explains why they cannot come to terms with the presence of a such huge migrant-minority population.

Non-German journalists , mostly Turks but some South Asians, Afro-Germans and Arabs, actually feel “overawed” by the German presence in the media – they were unanimous about “the lack of voice” (as one journalist of Indian origin described it) that they have in editorial decisions. Actually , many migrant background journalists agreed to fill up the questionnaire circulated during this study on strict conditions of anonymity, apprehending “impact” in their jobs when the study report is in public domain.

Unless German mainstream media content provides fair and balanced output on migrant-minority issues and in appropriate quantity, the growing numbers of migrant-minorities (already a market size , big or small) may turn to the increasing number of diasporic media offerings or access their homeland newspapers, magazines and TV channels on the Internet or through satellite dishes.

Migrant-minorities and media use

In the past two decades , Germany was witnessed an explosion of the migrant-minority media . Latest satellite-related technologies and the internet have made available to the migrant-minorities in Germany a plethora of television channels and radio stations from former “home countries” and elsewhere . Daily newspapers produced in Ankara, Belgrade or Warsaw are producing Germany editions using satellite technology of “page transfer” , giving migrant-minorities a range of media options they never enjoyed since they came to the country. It is a paradox – second or third generation migrants normally “more integrated” in German society

and much more fluent in German than their parents or grand-parents are having on offer mother-tongue media in their drawing rooms or newsstands. This is creating “a return-to-roots” environment for many of them – like in the case of the Hispanics in the US.

The Radio MultiKulti set up by Berlin’s public service broadcaster SFB started producing a regular Turkish language programme since its inception – but the station’s real thrust was on German programming. After the race riots following the German unification, specially the murders in Molln and Solingen, the German government felt the need for furthering “intercultural understanding” and the MultiKulti venture, initially a three-year project in 1993, secured permanent funding. It had 24-hour programming on a terrestrial frequency and functioned with a “double mission of serving different immigrant groups and of raising the levels of tolerance amongst German-majority population.”³⁷ MultiKulti won many awards for imaginative broadcasting and for promoting intercultural understanding, easily the first German public service broadcasting venture that promoted integration through multiculturalism and tolerance of migrant cultures rather than push migrants towards assimilation.

MultiKulti was soon followed by Metropol FM, the 24-hours Turkish radio station in Berlin, broadcasting from its studios in in Schöneberg, a district of Berlin with a strong Turkish presence – perhaps the strongest anywhere outside Turkey. Unlike Multikulti, Metropol is “*bizim dalga*” (our airwave) for Berlin’s huge Turkish population. Turks in Germany can now access a whole host of Turkish TV channels like NTV and

³⁷ **Busch, Jürgen C. 1994. *Radio MultiKulti: Möglichkeiten für lokalen Ethnofunk Berlin - Deutschland - Großbritannien*. Berlin: Vistas. (Translation : Kira Kosnick)**

Kanal TV, which uplink from Turkey – but the Turkish cable TV station TD-1 beams from Berlin and like Metropol FM, is a successful commercial venture surviving off local Turkish business advertising. All major Turkish newspapers like Hurriyet have German editions that sell very well. Kosnick, known for her pioneering work on Turkish migrant media in Germany, finds a “sea change” in the German ethnic mediascape over the last two decades :

“ Until the mid-1980s immigrants from Turkey had to make do with a half-hour radio program and the occasional five minutes of Turkish television provided by public service broadcasters, the situation nowadays is dramatically different . Both satellite imports and local developments have been noted by German observers and have prompted some to speak of an “ethnicization” of the media landscape in Germany, meaning that ethnic minorities are increasingly drawing upon their own media.... But the activism around these marginal migrant media is politically central when it comes to debating issues of democratic empowerment and minority participation in immigration countries.”³⁸

This study sought views of those interviewed on this new ethnic media explosion . All but one German editor (who did not give opinions on this issue) and three German journalists interviewed said the proliferation of the migrant-minority media in Germany worked against “the cause of integration” in German society. Is the output of ethnic media influencing non-German minorities against integration ? – to this question, most German journalists and editors said “yes” . Two German journalists actually said the ethnic media should be “strongly regulated ” and six said the ethnic media was orienting the minorities towards the “home country. Only one said the ethnic media could be a good recruitment ground for mainstream media to spot good journalists of migrant background .

On the other hand, migrant-minority journalists had varied responses . Some said the ethnic media is “bringing in too much home politics to Germany” – a few found the “ethnic media too parochial” or even “nationalistic” but almost all migrant minority journalists and editors said they were happy that their communities finally had enough media options to choose from . 78 percent of the German citizens (non-media persons or non-specialists) interviewed said the growth of the ethnic media in Germany threatened “integration” and some said “this was unfortunate.” Only 10 percent said the growth of ethnic media was “only to be expected” and the rest did not answer the question. On the other hand, 92 percent of the migrant citizens interviewed said “it is great to have our own media” but 68 percent said “there should be more German news in it , specially of our community” rather than news of home country. 8 percent said the ethnic media was “too narrow focused” or words to that effect. 70 percent of non-German citizens interviewed were Turks, the rest a combination of Afro-Germans, Arabs, South Asians and East Europeans.

But studies on the ethnic media have found evidence to the contrary. Kai Hafez and Alex Skinner says :

*“ It is by no means inevitable that consumption of media in the migrant’s native language blocks social and political integration, even among first generation migrants. As one generation replaces another, different styles of media use and production tend to develop, which may bolster both ethnicity and multiculturalism or trans-culturalism. Is diasporic media encouraging ethnicisation of immigrant communities and taking them away from multiculturalism. The answer is not so simple, it is not an either/or. The future of a multicultural society will be anchored in a complex interplay of old and new cultural orientation and lifestyles and in identities constructed in and through the media .”*⁴²

A study of Turkish media use by Hans-Jurgen Weiß and Joachim Trebbe , commissioned by the Federal Press and Information Office of the German government earlier in the decade, shows “that use of Turkish media does not exclude the possibility that users have a positive relationship to social and cultural integration.”

³⁸ Kira Kosnick. **Migrant Media: Turkish Broadcasting and Multicultural Politics in Berlin.** New Anthropologies of Europe. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009

³⁹ Kai Hafez & Alex Skinner, *The myth of media globalization*, Blackwell Publishers, London, 2007

Many immigrants, the study found, are “deeply engaged in both spheres – the German national sphere and the Turkish ethnic sub-sphere. They are well integrated in German society but simultaneously they retain huge interest in the Turkish media – so a high degree of integration does not necessarily entail a diminished interest in home politics.” Another study by Jorg Becker , Elmer Lenzen and Klaus Merten , commissioned by the German Ministry of Works and Social Affairs in 2001 concluded that “use of Turkish media has no negative effects whatsoever on integration and political behaviour. It is used chiefly to obtain information about politics and society in Turkey.”

e views expressed by German journalists, editors and common citizens during the course of this study are not borne out by specialist media analysis

undertaken by German researchers cited above. That reveals the gap between popular German perceptions within and outside the media and those between specialist studies undertaken on migrant minorities to study their media use patterns. Kira Kosnick provides an appropriate context to the whole debate about whether ethnic media in Germany works against integration :

“Media here become a means of self-orientation and self-expression by which the self is linked to the cultural identity of an ethnic group. In this understanding of ethnic minority media, two basic meanings of representation are collapsed: representation in the sense of “darstellen,” or “subject-predication,” by which the ethnic group is invoked, and representation in the sense of “vertreten,” or “speaking-for,” as in the political representation of that group.”⁴⁰

The growth of the ethnic mediascape in Germany could actually provide new opportunities for multiculturalism and greater inter-ethnic understanding if the German press come to terms with the reality and try to take advantage of it. German media houses who reach out to buy stakes in Bulgarian newspapers or Polish radio stations may actually consider investing in ethnic media . New markets could open out for them – bigger than those available in eastern Europe.

Even communities not as big as the Turks will try their best to retain their cultural identity in Germany. Twenty years ago, smaller migrant communities such as South Asians had to integrate with German society because they were too small to live as distinct communities. Today they can and do – in a virtual, if not a real sense. Koteswar Rao Anne, an engineer from southern India , worked for seven years in Hamburg. Now settled in the Austrian town of Klagenfurt, Rao is on internet first thing in the morning. He first reads the “Hindu” , the hugely popular English daily in southern India, where India’s major infotech hubs are located. The second paper that Rao reads is the Telegu language daily “Eenadu” , that brings him uptodate with “everything back home.” He is fluent in German but reads German papers only in offices – for catching up on “headlines and news that might specifically affect us.” Of the eight other Indian, seven Pakistani and four Bangladeshi migrants interviewed, all surfed the Net extensively.

So it would be a misnomer to imagine that first generation migrants from Turkey , mostly illiterate workers with little knowledge of German, would be the least inclined to “integrate” while more literate migrants may be more inclined to integrate. The South Asian migrants interviewed were all literate and fluent in German – yet all except one hardly read German papers or magazines. They see German TV but “only to catch up.” The Indians and Pakistanis mostly saw ZEE TV for South Asian soap operas and films. The Bangladeshis log on to Bangla channels on the Net.

This is what David Morley and Kevin Robbins call the “paradox” – the counter tendency to assert national and/or ethnic identity in an age of globalization. Hafez calls this “glolocalisation” , where nativist identities resurfaces amongst migrants in conditions ostensibly conducive to globalization. That makes old integration concepts rather obsolete.

⁴⁰ Kira Kosnick. *Migrant Media: Turkish Broadcasting and Multicultural Politics in Berlin.* *New Anthropologies of Europe.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009

This trend of “glolocalisation” is reflected in media use patterns of most migrant-minority communities in the West and Germany is no exception. Even in Britain, where South Asian migrants, are generally much more comfortable with English than Turkish migrants are with German, British media researcher Marie Gillespie has found that older generations of South Asians love Indian films and video productions and distance themselves from Western offerings for moral and political reasons. But Gillespie finds younger migrants frequently lack the background to appreciate Indian productions and prefer the British-Western offerings. But even they root for Indian cricket team against the English team because a victory of the “home team” is often seen as an anti-colonial assertion , a kind of a “we-can-beat-them” phenomenon that has implications for the young migrants workplace and in his relationship with his English colleagues.

The German media has to accept the reality of “glocalisation” before the larger society sees it. Instead of succumbing to needless Islamphobia or wail for “failed integration” , it should see in the growth of the ethnic media , specially the Turkish media , a huge opportunity to create a genuinely multicultural Germany – and a truly multicultural German press .

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