View metadata, citation and similar papers at core.ac.uk
brought to you by CORE
provided by Red de Bibliotecas Virtuales de Ciencias Sociales de...

Chapter 2

New complexities of transnational media cultures

Kevin Robins & Asu Aksoy

Until quite recently, what prevailed in European media culture was the system of public service broadcasting, involving the provision of mixed programming –with strict controls on the amount of foreign material shown– on national channels available to all. The principle that governed the regulation of broadcasting was that of national 'public interest'. Broadcasting should contribute to the political and cultural life of the nation –it was intended to help in constructing a sense of national unity. Thus, in Britain, during the earliest days of the BBC, the medium of radio was consciously employed "to forge a link between the dispersed and disparate listeners and the symbolic heartland of national life" (Cardiff and Scannell, 1987: 157). And, in the postwar years, as the media historian, Paddy Scannell, has demonstrated, both radio and television "brought into being a culture in common to whole populations and a shared public life of a quite new kind" (Scannell, 1989: 138). Historically, then, broadcasting assumed a dual role, serving both as the public sphere of the nation state and as the focus for national cultural identification. We can say that broadcasting has been one of the key institutions through which people –as listeners and viewers– have come to imagine themselves as members of the national community.

Over the past twenty years or so, however, things have changed, and changed in quite significant ways. From the mid-1980s, dramatic upheavals took place in the media industries, laying the basis for what must be seen as a new kind of media order. Two factors have been identified as being particularly significant in this transformation. First was the decisive shift in media regulatory princi-

ples: from regulation in the national public interest to a new regulatory regime –sometimes erroneously described as 'deregulation'– primarily driven by economic and entrepreneurial imperatives. Second was the proliferation of new, or alternative, distribution technologies, and particularly satellite television, which made it possible –maybe inevitable– for new transborder broadcasting systems to develop –bringing about, as a consequence, the formation of new transnational and global audiovisual markets. Driving these developments were new commercial and entrepreneurial ambitions in the media sector. And what was particularly significant here was the strong expansionist tendency at work in these ambitions, pushing all the time toward the construction of enlarged audiovisual spaces and markets. The objective and the great ideal in the new order –among media entrepreneurs and policy makers alike– was to achieve the 'free flow of television'. The fundamental imperative was to break down the old boundaries and frontiers of national communities, which had come to be seen as restricting the free flow of products and services in communications markets. There was consequently a logic in play whereby the new audiovisual spaces became detached from the symbolic spaces of national communities and cultures.

Discussions of these developments have tended to be seen in terms of the shift from one historical epoch or era to another –the transition from the public service era to that of global markets. In this metaphor of epochal shift, there is a tendency to overemphasize the contrast between the two epochs, and also to oversimplify the nature of each period. What we want to suggest is the use of a different metaphor to grasp the nature of the transformations that have been occurring. We would suggest that change is more akin the process of geological layering. What has happened is that the new audiovisual spaces and markets have come to settle across the old national landscape. Public service broadcasting continues to exist at the same time that new kinds of audiovisual markets and spaces have come into existence. Also important to emphasize, we believe, is that both 'public service' and 'global' are fluid and changing categories. In Europe, through the 1990s, for example, the idea of public service shifted in important ways to include provision of programming for minorities and also the recognition of cultural rights in the European regions. We should be clear as well that global broadcasting has developed in such a way as to include transnational and diasporic broadcasters like Roj TV (formerly MED TV) and Al-Jazeera, as well as giants like Disney and Time Warner. If we consider the European continent now, what should be apparent is the extreme diversity and complexity of audiovisual spaces –national, local-regional, and transnational. Viewers may tune in to the services of public service providers like RAI, ZDF, to local Welsh or Basque channels, to CNN or Sky, and also to Zee TV or TRT-INT. And through these new transnational developments, we maintain, the nature of the European cultural landscape and European public culture is being significantly reconfigured.

In the following discussion, what we want to explore is how new transnational cultures and new forms of transnational experience are being initi-

ated through the consumption of transnational media. What is happening –what might happen–, we ask, when it is possible to tune in to the new channels from anywhere and everywhere else? What is it that might be different and distinctive about transnational media cultures? What is their relation to, and what are their implications for, the older national broadcasting order? Our interest is in the mundane, everyday experience of transnational viewing. We pursue these questions through an analysis of the use of transnational satellite broadcasting by migrants living in Europe. Migrant audiences are particularly avid consumers of satellite television, and their viewing experiences can, therefore, provide a particularly good way into understanding the significance of the new transnational media. How, we shall ask, do migrant audiences relate to the different national media systems that they have access to? And what new kinds of transnational experience might be opening up for them?

In order to ground our inquiry, we focus on a particular case study, that of Turkish-speaking migrants living in Europe. All across the European space now, Turkish-speaking populations are tuning in to the numerous (more than forty –the exact number is in constant flux) satellite channels that are broadcasting programs from Ankara and Istanbul. Just like other migrant groups –Maghrebis, Arabs, Chinese, Indians, Afro-Caribbeans, and many more– they are now able to make use of transnational communications to gain access to media services from the country of origin (or elsewhere). This has been a very important development, a development of the last decade, which has very significant implications for how migrants experience their lives, and for how they think and feel about their experiences. What, then, is this significance? What is the nature of migrants' engagement with the new transnational media? What precisely is the difference that satellite television makes for those who live in transnational contexts? These are key questions that we want to pose.

To address these questions we draw on research that we have been undertaking amongst the Turkish-speaking populations in London (see Aksoy and Robins, 2000, 2003; Robins and Aksoy, 2001, 2004). In order to see how it is that ordinary Turkish people are relating to the new transnational media, what it is that they are doing with television, then we have to listen to Turkish people talking about their responses and reactions to it. Trying to make sense of what they have to say will therefore be a primary aim of this chapter. What we then have to recognize, however, is that the interpretation of what they are telling us is far from being a straightforward matter. It is not straightforward because so much clearly depends on the conceptual and theoretical framework in terms of which one seeks to make sense of the responses and accounts of Turkish viewers. In the following section, we shall argue that the currently prevailing framework –which has been mainly concerned with how transnational satellite broadcasting systems sustain new kinds of 'global diasporic cultures' or 'long-distance imagined communities'– is deeply problematical, essentially because it seeks to understand transnational developments through what are categories of the national imagi-

nary, and is consequently blind to whatever it is that might be new and different about emerging transnational media cultures. We will then proceed to develop our own approach, which seeks to move beyond the taken-for-grantedness of the national mentality and its fundamental categories (those of 'community', 'identity' and 'belonging') in order to explore alternative possibilities of transnationalism. What we will actually describe, through our analysis of focus group discussions with Turkish viewers, is a new cultural situation in which national and transnational dispositions interact. It is a situation in which the national mentality may be disrupted, creating a space for new transnational perspectives to emerge.

Beyond diasporic cultural studies

A key endeavour of this chapter, then, is to open up an agenda concerning the appropriate categories for understanding what is happening –actually, what might unexpectedly be happening– in transnational cultural experience. Let us first briefly indicate why we distance ourselves from the growing body of work on transnational communications functioning within the framework of what we might call diasporic cultural studies. Here it is generally argued that new media technologies are making it possible to transcend the distances that have separated 'diasporic communities' around the world from their 'communities of origin'. 'Diasporic media' are said to be providing new means to promote transnational bonding, and thereby sustain (ethnic, national or religious) identities and cultures at-a-distance. They are being thought about in terms of possibilities they offer for dislocated belonging among migrant communities anxious to maintain their identification with the 'homeland' (and the basic premise is that this kind of belonging must be the primary aspiration of any and every such 'community').

Now, of course we can recognize a certain kind of truth in this argument. From our own work on Turkish migrants in London, it is clear that access to Turkish-language media can, indeed, be important for overcoming the migrant's experience of cultural separation. But if there is some kind of truth here, we would say that it is only a very partial truth. The problem with diasporic media studies is that its interests and concern generally come to an end at this point. The inquiry is brought to a premature halt, with the ready acceptance that transnational broadcasting does in fact, and quite unproblematically, support the long-distance cohesion of transnational 'imagined communities' –and without ever confronting what it is that might be new and distinctive about the experience of transnational broadcasting. Because it has been principally concerned with acts of bonding and belonging, the diasporic agenda has generally been blind to what else might be happening when migrants are, apparently, connecting in to the 'homeland' culture. The limits of diasporic media studies come from the readiness to believe and accept that migrant audiences are all behaving as the conventional and conforming members of 'diasporic communities'.

The root problem is simply that the theoretical categories available to diasporic media and cultural studies make it difficult to see anything other than

diasporic forms of behaviour. Individuals are derived from the social orders to which they 'belong'; they amount to little more than their membership of, and participation in, any particular 'imagined community'. This is clearly an example of the kind of social theory that is powerfully criticised by Anthony Cohen, an approach that treats society as an ontology "which somehow becomes independent of its own members, and assumes that the self is required continuously to adjust to it" (1994: 21). In this kind of approach there is no place for self-awareness and self-consciousness –and, as Cohen argues, by neglecting self-consciousness, "we inevitably perpetrate fictions in our descriptions of other people" (1994: 191). To see anything more than diasporic behaviour in migrant audiences, it is necessary to introduce the category of the self-conscious individual, who is "someone who can reflect on her or his experience of and position in society, of 'being oneself'" (1994: 65).

As Cohen says, the imperative should be "to elicit and describe the thoughts and sentiments of individuals which we otherwise gloss over in the generalisations we derive from collective social categories" (1994: 4). The crucial point is that individuals are endowed with the capacity for both emotion (feelings, moods) and thought (reflecting, comparing, interpreting, judging, and so on). We should be concerned, then, with their minds and sensibilities, and not their cultures or identities –with how they think, rather than how they belong.

In the present discussion, we do not want to enter directly into a theoretical discussion of the categories of culture and identity that are being proposed in these analyses of so-called diasporic communities. Our critique will take a more oblique form, moving the argument into an empirical frame, via an exploration of certain new developments in migration that cannot be made sense of within this diasporic cultural agenda (and that may actually be affecting the conditions of possibility of the diasporic imaginary). We want to consider new practices that seem to open up alternative, and potentially more productive, dimensions of migrant experience. We are concerned with the kind of developments described by Alejandro Portes and his colleagues, in which "a growing number of persons… live dual lives: speaking two languages, having homes in two countries, and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders" (Portes et al, 1999: 217). Through a "thick web of regular instantaneous communication and easy personal travel" (1999: 227), it is argued, migrants are now routinely able to establish transnational communities that exist across two, or more, cultural spaces. In what follows, then, we want to look at how these new kinds of transnational networks and mobilities may now be changing the nature of migrant experience and thinking. We shall be concerned with the cultural potential that may be inherent in these transnational developments as they occur at the level of everyday experience. And we shall be particularly attentive to the possibilities that these new connections may be creating for moving beyond the agenda of national identity and the frame of imagined community.

Contradictory experiences of transnational television

It is in the terms set out by Anthony Cohen that we now want to reflect on the experiences of Turkish migrants living in London. What do they think and feel about Turkish channels and programming? What is the difference that transnational television has made for London Turks? What we may say is that transnational television has introduced entirely new dynamics into the management of distance and separation. Let us start from this crucial question of distance –from the idea that the new media systems can now work to bridge global or transnational distances. And let us do so by reflecting on what this seemingly straightforward idea might actually mean in reality. In the frame of diasporic cultural studies, we suggest, the agenda is about the maintenance of at-a-distance ties; it is about the supposed capacity of transnational media to connect migrant communities back to the cultural space of their distant 'homelands'. On the basis of our own research, we would characterise what is happening somewhat differently: in terms of how –in the case of our informants– transnational media can now bring Turkish cultural products and services to them in London, and of how 'Turkey' is consequently brought closer to them. As one focus group participant puts it,

> [I]t gives you more freedom, because you don't feel so far away, because it's only six foot away from you, you don't feel so far away from it. Cyprus is like one switch of a button away, or Turkey even, mainland Turkey, you are there, aren't you? (Focus group, Enfield, 21 April 2000).

Even a young woman who migrated when she was quite young, and who is therefore not really familiar with the country, has this sense of greater proximity to the actuality of Turkey. She thinks that it is very good to be able to watch satellite television

> because you too can see what's been going on in Turkey, the news… I used to think that Turkey was a different kind of place [*başka bir yer*]. It's bringing it [Turkey] closer [*yakinlaştiriyor*] (Focus group, Islington, London, 29 March 1999).

Television makes a difference because it seems to be in its nature –in the nature of television as a medium– to bring things closer to its viewers.

In one of our group discussions, two women tell us of how satellite television now allows them to be synchronised with Turkish realities. 'Most certainly [Turkish] television is useful for us', says one. 'It's almost as if we're living in Turkey, as if nothing has really changed for us'. The other confirmed this, saying that

> When you're home, you feel as if you are in Turkey. Our homes are already decorated Turkish style, everything about me is Turkish, and when I'm watching television too… (Focus group, Hackney, London, 7 December 1999).

The key issue here is to do with the meaning of this feeling of 'as if nothing has really changed for us'. In the context of the diasporic cultural studies agenda, this

feeling of synchronisation would be thought of in terms of long-distance bonding with the 'homeland', the maintenance of at-a-distance links with a faraway 'somewhere else'. For us, in contrast, it is simply about the availability in London of imported things from Turkey –where we might regard the availability of television programmes as being on a continuum with the (equally common nowadays) availability of food, clothes or furnishings from Turkey. 'Nothing has really changed' does not refer to ethno-cultural re-connection to some imagined 'homeland', but simply to the possibility of having access in London now to Turkish consumer goods and the world of Turkish consumer culture. It is 'almost as if we're living in Turkey' in that sense –being Turkish in London, that is to say, and not at all in the sense of 'being taken back home'.

Television brings the everyday, banal reality of Turkish life to the migrants living in London. The key to understanding transnational Turkish television is its relation to banality. Vladimir Jankélévitch has noted how people who are in exile can imagine they are living double lives, carrying around within them "inner voices… the voices of the past and of the distant city", whilst at the same time submitting to "the banal and turbulent life of everyday action" (1974: 346). This is the mechanism of psychic splitting –where the banality of the 'here and now' provides the stimulus for nostalgic dreams and fantasies about the 'there and then'. Now, what we regard as significant about transnational television is that, as a consequence of bringing the mundane, everyday reality of Turkey 'closer', it is progressively undermining this false polarizing logic. The 'here and now' reality of Turkish media culture disturbs the imagination of a 'there and then' Turkey –thereby working against the romance of diaspora-as-exile, against the tendency to false idealisation of the 'homeland'. We might say, then, that transnational Turkish television is an agent of cultural de-mythologisation.

This process of de-mythologisation can work in different ways. Here we will give two examples of how television can be used as a kind of reality-testing device. The first comes from an interview with an active member of London's Turkish-Cypriot population, a man in his forties who has been settled in Britain for many years. We find ourselves discussing the question of young people, relationships and the family, and he expresses quite critical opinions about what he clearly regards as the out-of-date morality of the Turkish-Cypriot community. In many ways, he says,

> you become almost frozen in your understanding of where your community is. The longer you are here the more you are likely to have views and attitudes that are more conservative and out of date. I've seen people my age and even younger, expecting things of their children that they have rebelled against.

He then moves on to suggest that transnational television could actually play a positive role in countering this migrant conservatism. 'In many ways', he comments,

> I wish they would watch more Turkish television. Some of their attitudes are far behind what the messages are. You turn on the Turkish television, and some of it is refreshingly modern. It's quite normal to watch people having affairs, or who are having relationships, who aren't married, on Turkish television. You would never have had that twenty years ago. But some of the mind set is relating to that. The first time a girl is having a relationship is when they get married –you see that with second-generation people. They don't get that from satellite. They get it from their parents (Interview, Camden, London, 20 April 2000).

What he is arguing is that television programmes and images that show how life and morals are in Turkey now can serve as a valuable corrective to migrant attitudes that, he believes, have become stuck in some ideal and timeless image of Turkish-Cypriotness.

The second example comes from a young woman of eighteen, we shall call her Hülya, who migrated to Britain from eastern Turkey when she was seven years old. At one point, towards the end of our discussion, she tells us how much she likes watching old Turkish movies on television, 'especially the love films', which she likes to watch 'to see the old Turkey. […] It gives you a very sweet sense'. But earlier she had spoken about a very different experience of watching Turkish television:

> We have one TV set, and this is why we have arguments, because I'm irritated by the news. I find it bad for my health. You might find it funny but, really, you sit in front of the television, you are going to watch the news, you are relaxed, everybody is curious about what's happening in Turkey; and then it says, 'Good evening viewers, today four cars crashed into each other'. God bless them. They show these things, people covered in blood. People who know nothing about rescuing, trying to drag these people out, they pull them, and in front of your eyes people die. I am a very sensitive person. Somebody dies in front of you, and they show this, and they don't do anything. For me, this is like torture. For them maybe it is not like torture, but for me it is. Two or three years ago, I was *very* upset, when this guy was killed because he had a tattoo saying 'Allah' on his back. Then, I don't know this person, but I was so touched that I cried. And I called Ahmet Taner Kişlali [a famous journalist]. These kinds of events make me very sad, because I'm delicate, and they wear me out, so for that reason I don't watch (Focus group, Hackney, London, 3 November 1999).

What is made apparent here is television's great capacity for conveying harsh and cruel aspects of the Turkish reality –Turkish news programmes are far more explicit than British ones in showing images of violence and bloodshed. For a great part of Turkish viewers, news programmes are very disturbing (the often intense discomfort of watching the news was an issue that ran through practically all of our focus groups). In some parts of its schedules, then, television may nourish warm

and nostalgic feelings. But at news time, especially, the principle of reality will always return, through images of Turkey that frequently provoke and shock. The news can be profoundly unsettling for migrant viewers. As Hülya says of her own experience, it 'creates a psychological disorder' [*psikolojik durum yaratıyor*].

What is important here is the evidential nature of television (which may be constructive, as in our first example, but also disturbing, as our second example makes clear). What we want to emphasize here is the capacity of the reality dimension of television to undercut the abstract nostalgia of the diasporic imagination. Turkish viewers come to participate in the mundane and banal world of everyday television. It is this aspect of television culture that goes against the idea that the proliferation of Turkish transnational media is now associated with an ethnicisation of media cultures and markets in western Europe (for such an argument see Becker, 2001). In our own work, we have not found this to be the case. We are inclined to agree with Marisca Milikowski when she argues that it is, on the contrary, associated with a process of de-ethnicisation. As she says, Turkish satellite television "helps Turkish 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: 444). The world of Turkish television is an ordinary world, and its significance resides, we suggest, in its ordinary, banal and everyday qualities –which are qualities it has in common with countless other TV worlds.

Turkish audiences look to the ordinariness of Turkish television. Like any other viewers of broadcast television, they look for "the familiar –familiar sights, familiar faces, familiar voices", as Thomas Elsaesser (1994: 7) puts it, "television that respects and knows who they are, where they are, and what time it is". And, to a large extent, we may say that they are able to find what they are looking for. And yet, at the same time, there is still something that is wrong, something that does not quite work properly with transnational Turkish television. At the same time as they can enjoy them, migrants can also find Turkish channels disturbing, unsettling, frustrating. This is apparent in a very dramatic fashion in Hülya's abrupt shift from feeling relaxed in front of the television to feeling worn out by what she saw on it. Many, many other people expressed these kinds of affronted and disgruntled feelings about the programmes they were watching. In one group, a woman objects to the production standards of Turkish television.

> We perceive Turkish television as being of poor quality, and rather sensationalist, and unedited, so it's a bit crude… I mean, it will show you things in an unedited way, whether it's blood and guts, or violence or whatever.

And she adds, in a joking tone,

> I can't take it seriously if it's Burt Lancaster with a Turkish accent –doesn't really appeal (Focus group, Haringey, London, 22 November 1999).

There is something about Turkish television that presents itself as in some way inadequate, deficient, often unacceptable. The experience of watching transnational television is ordinary, but never straightforwardly.

When Turkish people talk about what frustrates them, they point to the images, the programmes, the scheduling, or the nature of particular channels. But, somehow, it seems to us, this doesn't really get at what is 'wrong' with watching television from Turkey. There is something more that is disconcerting about watching transnational television, an elusive something else. We can perhaps get at what this something might be from a passing observation that was made by Hülya. We were talking about Muslim festivals, and about the sense that she and her friends had that the significance of religious holidays was diminishing in the London context. We asked whether Turkish television helps to remind people of the traditional holidays, and to create the festival atmosphere that seemed to have been lost. 'How could that help?', says one young woman sceptically. And Hülya says

> It's coming from a distance… It's coming from too far. It loses its significance. I mean, it could have significance, but it's coming from too far.

Later, when asked whether the availability of satellite television had implications for her identity and her relation to Turkish culture, she picks up on the same idea. 'No', she says,

> it can't, because it's too distant. Imagine that you were talking to me from I don't know how many thousand miles away. How much would this affect me? (Focus group, Hackney, London, 3 November 1999).

Perhaps we can make sense of this by referring back to Thomas Elsaesser's observation that the audiences of broadcast television want television programs that know who they are, where they are, and what time it is. Is it that television from Turkey doesn't seem to know its transnational audiences in this way? Is Hülya pointing to something that is new or different about the working of transnational television? Is she signalling something that might actually make transnational cultural interactions distinctive?

Transnational media experience and television theory

Turkish migrants clearly have quite complex thoughts and sentiments about the television channels and programmes that they are watching. And what is also clear is that they have a critical engagement with the new transnational television culture.

What they say demonstrates considerable awareness and thoughtfulness about different aspects of this culture, from the aesthetic and production values of particular programmes, through to the overall impact of the new services on the quality of their lives in Britain. What we now want to do is to go on and reflect on these complex attitudes and relations of Turkish migrants towards

transnational television. We want to try to make sense of what Turkish people are telling us in the context of more general ideas about the role and significance of media in modern life (which Turks are as much a part of as any other group).

For the most part, as we have suggested above, transnational media of the kind we are concerned with here have been considered in the special context of 'diasporic culture' and identity politics. Migrant audiences have been seen as, in some way, different; and the study of their supposedly different dispositions and preoccupations has seemed to belong to the specialized domain of ethnic and migration research. We ourselves believe that their media activities should be looked at with the very same media theories that have been applied to 'ordinary' (i.e. national, sedentary) audiences. Marisca Milikowski (2000: 460) is quite right to insist that we should look at migrant viewing from the point of view of "ordinary uses and gratifications" –for, as she observes, "non-ideological and non-political gratifications usually go a long way to explain a certain popular interest…" This we regard as an important principle of methodological democracy and justice. We should reflect on what is happening through transnationalisation of Turkish media culture in the light of media theory concerned with ordinary uses of, and gratifications from, everyday television.

Here, we think that the work of Paddy Scannell (1989, 1996, 2000; Cardiff and Scannel, 1987) –whom we referred to above as a leading historian of public service broadcasting– can serve as a particularly useful and productive point of reference. We have reservations, we must say, about certain aspects of Scannell's overall project –it is very national in its orientation, and often seems to be treating British broadcasting as an ideal-type model (for critical observations on the politics of Scannell's agenda, see Morley, 2000: ch. 5). But we do think that there is a great deal to be learned from his detailed analysis of the emergence of distinctive modes of address in national broadcasting cultures –how broadcasters learned to address listeners and viewers in appropriate ways (ways in which they would wish to be addressed). Scannell's work alerts us to the significance of the particular rhetorical structures that have come to mediate the relation of producers and consumers of broadcasting services. What he provides us with is a sustained account of the communicative structures and ethos that have made broadcasting culture work for its audiences. It is, moreover, a historically situated account, showing how the specific communicative forms of radio and television developed and functioned in the particular and specific context of national broadcasting systems. Scannell's concern is with how, at a particular historical moment, broadcasting media came to develop communicative forms that functioned as arguably the primary mediation between the private domain of everyday life and the public life of the nation state.

It seems to us that these communicative and rhetorical aspects of programming and scheduling are absolutely crucial for our own exploration of transnational Turkish television and its audiences. Of course, the codes that have evolved in the Turkish context differ somewhat from those of Scannell's British case

–the state broadcaster, TRT, has always had an 'official' tone, and it was only in the 1990s, through the development of private channels, that more informal modes of address came to be elaborated (Aksoy and Robins, 1997). But we may say that they have functioned in the integrative way, working to mediate the relation between private and public spheres of life in Turkey. And what seems to us to be a key issue, in the context of our own present concern with Turkish satellite broadcasting in the European space, is what happens to these nationally-forged communicative structures in the changed circumstances of transnationalisation. The point about Scannell's analysis is that it is essentially a phenomenology of national broadcasting –or perhaps, more accurately, a national phenomenology of broadcasting. It assumes that there is something universal and timeless about the way in which national broadcasting cultures have worked. What we observe is that there are likely difficulties when communicative structures that have worked more or less well in a national context are then made to do service in new transnational contexts. We are concerned with the communicative limits of structures that have served to mediate between the private and public lives of the nation.

There are two (closely related) arguments that we want to make here. The first is straightforward, emerging directly from our previous discussion, and can be made quite briefly. Scannell is concerned with what he calls the "care-structures" of radio and television, by which he means the practices that "produce and deliver an all-day everyday service that is ready-to-hand and available always anytime at the turn of a switch or the press of a button" (1996: 145-146). What this means, he says, is "making programmes so that they 'work' every time", and in such a way that viewers or listeners come to regard them as "a natural, ordinary, unremarkable, everyday entitlement" (1996: 145-146). In considering these care structures, Scannell has put particular emphasis on the temporality of broadcasting, on what he calls its "dailiness". "This dailiness yields", he says, "the sense we all have of the ordinariness, the familiarity and obviousness of radio and television. It establishes their taken for granted, 'seen but unnoticed' character" (2000: 19). And what Scannell wants us to recognize and acknowledge is the immense pleasure that this mundane quality of broadcasting has had for viewers –the pleasure that comes from the combination of familiarity, confirmation, entitlement and effortlessness.

And what we want to emphasize is that this particular pleasure principle is, of course, also present in Turkish broadcasting culture. Turkish broadcasting culture also exists as an ordinary and mundane culture. And the appeal of Turkish television, as with other broadcasting cultures, is equally the appeal of its ordinariness. Through it, Turks living in Europe have access to, or can extend their access to, what Jostein Gripsrud (1999) calls the domain of "common knowledge". They can be part of the great domain of "anonymous discourse" that broadcasting has brought into existence, the banal domain of "inattentive attention" (Brune, 1993: 37). What we are arguing, then, is that migrant viewers are looking to find what the national television culture has always provided. Like any other

viewers, Turkish-speaking viewers in Europe are also in search of broadcast television that is meaningfully and effortlessly available. They are also wanting –and to a quite large extent finding– the pleasures of familiarity and confirmation. And our point is that the desire for such an engagement with Turkish television is entirely *social*, and not at all ethno-cultural or 'diasporic', in its motivation. Migrant viewers are in search of ordinary social gratifications, precisely the kinds of gratification that Scannell is concerned with.

Our second argument is more complex, and takes us back to what Hülya said about Turkish television seeming to come from a distance and, consequently, losing its significance. What we want to get at is the particular feeling of *ambivalence* that very many Turkish people have about transnational television (which is more than the routine ambivalence that we all seem to have). They enjoy and appreciate the programmes they see; and yet, at the same time, watching them can frequently cause frustration and provoke resentment. Sometimes, it seems, transnational engagement with Turkish television culture doesn't 'work'. In Scannell's terms, we may say that the care structures of television break down. And what we want to suggest, as an explanation for this, is that, whilst considerable gratification may be got from everyday television, there are particular difficulties with its "sociable dimension", which Scannell regards as "the most fundamental characteristic of broadcasting's communicative ethos" (1996: 23). Put simply, Turkish television often seems to its transnational viewers to be failing or lacking in its sociable aspect.

Scannell draws our attention to the remarkable capacity of broadcasting to generate a sense of "we-ness", through the creation of "a public, shared and sociable world-in-common between human beings" (2000: 12). What Scannell means when he talks about the creation of a "world in common" is, of course, a national world in common; what is at issue is the contribution of broadcasting to the institution of the 'imagined community'. His account is often extremely idealistic, but what we think Scannell usefully brings out is the way in which television and radio have worked to create a public world with "an ordered, orderly, familiar, knowable appearance" (1996: 153). It is a world in which television and radio contribute to "the shaping of our sense of days" (1996: 149). The dailiness of broadcast media gives rise to the sense of "*our* time –generational time– the time of *our* being with one another in the world" (1996: 174). The broadcasting calendar "creates a horizon of expectations, a mood of anticipation, a directedness towards that which is to come, thereby giving substance and structure (a 'texture of relevances') to everyday life" (1996: 155). According to this ideal-type scenario, broadcasting produces a "common world –a shareable, accessible, available public world": what it does is "to create and to allow ways of being-in-public for absent listeners and viewers" (1996: 166, 168). It connects "everyone's my-world" to the "great world", which is "a world in common, a world we share" (1996: 172, 174).

And what we are arguing here is that it is this sociable functioning of broadcasting that doesn't 'work' properly for migrants watching Turkish televi-

sion in Europe. Transnational viewers are often disconcerted because, on very many occasions, they cannot relate to Turkish programmes as a natural, ordinary, unremarkable, everyday entitlement. In the case of news this is particularly apparent. If, as Scannell argues, "the care structures of news are designed to routinise eventfulness" (1996: 160), then we may say that in our Turkish case, at least, these care structures do not function well across distance. In the transnational context, there is a problem with the mode of address. Broadcasting works on the basis of what Scannell calls a "for-anyone-as-someone" structure of address: it is addressing a mass audience, and yet appears to be addressing the members of that audience personally, as individuals. "The for-anyone-as-someone structure expresses and embodies that which is between the impersonal third person and the personal first person, namely the second person (the me-and-you)", says Scannell (2000: 9). "The for-anyone-as-someone structure expresses "we-ness". It articulates human social sociable life". In the Turkish case, it seems that viewers may often be made to feel like no one in particular. The conditions no longer exist for feeling at home in the 'we-ness' of Turkish broadcasting culture.

Why does the 'my world' of Turkish migrants no longer resonate properly with a Turkish world in common? Why are there problems with the mode of address in the case of transnational broadcasting? Why are the care structures of broadcasting disrupted? The reasons are to do with the context of consumption. As we have said, transnational broadcasting is not about magically transporting migrant viewers back to a distant homeland. It is about broadcasting services being delivered to them in their new locations –in the case of the Turks we have been discussing, it is in London. What this means is that the world of broadcasting is not seamlessly connected to the world of the street outside, as it would be for viewers watching in Turkey. Migrant viewers cannot move routinely between the media space and the 'outside' space of everyday Turkish reality. And since so much of what broadcasting is about has to do with connecting viewers to the life and rhythms of the real world of the nation, there are bound to be difficulties with the dislocated kind of viewing that migrancy enforces. Turkish migrants will often protest that Turkish television exaggerates. 'When you see these things you naturally believe them', one man said to us.

> But I've been back from Turkey for two weeks, and it's nothing like that really. It's nothing like how it's shown. Turkey is the same Turkey. Of course, there are scandals, and there are people who live through them. But television doesn't reflect things as they are (Focus group, Hackney, London, 16 December 1999).

Migrants tend to forget that exaggeration is an integral part of television rhetoric in Turkey, and it is only when they go back for a visit that they recognize the discrepancy between screen reality and street reality (whereas viewers in Turkey are checking out this discrepancy on a continuous basis). We may say that the decon-

textualisation of the migrant viewing situation often results in a kind of interference in the reception of cultural signals from Turkey.

A further consequence of the dislocated context of consumption is that migrant viewers can never be in a position to watch Turkish television naively or innocently. We must be aware that they actually operate in and across two cultural spaces (at least) –Turkish and British. As well as watching Turkish channels, most of them are very familiar with British television. And they will often make comparisons between the two broadcasting cultures (concerning, for example, programme quality, scheduling, bias, censorship). We may say that there is a constant implicit comparison going on, and very often the comparisons are explicit –Turkish programmes are always watched and thought about with an awareness of British television in mind. As one man put it to us,

> We have the opportunity to compare things we see with what happens here. Before, we didn't know what it was like here (Focus group, Hackney, London, 16 December 1999).

When we say that Turkish migrants cannot watch Turkish television innocently, we mean that they can no longer watch it from the inside, as it were. They cannot recover the simple perspective of monocultural (national) vision. They are compelled to think about Turkish culture in the light of other cultural experiences and possibilities.

We have said that watching transnational Turkish television can be a frustrating and often disillusioning experience. What we want to emphasize in conclusion is that this disillusionment can also be a very productive experience. Through their engagement with Turkish (alongside British) media culture, Turkish migrants develop a comparative and critical attitude, and may become more reflexively aware of the arbitrariness and provisionality of cultural orders. In the present argument, we have been principally concerned with how the ordinary world of broadcast television can work to undermine the diasporic imagination. What should also have become apparent in the course of our argument, however, is the potential that exists, too, for working against the grain of the national imagination, against the confining mentality of imagined community.

Conclusion: transnational experience and media policy

In this discussion, we have been critical of diasporic cultural studies and the agenda centred on 'diasporic media'. Our objection has been to what we regard as a basic wrong assumption made by its exponents: that the people who watch transnational satellite television do so as mere ciphers of the 'imagined communities' to which they are said to belong. What we call into question is the idea that migrants function principally in terms of the categories of collective attachment and identification. As Roger Rouse has observed, "the discourse of identity suggests that social collectivities are aggregates of atomised and autonomous elements, either individuals or sub-groups, that are fundamentally equivalent by

virtue of the common possession of a given social property" (1995: 358). Human individuals are reduced to the status of being the poor representatives of whatever imagined community they happen to have once been aggregated into. Rouse points to the socio-cultural efficacy of this logic of identity. We may consider it, he says, in terms of "hegemonic efforts to make ideas about identity frame the ways in which people understand what it is to be a person, the kinds of collectivities in which they are involved, the nature of the problems that they face, and the means by which these problems can be tackled" (1995: 356). Our problem with the project of diasporic cultural studies is that, in the end, it contributes to the extension and perpetuation of these hegemonic efforts in the context of contemporary global change. Ultimately, everything remains predicated on the logic of national identity and a national, or national-style, cultural frame.

We have felt it necessary to go against the grain of the prevailing culturalism, and to take greater account of human consciousness and self-consciousness –to recognize that the minds of Turkish migrants may provide a more significant and interesting research focus than their identities. This means moving our agenda away from the 'problem' of migrant culture and identity, to consider how it is that migrants experience migration, and how they think and talk about and make sense of their experiences. The point about identities is that they require simplicity. In the case of minds and consciousness, what is important is always their complexity. And what we suggest is that transnational experiences may now be helping to foster more plural, and also more complex, intellectual and imaginative perspectives. At the beginning of this discussion, we mobilised a geological metaphor to characterise the complexity of contemporary developments in the media landscape in Europe. Across the old order of national audiovisual spaces, we suggested, we have come to see the subsequent layering of regional spaces and of global and transnational spaces. Now, at our discussion's concluding point, what we are invoking is actually the mental space equivalent of this new geographical complexity. We might also apply the geological metaphor to the minds of our Turkish interviewees. Turkish viewers take in the diversity of media cultures that we have referred to. They are watching a whole range of Turkish-language channels, and some would watch Kurdish TV; they also watch the British channels, as well as global channels such as CNN or MTV; and they are also reading local Turkish newspapers and listening to local Turkish (and Kurdish), as well as British, radio. They have to find ways to accommodate differences of view and perspective. They have to accommodate the new cultural complexity that emerges out of the contemporary encounter between national and transnational cultures spaces.

Turkish viewers are inevitably caught up in a process of constant comparison between the different (national) cultures they consume. And this process necessarily involves a certain distantiation from (national) cultural codes and rhetorics. Thus, in the migrant context, where the ideal rhetorical situation of Turkish national television is significantly undermined, there may be possibil-

ities for a more reflexive and critical engagement with television from the 'homeland'. What we have tried to suggest is that, in the Turkish case at least, transnational television might actually be working to subvert the diasporic imagination and its imperatives of identification and belonging. What emerges from our discussion of Turkish migrant experiences is the possibility –it is by no means a necessity or an inevitability– that transnational cultural developments might open up new possibilities for mental space: perspectives beyond the national imagination. "It all depends on the rifts and leaps in a person", Elias Canetti (1991: 20) once observed, "on the distance from the one to the other *within himself*". Transnational experience is surely about developing –and putting a positive value on– this capacity to travel the distance from the one to the other within oneself.

Our discussion here has focused exclusively on Turkish migrants. But is it possible, you might ask, to generalise from it? We do not want to make more general and abstract claims about migrant experience. As a result of a number of factors –the geographical proximity of Turkey and Western Europe; the particular historical trajectory of Turkish migration; the working out of Turkish identity politics in recent years– there are important specificities in the Turkish case. We believe it is crucial to be attentive to these specificities. But this does not mean that our argument is only a narrow and limited one. We do believe that what we have been describing has relevance for other migratory experiences. The point, however, is that, because each migrant population, in each locale, has its own specificities, nothing can be directly read off from one set of findings. It is not possible to generalise from any individual case study, then. But what is possible is to use the particular resonances of a case study to throw light on the distinctiveness of other migrant experiences –Iranians in the United States, for example, or Koreans in Latin America. Our Turkish case study can surely be evocative for the understanding of different migrant cultures.

We conclude our discussion by making the point that the emergence of the new transnational cultural spaces and of new cultural experiences of the kind we have been describing must have considerable implications for cultural and media policy. Or perhaps it is more accurate, at this point, to say that the emergence of these spaces *should* have such implications. For, if it is clear that developments in transnational broadcasting are raising important new issues for audiovisual policymakers, it is the case there is at present no constituency or agency for discussing what the policy implications of these new developments might be. We may say there are now possibilities for the institution of what could be an interestingly –and productively– new transnational European cultural map. And yet media policy remains predominantly and stubbornly national in its scope and concerns, and has not really begun to consider the implications of a situation in which migrant populations are now watching a complex new array of transnational programming –programming from across the world. No agenda –and, perhaps more seriously, no imagination– has yet emerged to deal with the new chal-

 lenges arising as a consequence of the new other-than-national dynamics in media industries and cultures.

As a consequence of the proliferation of transnational television channels of all kinds, we have been seeing a fragmentation of the national media space. The relationship between audiences and the national public sphere once mediated by public service broadcasters has now changed in a significant way. Migrant audiences are no longer dependent on the provision of minority programming in their country of residence, and are no longer necessarily loyal to, and held by, the public service channels and broadcasters. The audiences within any particular national territory now constitute different publics, not necessarily sharing in the common knowledge pool or the reference point of the nation. These are developments that raise important questions. What are the cultural implications when sizeable migrant communities cease to watch the national channels of their 'host' country for cultural diversity strategies and policies? Does the concept of 'minority' programming cease to be adequate for addressing audiences that have, until now, been categorized in this way? How should cultural diversity policies in broadcasting be re-invented in the age of transnational broadcasting? What is the significance of the new transnational media for public-service ideals, nationally but also increasingly at the transnational scale? How should public broadcasters be responding to the increasing penetration of transnational broadcasters into the mainstream audiences? What are the appropriate scales of intervention for media policy agencies now, given the transnationalisation process?

The processes of media transnationalism are posing a whole new set of questions with respect to public culture in the European space. Important new issues are being opened up concerning cultural provision, cultural diversity, and public culture, on a basis that now exceeds the national framework. What is called for is a new political and cultural geography for media policy and regulation.