Ethnic Minorities in the Mass Media: How Migrants Perceive Their Representation in Swiss Public Television

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Abstract Communication research highlights deficiencies in the media's representation of migrants. The study at hand analyzes these deficiencies from the perspective of the migrants concerned: How do they perceive their representation in the media, especially on television? And how do they assess the perceived situation with regard to immigrant integration? This topic has been examined in a qualitative pilot study based on six group discussions amongst migrants and Swiss citizens with an immigration background in the German-, French-, and Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland. The results show a high discrepancy between the desire for more presence and participation on the one hand, and the wish to stand in the spotlight less often, on the other hand.

Keywords Migration · Integration · Perception of representation · Media portrayals · Focus groups

Introduction

The *perception of the other* is a core aspect of the integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants. It includes the perception of one's own ethnic group and the feeling of being a part of it; group identity and stereotypes are important terms in this context (Nordquist 2001). The perception of *one's own* group and *other* groups is not only based on interaction and face-to-face communication, but also on the perception of representation in the mass media (Friedland and McLeod 1999). Thus, the exposure of particular population groups as, e.g., migrants by the media and their recognition respectively interpretation of the media's content play a fundamental role with regard to group identities (Viswanath and Arora 2000). Moreover, represen-

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tation in the media is vitally important for the social integration of ethnic minorities. Being represented in the media and having the opportunity to express oneself in the public sphere—which is nowadays mainly created by the media—is a fundamental basis for the integration of all groups into society (Schoenhagen 1999). Since social reality is permanently constructed in a collective process of communication (Berger and Luckmann 1966), being excluded from this process means also being excluded from the collective construction of social reality. From a normative point of view, deficiencies in representation hinder social integration and may influence the affected members of society in a negative manner—ultimately having an impact on everyone (McQuail 1994). Academic publications in communication science regularly highlight deficiencies in the representation of migrants in media coverage, in studies mostly based on content analyses (ter Wal 2004). Furthermore, research findings suggest that the perception of such deficiencies by migrants themselves influence their group or ethnic identity and their identification with the majority (Jeffres 2000) as well as their media use (Trebbe 2009).

Against this background, the study presented below[1] focuses on the presence and representation of ethnic minorities on Swiss television, on the opportunities of said minorities to have their say, and on the coverage about them—from the perspective of the migrants concerned and the members of ethnic minorities. How do they perceive the media's representation of their own group, and how do they evaluate the situation? Due to the generally scarce research from that perspective and the fact, that so far no results on the migrants' perception of media representation in Switzerland exist (Trebbe 2009), a qualitative pilot study was conducted. For this, a total of six group discussions amongst migrants and Swiss citizens with an immigration background were held in the German-, French-, and Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland.

Deficiencies in Media Representation and their Perception

A lot of literature exists regarding the representation of ethnic minorities in the mass media based on content analyses of media coverage respectively news reporting (ter Wal 2002, 2004), fictional television programs (Wright 2002) or even commercials and advertising (Bang and Reece 2003). Overviews and synopses on this research are not in short supply either (Cottle 2000; King and Wood 2001; Downing and Husband 2005; Mueller 2005; Ruhrmann and Demren 2000; Bonfadelli 2007). But the results of the different studies are difficult to compare because of varying research objects (media types), samples, time backgrounds, and affected ethnic groups (asylum seekers, immigrants, national ethnic minorities). However, they all identify certain deficits related to the representation of immigrant groups and ethnic minorities. These "syndromes" (Merten 1987) or "biases" (ter Wal 2004) are descriptions of differences between routine media coverage and the coverage of news stories with an ethnic dimension. Three dimensions or types of syndromes occur repeatedly: (1) underrepresentation or marginalization: the representation of ethnic minorities in the mass media does not correspond to the percentage of

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[1] The Swiss Federal Office of Communication funded this research.

population they represent (Bonfadelli 2007); (2) labeling and stereotyping: members of ethnic minority groups are much more often object than subject of medial communication, they are described with generalized characteristics and not recognized as individual personalities (D'Haenens and Bink 2007). Ethnic groups are divided into categories of good (useful) and bad (not useful) foreigners (Ruhrmann et al. 2006); (3) negative contextualization or framing: media coverage on negative issues dominates stories and programs with an ethnic dimension in comparison to non-ethnic stories (ter Wal 2004).

We will not go into the details of these content-based analyses. Our focus is on the perception of these deficiencies by the members of the affected ethnic minorities. To avoid misunderstandings: this is not about self-perception of an (ethnic) social group, but about perception of and reflection on mass media coverage by the objects of said coverage.

Members of different ethnic minorities in different countries with distinct media surroundings do perceive representation deficiencies. Greenberg et al. (2002) give an overview for the USA. Sreberny (2005) did the same for Great Britain with results from several qualitative surveys; Christiansen (2004) cited studies from Sweden, Denmark, and Germany. D'Haenens et al. (2000) presented the dissatisfaction of several minorities in the Netherlands with their portrayal in the mainstream media. Mahtani (2008) described perceived mis- and underrepresentation of Iranian and Chinese minorities in the Canadian English-language media. Hafez (2002) interviewed members of the Turkish minority in Germany and they were also concerned with the inadequate and stereotyped depiction of the ethnic group in the German mainstream media. In another recent study about media use and integration among young Turkish immigrants in Germany, the participants of focus groups complained about the coverage of the Turkish minority (Hammeran et al. 2007). They turned away from this kind of media coverage because they did not find themselves portrayed accurately. According to Deuze (2006), this is one of the main reasons for the upcoming and exponential growth of ethnic minority media in Europe and the USA. It is suggested that the perceived negative coverage causes the rejection of the media used by a major part of the society and results in a growing attention for the minority's own media, the so-called ethno media and—via Internet or Satellite—more use of radio, television and press from their countries of origin (Maurer and Reinemann 2006; Sreberny 1999, 2005; Weber-Menges 2005).

In addition to this, a shift from ethnic to religious discrimination can be observed. There are some studies of media audiences, in which the members of immigrant populations found themselves not being labeled and discriminated as "Turkish" or "Arabic" but named as members of the Muslim community respectively the Islamic minority (Schiffer 2005; D'Haenens and Bink 2007; Ates 2006; Zft 2006).

The representation deficiencies in general and the last point in particular are affecting the identity of ethnic minority group members. Do they, as a consequence, loose (or fail to develop) the feeling of being part of the country they live in? Or are underrepresentation, marginalization and negative portrayal leading to marginalization and separative acculturation strategies and social disintegration (Berry 1992; Gerbner 1993; Signorielli 1984; Sreberny 1999; Christiansen 2004; Weber-Menges 2005; Deuze 2006)? A bad representation of ethnic minority groups will probably not foster the feeling of being at home in a

society and the willingness to make a contribution to social integration (Jeffres 2000; Maurer and Reinemann 2006).

The special case of Switzerland generates some additional perspectives, especially when comparing the perception of immigrants from neighboring countries who cannot be described as *ethnic* minority groups because they are in general part of the same cultural region and population (language, religion, habits, etc.), to migrants with a more exotic background from more remote countries. There is some evidence for the existence of hierarchies of perception of ethnic groups in larger and traditionally more multicultural societies (Hagendoorn 1995). It will be explored if this is also true for different groups of migrants in Switzerland.

Hardly any studies about the representation of ethnic minorities in Swiss media have been published so far (Bonfadelli 2007), although social integration has been an important subject due to the four different language regions[2] in Switzerland, regardless of any streams of migration. The reasons for this are the specific media landscapes of each language region, their strong cultural identity, and last but not least language itself. Furthermore, Switzerland has one of the largest percentages of migrants in Central Europe (approximately 20% of the population), and in each language region different ethnic groups have settled and developed independent cultures and forms of social interaction. In order to avoid complicating this complex situation any further, we will now focus on Swiss television as the most important and most popular mass medium in all these regions (Mediapulse 2009). Besides, Swiss Radio and Television Law contain a supervisory regulation to ensure the representation of each Swiss language region and guarantee the inclusion of foreign and ethnic minority of the population (RTVG 2006).

Research Questions

As explained above, this analysis focuses on the *perception* and *estimation of the representation* of ethnic minorities on television by the people concerned. The main research questions are the following: How do the persons concerned perceive the representation of their own group and of other groups of migrants? Which characteristics of the media coverage do they observe and consider being particularly important and maybe problematic? What relationship between ethnic minority and majority do they perceive in television coverage?

In addition to the perception of the media's coverage, the discussants' *evaluation* of their own observations is important for the purpose of the study. Do they feel that what is shown or not shown on television is relevant for their own or their group's identity? Does television, in their opinion, have a potential for constraining or stimulating, starting or stopping the integration of ethnic minorities in Switzerland?

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[2] Language regions in Switzerland are German-, French-, Italian- and Retoromanic speaking. They are rather compact, geographically, i.e. the language groups mostly live separated from each other (Blum 1999). Out of the 26 Swiss cantons, 17 have German as their official language, four French and one Italian. Three cantons are bilingual; one is trilingual (Kuehne 1997). According to Blum (1999), the German-speaking parts of the country make up 65% of the population, French-speaking 19%, Italian-speaking 8%, and Retoromanic-speaking 0.5%.

The discussants' contributions to these questions are bound to be related to their own mass media use.

The answers to these questions will replenish the findings, which are firmly assured on the side of media content, with the audience's point of view. This means that the results should provide indications for the importance of television in the context of social integration and highlight which dimensions of representation in the media are particularly relevant in this context. Due to the pilot character of this study, it has to be emphasized that the results can only serve as first references and must not be generalized. They may be seen as a first step of a future project of a standardized and representative research on ethnic minorities, their mass media use and their degree of integration—all of which are serious research deficiencies in Switzerland.

Methodology

In order to get a first idea of the migrants' perception of their portrayal in the media in different language regions of Switzerland, a total of six group discussions were held in the three major Swiss language regions.[3] As recommended in methodological literature, each group should ideally "consist of between six and ten people; more than 12 has been found to inhibit discussion" (Payne and Payne 2004: 105). A core criterion for the choice of participants was their origin. Persons with an immigration background were primarily asked to discuss the way they perceive the depiction of migrants in Swiss television programs. These individuals were not necessarily born outside of Switzerland. The term 'immigration background' also applies to people whose parents were born abroad. For each language region, one group discussion with people sharing the same national immigrant background (homogeneous groups—'A') and one group discussion with persons from various countries of origin (heterogeneous groups—'B') were planned. We chose homogeneous and heterogeneous groups, as with the former the collective experiences of a certain subgroup of migrants (with a common cultural background) can be the focus, whereas with the latter the general experiences of migrants and potential differences in media perception between migrants with different origins can be evoked (Baker 1999; Stewart and Shamdasani 1998). The homogeneous groups were to be based on one of the largest immigrant groups of the respective language region. The participants were recruited through adverts in the mass media, as well as announcements at central public locations and mouth-to-mouth propaganda.

The preconditions mentioned above were met, with one exception (group A2). The largest groups of migrants in the German-speaking part of Switzerland originate from former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia), Italy, Germany, and Turkey. The homogeneous group (A1) was composed of eight persons with a Turkish immigration background living in the Zurich area. The project management decided on discussants with a Turkish background as a couple of surveys from other countries dealt with this ethnic group and a comparison with their results was aimed for (Hammeran et al. 2007; Hafez

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[3] For detailed documentation on the methodological design, see Trebbe and Schoenhagen (Eds.), 2008.

2002; Christiansen 2004; Sreberny 1999; Millwood Hargrave 2002). Group B1 was composed of eight migrants with different national backgrounds. The homogeneous group of migrants in the French speaking part of Switzerland (A2) was supposed to consist of persons with a Portuguese background, as they represent the largest group of migrants in this language region. Unfortunately, it turned out to be impossible to recruit enough people with Portuguese origins, despite various efforts; hence, we decided on a group of migrants originating from former Yugoslavia, which is the second largest group of migrants in French speaking Switzerland. Regrettably, only three men showed up, one of them accompanied by a person with an African background (all living in the area of Geneva). The moderators spontaneously decided on forming a group with these four participants, hence no homogeneous group discussion was conducted in French-speaking Switzerland.[4] Therefore, the results need to be considered carefully, as the suggested group size of six to ten or 12 participants was not respected—although some authors concede that "it can work with a few more or less [than six to ten] either way" (O'Sullivan 2003: 121). Group B2 was composed of eight migrants with various backgrounds. Group A3, in the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino, consisted of seven persons with an Italian immigration background—the largest group of foreigners in this part of the country. Group B3 included 11 persons with various immigration backgrounds. Overall 46 individuals (of the 67 that had been contacted) participated in the six discussions.

Since the focus groups should not conduct "a freewheeling conversation among group members" but have "a focus and a clearly identifiable agenda" (Stewart and Shamdasani 1998: 511; see also Payne and Payne 2004), the thematic focuses of the group discussions were defined in a discussion guideline or "topic guide" (Gaskell 2000: 40) that had been assessed in two pretests. Each focus group was moderated by one person with the assistance of a "second interviewer or scribe" (Payne and Payne 2004: 106), in each case communication and media scientists from the Universities of Fribourg and Lugano. Besides the usual opening, warm-up, and closing procedures, the discussions consisted of five parts wherein the following topics were focused on by the moderators: attitudes towards their country of origin and towards Switzerland, the role of Swiss television in the participants' lives, the representation of their population group in Swiss television, the way migrants in general are depicted in Swiss television, and the impacts of media coverage as well as modification proposals. The group discussions, all held in spring 2007, lasted between 60 and 100 min. All discussions were videotaped and transcribed in full afterwards, then analyzed by means of a qualitative content analysis with categories that were partly deduced from theory and former research, as well as partly developed based on the transcriptions (Nawratil and Schoenhagen 2008).

It should be obvious by this point that this kind of methodological design does not claim any degree of representativeness in a statistical sense. The aim of this qualitative approach is to identify the basic dimensions of the perception within different ethnic groups in Switzerland and not to make quantitative statements about distributions of certain opinions within these groups or linguistic regions of the country.

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[4] Due to a restricted time schedule, it was not possible to replace this group discussion with another.

Results

In the following, the results of the group discussions are presented in sequence of the discussions with regard to the most crucial observations made by the participants of the different groups.

Double Identity

Regarding the participants' attitudes towards their culture of origin on the one hand, and towards the Swiss society on the other hand, most of them pointed out that they feel very well integrated in Switzerland.

> I visit Germany once a year, as I have friends and family there. But go back? No, never! I've been living here for 45 years and feel good about it. I feel quite Swiss. I am also in the German Club. I feel good. (Margret M., B3, 102–104) [5]

> As I've lived here in Switzerland for quite a while and have grown up here I thought I'd go and get myself a flag, a Swiss flag, and I then put it up on my balcony on the national holiday. (Kübra H., A1, 167–169)

The majority of the respondents expressed that they feel like they have a positive double identity and feel rooted in Switzerland as well as in their country of origin.

> I feel at home in both worlds, I can be Swiss and Turkish at the same time. I spend most of my time in Switzerland, but I visit Turkey twice a year. (Fatih A., A1, 47–75)

This includes the ability to speak both languages, having circles of friends in both cultures, the participation in local festivals, and the maintenance of traditions from the country of origin.

> Me, I've grown up here, I also feel Swiss in general but have a Kosovarian background. I think it's nice to have both, this way I get to know the two cultures. (Nazmi B., A2, 33–34)

Participants belonging to the second generation of migrants show slightly weaker ties to their home country. They often do not speak its language perfectly anymore, and the traditions are kept up less intensively.

> The kids, I mean the second and third generations, are well integrated, they've become Swiss. It's good it has happened this way. We old ones still feel nostalgic, we feel more connected to Italy. (Giuseppe B., A3, 395–397)

Persons of Muslim faith (e.g., Turks and North African people) seem to have a stronger determination to maintain culture and religion of their home country than migrants with a Christian background (e.g., from Italy, France, Germany). In spite of their very 'Swiss' lifestyle in many respects, Muslims of the second generation often wish for a partner belonging to the same circle of ethnic culture.

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[5] All names in the quotes have been changed. The discussions were taped on video, transcribed and partly translated into German. Here, we present an English translation. The numbers indicate the group and the lines within the original transcript.

The choice of partner is also very important. And if I'd be looking for a partner now I wouldn't care if he was Swiss or had some other nationality. It's religion that counts for me. Something has to match. I'd never consider a Swiss Christian. But I am sure that there are Swiss Muslims, converts for example, with whom I could imagine having a relationship. Then there'd be a basis to start from. But if Christian faith becomes part of it things become more difficult. (Zehra F., A1, 194–199)

More than a few participants are citizens both of Switzerland and of their country of origin and enjoy the freedom of movement granted by both passports. Whereas persons belonging to the second generation generally consider themselves Swiss, the first generation of migrants regards Switzerland as a kind of 'adoption country'.

[…] to me Algeria is my country of origin but Switzerland is my adoption country […] And although I feel at home here, something is missing. I visit my home country every four, five months and feel at home there, too. (Abdel B., B2, 103–108)

Regular journeys to the country of origin are important for this generation. However, their members often stated that they do not necessarily see themselves as a part of this society of origin any longer, or that they are partly considered Swiss by relatives and friends living there.

When returning to my village I feel like a foreigner. Just like back when I emigrated. I go there and don't know anyone. Just some people who are the same age as me. But there's still some nostalgia left. (Mario D., A3, 60–62)

As the citations above show, although permanently returning to the country of origin is unthinkable for almost all participants, they maintain contacts to their culture of origin and care for it. From their point of view, integration does not exclude maintenance of their native language and their own culture. This result is consistent with an integrative strategy of acculturation as established by Berry (1992) who described the attitudes towards the social context of origin and the context of the (new) majority as independent dimensions.[6]

Marginalized Representation

The reaction to the question on the observations concerning the representation of migrants on television was identical in all group discussions: it was stated that they are not present on screen at all. Many migrants feel like they are being marginalized in the media and thus are not being recognized as a part of the society.

I'd like to say that there have been different nationalities for ages. This really needs to be said, there are Croats, Serbs, Turks. […] but on TV they don't talk about them, not at all. (Katja S., B2, 482–484)

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[6] In this context, some Italians complained that in contrast to other groups they no longer receive (state-aided) opportunities to maintain their roots.

However, this 'non-existence' has to be looked at in a more differentiated way: well-integrated migrants who have adopted the Swiss way of life and have been living in Switzerland inconspicuously for many years (sometimes already in the second or third generation) feel particularly under-represented on television.

> Yes, we're just no sensation because we're ordinary, because we integrate ourselves or are integrated. That's why we're just not of interest for the media. (Fatih A., A1, 602–603)

For instance, in the view of several participants, Italians or the Italian 'Communità' are no longer a topic on the public agenda in the canton of Ticino. But at the same time, many discussants with Italian roots spoke about the Italians in the third person, so they do no longer consider themselves to be foreigners or Italians. This presents a certain paradox, because on the one hand these individuals feel under-represented as members of the Communità, but on the other hand they seem to feel more like Swiss citizen.

The participants specified that migrants only seem to be newsworthy when they attract negative attention: they observed that people showing deviant behavior made the headlines, and that their potential ethnic background was particularly highlighted.

> TSI [= Italian-speaking Swiss TV, JT/PS] shows ethnic groups, but only in connection with incidents, like when drug deals are connected to a specific ethnical group etc. If there's a knife attack somewhere it was caused by a member from this other specific ethnic group. (Karen F., A3, 472–474)

> If a Kosovar is caught selling drugs on a train these days it's clear that the headline will say that 'a Kosovar has been selling drugs', that's for sure. (Nazmi B., A2, 163–164)

In the view of the discussants, foreigners are only portrayed in a selective and little differentiated manner. Thus, migrants seemingly only attract attention when the political parties put immigration related topics up for discussion during election campaigns, in order to court the voters. Even in Geneva, which was described as multicultural by the discussants, migrants would only rarely be represented in the media, according to their observations. New groups of migrants, e.g., the Brazilians, felt they were settling there almost without getting any attention from the media. Participants called it typical for Switzerland to dull down everything, which could be a reason for the poor representation of migrants in the media.

In contrast, celebrities with an immigration background, e.g., sportsmen and sportswomen, are seen as getting particular attention from the media. It has been evoked during the discussions that the situation of migrants in Switzerland is sometimes put up for discussion due to these successful stars. But for most participants, successful athletes do not stand for their country of origin, and consequently do not represent it, but are a particular species incorporating something international or global, often being on the road and rootless.

> An athlete is not national, he is international. Today he plays in England, tomorrow in Switzerland, the following day in Germany, then somewhere in Tallinn, in Spain. He has got no roots, he is based nowhere, he is somewhere in the air. (Nikola G., B1, 323–325)

The Yakin brothers and Kubilay Tuerkyilmaz (soccer players originating from Turkey), who grew up in the canton of Ticino, are mentioned as examples, as well as soccer players with Italian origins and a boxer from the Balkan region. Furthermore, the former German Formula One racing driver, Michael Schumacher, who now lives in Switzerland, was mentioned by female German immigrants in the canton of Ticino.

Framing and Stereotyping: Religion, Delinquency, and Asylum Abuse

In the eyes of the discussants, the topics in the context of which immigrants are mentioned in the media can be reduced to a few recurrent fields. For instance, the immigrants of Turkish origin, as well as the North Africans, felt like they were consistently depicted in connection with Islam.

> Since September 11th it has been Bin Laden [who is often depicted as a representative of the Islamic world]. It has almost become some kind of a nightmare. […] We're always singled out, in the positive, as well as the negative sense. It's always talked about. (Amina B., B3, 353–356)

They said that in most cases, the image of Islam carried negative connotations reaching from fundamentalism to women's oppression and religious fanatics. Furthermore, Turks pointed out that they were frequently depicted in connection with the building of minarets. Sometimes the media equated Turkish immigrants with fundamentalists in connection with the coverage of the 'Grey Wolves' (Turkish extreme nationalists). The participants see North Africans and Turks as consistently being associated with the debate about the Muslim headscarf. Turks cannot identify a very positive image of their home country in the Swiss media: in their opinion, it is affected by the unsolved problems in Cyprus and Kurdistan, as well as by the Armenian Genocide. Other immigrants, e.g., Africans, felt that they are being represented in connection with asylum seekers or (drug) delinquency. According to the participants' perception, people from the Balkan region are frequently presented in articles about speeding, drug abuse and trafficking as well as other offenses; nationality is being mentioned explicitly by the media, in this context.

> Now it's the Albanians. Many extreme examples are shown in this context. Of speeding. (Ergin N., A1, 611–612)

As mentioned above, the discussants experienced that migrants of Italian origin are no longer a sensation in Switzerland and only make the headlines in relation to political affairs in their home country, for example. As a consequence, Italy is depicted in a clichéd manner on Swiss television occasionally, sometimes also having the image of a vacation spot in the media. It was mentioned in the discussions that the Swiss had adopted pizza and pasta from Italian immigrants, but that this group was not newsworthy any longer, unless its members were celebrating slightly too loudly and being too noisy when Italy won the last soccer World Cup. Also, migrants from other neighboring countries mostly noticed that they hardly were the subject of media coverage, that the media focus on the (Far) East more often—on Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine—and that there is hardly any time left to

cover topics from the West. People from France, Belgium, or Germany thus feel under-represented on television.

We think that this is a specific consequence of the geo-cultural situation of Switzerland. Migrants from all neighboring countries (Germany, Austria, France, Italy) speak at least one national language and are generally familiar with the culture of the respective part of the country they are emigrating to. Thus, they cannot be easily identified as foreigners and maybe do not experience social exclusion in the same way as migrants from more remote countries.

Discussants of all immigrant groups were convinced that the media prefer extreme examples and mainly show negative aspects of immigration.

> They have a tendency of giving veiled extremists that are being discriminated against a platform, rather than the regular people. (Erika Z., B3, 337–338)

> They [TSI] really value the negative; it's always been that way. The bad is talked about, the good isn't. If there were a place where we could voice our opinion, the result would be positive. (Romana A., B3, 259–261)

Even if the discussants see people of foreign origin as rare subjects of media coverage, they identify with the way their country of origin is depicted in the Swiss media—and they perceive this picture as undifferentiated.

Objects Rather Than Subjects

An important accusation against the media made by the participants is the depiction of migrants as objects: The media would talk *about* them instead of allowing them to speak for themselves. Debates with the participation of foreigners were felt to be very rare in the media; politicians would rather prefer setting their topics in the election and to run immigration or integration topics without giving the people affected the floor. They would only be asked if something has to be justified.

> The foreigners are [only] allowed to speak if they have to defend or justify something, for instance 9/11. (Amina B., B3, 314–315)

Another possibility to be heard would, according to the participants, be by attacking a politician directly. This was, for instance, the case when 'Stress', a rap singer from the French-speaking part of Switzerland with Estonian origins, disparaged Federal Councilor Christoph Blocher.

A further point of criticism was that well-known people from abroad often have their say in the media instead of local experts with immigration background. If migrants living in Switzerland were allowed to speak at all in the media the same people would be interviewed over and over again. During television shows, people with immigration background in the audience would never be called on or contacted at home in case of a live transmission. The discussants felt that the Swiss determined the topics; the migrants' needs or interests would be ignored.

> They talk about the people, but not to them. Very few people [migrants are meant] are on television. (Belkis K., B1, 270–271)

I think there aren't enough debates. With foreigners on television. That's something I've hardly ever seen. (Malik F., A2, 485–486)

Another reproach is the under-representation of migrants or colored people on and behind the screen. In German-speaking Switzerland, the participants of both group discussions could not name a single person known from Swiss television who is obviously not of Swiss origin. In contrast, other countries are considered to be more progressive in this regard. Especially in Great Britain, colored presenters appear on MTV, in Germany there is a news anchorwoman of Turkish origin, and some broadcasts in Italy, France, and Spain are specifically aimed at migrants.

A black or dark-skinned woman can hardly be seen in a publicly visible position. (Amina B., B3, 330–331)

A Hierarchy of Presenting Ethnic Minority Groups in the Media

We identified indications for differences in the perceived portrayal of various immigrant groups as found in the literature review and stated above. Participants recognized different portrayals of migrants from neighboring countries in comparison with migrants from countries further away. They perceived a distinction between good (useful) and bad (less useful) foreigners and were aware of a hierarchy of ethnic groups in the Swiss society mirrored by television programs, as mentioned above. In fact, all participants agreed that the coverage of their immigration group and of the migrants in general was incomplete and that no ethnic group was depicted in a positive way: "They highlight only one side of the coin and nothing else" (Fatih A., A1, 586–587). But some immigration groups would come off particularly bad in the media. People from former Yugoslavia, especially Albanians (from Kosovo) and Serbs, would be presented most negatively, followed by Africans and Turks. Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian people appeared in a slightly more positive light, but in the past they had suffered from the same stigmatization in the media as the Balkan people today. According to their perception, migrants from outside of the EU are generally depicted more negatively than migrants from the neighboring countries and other EU countries.

The Italians certainly come off better [in the media] than the Turks. And I would say that the Albanians, or Kosovars, are even worse off. (Sevinc B., A1, 622–623)

Furthermore, they experience that Muslim people are generally being presented in a negative way: whereas the depiction of Turks could be considered as neutral, for example, Turkish participants still felt discriminated against by the negative and undifferentiated image of Muslims in general. But it was noted in this context that Muslims from the Middle East come off worse than, e.g., Muslims from Turkey.

Especially immigrants originating from the ethnic groups particularly affected by negative tendencies in media coverage suffer from their image in the media, and call it painful and offending.

When there's something (…) about the Turks, like for instance about the headscarf, Cyprus or on another political topic, you will get bothered and

insulted on the street the next day. And then it's supposed to be our fault because the TV channel didn't explain things properly. (Kübra H., A1, 350–353)

Discussants from neighboring countries partly showed their solidarity with the people concerned, but did not feel like they were being stigmatized in the media themselves. Some people also manage to distance themselves from unpleasant reports:

Before […] you always read in the 'crime' section or elsewhere: a Yugoslav did this or that, then it became a 'citizen of former Yougoslavia'. I don't feel affected, I still am a Croat. (Katja S., B2, 478–480)

However, several migrants, two persons belonging to the first generation of immigrants from former Yugoslavia in particular, sympathized with Swiss media. Moreover, the Swiss media in general enjoy a good reputation among the participants of the discussion groups who acknowledged their performance. They also admitted that the existence of 'good' and 'bad' migrants could not be denied; and feeling well accepted, they did not want to criticize Switzerland in general.

A Demand for Options to Participate

For the conclusion of the discussion rounds, the migrants were asked about the impact of the foreigners' image presented by the media on the Swiss population in general and about their own experience in this context. They were asked to turn their criticism into suggestions for the Swiss television in order to improve the current situation. The participants agreed that the presented image of migrants most probably has an impact on the viewers' perception. The migrants reported that they are confronted with statements which match the media image on a daily basis and that they have to take a position on this; however, they also detected a lot of ignorance among the majority of the Swiss.

Yes, people are stubborn and once they've seen something on television it must be the truth. One time I was approached concerning those arranged marriages and asked if I'd be married to someone, someone of my father's choice. (Zehra F., A1, 814–816)

The interviewed migrants expressed the need for action on different levels, and their discussion proved that there is no lack of good ideas.

Why not go to a Turkish or Albanian wedding, for instance and just look and listen […] Hear what their visions are, […] what plans they've made for the future. (Nikola G., B1, 679–683)

In the absence of direct contacts between natives and migrants, the media are said to have a key role in building bridges. In the participants' eyes, simplifying and superficial articles about migrants therefore endanger the coexistence of natives and immigrants. The migrants' most important request is probably the demand for active participation in the media, i.e., they would like to help creating the program in front of and behind the camera.

Finally, it should be noted that we could not observe an avoidance of Swiss media in favor of the media from their home countries as a reaction to the scarce representation of ethnic minorities among our participants. In spite of their criticism, they seem to have strong ties to the local media landscape. This is partly contrary to the various research findings mentioned above. However, they refer to other countries than Switzerland. Maybe this finding can be explained by the small size of Switzerland and the cultural regions of German-, French- and Italian-speaking populations: a nationwide public sphere hardly exists in Switzerland—political and public agendas are mostly built up in regional and local media. The amount of language bound regional television programs is much higher in larger countries with just one language. The only existing quantitative survey of media use by foreigners and migrants in Switzerland was conducted in 1995 and does not give any clues about relationships between media use and the perceived portrayal of ethnic groups (Anker et al. 1995).

Additionally, we have to keep in mind that we do not have any representative data and a very arbitrary selection of discussion group members—we cannot make any reliable statements about the typical media use habits within the ethnic minority groups of Switzerland.

Discussion

It is very interesting to see that the observations made by the discussants with regard to the representation of migrants or ethnic minority members in Swiss television show strong parallels to the results of some previous, similar studies from other countries (Mahtani 2008; Deuze 2006; Sreberny 2005; Christiansen 2004; Hafez 2002). Moreover, there are many aspects mentioned in the focus groups that resemble the results of numerous content analyses conducted in different countries like Great Britain, Sweden, or Germany—even if comparisons have to be cautious because of the big differences between the particular situations of migrants and social integration policies in these countries.

Such parallels can be drawn with respect (1) to marginalization and underrepresentation of migrants in the media, (2) to the passive role migrants generally play in the media, as they are mostly depicted as objects, and (3) to the over-representation of migrants in the problem-oriented coverage and their under-representation in the non-problem-oriented news as well as in fictional genres. These deficiencies of media coverage thus are not only an observation on the part of many researchers, but also part of the recipients' perception and experiences—in Switzerland as well as in other countries.

A second basic finding refers to the mutual perception of different immigration groups or ethnic communities: the discussants unanimously detected a certain hierarchical structure in the media coverage about migrants with different origins: the more foreign the people, the more negative their representation in the media. This is firstly congruent with the perception of ethnic group hierarchies in bigger countries with a larger diversity of ethnic groups (Hagendoorn 1995), and secondly can be traced back to the discrepancy between language respectively cultural and national borders. Migrants from neighboring countries are mostly part of the same

cultural region and able to speak at least one of the national languages of Switzerland. It can be assumed that migrants from nearby are portrayed and perceived as more familiar than migrants with a different cultural background. So, in Switzerland, located in the heart of Europe and having one of the largest percentages of migrants compared to neighboring countries, a strong influence of geographical and cultural proximity has become apparent.

Furthermore, it was interesting to discover that, although the deficiencies mentioned above are attributed to the media, the migrants in our focus groups expressed a certain understanding for the mechanisms of mass media: negativism, sensationalism and personalization were mentioned as basic characteristics of media coverage in general and therefore seen as unavoidable—although scientific results show that these mechanisms play a bigger part in stories with an ethnic dimension (ter Wal 2002).

Ultimately, the participants of this Swiss study show that there is an important discrepancy between the desire for more presence and participation in the media, on the one hand, and a desire to stand in the spotlight less often, on the other hand. The participants of almost all ethnic groups feel marginalized in the depiction of everyday life and culture on television. In contrast, they feel over-represented when they are shown as migrants, when they are consistently depicted in connection with the same thematic frames, when they are described by means of generalizations and prejudices, and especially when they are presented as a problem. The denomination of these poles shows quite distinctly that the deficiencies cannot be solved either by a more intensive discussion about integration issues or by a higher presence of famous migrants on television. Normality in this respect is likely to be attained only in a slow process and by raising awareness in journalist education, political debate and scientific discourse.

To sum up, we found clear similarities between documented findings for other (bigger, more multicultural and traditional immigration) countries and Switzerland regarding the perception of media coverage on ethnic groups by migrants. In particular, we have found some indications for the perception of general underrepresentation and negative contextualisation of migrants on Swiss television. These findings seem to be phenomena that are generally present in European countries and the USA. However, we also found some specifics that can be explained by the particular geo-cultural situation of Switzerland. This applies to the high significance of the local media for the migrants as a consequence of the relative small size of the country. Furthermore, we identified a perceived hierarchy of immigration groups connected to linguistic and cultural proximity. Based on the results of this research, it would be beneficial to conduct a representative survey in order to collect more reliable data regarding the relationship between social integration, media use, and perception of ethnic minority groups in Switzerland.

It is crucial for the social integration of ethnic minorities to treat them not as cause of social problems or only in the context of social issues such as religion. Migrants should be involved in all social and political debates and have their say as fully-fledged members of society and the public sphere. In the case of Switzerland with its particular linguistic and cultural situation, it would be sensible to support local ethnic media to develop a Swiss part of the hybrid identity for members of ethnic groups.

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