

Views from India: Media and Minorities in Europe

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Migrant Minorities and the German Media: Integration or Glolocalisation

Subir Bhaumik

2009 has been Germany's year of celebrations, three anniversaries marking its historical landmarks, making it, as one media report said, "a truly German year". The first anniversary was to mark Germany's democratic rebirth, the 60th year of the promulgation of its Grundgesetz or Basic Law in 1949. Then came the 20th anniversary of the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, an event that paved the way for German re-unification after forty years of painful separation. The third anniversary that Germans observed was a throwback in early German history, marking the defeat of the Roman legions in North Rhine-Westphalia two thousand years ago. The Germans honored the legendary Hermann -- also known by the Latin moniker Arminius -- for his epic victory in the Teutoburg Forest against the Roman legions of Publius Quinctilius Varus in 9 AD. That victory left Germany free of Roman control and allowed its people to develop their distinct identity. So the victory at Teutoburg Forest was a celebration of German origins.

Though the ceremony observing the fall of the Berlin Wall grabbed more headlines, the big outdoor parties but the Bürgerfest (Citizens Festival) at Berlin's Brandenburg gate to mark the signing of the Grundgesetz, or Basic Law sixty years ago were no less heady. The celebrations of Germany's democratic rebirth, its re-unification and its early distinctive origins have all happened in a year, when most Germans, to quote Paul Kohtes, chairman of the Düsseldorf-based Identity Foundation, are "finally much more at ease with who they are."¹ A survey released by his Foundation this year showed twice as many Germans as feeling 'very proud' to be Germans compared to eight years ago. Almost 73 percent said they should show more confidence about being German. The survey said that most Germans saw themselves as a nation of poets and philosophers like Goethe and Schiller, a nation that abides by law and has strong democratic tendencies. The success of managing a modern democracy, albeit a relatively young one, and a very buoyant economy has perhaps given Germans the confidence to put behind their Nazi past and look to a future where their great country would be Europe's role model in years to come -- and for many different reasons. A Reuter's journalist, reporting on these ceremonies, observed:

"After six decades atoning for the crimes of the Nazis, Germans are rediscovering a sense of patriotism and are no longer ashamed to wave their flag and sing the national anthem. They are even daring to discuss bringing back a bravery medal—unthinkable a decade ago in a country which rejected militarism and turned fiercely pacifist. This non-aggressive self confidence, also

¹ Interview with public broadcaster RBB, 21st May 2009

evident in a more assertive foreign policy, is increasingly manifesting itself as Germany this year celebrates 60 years as a democracy and the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.”²

A German sociologist summed up the country’s mood in 2009: “The German soul, bruised and discredited by the Nazi era, has to a large degree healed. We are seeing normalization.”³ Though Germans admit their “strong regional roots” and in being “more federal than national”, there are clear signs of a new-found German patriotism. The country’s commitment to the European Union remains strong, but polls to the European parliament have produced lesser turnouts than national elections. The country’s political leadership is more assertive than ever before – take Chancellor Angela Merkel’s strong defence of the German car industry, or her Finance Minister Peer Steinbrueck’s scathing attack on the bank secrecy rules of Switzerland and Luxembourg. But it is precisely this surge in German patriotism that unnerves the country’s large migrant-minorities, now just under a fifth of the country’s population. Disturbing questions are being raised about the future direction of German society – whether integration of the migrant-minorities is a failed project, whether multi-cultural is a thing of the past and whether the resurgence of the extreme right is a possibility in the future.

The “Other” Germany

Unlike European colonial powers like Great Britain or France, Germany did not face much migration by non-European populations before the Second World War. But that changed after the country’s post-Marshall Plan “economic boom” in the 1950s, to sustain which the Federal Republic of Germany was compelled to sign recruitment agreements with Italy (1955), Spain, Greece (1960), Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), Portugal(1964), Tunisia (1965) and Yugoslavia (1968). That led to a sudden and a sharp rise in Germany’s migrant population, especially from Turkey. According to the "Statistisches Bundesamt" (Federal Statistical Office), the population of Germany now is just over 82 million, making it the 14th most populous country in the world. But more than 16 million people residing in Germany are of non-German descent (first and second generation, including mixed heritage). About seven million of these are foreign residents; the remaining nine million are German citizens. So every fifth resident in Germany now is of non-German origins. The Turks are the largest non-German community, numbering around 3 million.

Germany’s “changing color” problem owes to the large scale migration from Turkey and other Asian and African countries since the 1960s. France and Great Britain were used to such migration from their colonies over a much longer period, but for Germany, it is something that gained momentum merely sixty years ago. Studies by German research institutes highlight the “serious integration problems” of these Afro-Asian settler communities, specially the Turks – on the reverse, many studies indicate much better integration achieved by European migrants like the Italians , the Spaniards , the Greeks , not to speak of the migrants from countries of the Baltic or the Balkans . The fact is that the Turks or other Afro-Asian communities are Muslims or from faiths other than Christianity which is seen as compounding the problems of integration.

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

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

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

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

Migrants, Minorities and Media

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

The primary data is considerable, drawn from 187 detailed interviews conducted over a three-month period (May-June-July 2009). Those interviewed include six senior German editors and three Turkish editors, 33 German and 14 non-German journalists of migrant-minority origin

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

5 Deutsche Press Agentur report , 26th January 2009

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

working for television, radio, print and online websites, 36 writers and academics, public intellectuals and media researchers of both German and non-German descent and 95 general citizens of both German and non-German parentage residing in Germany who consume media in varying degrees. Most, like leading German media researcher Kira Kosnick (of the Frankfurt University) were first interviewed through a detailed questionnaire mailed to them and subsequently in person during my visit to Germany. Some, like famous Turkish journalist-turned-writer Hilal Sezgin, were interviewed through the questionnaire followed by extensive Internet chats and e-mails. Some, like the Bayerischer Rundfunk Chefredaktion Hörfunk (chief executive), Mercedes Riederer or Ulrich Brenner, the Schulleiter und Geschäftsführer of Deutsche Journalistenschule in Munich, were interviewed only in person over fairly long hours. Some, like RTL TV editor-in-chief Peter Kloeppel could be interviewed only through the questionnaire because they could not spare much time.

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

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

It is also not unusual for the German media, driven by market logic, to pander to stereotypes, either because the media decision-makers and journalists feel strongly about the undermining of German language and culture or because they want to keep their core audiences happy by supporting – rather than challenging – their racial/cultural stereotypes. This happens all over the world – not the least in Turkey, when the Kurdish rebellion is suppressed with a heavy hand. It is now well known how the Turkish secret service used the Turkish diaspora media in Germany and Europe to launch a strong campaign to shut down a Kurdish Roj TV channel telecasting out of Belgium but with a satellite transponder hired from France Telecom. But the

media does not merely provide a level playing field for a vibrant young democracy such as Germany's, or a platform for divergent views to emanate across the racial and the religious divide. It also often influences the public discourse through its output. The media process, if carefully used or managed (though that is a value contradicting the basic tenet of free speech in democracy) can moderate tensions between host societies and migrant groups, despite the obvious differences of race, religion and culture.

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

"German Media too German"

Migrant-minority representation in the mainstream German media has been an issue for a while. Theoretically, crucial issues of migrant-minority communities can be raised by journalists and editors from the majority community. But across the world, media experience suggests a close linkage between effective exposure of migrant-minority issues and increased migrant-minority representation in mainstream media of host societies. That is why the BBC, Britain's public service radio-television-online platform, has decided to reflect the diversity of contemporary British society, not merely in programme content but also in its hiring policy. The corporation makes a conscious attempt to reflect the country's demographic reality in the ethnic composition of its staff -- at least ten percent of its staff is from migrant-minorities.

By contrast, broadcasters in the European Union have only recruited between 2 to 3 percent of their staff from migrant-minority background, though their population is around 8.5 percent of the total population of the European Union.⁸ The situation in the print media is worse, unlike in Britain, where mainstream newspapers have a rich sprinkling of journalists from migrant-minority backgrounds. Senior positions in the BBC, specially its world service, are held by men and women from migrant-minority backgrounds. Both the Head and the Regional

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

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

Executive Editor of the BBC's Asia-Pacific region have, for some time now been journalists from migrant-minority background. Both the current incumbents graduated to editorial positions in mainstream English outlets and the World Service Newsroom from their language services before coming back to head the region. That cannot be said of the Deutsche Welle, where non-Germans have only headed their language sections. BBC's performance audits have found a close linkage between (a) recruitment and effective use of broadcasters/ journalists from migrant-minority backgrounds (b) the depth and quality of reporting of countries producing large number of migrants for the host societies; and (c) the migrant's perception towards host societies and the host-population's perception towards migrants. A legendary BBC journalist says, "Our local reporters are our eyes and ears. Without them, we will hardly understand very complex realities anywhere in the world. So they have to be real good".

That the BBC now draws on the considerable expertise of its World Service to create a domestic Asian Network, almost wholly staffed with South Asian editors and journalists and targetted at South Asian settlers in UK, is an useful model for many European – and German – broadcasters to follow. The Asian Network is a stand-alone mainstream media option for South Asians. It is for outlets such as these that the South Asian diasporic media in UK never quite thrived – as does the Turkish diasporic media in Germany. So arguing for greater representation of migrant-minorities in the mainstream European—and German-- media is not aimed at creating a quota system by undermining meritocracy. It is an effective way to internalise migrant-minority issues in mainstream media that augments the host-society's capacity for absorbing and reflecting diversity. The British used "internalisation" to stabilise their Empire and now use it for ensuring the stability of their post-colonial society. So does the post-colonial Indian state, to handle its many internal conflicts and its large ethnic and religious minorities.

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

"More and more non-Germans and Germans with a migrant background are moving into journalism and mainstream media, but their representation is still much below the size of their populations in Germany. I don't think this is because of any bias in recruitment that exists in German media houses it is question of competence and meeting the recruitment criteria at the entry-level."⁹

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

"German media, specially the print media, is still too German, even those who think left or liberal. They are very conservative in recruitment and employment policies. They tend to promote people

⁹ Peter Kloepfel, editor-in-chief, RTL Television, interviewed by questionnaire over Internet during this study

who have classic German middle class background – proper university education, strong command over German language. Television is less conservative, so you are beginning to see some non-German faces or hear some non-German voices there. A TV screen looks good with different kinds of faces, it sells. That's not true of newspapers and magazines.”¹⁰

Some German newspapers like the Berlin-based Tageszeitung have made a conscious attempt to promote young journalists of non-German origin to broad base their recruitment. But no other German newspapers or magazines quite followed the lead. What they did instead was to recruit the odd Turkish reporter, especially after events like the 9/11 Twin Tower strikes to “check out what's happening in the mosques.” Some of these hurriedly-recruited journalists from migrant communities, including a Turkish woman reporter who wished to remain anonymous, said they “felt like spies unleashed on their own community.” Most of them failed to retain their jobs and have switched professions. Turkish journalist-turned-writer Hilal Sezgin, who worked as cultural editor at the Frankfurter Rundschau from 1999 to 2005, blames the lack of migrant-minority representation in ‘national news and culture boards’ to the ‘lack of some kind of diversity program’ in German media houses. She said in an interview :

“We have two foundations now giving extra grants supports to migrant journalists (or those who want to become some), and one of our public channels made a big fuzz about inviting migrants to join them – as freelancers. But there were still no regular jobs to be given.”¹¹

Some sporadic efforts were made to increase the representation of migrant-minorities in the German media.

Under the “On Air/ More Diversity in Media project” , Germany’s Adolf Grimme Institut offered twenty women from migrant background a seven month training course in journalism for radio and television, followed up by a year long experience placement. But finding regular jobs for them did not prove to be easy. A senior German editor admits entry for aspiring journalists from migrant background is tough:

“If someone from the migrant-minority background is there purely on merit, that's it , but I admit there is no structure of support for them. There are not a lot of them in our media, but their numbers are growing. That's perhaps because some of them are achieving the level of competence needed at entry-level.”¹²

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

“I was a lucky guy. I was integrated into German society from the very beginning because my mother was German and my Bengali father was not too keen about his roots .I gets a lot of

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

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

12 Christopher Keil , Editor, Media Issues, Munich-based Süddeutsche Zeitung, interview with author, 8th Jun 2009

backing from my German editors because they treat me as one of them, despite my dark skin and strange-sounding surname. There could be a silent racism prevailing in some German publications who are politically on the right but that have not been the case in my newspaper.”¹³

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

“Conservative Germans, especially older people, and I must say their numbers are considerable, have much reservations about foreign looking faces or names when they see or read news about Germany. So selling hard news with foreign sounding bylines or non-German faces is not easy for media houses. It is however different with entertainment shows, where exotic foreign looks and dresses work.”¹⁴.

The success of two Bengali sisters, Debarati Mandal and Namrata Mandal, in the 2009 finals of Germany’s popular Next Showstar Contest broadcast on the Pro Sieben Channel, is a case in point. They brushed past a strong field of 585 contesting groups, impressing German judges with their traditional Indian costumes and Bollywood (Bombay film industry) songs. But, in news and current affairs, it has always been very difficult for non-Germans even if they spoke or wrote fluent German. An ARD journalist of Indian origin recounts being refused commissioning on German programmes, though she was used, along with a Pakistani man, to present the TV channel’s prestigious “Weltspiegel” (literally World Mirror) programme, “as the two politically active exotics on the German telescope.” And despite her professional credentials and experience, it took this journalist eight years to become the ARD’s South Asia correspondent in Delhi because the management was against giving a key foreign posting to a non-German.

“For years I was engaged in an ongoing battle with the commissioning editor of “Extra III” about presenting this political satirical programme. No, he argued, the German public would just not buy my interpretation of Lower Saxony’s regional politics. How could I know anything about it, the way I looked? Another German colleague claimed he always got terribly confused when I referred to “us” on television. He never knew whether I meant “us, Indians” or “us, Germans”.¹⁵

This is a situation well described by a German professor of literature and media studies:

“Whoever is the target of a specific exclusion and who also is generally considered as the stranger, the foreigner, is in a potentially paranoid situation: he will never find out whether he has been subjected to a specific or to a general exclusion (and even when it is explicitly indicated he does not have to believe it). This holds potential for aggravating conflicts [...]. Everyday conflicts are over interpreted as cultural incompatibility, making it fundamentally impossible to overcome cultural differences”.¹⁶

Most German editors and journalists interviewed during this study denied the presence of “any institutional bias” against recruitment of journalists from migrant-minority backgrounds. But the ARD lady journalist of Indian origin, one of Germany’s most experienced media person from a

13 Oliver Dasgupta, Online Editor, Munich-based Süddeutsche Zeitung, interview with author, 8th June 2009

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

15 Navina Sundaram, paper titled “An Outsider’s inside view or Insider’s Outside view : Changing media perceptions of India on German TV (1957-2000)”, made available to the author (followed by e-mail interviews)

16 Bernd Scheffer, (Hg) Medien und Fremdenfeindlichkeit. Alltägliche Paradoxien, Dilemmata, Absurditäten and Zynismen, Opladen:Leske + Budrich 1997 (Translation Navina Sundaram)

migrant-minority background, disagrees and recounts an interesting incident to back up her contention: “During the conference “Journalism without Boundaries and Limits – 40 years of Weltspiegel” that took place in NDR/Hamburg in May 2003, a young Afro-German colleague posed a question to the high powered panel full of hoary and greenhorn foreign correspondents: “If, as was claimed, German media and society have changed then the way this society looks at itself and at the world should also change. Editorial staff policies and programmes, particularly “Weltspiegel” ought to reflect this. Take the instance of CNN or BBC-World. Their presenters and reporters come from Latin America, Arabia, Africa and Asia. Should not German Television as a public broadcasting institution want to emulate this?” This query, couched in such considerate terms, was arrogantly brushed aside by the young editor chairing the panel. “No one ought to be surprised if Germans were reporting for German Television!” At the very least the multicultural and multiethnic composition of this society should be reflected in editorial office practice.”¹⁷

The obvious under-representation of migrant-minorities in the German media cannot be redressed unless more aspirants from these communities can join the prestigious journalism institutes after finishing school. The Munich-based Süddeutsche Zeitung, a liberal newspaper, has just one Turkish journalist, on its payroll. That is perhaps because the prestigious Deutsche Journalistenschule in Munich has had only five students from Turkish community in the last ten years. Its principal, Ulrich Brenner, insists that “on principle, there is no discrimination between Germans and non-Germans during entry” and that most non-German candidates cannot make it to his Journalistenschule because “they lack command over both spoken and written German.”¹⁸ The Turkish-German journalist-turned-writer Hilal Sezgin admits that it is a problem:

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

But I think every channel could have some kind of support center for this. The German educational system, at the moment, doesn’t seem able to bridge gaps in family background very well...Therefore it takes several generation to lift former migrants workers and their descendants to the average level.”¹⁹

In the climate of growing linguistic nationalism and orthodoxy in Germany, it is not going to be easy for aspirants from migrant background to make it into the mainstream German media – or even to the Journalistenschulen. In December 2008, the annual conference of the ruling Christian Democratic Union (CDU) voted in favor of adding a new sentence to the German constitution: “The language of the Federal Republic shall be German.”²⁰

17 Navina Sundaram, Mehr Farbe in den Medien oder der alltägliche Rassismus in den Redaktionsstuben, Tagungsprotokolle- Institut für Kirche und Gesellschaft(Hg) Für eine Kultur der Differenzen, Friedens-und Dritte- Welt-Zeitschriften auf dem Prüfstand, Evangelische Akademie Iserlohn 2004, p.111 (Translation Navina Sundaram)

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

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

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

German is the only language used in the government, trade and education, so why such a proposed amendment now was an obvious question.

This is not merely a show of sympathy for school-teachers and language purists but is also seen as a CDU sop to right-wingers who allege foreigners are taking over. German chancellor Angela Merkel rebuffed the idea and said it was “not important to put every last thing in the constitution.”²¹

But there was a strong support for the proposal within the CDU. A senior CDU leader representing “retirees” supported the proposal, saying “Language is the most precious jewel of culture and should be protected in the Constitution.”²² But the migrant-minorities were understandably alarmed, with the chairman of the Turkish Community association, Kenan Kolat for blaming CDU politicians for “pandering to the latent fear of migrants.” Kolat said: “We interpret this idea as a pressure to assimilate. It does not conform to democratic practice. That’s how migrant communities will perceive it.”²³

This whole debate about whether the German language is under threat was revived in 2008 when the new co-leader of the Green Party, Cem Oezdemir, who is of Turkish extraction but is born and bred in Germany, called for optional Turkish-language courses in public schools. German conservatives were outraged and insisted that Turkish children must speak and write German. The German language society VDS, therefore, welcomed the CDU resolution, with its secretary Holger Klatte saying that “now we hope German will be better taught in schools.” But unless the German media switches to easier language, intake from migrant-minorities will continue to be low. The English press, in UK, USA and India, have switched to easier language that has helped them gain new audiences amongst neo-literates and migrants alike. But in the German media, even in TV, that is still not the case, says a senior freelancer of Iranian origin:

“The day we have a black or a Turk reporting from the German parliament, we will know Germany has come to terms with migrants and migration. It doesn't matter whether you have Turkish roots and look obviously different or have a Polish background and blend in with Germans. There's been a general wariness about contact with other accents and cultures in the country, and that's reflected on television.”²⁴

How soon this change would be incorporated in the German media is debatable, but many German editors and politicians are already stressing the need to recruit more journalists/anchorpersons from the migrant-minorities. The chief executive of South Germany’s main radio station, Bayerischer Rundfunk, is one of them:

“We need more journalists from the migrant communities, we need more stories about those communities in our output, and we need more audience in those communities. More journalists from these communities would help us improve our understanding of minority issues. Otherwise we run the risk of creating ethnic and religious divides in German society. That’s what we can ill afford.”²⁵

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

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

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

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

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

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

"It's a sign of normality when you have a person with an immigrant background casually reading the news or the sports results on a major network instead of being shown as a problem or an exotic stereotype."²⁶

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

"We have to make immigrants more visible in German television, "I keep hearing from immigrants that they don't see themselves represented by the public sector broadcasters. There isn't enough awareness of their experience of life, and there aren't enough immigrants in front of or behind the camera. For example, having a Turkish anchorwoman needs to become a normal thing," she added. "We need more reporters who themselves know the immigrants' world and can convey it."²⁷: Maria Böhmer German Minister for Integration, quoted in Deutsche Welle report, 25th April 2007.

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

"It's a sign to potential journalists who perhaps haven't trusted themselves to think that presenting a prime-time news show on a major network could be a job for a person with an Italian or an Iraqi name. Today every fifth person in Germany has an immigrant background, among the young generation in the big cities it's every second. We just have to take these viewers into account; otherwise we lose our right to exist."²⁸

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

"The pool of potential immigrant journalists is tiny, which shows that promoting diversity has just not been a priority for media networks. A combination of poor language skills, lack of an academic environment at home and insufficient educational qualifications prevent many from migrant-minority background to opt for a career in journalism."²⁹

An OECD study last year found that children from immigrant families in Germany have fewer chances to succeed at school than in almost any other industrialized country. Most media researchers feel that only a coordinated effort by politicians, media companies and journalism schools is needed to fix problems in the national education system. Also consciously seeking and training budding immigrant journalists is the only way to boost the presence of minority

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

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

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

29 Lutz Michel, head of the MMB Institute for Media Research, Essen, quoted in Deutsche Welle report, 25th April 2007

journalists in the mainstream national media. Another way is to seek out promising journalists, specially reporters, in the diasporas media , induct them into German print or audio-visual media and provide them special language training to improve writing or presentation skills and make them part of the staff. But for that, one would need senior German editors who would know languages of migrant-minorities, would be inclined to monitor the diasporas media and respect the specific knowledge and expertise of diasporas journalists. If these journalists are then treated as “second class”, the system will not work. The BBC has achieved success with this method of recruitment in its domestic outlets and World Service.

Migrants, Minorities and Media Content

German public service radio took the lead in creating specific media content for migrant-minorities in the 1960s. The newly funded Regional Broadcasting Corporations produced thirty-minute capsules called “Gastarbeitersendungen” (guest-worker programmes) – first in Italian language in 1961, then in Turkish, Greek and Spanish programmes since 1964. In 1970, Serb-Croat programmes were also started. Listening to the “Gastarbeitersendungen” became a daily routine for large number of migrant families. The Association of the Public Broadcasting Cooperations (ARD) officially defined the function of these programmes as building a “bridge to home”. They reflected the public service mission of support to the cause of migrant integration, in which the public service media was given a definite role to play by the government. These programmes were very popular with the migrants until about the mid-1970s, when, according to the UNESCO, more than 75% of the migrant workers in Germany were listening to them.³⁰

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

In German print media, the only novel experiment in providing multi-lingual and multi-cultural media content started with the publication of the newspaper *Percembe*. The articles by its team of Turkish and German journalists are aimed at attracting a bicultural audience. The language in which the paper is produced varies according to the topics. It is published as a weekly supplement to the leftist German newspaper “Die Tageszeitung” by an imaginative German editor-in-chief, Claudia Dantschke. But the condition of such multicultural projects meant for “hybrid” and ethnically diverse audiences is still not encouraging. These projects run into serious competition from big TV Stations and newspapers mainly produced in the migrant homelands

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

like Turkey. The situation is further compounded by “the continuous ignorance of a majority of the German population and the German media sector towards multicultural issues.”³¹

In the meantime, almost all the programmes meant for migrant audiences on public service radio have been cancelled. Apart from one programme of the Regional Broadcasting Cooperation in Cologne (WDR) there is no inter-kultur programme on German public radio anymore; neither is there programmes produced by migrants for migrant communities highlighting issues of migrant communities. Another study argues that the media supply for migrants in Germany is “poor in quantity and quality and that this is due to unwillingness of German officials to concede migrants either full societal participation or integrity in cultural and communicative terms”.³²

German media researchers are alarmed by huge cutbacks on the inter-kultur programmes in German media, specially radio. Kira Kosnick of Frankfurt University says:

“Everything cannot be left to the market logic. Public service broadcasting must be there to perform crucial national tasks and integration of migrant-minorities is one such task that no commercial broadcaster will ever address. If the government hacks down on all inter-kultur kind of programmes just because they sound drab and old-fashioned, it is shirking its commitment towards multi-culturalism. These programmes must be remodeled to suit current migrant audience tastes but not cut out completely.”³³

Ulrich Raiser of Humbolt University has a three point suggestion -- (a) transformation of radio stations like Radio Multi-Kulti and Funkhaus Europa into national broadcasting services (b) innovative development of new programmes concerned with multicultural issues via-a-vis regulated proportional use of the public service fees for production of migrant programmes (c) a reasonable representation of media producers from migrant backgrounds in Inter-Cultural councils and at senior decision-making levels of public broadcasting corporations by modifying existing legislations.³⁴

Raiser calls for fair coverage of migrant issues in mainstream German media , specially those related to Turkish and Muslim minorities, so that ethnic Germans are properly sensitized about these issues and the bridge between them and the migrant minorities, specially the Turks and other Muslim communities, is effectively bridged.

“Studies by Gerhards (1993) and Ganter (1998) have shown the discrimination of non-European migrants is considerably higher in Germany than the discrimination of European migrants. Therefore Ghettoisation of migrant groups and the move back into the own ethnic community is mainly linked to a still rather hostile reception of especially Turkish migrant in Germany. Media consumption along ethnic lines might enforce the tendency towards segregation and Ghettoisation.”³⁵

The German journalists and editors interviewed during this study also admitted that there is not enough content on minority issues in national papers, magazines, TV channels and commercial radio stations. All but two of them said coverage of sensitive minority issues was professionally

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

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

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

34 Ulrich Raiser, Humbolt University, Berlin “Mapping Minorities and their Media: The National Context – Germany” paper accessed from LSE website. URL :

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/EMTEL/Minorities/papers/germanyreport.pdf>

35 Ulrich Raiser , Ibid

inadequate. Some said the coverage was “sloppy”. At least three German journalists working for mainline publications said the coverage was “slanted” and all but one said the content was not enough. So, there seems to be a consensus amongst German journalists and editors themselves about the fact that the coverage is not enough and could be much better in both quality and quantity. But one German social worker who works with a NGO involved in development projects in South Asia is particularly scathing in his criticism of the German press in the way it covers migrant-minority issues. He was not willing to be quoted by name – presumably because as a NGO organizer, he would not like to be on the wrong side of the press. But he was unusually critical of the German press coverage – or the lack of it -- on minority issues: “There are hardly any reports in local dailies or local TV/radio on events of importance for the minorities. And the material that is carried fails to represent the minority aspirations – this is a huge shortcoming. I will not say that the German media in general demonises any particular minority community, but the yellow press, those who seek sensation, very often do that. And some of these papers have huge circulation; some of these channels have huge viewer ship.”³⁶

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

“If the politicians say something insensitive about minorities, the press also reports it. In 2000, the conservative contender Juergen Ruetters, who now heads the government in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany’s most populous state, campaigned with a slogan – *Kinder Statt Inder* (Children, not Indians). He was fiercely opposing a federal plan to attract more Indian infotech specialists and what Mr Ruetters wanted to say was that the government should instead train German young people. Now it is a typical conservative German position but the slogan was in real bad taste. However it was widely reported because Mr Ruetters happens to be an important politician and what he says makes news.”³⁷

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

“It depends on the kind of media you are talking about. After 9/11, some media houses made great effort to project minority issues properly. There was some initial hysteria and Islamophobia after 9/11 and some papers and channels did play that up but many others stayed clear of such tendencies and provided balanced coverage. And at the moment, I don’t see any open demonisation of any minority, though some stereotyping does take place.”³⁸

By and large, there was a consensus amongst German editors and journalists in support of the need for better reporting of minority issues and the need to give them more airtime and print space. “This is one area our coverage needs to improve and become more professional and balanced” said the chief executive of Bayerischer Rundfunk.” “We clearly need more and better stories on migrant communities in our mainstream coverage.”³⁹ Some say that German journalists need to be specially sensitized to minority issues so that they can look at them more fairly and “from the other man’s shoes.” And few argue that this process should start at the

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

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

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

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

Journalistenschule, in the formative years of training, though, at the moment, those heading these institutions, like Ulrich Brenner of the Journalistenschule in Munich, do not think that was necessary and “be better left to the students who are bright and can pick up by themselves.”

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

Non-German journalists, mostly Turks but some South Asians, Afro-Germans and Arabs, actually feel “overawed” by the German presence in the media – they were unanimous about “the lack of voice” (as one journalist of Indian origin described it) that they have in editorial decisions. “We are mostly very junior in our organizations, so we rarely get to question existing editorial wisdom on critical issues including those related to the minorities. And our numbers are so low, we feel dozens of hostile glares will fall on us if we raised our voice on issues affecting our communities,” said an Afro-German journalist, but she was not willing to be named. Only one second generation migrant background journalist at the *Suddeutsche Zeitung* said he has been mentored well by his German seniors. Actually, many migrant background journalists agreed to fill up the questionnaire circulated during this study on strict conditions of anonymity, apprehending “impact” in their jobs when the study report is in public domain.

But again, to be fair, the German situation is not something unusual. In India, a person from the country does northeast have complained of unfair, flimsy and often biased coverage in the national press. These are India’s own ethnic minorities and not migrants but who feel that the Indian national TV channels and print media often gave them a raw deal. Even boys and girls from the northeast, because of their Mongoloid features and free-mixing life styles, face much trouble in Delhi – a recent survey indicated as much as 86 percent of “north easterners” living in the Indian capital have faced some kind of sexual harassment, intimidation, racist cajoling or even physical assault. The survey found such hostile attitude displayed by Delhites to “northeasterns” which were born more out of ignorance than design. When a boy from Nagaland told some Delhites about his state, he was asked whether this place was close to England or New Zealand! So much so that the chief minister of the north eastern state of Mizoram, speaking at a conference in Singapore, alleged he was a victim of racial discrimination in India because of his “chinky Mongoloid looks”. “They think I am Nepali or Chinese but I am as much Indian as any of them,” said Chief Minister Lalthanhawla, upsetting other Indian delegates enormously.

Much as poor reporting about Northeast in the Indian press was born out of ignorance about the region, the same could be true about the German press when it reports on minority issues. Now with more and more journalists from the northeast joining the national press in India, the situation is beginning to change. Similarly, more journalists from migrant-minority backgrounds in the mainstream German press could make a difference – but German editors and media schools should also keep aside some training time, to sensitize new media aspirants or students about key minority issues and provide them with the historical background to migration – that these people did not flood Germany on their own but were brought to the country to make up for acute labour shortages caused by the huge casualties of World War 2. The BBC, when it

trains journalists for its domestic outlets, does provide “specific sensitization” about minority issues and do not merely leave it to the “society at large”. Unless German mainstream media content provides fair and balanced output on migrant-minority issues and in appropriate quantity, the growing numbers of migrant-minorities (already a market size, big or small) may turn to the increasing number of diasporic media offerings or access their homeland newspapers, magazines and TV channels on the Internet or through satellite dishes.

Migrant-Minorities and Media Use

In the past two decades, Germany has witnessed an explosion of the migrant-minority media. Latest satellite-related technologies and the internet have made available to the migrant-minorities in Germany a plethora of television channels and radio stations from former “home countries” and elsewhere. Daily newspapers produced in Ankara, Belgrade or Warsaw are producing Germany editions using satellite technology of “page transfer” , giving migrant-minorities across the country a range of media options they never enjoyed since the time they – or their parents or grand-parents – came to the country. It is a paradox – second or third generation migrants who are normally expected to be “more integrated” in German society and perhaps speak or read German language with greater ease than their parents or grand-parents are having to offer their own ethnic media offerings in their drawing rooms or newsstands.

The Radio MultiKulti set up by Berlin’s public service broadcaster SFB started producing a regular Turkish language programme since it was set up – but the station’s real thrust was on German programming . After the race riots following the German unification, specially the murders in Molln and Solingen, the German government felt the need for furthering “intercultural understanding” and the MultiKulti venture , initially conceived as a three-year project in 1993, secured permanent funding later. It had 24-hour programming on a terrestrial frequency and functioned with a “double mission of serving different immigrant groups and of raising the levels of tolerance amongst German-majority population.”⁴⁰

MultiKulti won many awards for imaginative broadcasting and for promoting intercultural understanding but one can see it as the first German public service broadcasting venture that sought to promote integration through multiculturalism and tolerance of migrant cultures. It can also be seen as the last great German public service broadcasting effort to promote integration.

MultiKulti was soon followed by Metropol FM, the 24-hours Turkish radio station in Berlin , broadcasting from its studios in in Schöneberg, a district of Berlin with a strong Turkish presence – perhaps the strongest anywhere outside Turkey. Unlike Multikulti, Metropol is “bizim dalga” (our airwave) for Berlin’s huge Turkish population. Turks in Germany can now access a whole host of Turkish TV channels like NTV and Kanal TV , which broadcasts from Turkey – but the Turkish cable TV station TD-1 beams from Berlin and like Metropol FM , is a successful commercial venture surviving off local Turkish business advertising. All major Turkish newspapers like Hurriyet have German editions that sell very well.

Kira Kosnick, known for her pioneering work on Turkish migrant media in Germany, finds a “sea change” in the German ethnic mediascape over the last two decades:

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

“Until the mid-1980s immigrants from Turkey had to make do with a half-hour radio program and the occasional five minutes of Turkish television provided by public service broadcasters, the situation nowadays is dramatically different. Both satellite imports and local developments have been noted by German observers and have prompted some to speak of an “ethnicization” of the media landscape in Germany, meaning that ethnic minorities are increasingly drawing upon their own media.... But the activism around these marginal migrant media is politically central when it comes to debating issues of democratic empowerment and minority participation in immigration countries.”⁴¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The views expressed by German journalists, editors and common citizens during the course of this study are not borne out by specialist media analysis undertaken by German researchers cited above. This reveals the gap between popular German perceptions within and outside the media and among those who have undertaken specialist studies on migrant minorities and their media use patterns. Kira Kosnick provides an appropriate context to the whole debate about whether ethnic media in Germany works against integration and could lead to creation of parallel societies and media ghettos:

“Media here become a means of self-orientation and self-expression by which the self is linked to the cultural identity of an ethnic group. In this understanding of ethnic minority media, two basic meanings of representation are collapsed: representation in the sense of “darstellen,” or “subject-predication,” by which the ethnic group is invoked, and representation in the sense of “vertreten,” or “speaking-for,” as in the political representation of that group.”⁴³

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

Smaller German media houses may do well to exploit these new ethnic markets to augment their profits by buying stakes in successful ethnic media ventures – this may be one good way for them to challenge bigger monopolies like the Bild Zeitung . German investors did back the Turkish migrants in the Metropol FM venture – that could be a useful model for future media investments. Germans should not see the growth of ethnic media as a threat to integration. The traditional concept of integration in Germany – one based on cultural identity change rather than cultural identity retention – will not work anymore in the context of globalization with satellites and Internet around. 21st century Germany will have to accept that a Turk will be a Turk at home and German in his workplace. He will cheer the Turkish World Cup team one night and also cheer, with equal enthusiasm , the German World Cup team the night next, as they did in 2006.

Even communities not as big as the Turks will try their best to retain their cultural identity in Germany. Twenty years ago, smaller migrant communities such as South Asians had to integrate with German society because they were too small to live as distinct communities. Today they can and do – in virtual, if not in a real sense. Koteswar Rao Anne, an engineer from southern India, worked for seven years in Hamburg. Now settled in the Austrian town of Klagenfurt, Rao is on internet first thing in the morning. He first reads the “Hindu”, the hugely

⁴³ Kira Kosnick. Migrant Media: Turkish Broadcasting and Multicultural Politics in Berlin. New Anthropologies of Europe. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.

popular English daily in southern India, where India's major infotech hubs are located. The second paper that Rao reads is the Telegu language daily "Eenadu" that brings him up-to-date with "everything back home." He is fluent in German but reads German papers only in offices – for catching up on "headlines and news that might specifically affect us." Of the eight other Indians, seven Pakistani and four Bangladeshi migrants interviewed, all surfed the Net extensively.

So it would be a misnomer to imagine that first generation migrants from Turkey, mostly illiterate workers with little knowledge of German, would be the least inclined to "integrate" while more literate migrants may be more inclined to integrate. The South Asian migrants interviewed were all literate and fluent in German – yet all except one hardly read German papers or magazines. They watch German TV but "only to catch up." The Indians and Pakistanis mostly saw ZEE TV for South Asian soap operas and films. The Bangladeshis log on to Bangla channels on the Net. This is what David Morley and Kevin Robbins calls the "paradox" – the counter tendency to assert national and/or ethnic identity in an age of globalization. Hafez calls this "glocalisation", a situation where natives' identities resurface amongst migrants in conditions ostensibly conducive to globalization. That makes old integration concepts rather obsolete.

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

The German media has to accept the reality of "glocalisation" before the larger society sees it. Instead of succumbing to needless Islamophobia or wail for "failed integration", it should see in the growth of the ethnic media, specially the Turkish media, a huge opportunity to create a genuinely multicultural Germany – and a truly multicultural German press. Germany did not have colonies, so migrants in Germany are yet to be fully at home with the German language. But that is precisely why the diasporic press thrives in Germany more than it thrives in the lands of its former colonial neighbours, because ex-colonials there are comfortable with English, Dutch or French. If German editors and journalists monitor the Turkish ethnic media regularly, they will end up covering the community much more professionally. That is a much better option than hastily recruiting some Turkish reporters to "check out what's happening in the mosques." Besides being able to spot ethnic talent in this ethnic press, can be used to recruit for mainstream media. The German editors can also pick up major migrant community issues early on. Improved coverage of these issues may bring back migrant audiences to mainstream German media. Simultaneously, the ethnic media can continue to be the real mirror of Germany's ever-growing migrant minority populations and co-exist alongside the German mainstream media.

Media in France and the Politics of Integration

Sumon K. Chakrabarti

Introduction

2006 marked the beginning of what many be perceived as a change in France. In many ways, it was a watershed year in French history, which a leading campaigner for minority representation in the media branded as a "bombshell of news". It marked the advent of Harry Roselmack, the first black journalist ever to present a popular, prime-time mainstream TV news programme on the biggest television station in the country, TF1. Harry's primetime appearance came in the immediate aftermath of the 2005 riots in the suburbs of Paris – riots for which the international media squarely blamed a racist society that has marginalized the children and grandchildren of North African immigrants. A country steeped in the much vaunted ethos of 'liberty, equality, fraternity', the problems in France are compounded by a kind of ghettoisation not seen elsewhere. The country's original immigrants most often have settled in suburbs just outside Paris, such as Savigny-sur-Orge and Raincy, forming large African and Arab communities where unemployment is higher than the national average and residents complain of racism and discrimination.

France has an estimated three to five million black population, the largest coloured minority in Europe. But no one can provide an exact numerical count. This is because France has always tried to portray a face of equal tolerance towards ethnic and religious minorities and it has done so by putting in place a colour blind policy. This policy is based on a model of integration that does not recognise that such minorities exist. Census in France by race is illegal. France's "egalitarian philosophy" written into the constitution rejects any official statistical classification of people into ethnic or racial groups. Discrimination against minorities is particularly awkward in France because its model of integration does not recognise that such minorities exist. The 2005 riots in France were seen by people like Manuel Valls, mayor of Evry and a Socialist member of parliament, as "consequences of 30 years of ethnic and social segregation" resulting in what he calls "territorial apartheid", combined with the "bankruptcy of the model of integration: in France, our social elevator is blocked."⁴⁴ And this in a society where the media is an integral part of the dynamics.

The riots forced President Jacques Chirac to urge the media to hire more ethnic minority journalists after the riots by Arab youths. For the first time, a debate started in the French media, looking for reasons behind the riots. Harry Roselmack's recruitment resulted from the churning that started with the riots. During the first few days of the 2005 riots, the media had even failed to get past the information barrier. Years of turning a blind eye to the existence of the minorities

⁴⁴ "An Underclass Rebellion-France's Riots", *The Economist*, November 12, 2005, USA

meant that no mainstream media outlet in the country had any primary source of information within the aggrieved rioters or any reporter who had covered their issues in the past.

An observation in this context by social scientist Ezra Suleiman, director of the European Studies program at Princeton University, was quite apt:

In the absence of hard data about why these riots broke out at this moment and in a particular place, whether they were organized or spontaneous, why they took the form they took, what the desires or demands of the rioters are, and even the basic organization of the communities, it becomes even difficult to devise policies for resolving the 'conditions'. The police become the only group with (obviously partial) information. And they certainly can't substitute for social scientists.⁴⁵

Particularly, the rise to the White House of President Barrack H Obama of the United States of America (USA) has stirred a debate in France about the plight of the minorities in the country who remain for the most part locked out of the political and business elite circles.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy's new diversity czar, Yazid Sabeg, the Commissioner of Diversite, warns that France risked becoming an apartheid state unless it brings minorities into the mainstream. "We are creating a societal civil war in this country that could tomorrow become a war between communities," he says, noting that poverty in France affected mostly black and Arab minorities. "This period ahead of us is our last chance" to address problems from integration, says the man who has been given the responsibility by Sarkozy to find out ways and means to promote diversity in the country's business institutions and the media.⁴⁶

It seems clear that Islamophobia drives the media to take a hardliner position, a position which was clearly visible in the recent Burqa ban controversy and the earlier controversy with the issue of the Islamic headscarf in the late 1980s.

My research has been primarily based on extensive interviews conducted with nearly 100 media professionals along with civil servants, academics, politicians, activists and intellectuals in Paris in July and August 2009. I have also interviewed many journalists over email during the same time to understand the distinctive complexities in the history of migration into France. My discussions with Sonia Dayan-Herzbrun, Professeur émérite à l'université Paris Diderot and Professor Geraldine Mulhman at Université Pantheon-Assas Paris, my brainstorming sessions with Martina Zimmerman from Radios Allemandes-ARD (without whom this paper would have never got the initial impetus), in-depth sessions with author Pierre Fréha, Algerian journalist Nadia Bey, Wallace Kotra from France O, France's Commissioner of Diversity Yazid Sabeg, the sociologist couple, residents of France - Priti Sanyal and Dr Bikas Sanyal, and Rejane Ereau from *Respect* magazine along with several other individuals I interviewed has helped shape this perceptive analysis of a étranger (foreigner).

Migration in France and the Politics of Integration

Migration into France started since the late nineteenth century after a fall in the birth rate had resulted in a labour shortage in the country. It was unique by Western European standards and France was forced to sign labour recruitment agreements with Italy (1904, 1906, 1919), Belgium (1906), Poland (1906) and Czechoslovakia (1920)⁴⁷. By 1851, the first year official records of this

⁴⁵ Suleiman, Ezra,. *France: One and Divisible*. Nov 18,2005,. <http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org>

⁴⁶ *Interview with Yazid Sabeg in Paris (August, 2009)*

⁴⁷ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/215768/France/40444/The-Third-Republic>

nature were kept, there were 380,000 *étrangers* in France which accounted for one percent of its total population. Thirty years later, in 1881, that number had nearly tripled to 1 million or 3 percent of the total population, and by 1931 it had increased to 2.7 million or 6.4 percent of a total population of 42 million⁴⁸. The flow of immigrants increased by leaps and bounds, so much so that in the 1920s and the 1930s, the immigrants in France were of a higher proportion of the population in percentage terms than in the USA, the main destination for European immigrants since the middle of the nineteenth century. By numerical count, it stood second only after the USA⁴⁹.

But since the middle of the 1950s, the pattern of the movement of migrants into France changed. The legacy of colonialism started influencing the long tradition of recruiting foreign workers, mostly white-skinned Europeans till then⁵⁰. After Britain, France was the next major colonial power in the world. And the French realised that despite their wide-spread colonial reach across the globe, their colonies nearer home had a workforce that was more potent and less expensive. Thus started an inflow of migrants from what is called the Maghreb (North-West Africa: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia), certain countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Senegal), and the DOM-TOM (Départements d'outre-mer and Territoires d'outre-mer) like Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guyana (in the Caribbean) and Reunion Island (in the Indian Ocean).

In France, there are two main groups of black populations: black-Afro-Caribbeans and black-Afro-Africans. The first are from France's colonies in the French Antilles and also from the African Indian Ocean island of the Reunion, while the second are from France's former colonies of West and Central Africa and the African Indian ocean island of Madagascar.⁵¹ Although the first were colonies, their status did change in 1946 when they became France's overseas dependences. It was a legal or administrative act that made France's former colonies in the Caribbean and in the African Indian Ocean also known as the 'old four' to, in principle, enjoy the same rights with their compatriots in metropolitan France⁵².

As for the second, their status mutated twice, first in 1946 and then in 1960, when they became independent countries with strong ties with the former colonial power⁵³. Children of the second are the ones forming the bulk of black-Afro-Africans in metropolitan France today. Even though blacks from France's colonies of the Caribbean and the Reunion, have a different administrative status from those in Africa following the afore mentioned mutations/reasons, both communities are facing the same problems of discrimination and are also the subjects of wild fantasies from the mainstream majority White French⁵⁴.

The Maghrebians became the most significant group of immigrants into France. The vast majority of these were not from Morocco or Tunisia (which were former protectorates of France and not full-fledged colonies) but from Algeria, the jewel in the crown of

⁴⁸ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/215768/France/40444/The-Third-Republic>

⁴⁹ <http://www.focus-migration.de/France.1231.0.html?&L=1> (Hamburg Institute of International Economics, Federal Agency for Civic Education, Netzwerk Migration in Europa)

⁵⁰ <http://www.iheu.org/node/377> International Humanist and Ethical Union

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Readmore: <http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/5923/Africa-French-Colonies.html#ixzz0VImTdctA> French Colonies – Political Organization of French Colonies in Africa, Association and Assimilation.

⁵³ <http://www.britannica.com>

⁵⁴ *Faes, Geraldine & Stephane Smith, 2006. Noir et Français. : Edition Panama.*

the French colonial empire. In 1962, upon the conclusion of the Algerian War, which many refer to as France's Vietnam, 900,000 *pied-noirs*, meaning "black foot" but used to refer to the European *colons* in Algeria, were repatriated to France, as well as most of the 91,000 Harkis (native Algerians who fought with the French army during the war)⁵⁵.

They were expected to return home but that never happened. They joined the *travailleurs immigrés*, Algerian and Maghrebian population already living in France as migrant workers. By 1975, the Maghrebians started bringing their families to France. That culminated into a flashpoint by the early 1980s when years of neglect forced the migrant workers, primarily the Maghrebians, to take out La Marche Pour L'égalité on the streets of Paris in 1983⁵⁶. Suddenly, the whole of France was waking up to a new reality – a reality of a multi-coloured country, a reality that France refused to accept for a long time. It also coincided with the rise of the extreme Right, the radical movement led by Jean-Marie Le Pen and his political party, Le Front National⁵⁷. The French society was suddenly faced with the debates about immigration, integration, assimilation and the Right. The Marche Pour L'égalité et Contre le Racisme, a march from Marseilles to the centre of Paris in 1983 to protest against discrimination was a key moment in the *la génération Beur*, a generation of young men and women with their own specific cultural identity at once different from that of their North African parents and from that of their peers of European descent. The term *Beur* expresses a bi-cultural identity experienced as either plenitude – both Arab and French and belonging to both cultures – or as alienation *neither French nor Arab* and belonging fully to neither culture. *Beur* is the word "arabe" inversed ("be-ur"), a linguistic fashion in the suburbs. They started gaining national visibility⁵⁸.

A History of Hostility

But as Phillippe Bernard of *Le Monde* newspaper points out, "there is a history of hostility and resistance to immigrants in France", and it did not start with the Maghrebians or Le Beurs. "But, obviously, the earlier immigrants from Poland, Italy, parts of Eastern Europe were not stigmatised for the colour of their skin,"³ Bernard, an expert on migration in France, says.⁵⁹

The European immigrants were victims of racism as the French perceived their influx vis-a-vis lowering of employment opportunities for the sons of the soil. The fear of *l'invasion*, the invasion of France by large numbers of foreigners who were seen as *briseurs de grève*, pushing down the wages of the honest and hard-working *Français de souche*, threatening the social order and the purity of French womanhood.⁶⁰

And then there was the 'other' fear. The fear of *l'inassimilabilité*, the concern that these immigrants would not 'assimilate' (and not integrate) successfully into French society.

Italian and Polish immigrants, for example, were attacked for their religious devotion by a French working class that was no longer regularly attending Church (mass, confession etc.) and were given the derogatory term *Christos* (mainly the Italians) or *calotins* (mainly the Polish). Their

⁵⁵ Algerian government brochure – "The History of Algeria"

⁵⁶ Radio Allamande, "Hintergrund Vorortkrawalle" Report by Martina Zimmerman, Nov 30, 2007

⁵⁷ ^ L'affaire du poignard du lieutenant Le Pen en Algérie, *Le Monde*, 17 March 2003 (French)

⁵⁸ Kessas, F., *Beur's Story*. Paris: L'Harmatta, 1989.

⁵⁹ Interview with Phillippe Bernard at the *Le Monde* headquarters in Paris (August 2009).

⁶⁰ Bernard, Philippe., *L'Immigration*. Paris: Le Monde-Editions. Pg 21, 1993.

religion - Catholicism not Islam or Judaism - hampered immigrants' integration into French society.⁶¹

The refusal to accept had led to violence in the past. One such flashpoint was the economic downturn in the late nineteenth century, when immigrants in France faced frequent attacks. This violent xenophobia resulted in anti-Italian riots in Marseilles in 1881, in the town of Aigues-Mortes in southern France in 1893 and in Lyon in 1894.

Anti-Maghrebian racism accounted for nearly 80 per cent of the recorded acts of violence throughout the 1980s and the 1990s. In 1983 in the *banlieues* (suburbs) of Lyon started a phenomenon known as the rodeos – the intentional crashing and burning of cars, which became a practice in Strasbourg every New year's Eve – Strasbourg held the national record for the maximum cars torched on every December 31st for many years till the mid 1990s .

But the phenomenon has now changed and this was quite evident even during my research in Paris in July and August 2009, as some 500 vehicles were burned in France during the night of July 13-14 as France celebrated its national holiday, Bastille Day. Car-burning by gangs of youths living primarily in France's run-down suburban ghettos on the eve of Bastille Day has become a tradition in France and an outlet for disaffected young men to express their anger at French unemployment rates and a failed integration policy for ethnic minorities. In October and November 2005, it became a form of protest when youths burned some 9,000 vehicles after riots erupted in more than 300 communities throughout France following the deaths of two teenagers from immigrant families in a Paris suburb. The Bastille Day riots followed three nights of anarchy on the streets of Firminy near Lyon, as youths protested amidst reports of a 21-year-old Algerian man dying in police custody on Wednesday July 8.

The contemporary problems of the Blacks and the Beurs did not include one major problem faced by the 'first' immigrants from Europe: they came (and still come) from former French colonies. The Maghrebians thus speak the same language. A prominent German radio journalist with Radio Allemandes in Paris for the last 22 years, Martina Zimmerman, puts it aptly

Most of the immigrant children come from francophone countries, and they also learn to speak French in school. You cannot compare them to immigrants to Germany, where there are maternal language classes. So the argument in most parts of the world that immigrants have lack of command over the spoken and written language of the country where they have migrated to does not hold true in France.⁶²

But if one goes back in history, it is easier to understand why France today finds it difficult to break the shackles of the same ethnographic dilemma.

As late as 1825, slave chains and manacles could be openly purchased in Nantes.

But France, it is with deepest regret I mention it, has countenanced and encouraged the slave trade, almost beyond estimation or belief. France is engrossing nearly the whole of the slave trade. [In one year till September 1819] 60,000 Africans have been forced from their country, principally under the colours of France... They were taken mostly to Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Cuba.⁶³

France obtained the monopoly of *oriento* (that is, the monopoly of the supply of slaves) in 1701⁶⁴. The economy of France was dependent upon revenues from the colonies, where slavery existed on plantations and thrived due to the lucrative trade triangle. Ships would

⁶¹ McNeill, Tony. *Immigration in France. The University of Sunderland, 1998*

⁶² *Interview with Martina Zimmerman in Paris (August 2009).*

⁶³ Johnson, Paul., *The Birth of the Modern: World Society 1815-1830. Harper Perennial. Pg. 330, 1992*

⁶⁴ Elikia M'bokolo, The impact of the slave trade on Africa, *Le Monde diplomatique*, April 2, 1998

sail south to pick up African natives, and transport them across the Atlantic to be sold as slaves in the colonies. The ships' hulls were then filled with plantation goods, such as sugar and coffee, to be marketed back in Europe. France's Caribbean colonies were the principal destination of 90 percent of French slave ships.

The French turned four times more Africans into slaves than the Americans did in the history of the Atlantic slave trade; they used them far more cruelly, and French slavers not only got a head-start on Americans, they continued the slave trade - legally - until 1830, long after the rest of Europe had given it up. And they kept it alive, albeit clandestinely, until after the U.S. Civil War. France officially abolished slavery in its colonies only 14 years before Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation on 1 January 1863, and then only under pressure from slave uprisings⁶⁵. In fact, when the Convention in Paris in 1794 declared the universal emancipation of slaves, but it did not actually outlaw the slave trade. The colonies required slaves, and under Napoleon, slavery was reintroduced⁶⁶.

French slavery totals in the 17th century were lower than they might have been due to incompetence, bankruptcies, and mismanagement and strict royal rules about buying from, or selling to, other empires. By the 1720s however, French private traders had broken the monopolies and the slave trade boomed under the French flag. During the 1730s alone, the French shipped probably more than 100,000 slaves from Africa. The government raised the bounty per slave delivered to 100 livres, and in 1787 upped it again to 160. By the 1760s the average number of slave ships leaving French ports was 56 a year, which does not sound like a large number, but they were big ships, averaging 364 slaves per boat. The attendant horrors of the Middle Passage, of course, were multiplied in the bigger ships. In 1767 the French overtook the British in sugar production for the first time⁶⁷.

“By the late 1780s Saint Domingue planters were recognized as the most efficient and productive sugar producers in the world. The slave population stood at 460,000 people, which was not only the largest of any island but represented close to half of the 1 million slaves then being held in all the Caribbean colonies. The exports of the island represented two-thirds of the total value of all French West Indian exports, and alone were greater than the combined exports from the British and Spanish Antilles. In only one year well over 600 vessels visited the ports of the island to carry its sugar, coffee, cotton, indigo, and cacao to European consumers.”⁶⁸

Bordeaux, which today produces some of the best wines in the world, was known as the “harbour of ebony” where *Traite des Noirs* was one of the biggest in France alongside Nantes. Professor Sonia-Dayan Herzbrun makes an interesting observation in the history of slavery in France: “Even the great French author Voltaire was involved in *le commerce du bois d’ebene*.”⁶⁹

Today, the real problem with the minority population in France lies not only in the gap in their successful cultural integration into the French republican model but also in the lack of their own socio-economic integration into the same society. For the minority second or third generation youth, it is tough to accept their deliberate exclusion from the society because their decrepit

⁶⁵ King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa. Houghton Mifflin Books. 1998.

⁶⁶ Cherfils, Christian (1914). *Bonaparte et l'Islam d'après les documents français & arabes*. Pedone.

⁶⁷ *The Emancipation of America*, Jaime E. Rodriguez O.

The American Historical Review > Vol. 105, No. 1 (Feb., 2000), pp. 131-152

⁶⁸ S. Klein, Herbert., *The Atlantic Slave Trade*. Cambridge, 1999. Pg 33.

⁶⁹ *Interview with Professor Sonia Dayan-Herzbrun at Universite Paris Diderot. (August 2009)*

banlieues often remind them that the universalist ideals of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* they have imbibed since their first schooling days do not apply to them. Yazid Sabeg calls it the “double vision” of the French people. “It is not easy for the French people to accept people of other ethnic identities as their own. The conception of identity here is purely white, it is inscribed in the French mindset,” says the Algerian-born Sabeg, who was appointed the Commissioner of Diversity of France in December 2008 by President Nicolas Sarkozy.⁷⁰ He was appointed to draft an action plan to promote diversity at elite schools, in business establishments and in the media.

‘French’ Media, Migrants and Minorities

Sabeg’s theory of the white French identity is clearly reflected in the French mainstream media. A particular report on 29 August 2009 by Agence France-Presse (AFP), the oldest news agency in the world, on the Yemenia jet that crashed off the Comoros islands on 30 June killing 152 people, marked a significant deviation in the French media’s coverage of the air-crash. It said: “The causes of the crash of the plane, which was carrying mainly passengers of Comoran origin living in France, remain unknown.”⁷¹

Following the AFP report, the initial coverage in the French media described the passengers as Comorans. It attracted widespread protests from anti-racism groups in France, who saw media’s attempt to portray legitimate French nationals as just Comorans a ‘legacy of the white mindset in the newsrooms.’ Wallis Kotra, Managing Editor of France Ô, whose family migrated from New Caledonia in the Pacific Ocean, insists: “Till now, the media in France has been internally racist. The white newsrooms have practised implicit racism over the years. They have closed their eyes to the minorities and that is not going to change in a hurry.”⁷²

According to a survey in 2004 by the Institut Montaigne, a think-tank, the unemployment rate of “visible minorities” is nearly three times the national average. Young women seem able to get and hold down jobs; but many job applications from young men end up unread in the bin.

Over the years, the French media has turned a blind eye to the ever-increasing presence of migrants in France. In fact, the riots of 2005 in the *banlieues* of Paris were an eye-opener to the print, audio-visual and cyber media in the country. As the riots started, the media descended on the Paris suburbs but their geographical, historical and sociological knowledge of the area was so little that most media houses did not even get a single voice from the Black community on the first or second day. For days the rioters were simply referred to as “youths from the suburbs”, as the French media grappled with the realisation that after decades of minority suppression, it was an outburst led by the second generation immigrants, who refused to take things lying down unlike their parents. It was the outcome of a blatant failure of successive governments to address the problems of low-income, high-immigration suburbs dominated by grim public housing estates, some of them little more than ghettos where crime and gangs run rampant.

⁷⁰ Interview with Sabeg (August 2009)

⁷¹ France 24. ‘Search teams locate second black box’. 29 August 2009. Full text available at <http://www.france24.com/20090829-second-black-box-found-yemenia-flight-comoros-crash-airbus>. last accessed 1 October 2009.

⁷² Interview with Wallace Kotra, Managing Editor, France Ô. He is the first and only black editor of a television channel in France.

Sabeg compares the media in France with its political establishment. France's political establishment remains overwhelmingly white despite the appointment of two women of North African (Maghrebian) descent and a black human rights minister in Sarkozy's right-wing government. There is only one black Member of Parliament from mainland France. Sabeg sums up the situation aptly:

The integration of immigrants is one of the top challenges facing the French society. Today we are creating a rift that is leading straight to apartheid. And the media is a partner in crime with the French society. The media reflects the society. They play a large role in influencing the society; they can play an equally pivotal role to introduce the question of plurality of opinions in the society and their own system. But the problem is that all newsrooms in France are of the same origin. There is no diversity in newspaper by-lines or on the television screens.⁷³

Professor of Political Science at Universite Pantheon-Assas Paris, Geraldine Mulhman, who also moderates her own talk show in a leading television network, agrees with Sabeg's assessment.

The system will not lead students from minority communities to study journalism in top universities. The legacy of discrimination has ensured that the minorities today cannot even think that white-collar jobs are for them. And the white majority will just deny that any discrimination happens in France, citing the principle of 'laïcité'⁷⁴ and the tough law that exist against racism.⁷⁵

Isabelle Stassart, Photo Editor of *Le Figaro*, makes an observation which gives a clear indication of the French republican psyche that is prominent in the media. In the late 1990s, when Naomi Campbell was put on the cover of the French edition of *Cosmopolitan*, the leading lifestyle magazine for women, initially it was seen as a bold move. But then the magazine claimed that sales had gone down by 20 per cent.

After that no black model was ever put on the cover of *Cosmo* till very recently. Earlier there were famous editors like Axel Ganz in our country who were very racist. They would never put a black on the cover. But even today, in the media, the representation of the people of diversity is very poor.⁷⁶

Analysing her own newspaper *Le Figaro*, Stassart concludes that the "issues of the minority community are hardly discussed, except when controversies happen."⁷⁷

One such controversy arose following the Islamophobic discourse that has been generated in the country which has complicated the process of integration of the minority communities, a majority of whom are Muslims, into the French society after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the USA. It was over the recent *burqa* debate which is an offshoot of the growing Islamophobia in France, and President Sarkozy's statement at a special session of the national parliament in Versailles on 22 June 2009 which sparked off this debate:

We cannot accept to have in our country women who are prisoners behind netting, cut off from all social life, deprived of identity. That is not the idea that the French republic has of women's

⁷³ *Interview with Sabeg (August 2009)*

⁷⁴ In its strict and official acceptance, it is the principle of separation of church (or religion) and state. Etymologically, *laïcité* comes from the Greek *λαϊκός* (*laikós* "of the people", "layman"). In French, *laïcité* (pronounced [la.i.si.te]) is a French concept of a secular society connoting the absence of religious involvement in government affairs as well as absence of government involvement in religious affairs. During the twentieth century, it evolved to mean equal treatment of all religions, although a more restrictive interpretation of the term has developed since 2004.

⁷⁵ *Interview with Professor Geraldine Mulhman in Paris (July 2009)*

⁷⁶ *Interview with Isabelle Stassart, Photo Editor, Le Figaro, in Paris (July 2009)*

⁷⁷ *Ibid*

dignity. The burqa is not a sign of religion; it is a sign of subservience. It will not be welcome on the territory of the French republic.”⁷⁸

Surprisingly, there are only about 500 women who wear the veil on the streets of France. French author Pierre Fréha finds the ban on the *burqa* “preposterous”. But in France, campaigns to stop the State cracking down on the wearing of the headscarf are often run by young Muslim women confident of their right to fulfil their potential and their right to express their religion. Journalist Rachida Ziouche, daughter of an Algerian *imam* who has been living in exile in France since fleeing her homeland, told the BBC that “France wants its people to live together, celebrating their diversity, but it also has a secular tradition to protect - one which seeks to keep religion from the public sphere... Where I live, in a small town in France, girls and young women are intimidated by Muslim men who oblige them to wear the scarf. These Muslim women are often isolated, and need some protection. The law to outlaw the veil goes some way towards addressing this need.”⁷⁹

But Pierre Fréha believe that the *burqa* ban is an attempt to “make the French society look like an aquarium full of good-looking fishes - the *burqa* debate has seen unbalanced views being propagated through the media.”⁸⁰

But at least there was a debate generated in the media, and this in itself points to changing times. Stephanie le Bars, who has reported on religion for *Le Monde* for several years now, feels that this time the media was very moderate in its approach compared to its approach in the autumn of 1989 after the issue of the Islamic headscarf blew up into a national controversy when the headmaster of the Lycee Gabriel Havez in Creil, a suburb of Paris, announced his decision to exclude four students from his school for wearing a headscarf.

“This time the media has been very cautious. Though the press has been supporting the anti-*burqa* move, this time they are talking about resolving the issue through mediation and dialogue rather than directly condemning the *burqa*, as they did during the headscarf debate.”⁸¹

The media had also reacted in an utterly biased manner, taking Islamophobia to new heights, after former President Jacques Chirac’s landmark speech on secularism, in which he had called for a ban on all “conspicuous” religious signs in schools. The mainstream media had backed the move, argued it was meant to curb the influence of Islamist fundamentalists and to block what the government perceives as their attempt to undermine the country's secular system through the provocative use of religious symbols in the sanctuaries of the republic - the schools.

Only one or two newspapers had opposed the move. The French daily *Le Monde* had warned that such a move could backfire because it will render secularism “cold, closed and defensive,” and exclude a large segment of the citizens that the State needs to integrate.⁸²

⁷⁸ Burkas 'not welcome' in France: Sarkozy
AFP News report, 22 June 2009.

⁷⁹ Viewpoints: Europe and the headscarf.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3459963.stm>

⁸⁰ *Interview with Pierre Fréha in Paris (July 2009)*

⁸¹ *Interview with Stephanie le Bars in Paris (July 2009).*

⁸² *(Le Monde archives, December 15, 2003)*

Media, Multiculturalism and Cosmetic Changes

When former French President Jacques Chirac spoke to the nation after three weeks of rioting in 2005, he said that the media must better reflect contemporary France. Chirac had argued then that it was vital that television and newspapers should be representative of the population as a whole. This came after widespread criticism of the French media, especially the visual media, not only for their failure to present an ethnically diverse picture of French society during the riots but even for their lack of coverage of the country's worst civil unrest in decades.

One of France's leading TV news executives even admitted censoring his coverage of the riots in the country but sugar-coated his defence with a politically correct message. Jean-Claude Dassier, the director general of the rolling news service LCI, said that his decision was "motivated by a desire to avoid encouraging the resurgence of extreme rightwing views in France."⁸³ Dassier had argued: "Politics in France is heading to the right and I don't want rightwing politicians back in second, or even first place because we showed burning cars on television," but he also denied he was guilty of "complicity" with the French authorities.⁸⁴

However, the criticism and the simultaneous political pressure resulted in the recruitment of Harry Roselmack in TF1 as the first black prime time presenter in the history of French television. The TF1 evening news, with an audience of more than 5 million, is one of the most watched news programmes in Europe. In a country which has a low readership of national newspapers, the TF1 news often is considered the main window on national and international events, especially in "*La France profonde*" (provincial France).

The recruitment was received with great enthusiasm with the then Minister for Equality of Opportunity Azouz Begag, calling it a "great step forward" because television was the "mirror in which society looks at itself".⁸⁵ Roselmack's photograph was splashed across the front pages of most newspapers the next day.

Despite the euphoria it generated, many saw it as France's acceptance of the fact that they are fighting a battle against racism that they lost in their backyard, slowly burying even the symbolic value of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*.

Roselmack, whose parents migrated from Martinique, in the French Caribbean, himself was not convinced though that his appointment had changed French media's discriminatory outlook towards its minorities:

This is certainly no sign that we have arrived at a normalized situation. That will be the case the day people no longer make such a fuss when a black, North African or Asian colleague is hired.⁸⁶

Roselmack's recruitment came as part of the government's "positive discrimination" programme - a programme which was given prominence during his election campaign by President Nicolas Sarkozy, the same man who as the interior minister in Chirac's government called the 2005 rioters "*racaille*" (scum) and promised to clean popular areas from "delinquency" with a

⁸³ *Guardian, UK* (Nov 10, 2005) –

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2005/nov/10/france.tvnews>

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Le Monde* (March 6, 2006)

⁸⁶ *The New York Times* (14 August 2006) -

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/14/arts/television/14anch.html?_r=1

“Karcher” (high pressure cleaner).⁸⁷ Sarkozy’s vocabulary received high praise from the Right and the extreme Right, but was perceived by the minority community, especially the youth in the suburbs, as a blanket slur.

Footballer Lilian Thuram says Sarkozy’s comments hurt, forcing him to rethink whether change is at all possible in France. Thuram is one of France’s great sporting heroes, who moved to France from the French island of Guadeloupe (he moved from FRANCE TO FRANCE, from Guadeloupe to Ile de France) at the age of nine and grew up in the troubled outskirts of southern Paris, and is hailed as a symbol of a new racially peaceful France after the World Cup victory of the French national football team comprising mostly of the Blacks and Beurs. He says:

Do you think that it’s right, to speak like that? I took it personally. His words hurt. Perhaps Sarkozy doesn’t know what he is talking about. I grew up in an estate, too, but I am not scum. People used to say the same thing to me. What I wanted was to find work. Violence never happens for no reason. You have to understand where the malaise comes from. Before talking about law and order, you have to talk about social justice.⁸⁸

Nadia Bey, senior journalist with Radio Orient, who is an Algerian working in Paris, thinks that Sarkozy used “positive discrimination” to his own advantage:

At that time, we were sick and tired of being described as immigrants, delinquents, thieves, Islamic radicals. They still see us mostly as gang rapists, hash dealers or religious zealots but then Sarkozy launched a loud, cosmetic effort to change this image. He did so though the media and his own cabinet. He made positive discrimination sound like his own trumpet.⁸⁹

Though the phrase entered France’s political vocabulary 20 years ago, “positive discrimination” has gained wide currency only in the past few years, courtesy Sarkozy. But for all the debate since the violent riots in 2005, it has hardly cut any ice on the ground.

There are just two TV anchors “colouring” the French airwaves at present: Harry Roselmack and Audrey Pulvar. Pulvar who comes from the French Caribbean island of Martinique, feels that cultural diversity in the newsroom French is still “wishful thinking”. In an interview to *Le Monde*, Pulvar said: “This country is moving, but the editors argue slower than the company they keep!”⁹⁰ Sabeg, the Commissioner of Diversity, says that “positive discrimination is a bad word.” According to him:

It reeks of discrimination. Why not call it ‘affirmative action’ like the whole world does? The problem is that in France, there is no process of such action to integrate the minorities even after thirty years. There are only individual acts like the recruitment of a (Harry) Roselmack.⁹¹

While analysing the role of the French media in both overlooking and the stereotyping of blacks in France in their book, *Noir et Francais* (2006), authors Geraldine Faes and Stephane Smith make an interesting observation, yet again linked to the French model of abstract Republicanism, that the reason for the absence of black journalists in the editorial team of main French newspapers such as *Le Monde* or *Liberation* or in television networks like TF1 is because these newspapers and television channels are owned by people who do not accept black tenants in houses that they own.

⁸⁷French Sociology Under Fire: A preliminary diagnosis of the November 2005 “urban riots”, by By Franck Poupeau, Jun 11, 2006

⁸⁸*Soccer Heroes Blame Social Injustice, November 10, 2005, The Times, London*

⁸⁹*Interview with Nadia Bey, Senior Journalist, Radio Orient in Paris (July 2009)*

⁹⁰*Le Monde– Interview with Audrey Pulver, (14 September 2009).*

⁹¹*Interview with Sabeg (August 2009)*

Walles Kotra, managing editor of France Ô, recounts an incident when he went to a dinner invitation in Paris where the social and media elites of France were all present. On being asked where he worked, Kotra said he worked as a manager of a television channel. To that, the owner of a French newspaper wanted to know which African country he worked in.⁹²

Kotra is the first black person to manage a television channel in France. The channel he runs, France Ô, is a French public television network featuring programming from the French overseas departments and collectivises in France. It is part of the France Télévisions group, and is available through cable, satellite, ADSL and the new digital terrestrial television system. It is not, however, available for free in main cities like Paris through the main cable networks that would have exposed the French population to the diversity in their multicoloured reality.

Minorities, Media and Colonial Exigencies

Throughout my research work in Paris, there was one overriding constant during all my interviews. Almost everyone I spoke to mentioned that France has taken refuge to the “principle of *laïcité*” every time doubts has been raised in the country’s ability to accept multiculturalism as a way of life in the multi-coloured France of today. The argument for a “color- and religion-blind” country under the larger banner of liberty, equality and fraternity has lost its relevance in the maze of some abstract universalism which was reflected in the French media’s interpretation of the recent *burqa* debate. Call it the great French illusion.

The media has always sought refuge - and continues to do so - in this quintessential French logic, evocative of political conceptions of culture in everyday discourse, which are notoriously famous for excluding any possibility of mediation and reconciliation between different cultures. Huntington’s much cited book, *The Clash of Civilizations* is a leading example of this discourse, in which the author perceives that the current world conflicts are indicative of his thesis that cultures are primordial and that differences between them are simply unbridgeable.⁹³

Feriel Balcadhi, junior producer at France Ô, a Tunisian born French, puts the media’s lack of understanding of the diversity issue in perspective:

What our media here does not understand is that a French young woman of North African origins may feel more at home in Paris or Marseilles than in Tunisie or Algiers. I am more comfortable here, I live like the French do, and my father back in Tunisia does not accept it.⁹⁴

But she is proud of her Tunisian roots and complains that the media’s ignorance and a lack of willingness to look inside the lives of the black and the Beur on a regular basis forces her, especially in a white newsroom, to overplay her North African-ness only to resist a culture of racism that excludes North Africans from French society.

Most black journalists blame it on the “white arrogance” in the newsrooms combined with the “fear of losing power” if integration happened in the true sense. To a large extent, this “fear” is perhaps rooted not only in a collective “colonial hangover” that France suffers from, but also in a present day reality that does not allow the French to come out of their past. The failure

⁹² Interview with Kotra (August 2009)

⁹³ Huntington. ‘*The Clash of Civilization*’, 1997.

⁹⁴ Interview with Feriel Balcadhi, Junior Producer at France Ô in Paris (July 2009)

of colonial distancing in France, which has been done quite effectively by former colonial powers like Great Britain and Portugal, leads to a fear that a new France will be less French and it arises from the fact that France still clings on to its several “Overseas Territories” or “Collectivities”. The French *départements d'outre-mer* and *territoires d'outre-mer* or DOM-TOM (Overseas Departments and Territories) consist broadly of French-administered territories outside the European continent. These territories have varying legal statuses and different levels of autonomy, although all (except the ones with no permanent inhabitants) have representation in the Parliament of France and the right to vote in the elections to the European Parliament. The DOM-TOM include island territories in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans, a territory on the South American coast, and several peripheral Antarctic islands as well as an extensive claim in Antarctica. 2,624,505 people were censused as living in the French DOM-TOM in January 2009.⁹⁵

One of these overseas territories is New Caledonia, where the indigenous population has been fighting for the right to self-determination, to decide whether they want to continue under French control. The French took control of New Caledonia in 1853 and subsequently declared it as a Penal Colony in 1863 before giving it full colonial status. It has remained with France ever since. Several revolts in New Caledonia over the years against the French presence have resulted in brutal repression and coercion, including an effort by France to force the indigenous population to fight on the frontlines of the First World War in Europe. A referendum was held in France in 1985 as a result of pressure from the United Nations, and 80 per cent of the French people voted for the right to self-determination for the people of New Caledonia. But repeated delaying tactics by successive French governments have ensured that the self-determination bill has still not been passed. However, it is an issue that hardly gains any mention in the French media.

But a small change, however token in nature, is indeed happening in the country's media. A media which labelled anyone discussing multiculturalism in the 1980s and 1990s in France as a “*communautariste*” (ethnic separatist) or as a destroyer of the Republic, does debate once in a while, about the *diversité* in today's France. Author Pierre Fréha, who has often worked among the diversity population in other countries including India, puts it in perspective:

The concept of ‘minorities’ here is almost a new one. Before the 1970s and 1980s it was not even an issue, though there were minorities. But politics ignored them. The Chinese, for instance, did not even try to speak out. Also the rise of Le Pen's ideas has had a paradoxical effect. Suddenly they were being talked about. It has helped the media realize that it could not continue without comment like that. So, Le Pen helped make things better, what a paradox! And the 2005 riots forced our inward looking society to look out of their windows. After all, Paris was burning then.⁹⁶

The beginning of “small” change in the media and its outlook in the aftermath of the 2005 riots was accelerated by the nudge from President Chirac and surveys like the one conducted by the daily newspaper *Le Parisien* in which 79 percent of the respondents agreed with Chirac's statement that “The media must better reflect the French reality of today.” In the newspaper *Le Monde*, which many believe played a leading role in advocating decolonisation, people like Phillipe Bernard played an important role to make the first serious recruitments of people from black or Beur backgrounds. Mustafa Kessous was one of the first Maghrebian journalists to be recruited at that time; in 2009, he became the first journalist from diversity to cover the Tour de

⁹⁵ <http://french.about.com/od/vocabulary/g/domtom.htm>

⁹⁶ *Interview with Fréha (July 2009)*

France, a typically “white and populist” event. As Professor Herbrun explains: “Something is moving in France, we are in a period of flux.”⁹⁷

The *Le Parisien*, which is one of the best-selling newspapers with a circulation of 500,000 daily in Paris and the suburbs, is also seen as a harbinger of this change with dedicated daily reporting on the minorities as well as on the *banlieues*. Every Wednesday, *Le Parisien* brings out a page dedicated to the minority community. The newspaper has also recruited the maximum number of journalists from the minority community since 2005.

But diversity in the media itself remains a big problem because the system will not lead minorities to study journalism in top French colleges. Patrik Lozes, who fights for “true *egalite*” in the system with his Conseil Representatif des Associations Noires (CRAN), says: “the glass ceiling in the French society prevents minority students from even aspiring to study for a white-collared job like the media.”⁹⁸ In addition to this, journalism schools are expensive, and most minority families find it beyond their means to afford these schools for their children.

TF1, the leading private-owned news network in France perceived to be close to President Sarkozy, started an *integration programme* for journalists in 2008, which recruited three young students from the minority community and gave them a two year training in journalism, with alternative two-weeks in journalism schools and two-weeks of practical training in TF1 spread over 24 months. Many suspect that this was done at the behest of President Sarkozy. One of the students selected in 2009 from the northern Paris suburb of Saint-Denis, home to the *Basilique Saint-Denis* (Basilica of Saint Denis) - the burial site of French monarchs – is Jean Marie Bagayoko. A French citizen of Malian descent, Bagayoko went to journalism school for one year but had to drop out as the course fees were expensive, before he was selected for TF1. He says:

I would have found it difficult to ever break into the big league if there was no integration programme. The media in France is run by the elite of the society. That’s a vicious cycle. Here in France, to become a journalist, you have to have a background of certain elite, white schools.⁹⁹

At the prestigious Ecole supérieure de journalisme (ESJ) in Lille, France, only one or two percent of the students come from a working class background; a small change that has happened in the last four years. In a bid to increase this proportion, the ESJ has launched a foundation course to help students from less financially sound backgrounds pass the entrance competition for French journalism schools. It has done this with Bondy Blog, a news website rooted in the *banlieues*, or suburbs. 20 students out of 200 applicants who represent French social diversity have been recruited, all of whom are grant holders from France’s National Education, coming from the North of France, the Paris area and the South of France.

Marc Capelle, the school’s managing director, emphasises that they come from a background of “social diversity”.

I am not talking about cultural diversity, though the two are often connected. Because of their social background, these young people thought they could never get into journalism schools. They thought it wasn’t for them, because they noticed the lack of diversity in journalism recruitment schools like ours, the ESJ. That’s why we launched the preparatory course, ‘Diversity’. The idea

⁹⁷ Interview with Herbrun (July 2009)

⁹⁸ Interview with Patrick Lozes, CRAN (July 2009)

⁹⁹ Interview with Jean Marie Bagayoko (July 2009)

was to widen recruitment in journalism schools and, on another level, to widen diversity in newsrooms.¹⁰⁰

Still, the coverage about minority issues mostly veers around the negative aspects of life in the *banlieues*, which more or less has come to represent the minority habitat. The media mostly loves to sensationalize the minority issues. According to Vicent Brossels, Asia head of *Reporters Sans Frontiers*, the coverage of people from the minorities has definitely increased but still “it mostly focuses on crime; we hardly see minority success stories or positive stories from the suburbs.”¹⁰¹

Rejane Ereau, bureau chief of *Respect* magazine, blames it on the lack of resources in the mainstream dailies and television channels:

They argue that they do not have the resources to go deeper into the topics. The journalists are also afraid to go into the suburbs, because the white French newsrooms are never at ease with the blacks and the beurs. In fact, in the history of the French media, the word ‘black’ only started appearing in print after the early 1990s. And then, in the middle of this decade, they started treating the suburbs as zoos, a spectacle of animals in front of cameras.¹⁰²

Indeed, the roots of such “deep-rooted media perceptions” lie in stereotyping the blacks and the beurs. Interestingly, William T. McLeod, editor of the *Collins Concise Dictionary*, has written that the term “stereotype” has a French root. It deals with the received common idea or convention that will “standardise image or conception of a type of a person.” The words 'Africa' and 'Black' have long been associated with barbarism and demeaning undertones that both insult and undermine black people's intelligence, their humanness and their humanity. Today, Bagayoko emphasizes that the Black community in France is “associated with sports, music, arts and sex”, but never with any intellectual white-collared jobs or positions of leadership, even in the sporting arena.

In 1998, when the French football team won the World Cup, aided by the likes of Algerian-born Zinedine Zidane, the son of a North African immigrant worker, and the Guadeloupe-born Lilian Thuram, the celebrations witnessed on the Champs-Élysées following the final victory over Brazil was hailed as a new dawn for France. The media looked at it as a manifestation of a new state of mind in the French society, labelling it as a victory for integration because the crowds, like the French football team, was made up of all sections of the French society. The newspapers interpreted it as if a nation had rediscovered its lost pride in the true values of its national motto - *liberté, égalité, fraternité* - calling it a victory for the non-aggressive and non-exclusive nationalism and the values of the “principle of laïcité.” Today, there's hardly a white face in the powerful French national football team, but all the glory has never resulted in a black becoming the coach of the national team or for that matter, of any of the top club teams in France.

Similarly, there are no black teachers in French schools apart from those in the suburbs, no black professors in the universities and the presence of black journalists in the media is till now an exception which has helped to prove the rule. Here the debate definitely veers off towards the argument that the minority communities need to create their own tool to represent diversity in the media. Ethnic media began making an appearance on the French market in the mid-1980s, when the extreme Right-wing of Le Pen was gaining momentum. But that mostly happened in the realm of radio. Unlike neighbouring Germany, France still does not have an

¹⁰⁰ Marc Capelle's interview with European Journalism centre (Sep 21, 2009)

¹⁰¹ Interview with Vicent Brossels (July 2009)

¹⁰² Interview with Ereau (July 2009)

ethnic television station or a daily newspaper for the diaspora. “We don’t have love stories, we don’t have our TV, we don’t have our media,” says Hortense Nouvion, founder and editor of *Cite Black*, a magazine that the African culture of France.¹⁰³ Martina Zimmerman argues that this is because “minorities here watch only mainstream media”. After all, they all speak the same language.

After coming back from reporting on Tour de France, Mustafa Kessous wrote how difficult it is to be an Beur journalist in France in his own newspaper *Le Monde*. “It is very difficult for people to imagine I can actually work for *Le Monde*,” Kessous writes.¹⁰⁴

The ethnic radio stations like Beur FM started gaining popularity during the 2005 riots. Beur FM, founded and run by Maghrebians themselves, started as a grassroots reaction to years of marginalization, racism, and misrepresentation in French mainstream media. Its mission is rather particularistic, but one of its goals is to facilitate the integration of its listeners into French society and help them reconcile the cultural contradictions they experience in that society. But Beur FM’s mission was in sharp contrast to Radio MultiKulti, a public station targeting Germans and all ethnic minorities in Berlin, first created as a public-service reaction following a mounting wave of xenophobia and violent attacks against foreigners in the Branderburg federal state, of which Berlin is the capital. One of its main concerns is to educate the German public and minorities on the benefits of a multicultural society while preserving the cultural identity of foreigners.

Clearly, with most of their programming in French, the minority radio in France has limited value in cultural retention but it serves as a morale-booster for a community long sidelined or over-looked in the social hierarchy. While the Diaspora media constitute a key site for identity formation in neighbouring Germany and even Britain to a great extent despite the outreach of a multi-coloured BBC, in France it fails to make an impact in the public discourse beyond the obvious fetish of hackneyed nostalgia (which in a way acts as a catalyst for essentialising their cultures) or uniting hybridized cultural pride. But radio stations like Beur FM and Tropic FM have been successful in keeping the minority issue alive in the public discourse, igniting the aspiration levels of the community in its perennial struggle to reconcile their use of ethnicity with an old “constant” of French political philosophy and culture: French republicanism. Rejane Ereau agrees the magazine she helped to start in 2002 to give a platform to the people of diversity in the French society, *Respect*, can never replace the mainstream in France; it can only survive simultaneously.

If it was Germany, the Turks would have produced such a magazine in Turkish, In Britain, South Asian minorities have created media outlets in their own language and have gained best-selling popularity, but in France we can only publish in French.¹⁰⁵

This is because a majority of the minority communities come from former French colonies or present French overseas territory and the main media is their first source of information.

Conclusion

¹⁰³ Interview with Nouvion (July 2009)

¹⁰⁴ http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2009/09/23/ca-fait-bien-longtemps-que-je-ne-prononce-plus-mon-prenom-quand-je-me-presente-au-telephone_1244095_3224.html

⁶² Interview with Ereau (July 2009)

France, with a larger proportion of non-European minorities than any of its neighbours, has been in denial of the increasingly multiethnic makeup of its society for decades. The disparity between the country's monochromatic image of itself and the multicoloured reality frustrates young citizens from non-European immigrant backgrounds and adds to their sense of alienation. The French society talks about equal opportunities as part of the public discourse which it has internalised to the point that it devaluates the American model of affirmative action. But the talk of equal opportunities remains confined within the discourse and the often "proud" rhetoric, and hardly gets translated into positive action in reality. But the first signs of change are also coming through the prism of the media.

As a man making the change in his journalism school, Marc Capelle feels that for long French media propagated an unilateral theory, which became manifested awkwardly during the riots of 2005 as the media fell victim to a state ideology that goes a long way to explaining not merely the origins of the riots but the absence of data that might have helped the authorities adopt policies that might have avoided the outbreaks, or even to react to them more effectively, and certainly to have a better idea of what the aftermath should call for. But France is going through a season of flux and Capelle wants the media to start reflecting the flux.

Journalists are, by definition, observers of reality in many different walks of life, so it's very awkward when people doing this job are predominantly from privileged backgrounds – middle managers, upper managers, professionals, etc. – and hence often ignorant about whole parts of French society. So, of course, young people from this diversity will bring something in their work.¹⁰⁶

The French media, which often mirrors an aggressively exclusivist society, needs to adhere to the national motto of the country after making an addition to the maxim of liberty, equality and fraternity. It should read: *Liberté, égalité, fraternité, diversité*. Then only will the society start accepting the new way of life: that France can no longer live in its white European identity.

Most often than not, France has failed to recognise its own crimes during the period of colonisation (which continues in the form of overseas territory even now) and the price for that has to be paid now through proper means of integration, if the French want to regain their moral right over the much-vaunted principle of *laïcité*. Because *laïcité* is proving to be as much a rigid ideology as any religion whose expression they fear. *Laïcité* needs to be synonymous to religious pluralism, which is a way for a society to cultivate acceptance of different faiths.

⁶³ Marc Capelle's interview with European Journalism centre (Sep 21, 20009)