Gendered television use of diaspora youth in Flanders (Northern Belgium): an audience research

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Abstract

This article focuses on the television use of second generation Turkish and Moroccan youth living in Flanders (Northern-Belgium) in the context of their everyday life and family dynamics. By means of four in-depth focus group interviews with twenty-four diaspora youngsters, TV use is discussed in terms of TV access, the social viewing context of the home, TV related communication and struggles over programme choices within diaspora families. This article particularly aims at a better understanding of how TV use articulates and shapes family relations, friendships and identities in the everyday life of diaspora adolescents, while paying special attention to gender differences. Results show remarkable gender differences in terms of private access, the social viewing context and power struggles concerning television viewing. Television use of diaspora adolescents articulates and shapes hybrid identities, friendships and family relations while it is also being defined by them.

Keywords: Television use, diaspora youth, gender, family dynamics, hybrid identities, qualitative audience research

INTRODUCTION

Family relations and media discourses are both very important socializing factors in the everyday life of young people. Since television is still the most prominent medium in the lives' of contemporary youth, it plays a significant role in the routine contacts between friends and family members (Livingstone 2002; Author et al 2011a and 2011b). Television use is always socially mediated, negotiated and structured. It takes place within the context of family life and peer group interactions and "while it helps to define those relationships, it is also defined by them" (De Block and Buckingham 2007:97). Scholars indicate that gender is a key determinant in studying the family contexts of television viewing and differential powers over remote controls (Morley 1988; Mackay and Ivey 2004). So far, little attention has been paid to family dynamics in relation to the television viewing context of second generation adolescents[1] within diaspora families. These adolescents are especially interesting to study because they are perceived as negotiating hybrid identities (Aksoy and Robins 2000; Barker 1997) and constructing 'new ethnicities'[2] (Hall 1992). Moreover, they are often rendered invisible in the public sphere. Following Barth (1969: 124), diaspora

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[1] Adolescence is *"a socially constructed and multiple identity whose relations to other social formations are constantly in flux"* (Austin & Willard, 1998:3). Second generation diaspora teenagers are persons who are born in Belgium and have the Belgian nationality, but of whom at least one of the parents or both grandparents were born in a non-European country.
[2] Notions of 'new ethnicities' and associated terms as hybridity challenge essentialized notions of ethnicity.

adolescents are conceptualized as "young people who construct different, partial and simultaneous worlds in which they move, their cultural construction of reality springs not from one source and is not of one place".

This article inquires into the television use of second generation diaspora teenagers (age 14-19) from Moroccan and Turkish[3] descent living in Flanders[4] (Northern Belgium). More specifically, it focuses on the actual uses of television as object in the context of everyday life, including the spatial and social contexts in which diaspora youth encounters television (cf. Siapera 2010). Since sociological research highlights the gender-specific education of diasporic adolescents in traditional family contexts, this article questions whether these gender-specific family dynamics have their outcomes in the television use of diaspora adolescents. By means of four in-depth focus group interviews with twenty-four diaspora youngsters, television use is discussed in terms of access and program preferences, social viewing, television related communication and power struggles over programme choices. This article particularly aims at a better understanding of how television use articulates and shapes family relations, friendships and identities in the everyday life of diaspora boys and girls.

By acknowledging that we cannot speak of 'one' diasporic group of 'Turks' or 'Moroccans' and by recognizing that individual authenticity must be preserved, this article does not strive to essentializing groups. Each respondent has to be considered within his or her own life story and specific context. Moreover, each diasporic situation is unique, distinct, has its own history[5] and cannot be generalized. Nevertheless, patterns of media use reflect the cultural capital of diverse community members more broadly.

GENDER RELATIONS IN THE DIASPORA

The Moroccan and Turkish diaspora in Belgium generally adhere to the Islamic faith[6] and are predominantly located in industrialized environments and large cities. Compared to Moroccans, Turkish diaspora are more affiliated with their family background because of a certain cultural reification that helps them maintain their language and cultural practices. They are accordingly a more 'closed community' (Lesthaeghe 2000). Both diasporic communities, however, still experience deep feelings of exclusion or confinement. Particularly young people and married women do so. This perception of being different and

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[3] Because they are the largest non-European diasporic groups in Belgium.
[4] Flanders is no independent state, but can be called a 'subnation' in the Belgian context because of its regional independence on a wide series of political, economical and cultural issues. Flanders has a surface area of 13,522 km² and a population of 5.9 million (60% of the Belgian population). The main language and cultural background of the southern part of Belgium, which is not included in this study, is French.
[5] Because of bilateral agreements due to which Moroccans participated in the defense of Belgium against the Nazi regime, large scale migration of Moroccans was initiated in the 1950s. The Turkish migration started in 1960. After 1974 up till now, an immigration stop was introduced, but still the population of Turks and Moroccans increased because of family reunions (Federal government, 2010).
[6] Islam cannot be considered as a monolithic belief system.

not comprehended results partly from traditional social norms imposed by parents, husbands and older generations, but also from structural limitations and lack of opportunities to make contacts in the community through education, work and leisure activities. Yet, research indicates that second- and third generation Belgian-Turks and Moroccans are becoming more involved with Belgian communities, whether this is through media consumption, linguistic skills, property owning, 'mixed' marriages and political representation (Lesthaeghe 2000; Zemni 2010).

European sociological studies on Moroccan and Turkish Muslim families in the Netherlands (Werdmölder 2005; Pels & de Haan 2003; Buitelaar 2006) and Belgium (Timmerman 2003; Clycq 2009; Zemni 2010) distinguish two hegemonic discourses[7]. The first is a religious discourse as scholars state that in the majority of families Islam plays a central role, although a great diversity in religious experiences and practices is distinguished (Mandaville 2001). The second dominant discourse for diasporic Turks and Moroccans is the traditional patriarchal family discourse. Traditional families are characterized by complimentary gender role divisions, as the male world is focused on the public sphere whereas the female world is focused on the private sphere of family and the internal community (Clycq 2009). Of course, boundaries between both worlds are not absolute. Central within this traditional patriarchal discourse is the feeling of honour which regulates male-female relations and helps maintaining traditional gender roles within family contexts. Noticeably, gender inequality in diaspora milieus is not a consequence of religion itself but of the hegemonic patriarchal discourse in which religious discourses are used to legitimate these inequalities.

For traditional diaspora parents, education principles[8] mainly aim at keeping children on the 'right path' and originate from the preservation of the honour of the family (Timmerman et al. 2008). Individual family members are held responsible for protecting family honour and therefore must avoid shame (Werdmölder 2005). For girls this implies 'chastity' and 'virginity' and for boys 'responsibility'. Hence, from childhood onwards, girls and boys are socialized in a gender specific way. Adolescent girls fulfil domestic tasks and have a restricted liberty of movement. Their life is for the most part situated within the private sphere, in which they take up caring roles. Boys, on the contrary, have a privileged position within the family. They are relieved from domestic duties and enjoy more autonomy than their sisters. Accordingly, they have negotiating power in the private as well as in the public sphere and in return are expected to act more responsibly (Clycq 2009). The traditional patriarchal discourse also implies that paternal authority is central in the organization of family structures. When children grow up to become adolescents, their relationship with the father becomes more distant and formal. From that moment on, education styles are more overtly gendered and based on principles of shame and respect which are almost always associated with sexuality

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[7] These scholars do not explicitly refer to 'discourse' but speak of two mainstays in society: Islam and the traditional family.
[8] Older siblings and other family members also play a role in the education of children. Likewise, peers are crucial in the socialization process (Werdmölder, 2005).

(Clycq 2009; Werdmölder 2005). Premarital sex is prohibited for both sexes, but in practice only girls should obey the rules whereas boys enjoy more sexual liberty. A girl's virginity[9] is the highest good to sustain family honour. As a result, different strategies are used to conserve and protect the virginity of adolescent girls (Buitelaar 2006). In terms of media use for instance, traditional diaspora parents experience overt sexual behaviour as threatening and fear the negative effects of sexual images on their children's behaviour (Clycq 2009; El Sghiar and d'Haenens 2011) . Female sexuality thus becomes an arena for power struggles within traditional patriarchal discourses (cf. infra).

TELEVISION USE OF DIASPORA YOUTH IN AN EVERYDAY LIFE CONTEXT
TV access, programme preferences and hybrid identities
Several scholars have charted the media use of adolescents of Turkish and Moroccan descent in Northern-Belgium[10]. These studies have shown that diasporic television use in terms of access and preferences is very similar to that of 'majority' teenagers and can be situated within a shared youth culture (Sinardet and Mortelmans 2006; d'Haenens, et al 2002; Saeys and Devroe 2010; Author et al 2011b). Age and life stage are therefore important determinants in explaining television use. Television is the preferred and dominant medium in the lives of adolescents and its use is mainly entertainment oriented (Author et al 2011a). Moreover, contemporary teenagers often posses their own television screen which is frequently referred to as a 'bedroom culture' (Clycq, et al. 2005; Livingstone 2007). However in terms of television ownership, gender differences are notable as boys appear to have more private possession of a television screen than girls. Author et at (2011b) found that second generation diaspora boys have the highest private access to television when compared with 'majority' and first generation diaspora youth (boys and girls alike). Hence, next to age and life stage, gender and 'diasporic generation' are important determinants for television use (cf. d'Haenens et al. 2002; Devroe et al. 2005). Clycq et al. (2005) indicate that, contrary to their first generation parents, second generation diaspora teenagers prefer Flemish cable channels over satellite channels. They favour the commercial channels *VT4*, *2BE* and *VTM* and the music channels *TMF* and *MTV* while the public broadcaster is the least popular (Author et al 2011b). This does however not imply that second generation adolescents do not watch satellite television as they appear to have a hybrid television use (Author et al 2011b; Nikunen 2008). Satellite channels such as *ATV*, *Kanal D* and *Show TV* for instance are recurrently mentioned (Author et al 2011b). Second generation diaspora teenagers say to watch satellite television for various reasons, such as affective and social motives, the acquisition of language and

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[9] It is important to acknowledge that while these religious connotations may have disappeared, the ideals of virginity and innocence in girls are still part of Western culture (Driscoll, 2002).
[10] In Belgium, no real particularistic media are available. Arabic and Turkish channels are available through satellite dish. Since the Moroccan population in Flanders mainly speaks Berber instead of Arabic, their amount of satellite channels to choose from is limited.

general knowledge of their country of origin (Clycq et al. 2005). Also in terms of favourite television programs, a hybrid use has been ascertained as youngsters prefer global[11] (mainly American) television programs that are available on Flemish cable as well as on satellite television channels (Sinardet and Mortelmans 2006; Author et al 2011b). This again reflects second generation diasporic youths' participation in a shared youth culture (De Block and Buckingham 2007). In addition, gender plays a significant role in the television programme choice as boys favour comedy and animation whereas girls more frequently report reality, drama and telenovelas. In the everyday lives of diaspora youngsters, satellite as well as cable television programs offer a broad range of symbolic resources that can be used to give meaning to everyday life experiences. Consequently, they can play a role in the negotiation of hybrid identities or in what Hall (1992:169) would call 'new ethnicities'. Previous findings seem to count for other European countries too (Tufte 2001; Milikowski 2000; Bonfadelli et al 2007).

Social viewing and TV talk

Next to media discourses, family relations are very important for the construction of identities in everyday life contexts (De Block and Buckingham 2007). Although private ownership of television screens in the bedroom of contemporary youth has increased, European research indicates that, despite this amplified privatisation of media ownership, today's youth still prefers to watch in the context of the family living room (Author, et al. 2011a; Livingstone 2002).Watching television is a family activity (Lull 1990:148) where 'the family' is a social setting with conjugal, parental and sibling relationships (Silverstone 1996). During this family time, when a TV set is literally the centre of attention in the family room, people come together and share interests, pleasures and conflicts. This increases the family's shared experiences, though television viewing is primarily considered to be mundane and unimportant (Mackay and Ivey 2004). Nonetheless, recent literature acknowledges that the family is changing (Pasquier 2001; Livingstone 2007). The plethora of different media in contemporary homes and the widespread ownership of multiple devices mean that much media consumption takes place individually or in smaller groups within the household (Mackay and Ivey 2004; Author, et al. 2011a).

To provide deeper insights into the spatial viewing context, a large scale survey assessed whether adolescents in Flanders watch television outside their familial contexts (Author et al. 2011a and 2011b). In general, age seems to the most important factor implying that the older a teenager gets, the more he or she watches television outside the home. Within the group of second generation diaspora teenagers, significant gender discrepancies were found. Boys more frequently watch television outside the home in the company of friends, which is rarely the case for girls. Within the social context of the home, second

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[11] American and 'global' television shows and series (e.g. *Project runway, teen mums, The Simpsons*…) are also available on for example Turkish commercial satellite channels such as Show TV.

generation diaspora youth indicates they most frequently watch television in the company of their siblings. In this context, several studies point at a generational divide between first generation parents who prefer watching satellite channels and their second generation children preferring global content (Clycq et al 2005; Tufte 2001; Georgiou 2006; Elias and Lemish 2008; Ogan 2001).

Media, and more specifically television, are often the subject of talk between parents and children. According to Pasquier et al. (1998: 511) *"talking about media is, of course, another important dimension of family dynamics around media."* Parents are more likely to converse about television when their children do not have private access to a television set (Bovill and Livingstone 2001). But, according to Livingstone (2002), the majority of teenagers mainly talks about television with their friends. Author et al (2011b) show that second generation diaspora teenagers talk considerably less about television with their father than first generation diaspora and 'majority' youth. Since diaspora teenagers watch television most frequently with their siblings and sometimes with their friends, it is commonsensical that they most often talk with these viewing partners (Author, et al 2011b). Buckingham (1993) highlights the specific importance of television related talk for diaspora youth: *"talk about television is a forum within which social behaviour is patrolled, identities are formed and social inclusion and exclusions are defined."* Television talk thus often creates a shared space within which social relations among peers and family members and identities are negotiated. For first and second generation diaspora youth, television can become a key factor in the way they engage with (new) places of residence and maintain contact with places where they (or their families) have lived before.

Power' struggles within the family

The domestic space also relates to differential powers of particular family members in relation to viewing choices. Family research on television use highlights explicit parental rules about the program content and time that their children are allowed to watch (Mackay and Ivey, 2004). Feminist (e.g. Oakley 1974) and other theorists (e.g. Bourdieu 1997) have drawn attention to the power struggles that go on in families, especially along gender and generation lines (Zontini 2010:823). Morley (1988) and Lull (1988) provide a picture of male dominance within the family in relation to television viewing, as fathers dominate in programme selection and in the use of the remote control device. Fathers use the remote for unnegotiated channel switching - that is, changing channels when they want to - without consulting other television watchers. Sons are active as well, using the remote control more often than their mothers or sisters. Mothers act as moral guardians of their household by downsizing the number of hours spent in front of the television for instance (Mackay and Ivey 2004).

So far, little attention has been paid to the centrality of power relations in television viewing behaviour within diaspora families from the perspective of youngsters themselves, except for research related to sexual content. Durham (2004) for instance, inquired into the sexual dynamics in relation to media of second generation diaspora girls from South Asian descent living in New York. She found that power relations set out the sexual dynamics of diaspora families. In line with the research of Gillespie (1995) and Maira (2002), she argues that because family honour depends on the chastity of daughters, sexual double standards are much more lenient on males than females. Furthermore, Durham asserts that the cultural constraints on female diaspora teenagers' lives - both the real restrictions imposed by their parents and brothers and the subtler cultural cues that tie female chastity to family honour – work to understand the issue of the authority over the remote control. Explicit sexual behaviour is perceived as threatening because of the possible negative effects of sexual images on adolescent behaviour. As a consequence, diaspora children will spontaneously switch channels when sexual content is shown and their parents are in the room (Clycq 2009; Werdmölder 2005). Family research among 25 Turkish and Moroccan families in Flanders indicates that parents mainly critique the explicit music videos available on music channels. In some families, parents then switch to teletext, while others code satellite channels in order to restrain access for their children (El Sghiar and d'Haenens 2011).

METHOD

To provide more insights into the everyday life television use and social viewing contexts of diaspora youngsters, four focus group interviews with second generation diaspora respondents of Turkish or Moroccan descent aged between 14 and 19 (N=24) were conducted. Each single-sex focus group (two female, two male) consisted of six to eight respondents (Morgan and Krueger 1999). Participants were friends or classmates and had known each other for years, which results in a natural peer group. Homogeneous groups in terms of gender were chosen in order to create a safe environment for the respondents (Montell 1999). The small group size allowed for group dynamics, intimacy among the participants and a degree of depth and complexity in the discussions. The group interviews took place in schools (without the presence of a teacher) or in youth clubs. These environments gave space for open and confidential discussions, especially on themes that potentially are sensitive in relation to parents and family (Banaji 2005). Each group conversation followed a semi-structured topic list, took approximately one hour and a half and commenced with questions concerning programme preferences. Then, discussions on social viewing, TV talk and power struggles related to television use were initiated. All conversations were audio-taped and transcribed at verbatim. The transcribed texts were then critically analyzed by means of

deductive, iterative thematic [12] coding. Since previous research indicated gender as an important determinant in television use and in explaining differential power over remote controls within family contexts, we will zoom in on gender differences within this group of second generation diaspora.

UNDERSTANDING TELEVISION USE: QUALITATIVE AUDIENCE RESEARCH
TV access and programme preferences

In line with quantitative research, the focus groups show a gendered private ownership of a television as only one female respondent has a private screen in her bedroom compared with 13 male respondents. Girls say they watch more often in the family context of the living room while boys have the privilege of watching in their own private space. *"I cannot have a television in my bedroom, so we mostly watch television with the whole family in the living room, though if I could choose I would prefer to watch alone!"* (female, age 15). *"I prefer watching in my room because you are alone, there is no noise, you can concentrate, you can watch other programmes than in the living room, you can switch channels when you want"* (male, age 16). Then again, this male private access does not imply solely individual watching behaviour as a lot of the boys say they like to share their private screen with a group of friends. In one focus group, an 18 years old male says: *"Every Saturday, we gather with nine guys in someone's bedroom to watch television series such as the Vampire Diaries"* (male, age 18). This double gender standard in terms of private television ownership reflects the divergence in socialization for male and female adolescents within traditional patriarchal family discourses. Of course, this difference in privatised television access also reflects more general tendencies within contemporary youth's television use (e.g. Author et al 2011a) and can also be explained by factors such as age, socio-economic status or educational level.

Our respondents articulate hybrid television preferences by stressing that their television use is threefold. Firstly, second generation diasporic television use is *'diasporic'* when using television products from Turkey or Morocco (e.g *Show TV, Kurtlar Vadisi*). Secondly, it is also *'national'(Belgian)'* (e.g. *VT4, 2BE, Komen Eten*) in the sense that watching Flemish television channels facilitates integration, peer relations and the negotiation of identities. But at the same time, their program preferences are *'global'* (e.g. MTV, The Simpsons, Vampire Diaries) when they access international youth culture (cf. De Block and Buckingham 2007).This shifting reflects teenagers' 'hybrid' identity position between at least two cultures (cf. Gillespie 1995; Nikunen 2008). Our respondents of course do not speak in terms of 'diasporic', 'national' or 'global' content. They talk about 'satellite' versus 'Belgian' or 'Flemish' television channels. Moreover, to them, everyday television use is ordinary and arbitrary. Respondents point at the practical advantages of the

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[12] Based on the themes in the topic list: TV access, spatial viewing, social viewing, TV talk and power struggles.

availability of both satellite and Belgian channels as this results in a broader 'television menu'. A fifteen year old female respondent argues: *"I prefer watching Belgian channels but I also watch Turkish channels. If I had to choose between Belgian or Turkish programmes, I couldn't because I need both. I want both because you have more choice"*. Nevertheless, respondents from Moroccan descent mention the fact that they have fewer options than their Turkish counterparts because no particularistic Moroccan channels are available whereas Turkish satellite channels are numerous. A 17-year old male with Turkish ancestors states *"I mainly watch Turkish channels like Show TV and ATV, but when I want to see football or cartoons, I watch 2BE."* On which a 16 year old male with Moroccan roots responds: *"I only watch series on VT4, 2BE, VTM...We (referring to Moroccan) don't have as much choice as the Turks here!"* Furthermore, from the focus group discussions it is clear that diasporic youngsters from Turkish descent say they are more affiliated with their backgrounds when compared to their friends from Moroccan descent (cf. Lesthaeghe 2000). Also, watching satellite channels seems important in terms of language acquisition, especially for our respondents with Turkish parents: *"Through watching Turkish television, you learn your mother tongue the way it is spoken in Turkey, because here they speak old fashioned Turkish. Now the Turks in Turkey speak contemporary Turkish, so when we go to Turkey, they immediately think we live in France! "* (female, age 15). Some respondents (mainly female) refer to social reasons for watching satellite television as these channels are mostly watched in the family context of the living room together with parents and/or siblings.

When talking about 'Belgian' television, respondents spontaneously start up a discussion on the representation of 'ethnic minorities' on television. Many youngsters feel strongly about misrepresentation as they condemn the negative stereotyping, the generalisations and lack of 'diasporic experts' and 'familiar faces and situations': *"they present a wrong image of us. I mean, a lot of Turks here are also doctors or lawyers! And Belgians can be thieves as well!"* (female, age 14). Particularly factual genres are subject of critique because they are perceived as having tangible consequences in everyday life. One girl for example mentions that two 'Belgian' girls from her class were prohibited by their parents to come to her birthday party because she lives in a 'Turkish' neighbourhood that had been linked to criminal facts in the news. A remarkable constant in the discourse concerning representation is the use of the construction 'we' versus 'the Belgians'. Respondents feel excluded and as such place themselves outside 'Belgian culture'. In contrast to 'Belgian' television, broadcasters from Germany and The Netherlands are perceived as good examples of showing great cultural diversity as they take part in positive representation of minorities: *"Dutch and German television programmes are much more 'social' towards migrants, but here in Belgium, they always want to show Belgian people!"* (male, age 18). Respondents have thought about alternatives in

order to make representations more positive. They suggest to show more 'real life situations of diasporic families', to stop using double standards or references to the 'ethnic background' and to invite more diaspora experts in factual genres.

Social viewing and TV talk

As was to be expected from the gendered private ownership of a television screen, gender differences in social viewing are noticeable. Watching television is a family activity, at least it is for girls. Female respondents are social viewers as they mainly watch in the family context of the living room, mostly in the company of their sister(s) and mother. Generally, satellite channels are watched in this family context because first generation parents tend to prefer these channels, although Belgian channels are watched together as well: *"I mostly watch television with my whole family...sometimes Turkish channels, other times Belgian channels, it depends on which programmes are on. But the Belgian news is mandatory!"* (female, age 15). *"My parents always watch Turkish channels and programmes, so I do too"* (female, age 19). Because social viewing very often leads to television related talk, girls say they frequently communicate about TV programmes and series at home. Parents are more likely to engage in conversations about television programs when their children have no private access (cf. Pasquier). Females are more communicative about television in the family context than males and state that TV talk is more common at home than among friends. A 14 year old female respondent argues: *"I talk more about television at home than at school because I watch the same programs as my sister and mother"* (female, age 14) *"At school, we only talk about television when there is nothing else to talk about. When you don't know what to say, then you start talking about TV"* (female, age 15). Nonetheless, girls find it annoying or difficult when they cannot participate in television related conversations among peers at school. That is why some female respondents would start watching series or shows on the condition that the series is appealing. Watching certain programmes is thus necessary in order to be able to participate in conversations among peers and to negotiate social identities:

> *"It is really annoying when the girls in my class talk about series that I don't watch because I am watching some other series at the same moment"* (female, age 14)
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> *"Yeah, like Gossip Girl, they always talk about it at school and then on Facebook, they have these pictures of the characters in which they tag you and you don't even know the people in those pictures ... really annoying! That is why I will start watching the series, but only if I like it myself"* (female, age 15).

Most common television-related topics among female diaspora girls are rumours about actors, characters in television series or funny or sensational things that happened: *"When I watch together with my sisters, we gossip about the actors!"* (female, age 14).

Boys tend to display an opposite communication pattern as they claim only talking about television with friends, and not with their parents. In this context, a lot of male respondents indicate the generational divide between themselves and their 'old fashioned' first generation parents:

> *"We don't talk about television with our parents, only with friends… You have to understand, we are all from the same age, our parents are a bit old fashioned, they don't understand us, we are from a modern time, you know?"* (male, age 18).

Some male respondents explicitly refer to their parents' channel and program choice as the main reason for their reluctance to converse about television: *"I don't talk with my parents about television because they don't watch Belgian channels that much…"* (male, 16 years). Alternatively, boys utter they do like to talk with friends about television series, especially when storylines are related to their own life experiences: *"When we see relationships on television and a girl cheats on her boyfriend, or some sensational stuff happens like parents going crazy, then we talk about it and think how we would react"* (male, age 19). Next to recognizable storylines, other frequent 'male' topics are sports, the news, poker games and beautiful actresses in television series. *"We sometimes talk about hot actresses (winks an eye), not negatively, but like 'ooh, that is a pretty girl, or that is a funny one"* (male, age 17). Most male respondents state they do not find it annoying when they are not able to participate in television-related conversations. Nevertheless, some of them admit to have started watching a television series because they heard friends talk about it.

Power struggles in diaspora families

Media use also reflects power struggles between parents and children and exposes differential powers of particular family members, also within diaspora families. The interviewees often spoke of their parents' authority over television viewing. In most families, fathers are described as holding the remote control for unnegotiated channel switching. Many respondents argue that this paternal authority is inherent to Moroccan and Turkish patriarchal culture and to traditional gender role divisions within their families. Their answers related to this topic are thus inscribed within traditional patriarchal family discourses.

> *"My father always decides what we are watching, he prefers Turkish channels"* (female, age 15).
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> *"My father has control over the remote, of course, who else?"* (male, age 17) *"My father decides, obviously"* (male, age 18) *"Why is that so 'obvious'?"* (moderator) *"We are Turkish, that is normal in our culture"* (male, age 16), *"It's the same for us as well (refers to Moroccan)"* (male, age 16) *"Not*

at my place... my father always watches upstairs, so that we have the television to ourselves downstairs" (male, age 16).

Overall, watching sexually explicit content is not allowed for male and female respondents, which does not imply that they do not secretly watch it when they get the chance. Interestingly, there is no uniform understanding among the adolescents of what constitutes 'sexual explicit content on TV'. When asked about their definitions of what is meant by a 'sexually explicit image', answers vary between *'the act of having sex, ' sexual intercourse with penetration', 'seeing naked intimate body parts (e.g. breasts)', 'people making out passionately', 'going further than just kissing', 'insinuation of people having sex (e.g. movements)',* etc. However, respondents agree that passionate kissing is not considered explicit because you see it on the street as well. Whether 'sexual' content is 'allowed' also depends on the length of the fragment at stake. In a male focus group, respondents concur that some music videos on music channels (e.g. <u>MTV, TMF</u>) can be categorized as explicit. For this 16 year old male respondent *"Video clips on <u>MTV</u> where women are dancing half naked, moving their bodies in awkward positions... "* are considered sexual explicit. In the female focus groups girls spontaneously assert that 'Belgian' channels broadcast more sexually explicit material than Turkish satellite channels. *"I think that Belgian channels show too much sex. I often think: 'are they doing it AGAIN?' and I switch to another programme. Sometimes I find it really annoying!"* (female, age 14).

In general, for both genders, watching sexual content is taboo when parents are present in the living room. Respondents argue that, when sex is shown, they automatically switch channels because they find it shameful and reprehensible towards their parents. That is, if the parents haven't already zapped channels themselves, switched to teletext pages or asked their children to close their eyes or to go to their bedrooms. When inquired about why sexual content is prohibited, some respondents answer that it goes against the essence of their cultural values and it is dishonourable and impolite. Others mention they cannot watch it because of their religion. Additionally, respondents emphasize parental fears that sexual images will provoke sexual transgression and misbehaviour, especially for girls. Television is recognized by diaspora teenagers and their parents as a convincing provider of sexual scripts. Because most boys enjoy the privilege of having their own television screen (cf. supra), parents' authority and control is less rigid than over girls without private screens. Moreover, the gender specific education of diaspora parents gives adolescent boys more freedom and responsibility than girls. Ruling out television series with sexual images is only one strategy traditional parents employ to conserve and protect their daughters' virginity and subsequently guard their family honour. All female respondents emphasize the importance of their virginity but attach a lot of meaning to the virginity of their future partner as well. However they acknowledge that male virginity can never be proven as opposed to their own. Some girls refer to their religious beliefs when

explaining and justifying their concern about virginity and their related refusal to have premarital sex. Religious discourses are thus used to legitimize a sexual double standard that is embedded within the hegemonic traditional patriarchal discourse of diaspora families.

> *"I would personally never have sex before marriage. For us, our virginity is really important, but not for you, for you guys, it doesn't really matter..."* (female, age 15) *"When you lose your virginity before marriage, men will not want you anymore. We keep our virginity, mainly because of our religion. Actually, boys have to be virgins as well, but the problem is that they cannot prove it"* (female, age 14). *"But I find it really important that my future husband is still a virgin!"* (female, age 15).

Next to the parents' authority over programme choice, an authority of brothers over their sisters' television behaviour was discovered as well. Most male respondents say they feel responsible for the watching behaviour of their sisters, and female participants utter they tolerate the authority of their brothers over the remote control when their parents are absent. Various male respondents point at the negative influence television programmes can have on their sisters' (sexual) behaviour. Some male respondents make an exception for older sisters whereas others say their responsibility does not change according to their sisters' age.

> *"When my parents aren't home and there is sex on television...with my brother, I would continue watching ..."*(male, age 16) *"Except with sisters! For my sisters, I would switch to a different channel because it would be too embarrassing!"* (male, 18 years) *"If I would walk into the room and my sisters were watching sexual content, then I would say: "Switch channels, now!" "Even if they are older?"* (moderator) *"Yes, switch channel!"* (male, age 17).

Despite the established consensus concerning boys' responsibility for their sisters' programme choice, some male respondents disagree and stress that their sisters can make their own choices:

> *"I don't agree, your sister should think about this herself, it is not our job to say what they have to do, they have to know it themselves!...Or you can watch together with her, then she should realize that she shouldn't watch those things. I would never oblige my sister to switch channels! It's just television!"* (male, age 16) *"Yeah, but whether it is a television series or not, it's the content, it can have a huge influence on them!"* (male, age 18) *"That's true, it can change their behaviour, they can start thinking differently about sex and might want to try it themselves!"* (male, age 16).

From these examples it becomes clear that female sexuality, female sexual behaviour and the virginity of daughters are embedded within traditional patriarchal discourses which highly value family honour. That is why apparently the rules regarding sexuality and remote control authority differ for boys and girls.

Adolescent diaspora boys are socialized into taking up responsibilities towards their sisters and younger brothers, also in terms of watching television.

CONCLUSION

Although the arguments raised here cannot be generalized given that each diasporic experience has its own uniqueness, this article shed light on the everyday life television use of second generation adolescents from Moroccan and Turkish backgrounds living in Flanders, with a particular emphasis on gender differences. More specifically, by studying the particular social contexts of diaspora youth, this paper extends the line of research that focuses upon family dynamics in relation to television viewing (e.g. Morley 1988; Mackay and Ivey 2004). In addition, this audience study enabled young people to find a voice and to talk about their experiences with television in their own terms. This is particularly important for groups, such as diaspora adolescents, who are often rendered invisible in the public sphere.

The focus group results show that second generation diaspora television use is clearly hybrid as it is 'diasporic', 'national' and 'global' at the same time. These multiple televised articulations help to construct multiple identities or 'new ethnicities' which enable youngsters to enjoy the best of different worlds (cf. Gillespie 1995; Hall 1992). Nonetheless, respondents from Turkish ancestors differ from Moroccan respondents as the former engage more in hybrid viewing than the latter, probably because of a higher availability of 'homeland' channels and affiliation with the home country. Furthermore, diaspora youngsters' television use appears to be primarily mundane, arbitrary and entertainment-oriented. It entails practical advantages because of the bigger spectrum of channels available. Some respondents point at the benefit of watching diasporic channels for learning the Turkish language or for maintaining family relations. In general, diaspora youth makes no distinction between content delivered by satellite or by cable broadcasters. Their 'pick and mix approach' needs to be situated within the context of global youth culture (cf. De Block and Buckingham 2007).

In line with Morley (1988) and Mackay and Ivey (2004), gender appeared to be a key determinant in studying family contexts of television viewing. While female social television use is mainly located in the private sphere of the home, males' social television use is more public, reflecting male autonomy and traditional gender role divisions that are inscribed into traditional patriarchal discourses. For girls, TV mainly articulates and shapes family relations whereas for boys, TV principally helps articulating and shaping friendships. Nevertheless, for both genders, watching certain programmes is necessary in order to fit in peer-initiated conversations and to construct social identities. Hence, talk about television is a means of

defining social inclusions and exclusions (cf. Buckingham 1993), which is also reflected in the discussions on (mis)representations of diaspora on television.

Television use involves power struggles between family members. Respondents referred to the paternal authority over the remote control as inherent to Moroccan and Turkish cultural heritage. Although no consensus was found regarding the definition of sexually explicit content, it is an unwritten rule that sex on television cannot be watched as a way of showing respect towards parents (cf. Durham 2004). In this context, some respondents bear on cultural values while others refer to religious values as possible reasons. Besides, parents recognize television as part of the social discourse on sexuality and point at the dangers for sexual transgression and misbehaviour, especially for girls since their virginity is crucial to maintain family honour. Next to paternal authority, adolescent boys are socialized into taking up responsibilities towards their sisters and younger brothers in terms of watching television. The issues of the authority over the remote control and the cultural constraints on female diaspora adolescents in terms of sexual content need to be situated within the context of traditional patriarchal discourses. Further research among diaspora parents for instance could provide complementary insights into these power struggles and family dynamics surrounding television.

To conclude, for second generation diaspora adolescents, television plays an important role in the everyday contacts between peers and family members. Family relations and friendships are mediated through the discussions that surround diasporic, national and global television. Television use of diaspora adolescents articulates and shapes hybrid identities, friendships and family relations while it is also being defined by them.

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