

Exploring Media Use among Migrant Families in Europe: Theoretical Foundations and Reflections

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Abstract

This article advocates the further development of research on media uses in the context of migrant families and reflects critically on the conceptual and theoretical framework for such research. First, the concept of *migrant* audiences is dissected. Why single out these particular audiences? We discuss the terms "migrants" and "immigrants", "ethnic minorities" and "diasporic audiences", focusing on issues of essentialism and pointing out the complexity of multiple, fluid, intersectional identifications and "super-diversity". Second, we discuss *the family* as a key context for media uses, both in general and specifically in relation to migrant audiences. Third, we further elaborate on two concepts which help us to theorise and research diasporic media uses. On the one hand, *hybridity* is often used to describe the transnational identification of (young) diasporic audiences, but there is a need for further empirical research on the various contexts shaping hybrid identity positions in Europe. On the other hand, *cosmopolitanism* could be a powerful framework for research, provided that we focus on concrete cosmopolitan competences in local, everyday and mediated social contexts. Overall, this paper makes a case for transnational, comparative research aiming to do justice to the diversity of diasporic family constellations and media uses across Europe.

Keywords: Media use, diaspora, migrants, hybridity, cosmopolitanism, families

Introduction

We are living in a time of social and media transformations. Socially, societies are becoming ever more global, with economics, politics and technologies transgressing and questioning national boundaries. People also increasingly cross national boundaries, forming diasporic movements and communities across the globe. The media facilitate these transgressions, with digitisation allowing content to travel and social contacts to be made instantaneously across the globe. These changes are well-documented and have been part of the media studies agenda for quite a while now. One major topic in this research is the impact of media changes on family life, particularly focusing on children and adolescents growing up in the "digital age". Another topic of interest is the media use of migrants, the group most directly experiencing the social changes mentioned above.

Family research and migration research each have an important, but mostly separate history. Media have gradually become a central topic on both research agendas, but audience research on migrant families is still relatively scarce. This also became clear in a research overview by Working Group 4 on "Audience Transformation and Social Integration" of the COST action *Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies* (www.cost-transforming-audiences.eu/). Reviewing 65 research projects from the 30 researchers involved, representing 15 European countries, we identified a great deal of work on families, adolescents and children, on the one hand, and a great deal on migrants and minorities, on the other hand, but relatively few projects covering both. Nevertheless, as we will discuss below, there are interesting connections to be made and in this article we advocate the further development of (preferably cross-European and comparative) research on migrant family media uses.

However, this is not a straightforward matter and there is a need for theoretical reflection on the concepts to be used in studying media use among migrant families. In this paper, we first dissect the concept of the "migrant" audience. Why should we single out these particular audiences? How do we best conceptualise and describe them? How do we study and do justice to their complexity and diversity? Secondly, we explore the specificities of and variations within migrant families, focusing in particular on media uses and generational differences. Finally, we reflect on two useful theoretical frameworks for the study of migrant families: the notion of "hybridity" and its connection to media use and identification; and the concept of "cosmopolitanism", discussing the importance of research on concrete cosmopolitan competences.

Although this is a review article, surveying and reflecting on the field without aiming to introduce new approaches, we do want to contribute to the existing literature by exploring the conditions for research on migrant family audiences. Throughout our account, we point to issues to be aware of, pitfalls to avoid and possible avenues for exploration in future research. In this way, we hope to contribute to the further development of an international research agenda on this topic.

Conceptualising Migrant Audiences

To start, one could ask: why focus in particular on migrant audiences? As indicated above, there is a clear social reason for doing so: migration is increasing and migrant groups are questioning the former self-evidence of "national" audiences. While national audiences have been studied extensively throughout the twentieth century, migrant audiences have only been added to the European research agenda in the past two decades. Since they are still generally underrepresented or absent in mainstream audience research (such as audience ratings), academic research should help to fill this gap in knowledge about a large and growing part of the population using different cultural capital in its media uses. At the same time, the need

to study these audiences does not imply that they are radically distinct or different, and ideally audience and family research as a whole should become more inclusive by incorporating more diversity. However, for the time being it is useful to isolate these audiences in order to question the theoretical assumption that people belong to clear national communities and that they have single, fixed cultural identities connected with particular media menus. Migrant audiences most clearly exemplify broader evolution, with media uses becoming more global and cultural identities becoming less stable, so focusing on these audiences helps us to see these changes more clearly.

A further reason for singling out these audiences is the great importance of the media in processes of movement, both geographically and socially: in a migration context, information from the "home country" and contact with distant relatives become important for the safeguarding of cultural heritage and family ties, while getting to know and establishing a connection with the "host country" and culture are equally important in a migratory context (Elias & Lemish, 2008, 2011). Elias and Lemish describe this as "integration inwards" (preserving unity within one's own community) and "integration outwards" (into the host society). Drawing on Putnam, other authors describe this as "bonding" (with the home country) and "bridging" (with the host country) social capital (e.g. Peeters & d'Haenens, 2005). Although these accounts set up dichotomies that are not as clear-cut in reality (as we will discuss further below), they do illustrate the particular importance of media and communication for migrant audiences. The increasing mobility and transnationality of audiences is also reflected in the emerging cross-border media flows that shape the understanding of national public spheres.

So far, we have used the notion of *migrants*, which refers to processes of movement across national boundaries, but this is only one among many possible terms. Across Europe, different terms have been introduced and subsequently replaced by new ones in attempts to remedy their shortcomings. If we consider the definition in recent migration studies of migration as a dynamic process characterised by evolving migration patterns, temporary and seasonal migration, circular or commuting migration, transit migration and return migration, then migrants is the appropriate term. However, if we are referring to a permanent stay, to international migrants permanently living in a country, these are better defined as *immigrants*.

The word immigrant evokes images of permanent rupture, of the uprooted, the abandonment of old patterns and the painful learning of a new language and culture. Now, a new kind of migrating population is emerging, composed of those whose networks, activities and patterns of life encompass both their host and home societies. Their lives cut across national boundaries and bring two societies into a single social field. (Glick-Schiller, Basch & Blanc-Szanton, 1992, p.1)

As a consequence, the term "migrants", strictly speaking, only refers to "first generation" migrants, and does not include their children or grandchildren. "Immigrants" refers to a more permanent situation, but use of this term, like that of the term "migrants", may strengthen the process of othering and exclusion (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998). Additionally, in some circles these terms have acquired pejorative connotations and alternatives have been introduced. One of them is *ethnic minorities*, which also incorporates later generations (a problematic concept, as we will discuss further below) and stresses the shared ethnic background of groups of migrants.

Ethnicity, as opposed to race, refers not to biological, but to social and cultural characteristics (Haynes, 2007). Therefore in principle it is more flexible, but in practice it is often used as a fixed and primordial characteristic of groups, a form of "new racism" (Cottle, 2000). Essentialism, which is a major problem across the social sciences, is also deep-rooted here, since ethnicity is often considered as a factor explaining and even determining behaviour, including media use (Harindranath, 2005). As stated by Gillespie (1995) in her seminal work on media and ethnicity, the conflation of race, nation and culture in ethnicity should be deconstructed in order to avoid essentialism, reductionism, absolutism and determinism. A related drawback to thinking in terms of audiences as ethnic groups is the assumption of clear boundaries and single ethnic identities. Particularly among migrant groups, cultural identities are multiple and shifting, and include connections with different communities. As an alternative to such essentialised visions, Cottle proposes:

The complexities and contestation of multiple "subject positions" or "positionalities" discursively mobilized within and through "new ethnicities", hybrid cultures and contested cultural spaces would rather suggest a more fluid and complex set of cultural responses within processes of media reception and identity formation. (Cottle, 2000, p. 26)

This complexity is a central point of interest in research on *diasporic audiences*, the key term now used to discuss audiences with a history of migration which destabilise assumptions of the national boundedness of ethnic experience (Sreberny, 2000).

In her key work *Diaspora, Identity and the Media*, Georgiou (2006) discusses identity and community construction across boundaries, focusing on people who experience deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation and who develop and sustain identities and social relations within and across nation-states (2006, p. 2). Thus, they connect the local and the global and question the self-evidence of the national and "methodological nationalism", which takes the national as the unquestioned basis for research. Nowadays, electronic and digital media (radio, television and the internet) in particular play an important role in this process, since they bring the distant culture close. As an essential ingredient of everyday life, they allow diasporic people to appropriate shared representations, constructing codes of communication

and crossing boundaries between Us and the Others. The imaginative (co-)presence of the diasporic community thus "becomes the basis for constructing a multilayered belonging in an imagined community that crosses geographical boundaries" (Georgiou, 2006, p. 22).

As noted by Georgiou, diaspora – like identity and ethnicity and probably every social category or concept – may carry essentialist overtones. It is important not to fix or romanticise transnational communities, but rather we should try to understand the interplay of continuity and change and the growing complexity and multiplicity of identities and communities (2006, pp. 49-58). There are no homogeneous communities or singular identities, and "diasporic identities are always positioned and dialectically shaped in relation to other identities, such as gender, age, class, generation and sexuality." (Georgiou, 2006 p. 58) In short, we should avoid considering diasporic communities as homogeneous, assuming a singular and common – essential – identity:

Essentialisms, which consider ethnicity and diaspora as being either bounded within inescapable dependence upon a distant homeland or doomed to fade out through inevitable assimilation, fail to grasp the negotiations, conflicts and unease of the diasporic condition in relation to both the country of origin and the country of settlement. (Georgiou, 2006, p. 154).

Similarly, Gillespie (1995, p. 11) describes identity not as essence but as positioning. Therefore, in future research it will be important not to focus on audiences as fixed ethnic groups, but rather to chart the multiple and overlapping identifications within the broad and diverse category of "diasporic families". Elsewhere, Gillespie gives an exemplary description of the process:

Our understanding of the dynamics of identities and identifications is based on qualitative data and premised on the assumption that all social beings have multiple, overlapping axes of identifications. Particular forms of identifications may be accentuated in some context but recede in others. Identifications are shifting but not infinitely fluid. They are strategically mobilized in different contexts and in response to different events. No one social category (for example, ethnicity of religion) defines a person's social identity. (Gillespie, 2007, p. 285)

In a similar vein, Ross and Playdon (2001, p. xix) conclude that "forms of ethnic identity and identification are not fixed and immutable but fluid and dynamic, changing within and between communities, generations and genders." This connects with current thinking on the intersectionality of identities, considering the combination of socially constructed classifications in the formation of multiple and intersecting identities (Lind, 2004).

The observations above are also reminiscent of Vertovec's (2007) concept of "super-diversity", referring to the increasing diversity of migrant groups, which cannot be described solely in terms of ethnicity. This presents a true challenge for future empirical, qualitative research, for which Vertovec recommends that we

draw inspiration from anthropological analysis of the "local micropolitics of everyday interaction" (2007, p. 1045). This is akin to Gillespie's (2007) use of collaborative media ethnography, combining interviews with participant observation. In order to adequately include super-diversity in audience research, it is important to try and cover the diversity of the diasporic population, incorporating families from different national origins but, within those, also of different (including smaller) ethnic groups. Because socio-economic status and level of education are often found to be crucial background variables for migrant media use (see e.g. Devroe, Driesen & Saeys, 2005; Sinardet & Mortelmans, 2006), it is also important to include people with varied socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Finally, it is important to take into account other relevant variables such as gender, language and technological skills, religious attachment etc. – thus trying to grasp the intersectionality of identifications in relation to diasporic media use.

Furthermore, the media followed by diasporic audiences are not necessarily directly connected with their home country, but are part of the transnational media connected to a larger language area (for example Arabic, Russian), rather than to a particular nation (Nikunen, 2011). The emergence of such transnational media illustrates the ways in which media companies, with the aid of new technology, create cross-border spaces of identity and citizenship that surpass the traditional boundaries of the nation. Therefore, besides considering the complexity of diasporic identifications among migrant families, we should also consider the multiplicity of national, "ethnic", transnational and global media on their media menus.

Studying Migrant and Diasporic Families

Turning from the broader discussion of diasporic audiences to diasporic families as audiences, and drawing on Georgiou's work, we can note a paradox: "the family is the assumed context in most of the migrant and diasporic media consumption research but it is rarely discussed as a significant analytical category per se" (Georgiou, 2010, p. 5). More generally, even though migration is currently one of the major sources of social change in Europe and migrants are becoming increasingly visible and significant actors in our societies, migrant families and their needs have not been the explicit object of many European studies so far (Wall et al., 2010). Nevertheless, as discussed by Jokinen and Kuronen (2011, p. 61), "migrant families are an important group when we discuss social and economic conditions of European families", since they may partially represent the solution to problems such as low demographic growth and ageing.

Considering the increasing importance of migrant families in our society, we want to reflect on the usefulness of taking the family as a unit of analysis in exploring media use among diasporic audiences. First of all, particularly in a migratory context, the close social circle of the family is an important point of support and socialisation (Georgiou, 2010). Moreover, within the European context migrants generally, but

not always, travel from more traditional societies with strong family values into more individualistic societies. Compared with ethnic majority audiences, therefore, they more often live together with their extended family and invest in close family ties. On the other hand, migration often breaks down former family structures and forces members of the same family to live apart and maintain relations across distances, where again transnational media and communications play an important role (Georgiou, 2010).

The importance of families in general and migrant families in particular is also underlined by the final objective of FAMILYPLATFORM, a project which aimed to launch "a European agenda for research on the family, to enable policy makers and others to cope with the challenges facing families in Europe" (Uhlendorff et al., 2011). Among other issues, the relation between families and media, communication and information technologies was considered. With reference to studies of media and migrant families, what emerged again is that the family is often implied but rarely explicitly analysed (Livingstone & Das, 2010). Moreover, on the one hand, there are intergenerational tensions around the use of media (especially television), but, on the other hand, shared television viewing provides an occasion for family bonding and communication. Besides the use of media as a way to structure family life, attention was also drawn to media availability: this requires resources, and may cause social differences and contribute to social inequality. What emerges is "a deficit in comparative research on the use of media in families. There is a need for more in-depth data" (Rupp et al., 2011, p. 354), collected among differentiated age groups and useful for showing differences in media literacy and consumption between social classes, ethnicities and different cultures.

When considering migrant families, we need to be aware of their diversity and the difficulty of creating a typology. The one suggested by Kofman (2004) differentiates between three types of migrant families: 1) family reunification; 2) family formation or marriage migration; 3) whole family migration. These three types of family have an impact both on family characteristics and on individuals' characteristics, leading to different traits and roles in the family and in society. These three types also imply different reasons for migration and different "generations" of migrants, e.g. first and second generation migrants, which experience the process of migration and life in a new country in dissimilar ways. Because of the lack of research on migrant families, little is known about migrant family structure (e.g. family forms or intergenerational relationships), whether it resembles those of the home or host country, and whether this structure changes with the migration generations (Rupp et al., 2011, p. 348). Also, when considering these families it is important to consider not only the traditional nuclear family, but also the extended family (which may or may not belong to the same household) and alternative family arrangements (such as single parents, gay and lesbian couples etc.).

Most research on diasporic audiences discloses important differences between *generations* of migrants. In particular, the first generation is mostly closely connected with the home country, also in terms of media use, which allows them to keep in touch and also to deal with the process of de- and re-territorialisation (Georgiou, 2006, p. 61). Later generations are generally less closely connected with the homeland and tend to have mastered the language of the host country better than their (grand-)parents, so they mostly use the media of the host country more extensively (Peeters & d'Haenens, 2005; Elias & Lemish, 2008). Therefore, it would be useful to incorporate these different generations more systematically in future research and to compare them. However, while these generational differences may be valid to some extent, research may emphasise them too much at the cost of essentialising and ethnicising migrant viewing in the case of the so-called first generation and romanticising hybrid identity positions in the case of later generations. Previous research has pointed out the diversity of media use among the same generation and across the same diasporic group (Alghasi, 2009) and this diversity is something we should not forget while researching families. Therefore, generations and differences between them should not be assumed or taken for granted, but rather understood as a heuristic tool to be explored.

Looking at families also allows research to incorporate people of different ages and therefore of different generations in media terms. As argued by Aroldi and Colombo (2007), generational belonging may well constitute a sort of "subculture" defining media diets, frames of interpretation of media texts and predispositions to the domestication of communication technologies. Generations are not determined by age in itself, but rather by membership of a cohort: having the same age at the same time and sharing particular media technologies and contents, particularly in childhood and adolescence. Most visible, of course, is the increased importance of digital and web-related media and the decreased importance of television for the younger generation. For this reason, in future research it would be good to incorporate different media generations by interviewing diasporic youngsters and also their parents and (if possible) their grandparents. This is not to assume that they live in different worlds, for, as Aroldi and Colombo (2007) highlight, the family plays an important role in socialisation and intergenerational exchanges. But, as noted by Elias and Lemish (2008), the household is also the arena for intergenerational conflicts, where parents often want to safeguard traditional culture and youngsters want to integrate into (global) youth culture. Therefore, it seems relevant to make not only vertical comparisons between children and their parents, but also horizontal comparisons with members of the same generation. The expectation here, as already suggested by many, is that younger people of different cultural backgrounds will share global (often American) media culture (e.g. Tufte, 2001; Elias & Lemish, 2008; Nikunen, 2008; Dhoest, 2009).

Media are an important element in the life of families. In the last three decades, research on media use in the household context has highlighted the importance of the media in structuring family life and in building

internal and external relationships, in articulating private and public life (e.g. the "domestication approach" elaborated by Roger Silverstone and colleagues since the 1990s). Considering migrant families, it is interesting to notice that media are not only used in order to seek ontological security in a foreign cultural environment, and they "are not only domesticated in a given home (based on a moral economy), but that the [media] technologies themselves are used in a process of taming and *producing* locality, and thus being crucial in the process of forming a diasporic identity and of *domesticating home*" (Sletteemås, 2006, p. 1). Therefore, it is important to study the interplay of multiple identifications and media uses in the home context, taking into consideration the "household" as a unit of analysis, which includes family members and/or people living under the same roof, and, in a broader sense of the term, also the house as a space, the persons inside it and the relationship between those persons.

Hybrid Identifications and Cosmopolitanism Competences

Having explored the importance and complexity of studying migrant families as audiences, in this last section we want to reflect on theoretical frameworks which allow us to conceptualise and grasp (at least some of) the intricacies of diasporic family media use. Diasporas of today are built on the existence of transnational communities that are characterised by dense, often multilocal social ties. This movement across cultures and its implications for identity have been discussed in terms of cosmopolitanism, hybridity, third space, transculturalisation and bricolage. These concepts have been applied to diasporic audiences in different ways.

Hybridity is extensively used to describe diasporic audiences and their identity positions. Much of the literature on diasporic use of online media, in particular, draws on discussions of hybridity and identity, exploring the ways in which identities are negotiated and created within these transnational spaces (Mitra, 1997; Naficy, 1999; Mandaville, 2003; Bailey et al., 2008; Ibrahim, 2008; Fogt & Sandvik, 2008). Such research, focusing on various diasporic online communities and uses of new media in everyday life, is increasingly popular.

The concepts of hybridity and of the "third space" (Bhabha, 1990) refer to a position that emerges in the mixture of cultures and often lay the ground for theorising migrant experience and especially migrant youth identities. Thus the term third space refers to the articulation of two or more cultures, a new emerging space of identity. This identity position related to the "third space" is discussed in terms of both-and-also, as well as and/and rather than either/or (Beck, 2006). Hybrid identity is then born in the mixture of cultures and draws from a series of identifications operating simultaneously (Ibrahim, 2008). The media are considered as a space of communication where identity is continuously constructed and reimagined.

Research has recognised specific spaces related to new digital technology, such as Internet discussion forums, websites and blogs that allow, represent and reflect these hybrid identities (Mandaville, 2003; McGinnis et al., 2007; Ibrahim, 2008).

Hybridity is particularly associated with transnational youth and the so-called second generation within which the facets of identity are drawn from more than one cultural tradition. In this context citizenship, nationality and belonging are more or less self-made and voluntary, formed through various mediated communities. These formulations highlight spaces of experience that cross the traditional frames of identity formation such as the nation-state. The third space and hybrid identity positions are often discussed in terms of empowerment and possibility. Bhabha, for example, describes the third space as something that allows the emergence of other positions and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives (1990, p. 211).

As David Morley (2000, p. 237) argues "we must distinguish between different forms and modalities of hybridity in different contexts, most especially in relation to the degree of choice or control that people have over their living circumstances." There is a clear need for research that explores more closely the historical, material process of hybridity and the various power relations defining and shaping the hybrid identity position. Instead of simply celebrating the emergence of hybridity and the "third space", research needs to explore various and complex power relations in everyday lives in order to achieve a more profound understanding of the migrant experience. Moreover, research should not focus only on youth and online media, but extend its scope to other, perhaps less trendy, audience groups of various media in order to highlight the variety of hybrid identity positions and different conditions of cosmopolitanism. Therefore, studying diasporic families can highlight the complexity of media experiences and pinpoint audiences that otherwise remain out of reach of traditional audience research.

Whereas hybridity is commonly used to describe the identity positions allowed and furthered by the media, *cosmopolitanism*, although theoretically connected with mobility and often used as a catch word, is not extensively used as a key concept in research on migratory or diasporic audiences. One reason for this may lie in the abstract nature of cosmopolitan theory that derives from the Kantian universal law of humanity. As argued by David Harvey (2000), cosmopolitanism can be understood as a universal ethos and a mindset connected with a sense of global citizenship. However, there is a gap between rather abstract cosmopolitanism based on the idea of universal humanity and the local particular versions of multiculturalism and diasporic lives, as Harvey eloquently points out. He goes on to argue that "those committed to traditional rationality have vested interests in suppressing or evading" other more concrete - in his words geographical - questions, perhaps because they are too banal or complex to grasp in a theory (Harvey, 2000, p. 539).

Following these lines, Craig Calhoun (2010) calls for a move away from a Western-centred and elitist form of cosmopolitan theory. For Calhoun, cosmopolitan theory, when presented as global citizenship, reflects an elite perspective on the world and echoes the colonial tones of civilising missions. The concept of cosmopolitanism rests on the notion of comfortable movement across different places in the world. It is exactly this comfortableness that makes cosmopolitanism blind to what Doreen Massey (1993) points to as power-geometry – the inequalities in people's access and practices of movement. Movement to another culture is not a matter of choice for everyone, nor is it easy and available for everyone, and this is something not adequately recognised in cosmopolitan theory. In other terms, cosmopolitanism offers an abstract and Western-centred idea of global citizenship, but little to connect it with the everyday lives of today's migrants and people who are living transnational lives.

This criticism is also recognised by Beck, whose work on risk society and modernity (1992; 2006) is significant for the cosmopolitan theory connected with mobility. Beck and Grande (2010) later attempted to reformulate cosmopolitanist theory towards a more particular, plural and global understanding of cosmopolitanism in the context of second modernity.

Calhoun agrees that the concept of cosmopolitanism has contributed to the understanding of citizenship as multiple and transnational. However, for him, cosmopolitanism offers too vague a description of the alternatives in political life. Striving to connect cosmopolitanism with citizenship, Calhoun highlights a need to further explore the important potential of multiple and hybrid identities for political participation (2008). In terms of audience research, this means that media use should also be investigated as a practice connected with the formation of citizenship.

As a response to this, researchers have discussed cosmopolitanism as local, rooted, particular (Glick-Schiller et al., 2011; Christensen 2012), everyday (Ang et al., 2002), vernacular (Lamont & Akasrtova, 2002) and ordinary (Werbner, 2008). Glick-Schiller, Darieva and Gruner-Dominic (2011) introduce, in the context of global migration, the notion of cosmopolitan sociability, which consists of forms of competence based on creating social relations with openness to the world and openness to difference. As pointed out by Glick-Schiller et al. (2011), the research on impoverished religious migrants in Christian communities has shown how cosmopolitan sociability is a question of simultaneous openness and boundary maintenance. The research also shows that cosmopolitanism is often created in the context of inequality and racialised hierarchies. However, while Glick-Schiller et al. (2011) are interested in researching how the mobility of non-elite people facilitates modes of openness, they point out that experiences of travel and migration do not necessarily or automatically produce a cosmopolitan sense of openness to the world and to difference. Glick-Schiller et al. (2011) understand cosmopolitanism as a set of competences acquired in particular contexts of migratory lives. In their discussion, the aspects of cosmopolitanism as universal humanity and

cosmopolitanism emerging in mobility come together. As argued by Glick-Schiller et al., a cosmopolitan view goes beyond the ethnic and racial identity of one particular diasporic group and instead explores the common aspirations, understandings and sensibilities shared with different people from different backgrounds. In this way their cosmopolitan sociability comes close to the transnational sensibility introduced by Robins and Aksoy (2005). However, Robins and Aksoy connect the term with transnational media use, while Glick-Schiller et al. examine cosmopolitan sociability in the everyday life of various migrant communities.

Clearly, we should not take the concepts of cosmopolitanism and hybridity as usable to describe every diasporic situation, but should critically discuss the particular contexts of identity formation and media use that may enhance or further a sense of openness and competence to move across cultural boundaries. What we need are more particular and local interpretations of media use in diasporic contexts in order to highlight the complexity of such participatory practices. Audience research needs to shed light on the social and political contexts of media production and reception, also pointing out the inequalities and racialised hierarchies in these contexts. Moreover, it is necessary to examine not only how particular contexts of transnational media use allow and further modes of openness, but also how connections made through the media affect the political participation and formations of (multiple) citizenship of various diasporic audiences.

Cosmopolitan theory has a lot to offer research on migrant and diasporic audiences, in particular concerning the ways in which media use connects with particular cosmopolitan competences: the ability to move across cultures, the sense of openness and understanding of difference. Moreover, research on particular and local versions of cosmopolitanism among diasporic audiences in Europe can shed light on the variety of mediated contexts where different kinds of experiences of cosmopolitanism emerge. Cosmopolitanism understood in this way can offer a framework for comparative audience research aimed at highlighting different degrees and shapes of cosmopolitanism in Europe.

Conclusion

After reviewing research projects and literature across Europe, we have come to the conclusion that more research on media use in migrant families is needed in order to understand the complexity of European audiences and the shifts that are taking place in the European mediascape.¹ Such research could help us to understand the needs of different audiences, as well as the media policies necessary for reaching these

¹ As mentioned in the introduction, this paper is based on the activities of the Working Group on "Audience transformation and social integration" of COST Action IS0906, *Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies*.

audiences. Moreover, it could offer insight on the larger-scale changes appearing among audience structures and within media use across Europe.

However, setting up such research entails various risks of essentialising, isolating and simplifying migrant audiences and should not be embarked upon naively. Therefore, the aim of this article was to highlight the problems and lessons learned from previous research and to carefully consider options for future research in this field. We have identified the complexity, hybridity and increasing diversity of migrant groups that needs to be recognised. We have stressed the importance of the family as a context, arguing that it is important to move beyond individualistic accounts of diasporic media use and pointing out the multiple, transnational connections within and between families. Processes of identity construction and identification, rather than fixed identities, are the focus of such an endeavour (El Sghiar, 2011; Silva, 2010). Moreover, recent technological media development, with new participatory practices, enhances the conditions for hybridity and transnational experience in a way that may challenge the traditional understanding of political engagement and citizenship. Clearly these shifts require more detailed research on media use in diasporic contexts.

In terms of theoretical framework, we found that, while cosmopolitanism is often used to refer to mobility and audiences, it is rarely explored in the context of migrant audiences. As indicated by Georgiou, "diasporas are cosmopolitans of a different kind to the high-flying, jet-setting cosmopolitans in control of global capital" (2006, p. 152). Clearly, we need to explore the conditions of cosmopolitanism and the ways in which cosmopolitan competences, the ability to move across cultures and the sense of openness to the world, may be connected to media use and shaped by different political and social contexts. We need to explore the variety, value and impact of local, everyday "cosmopolitan competences" particularly in relation to media use.

Comparative research seems particularly suited to this aim: not considering national contexts as self-evident "imagined communities", but recognising the transnational dimensions that cut across these national boundaries and thus do not remain caught in the categories of the national (see also Robins & Aksoy, 2001). In view of the complexity sketched above, comparative research may be useful for different reasons. First, it could lead to broader insights, moving beyond the dominant model of studies of one or a few migrant groups in one particular national context. Second, using similar concepts and methods across Europe could lead to more comparable findings, as opposed to the idiosyncrasies and methodological diversity of current research in the field. Thirdly, it could help to actually make research on transnational media uses transnational in itself, no longer assuming that national boundaries are the main factor to be considered. In this sense, such research should not just compare nations, but rather make multiple comparisons across countries, ethnic groups, family constellations, generations etc.

Reviewing the recommendations made throughout our account, the main conclusion may be that it is necessary to open up future research to the radical diversity of reality: to study not only "hybrid" diasporic youth, but also older generations and their interconnections in the family context; not only to study ICT and digital media, but to continue considering all media and communication uses and connections; not only to focus on one kind of (traditional, nuclear) family, but to be open to all kinds of variations and constellations; not only to focus on one migrant group in a single country, but to consider multiple groups and their transnational connections. Furthermore, future research should not only focus on ethnicity, but consider the intersection of multiple cultural and other identifications. It should also broaden the focus from "classical" groups of migrants (labour migration from outside Europe) to consider the radical diversity of migration patterns, including intra-European migration, temporary migration, separated transnational families, highly educated and/or high income migrants etc. This is not to say that all research in this field should consider all these dimensions, which would be hard to accomplish, but it would be good to try and think outside well-defined categories and to be more open to the diversity of diasporic audiences.

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