

Migrant News Seekers: News media use and evaluation by Moroccan and Turkish adolescents in Flanders.

Noël Clycq

Policy Research Centre on Equal Opportunities, University Antwerp, Belgium

Abstract

This article empirically examines the use and evaluation of television news by young 'news seekers' of Moroccan and Turkish origin. The main research questions are: Do 'migrant' adolescents, between 18 and 28 years, consult the Flemish television news? And, if so, how do they evaluate these broadcastings? By means of in-depth interviewing we tried, in this qualitative study, to gain understanding in their behaviour and attitudes towards Flemish television news. The results show that respondents often do consult the Flemish news media, in particular the two main Flemish broadcasting organisations, VTM (commercial television) and VRT (state television). Satellite television is less popular among our respondents but nevertheless they sometimes consult these channels for a *second opinion*. Although the consumption of Flemish television news is high, the respondents ventilated a few critical remarks. Mainly the representation of ethnic minorities and of the Islam was a cause of concern for our respondents.

Introduction

In 2002 the former Flemish Minister of Equal Opportunities launched the idea of setting up a television channel for (some) ethnic minorities in Flanders (De Standaard, 18/04/2002). Since this idea lay about a wave of criticism the minister requested the Policy Centre of Equal Opportunities in Antwerp to conduct a research on news media use by ethnic minorities in Flanders. Dish antennas decorating houses inhabited by individuals or families from ethnic minorities raise the question among some whether these individuals even do watch Flemish television programmes. Are ethnic minorities part of this audience or does a dish antenna stand for total lack of interest in Flemish topics? Does watching satellite television entail not watching Flemish television or can they go hand in hand?

For some time now scientific research is treating the subject of ‘ethnic minorities’ and ‘the media’. Nevertheless, Flanders does not have a research tradition in this field and knowledge about these topics is rather scarce. However, some older Flemish studies touched upon these subjects and make it possible to investigate if the patterns, present in the past, are still present nowadays. A general conclusion from these Flemish studies, but support for this can also be found in international research, is that ‘minority youth’ tends to spend significantly more hours watching television than ‘majority youth’ (Bureau Veldkamp, 1993, p. 53; De Aguirre, 1993, pp. 46-73; De Sutter, 1996, p. 76).

The Flemish situation evolved in a direction that the majority of the ‘autochthonous’ population equates ‘(im)migrant’ with individuals of Moroccan or Turkish origin. Italians or other residents from countries in the European Union are seldom referred to as ‘migrants’. Therefore research is inclined to focus on the Moroccan and Turkish minority, moreover because they constitute two large ethnic minorities in Flanders. When launching her idea about establishing a minority television channel, the minister – as almost everyone – implicitly had these minorities in mind. That doesn’t alter the fact that other large ethnic minorities, for example Italians, Poles and Congolese, should also be considered.

Even so, responding to an explicit question from the minister of Equal Opportunities, this study will focus on television news use and evaluation by respondents of Moroccan or Turkish origin. Gaining clear understanding of these practices is necessary, not in the least to bring about clarity regarding some all too scattered prejudices.

Therefore, our main research question is to examine which ‘news needs’ young adults of Moroccan and Turkish origin have. The minister also asked to incorporate our conclusions in the findings from national and international research. That way our own results can be placed in a wider context which allows us to examine if those general patterns and trends are also present in our research. Considering the particularity of the main research question our study can be an interesting addition to the existing research material.

The Uses and Gratifications theory and ethnic minorities

It is not a phenomenon of these last decades that the mass media form a highly debated research topic and in the course of time some interesting theories have been ‘constructed’. One of them is the Uses and Gratification theory (U&G) which is quite useful for our study. The U&G posits that a number of factors (for example age, socio-economic status or social environment) influence the desires and needs of individuals. For example, the peer group of a person will, to a certain amount, influence what television programmes a person watches, which channels s/he prefers, what topics or subjects are discussed in that peer group.

As such, the U&G creates the opportunity to link the possibility of *other* or *different* media needs and habits to the ethnic origin of individuals (Ruggiero, 2000, pp. 3-37). Our respondents, individuals of Turkish or Moroccan origin, could partly be interested in other topics because of their ethnic affiliation. However, this doesn’t entail that every time a respondent indicates his or her interest in a *particular* subject a causal connection between that subject and the ethnic origin must be established. As we shall see, not a few respondents cautioned us about making these correlations too swiftly. In some cases it is quite obvious that the special interest in a topic is ‘rooted’ in the ethnic origin of the individual. For example, when some respondents indicate they are very much interested in news reports on Morocco or Turkey this is probably because they or their parents are born in those countries. But, when some interviewees may criticise the lack of ‘multicultural’ topics in the Flemish television programmes this is not necessarily linked to their ethnic origin. A comment spoken out often by our respondents.

In this paper we will combine a study of the existing literature on the topics ‘media and minorities’ with data from thirty-two in-depth interviews. The opinions gathered from our respondents can be documented with the results from other studies. Due to this comparison it is possible to give more weight to our small qualitative research and furthermore, our results can be brought in those broader and often quantitative studies (De Aguirre, 1993, pp. 75-89; Detant, 1994, pp. 14-21; Stiens, 2000, pp. 113-

115; Dragt, 2002, pp. 8-9). It's interesting to examine whether our results fit the general patterns those studies brought about.

Research Questions

Our main research question ('Do young adults of Turkish and Moroccan origin watch Flemish television and, if so, how do they evaluate these television channels and their programmes?') can be subdivided in a few more specific questions: Which Flemish television channels and news programmes do our respondents watch to meet their information needs? Which 'foreign' or satellite channels do they watch? What do they like about all these channels or programmes? What annoys them and which aspects could be improved?

Before moving on to the discussion of the results we have to clarify a few central research concepts¹: 'migrants', news seekers and news programmes. In Flemish the word 'migrant' has a negative connotation and the term 'allochtoon' (which isn't used in English research) is preferred, in opposition to 'autochthon'. When we use the concept 'migrant' we rely on the formulation the Vlaams Minderheden Centrum² uses to define 'allochtonen' (VMC, 2001, p. 12): "migrants (allochtonen) are individuals who are born in another country than Belgium or whose parents (or one of the parents) are born in another country. Migrants are individuals who stay in Belgium legally. Often they suffer exclusion and discrimination because of their origin." We acknowledge that this definition doesn't remain free from criticism but that discussion goes beyond the outlines of this paper.

Another concept that is central in this study is 'television news programme'. According to Van Schie (2001, p. 5) this concept includes the amount of television news but also encompasses current affaires programmes. A third important research concept is that of 'news seeker', a construct we have given our own definition. Every respondent who indicated to watch television news at least three times a week, we

¹ Notwithstanding this clarification our definitions are not necessarily applicable in other research.

² VMC stands for Flemish Minority Centre.

consider a ‘news seeker’. By way of a short ‘pre-investigation’ we were able to single out these individuals (see below).

Method

In consultation with experts we opted – mindful of the available time and means – for a ‘theoretical sample’ limited to individuals of Turkish and Moroccan origin, aged between eighteen and twenty-eight, who are competent in Dutch and who identify themselves as ‘news seekers’. Therefore the results from this study only tell the story of this particular group of individuals, which entails that the results do not relate to ‘all migrants’. Given the available time and means it wasn’t possible to realize a research sample that was representative for all ‘migrants’. Forthcoming to this disadvantage the application of in depth-interviews is an important research method to complement quantitative surveys.

In small, theoretical samples it is important to obtain a high level of diversity between the respondents as a reflection of the variety present in ethnic minorities. We tried to obtain this goal, in the first place, by expanding our horizon and not recruiting our respondents solely via the *well-known* and by researchers already excessively contacted minority organisations. Another way to achieve this aim is trying to seek after regional diversity in our group of respondents. As a consequence interviewees were also recruited by contacting a factory, accosting individuals in the street, via snowball sampling and by using the social networks of other respondents. We selected individuals from three Flemish regions: Antwerpen, Vlaams-Brabant and Limburg.

We postulated that the respondents had to fit our profile of a ‘news seeker’ since discovering the use and evaluation of Flemish television news was our main study objective. We selected these ‘news seekers’ by way of a short pre-investigation with questions that probed among other things their media use. Participants who indicated to watch television news three times or more a week are in accordance with our definition of ‘news seekers’.

The research sample consisted of thirty-two respondents, eighteen of Turkish origin and fourteen of Moroccan origin. Ten respondents lived in the region of Antwerp, eight in Vlaams-Brabant and fourteen in Limburg. Sixteen respondents had attained a diploma at the secondary school level, eight had (or were attaining) a certificate at the High School level and eight respondents had (or were attaining) a university diploma. Diversity was also obtained for other background variables like sex and age. We interviewed our respondents using an open-ended questionnaire.

Results

In the first section we will dilate upon the use and the evaluation of Flemish television news programmes by our respondents. Their attitudes towards satellite television will be dealt with in the following sections, likewise the criticisms they vented on the portrayal of ethnic minorities or the lack of multicultural topics in television programmes. When possible, parallels will be drawn with other national and international studies to examine if some general trends are also present in our research sample.

The concept ‘news seeker’ is central in our study and keeping up with the news is an important goal for our respondents, or as one of them puts it:

‘I watch the news on a daily basis. It’s very important to me. If I haven’t seen the news during daytime I stay awake just to see the repeats at night. And then I’ll go to sleep. News is very important to me. If you’re living in Belgium and you’re not following the news ... well, you can’t keep up with what’s happening in society.’ (Respondent 6: man, Moroccan (origin), 19 years)

Use and evaluation of Flemish television

To begin with we will focus on the data concerning Flemish television, a next section will discuss the satellite or foreign television.

A recurrent observation in our research sample is the preponderance of the two big Flemish television companies, VTM (commercial television) and VRT (state

television with television channels TV1 and Canvas), over satellite television. Other studies observed this fact – the ‘second or third generation migrants’ directing themselves in the first place towards ‘autochthonous’ television (news) – as well (Detant, 1994, p. 23; De Sutter 1996, p. 79; Stiens, 2000, pp. 99-100). Additional research showed a preference for commercial television (VTM) to state television (VRT) with Moroccan or Turkish minority youth (De Sutter, 1996, p. 79; Elchardus, 2002, pp. 337-363). Thus, when our respondents want to watch television news they bend their mind primarily to Flemish television.

A development that is also found in other research is the inclination for the higher educated individuals to turn towards state television (VRT) and for the lesser educated towards commercial television (VTM). In our sample we can find both higher and lesser educated respondents who don’t fit this pattern. Furthermore, our sample is too small to make solid generalizations. Compared to television news current affairs programmes are much less *consulted* by our respondents. Mainly the higher educated respondents indicate to watch these programmes, but also a few lesser educated.

An important reason to watch Flemish television is induced by the fact that the respondents are Belgian and Flemish residents. Therefore they want to keep abreast of the current events that have the most impact on their daily lives. That is, *Belgian* topics are on their mind³.

‘I’m not interested in news programmes on Turkish television. I’m much more interested in what happens in Belgium. The TRT (Turkish state television) broadcasts too much political news. But all the important Turkish news facts are shown on Flemish television. That’s all I need.’ (Resp. 4: woman, Turkish, 23 years)

Furthermore the participants were asked how they evaluated the news programmes they watched: What do they like about them? What can be improved? Concerning the Flemish television news programmes the opinions of our respondents were moderately positive. Our respondents only consider the two main broadcasting

companies, VTM and VRT. The small scale companies (VT4 and Kanaal 2) are rarely commented upon. Moreover, it appears that someone who has a preference for a particular television channel also has a negative image or idea about the other channel.

‘I think of TV1 as very neutral. VTM is much more focused on sensation. For example, lately with those rows in Antwerp. The way you look at it, there is a clear distinction. TV1 also tells you what happened but VTM talks about it in a very sensationalist way: look, they did that, broke this, and this and that. And then I think: come on! In a general way, when there’s a car crash TV1 lets us know quite casually but VTM would go like: the man caused so much damage and this and that... But it also has a lot to do with the topic ‘migrants’. Because that provides them with a lot of viewers. The ratings go up, you know. According to me, that is also a reason why VTM accentuates some matters.’ (Resp. 18: woman, Turkish, 26 years)

‘I find television news on VTM much better and more human than the one on VRT. VTM shows the news more elaborate and even the pictures are more vivid. They both may discuss the same topics but VTM elaborates it more extensively. Moreover, the background in the studio is more beautiful. VRT is boring. Their time has passed. When you look at Bavo Claes [news anchor VRT]...Danny Verstraeten [news anchor VTM] isn’t either a youngster anymore but still...’ (Resp. 11: man, Moroccan, 20 years)

Alignment to a specific television channel is uttered very strongly in the interviews. Respondents who mention to watch the news on VTM, also state to watch the current affaires programmes (like ‘Telefacts’) on VTM. VRT-viewers focus primarily on news programmes like ‘Koppen’ or ‘Ter Zake’ on this channel. Few respondents say, for example, to watch the news on one channel and current affaires programmes on the other channel.

³ But this doesn’t rule out the fact that some respondents also watch television news programmes on satellite or foreign television.

It is remarkable that the distinction between the television company as a whole and the different programmes of that company is almost nonexistent. Respondents who say they like VRT very much, also like the news programmes on that channel very much and they quite often *dislike* VTM and their programmes. Of course, this also goes the other way around.

Critical remarks

Although the respondents evaluate Flemish news television in general fairly positive there are some crucial critical remarks made in the interviews. Research already pointed out that satellite television not always appeals to the needs of ‘minority’ youth, but ‘autochthonous’ television also neglects the ‘migrant’ part of their public. Young adults of Turkish or Moroccan origin state that they rarely find topics that portray their daily lives in a *neutral* or *casual* manner. They find it difficult to discover their own tale in the media, topics characteristic for their own social environment, Turkish or Moroccan music, etc. (Detant, 1994, pp. 14; De Sutter, 1996, pp. 81-85; 23; Stiens, 2000, pp. 113-115; Elchardus, 2002, pp. 337-363). The remarks and suggestions made by our respondents are described and analysed below. Most of them are related to their evaluation of Flemish television news on the two main channels, VTM and VRT.

Respondents (and researchers) often presume that the negative representation of ethnic minorities will have an influence on the individual and the society, and in particular on the relationships between ethnic communities residing in the country. Gerbner introduced this presumption in the scientific area with his ‘Cultivation Theory’ (Roussell, 1996, p. 11). Transferring his theory to our research we could state that frequent associations between negative reports and ethnic minorities in television news will result in negative attitudes towards minorities among ‘autochthonous’ television (news) viewers. Vergeer (2000, pp. 111-144) agrees with the Cultivation Theory but in his study he argues that exposure to a certain kind of media content (commercial, sensational) promotes this cultivation.

Our respondents also commented upon their worries about the cultivation of negative attitudes towards minorities. The major part of the criticism is focussed on the

portrayal of ethnic minorities and Islam in the media (see also Stiens, 2000, pp. 106-107). Analysing the interviews it becomes clear that the different remarks can be grouped in two categories: prejudices and stereotypes towards the ‘migrant population’ and the limitation of the television appearance of minorities to ‘typical’ topics.

- Reporting on ethnic minorities

The negative representation of ethnic minorities is, according to the respondents, caused by the manner in which the media write or talk about those minorities. The comments can be categorized in three groups.

To begin with it is seen as pernicious for the ethnic community concerned when journalists explicitly mention the ethnic origin or nationality of individuals in the context of criminal acts.

‘It bothers me that in the media – especially in the newspapers – journalists make a distinction between ‘migrants’ and ‘autochthons’. When a ‘Moroccan’ does something wrong they say: ‘the *Moroccan* did that’. But when a ‘Belgian’ did something wrong they just say: ‘the *man* did that’.’ (Resp. 13: man, Moroccan, 25 years)

Another remark was the tendency to generalize about ethnic minorities and in particular about individuals of Turkish or Moroccan origin.

‘In a television debate there was a discussion between two ‘Moroccans’. And you saw the moderator getting confused and he said: ‘But how can you disagree, you’re both Moroccans?’ Why do all ‘migrants’ have to think the same thing? It’s like you have already given your opinion just by being a ‘migrant’.’ (Resp. 3: man, Turkish, 24 years)

A third criticism concerns the religion, Islam and the linkage with terror that is often made in news media according to the respondents.

‘They blamed September 11th on the Islam. But that isn’t so. We are horrified about the attacks too. We oppose to terror totally. They can’t blame it on Islam’ (Resp. 22: woman, Turkish, 24 years)

- Typical ‘minority topics’

Also the typical topics associated with ethnic minorities are a cause of concern for our respondents. It is stated that there isn’t a lack of reports on Moroccan or Turkish youth delinquency, or debates about the Islamic scarf, the position of women in Islam and forced marriages, or Muslim extremists. But coverings about discrimination, the high number of unemployed migrants and so forth are rare.

‘The only topics discussed focus on girls who have run away from home because of a forced marriage. But that isn’t the reality in the neighbourhood [with a high number of Moroccan and Turkish ‘migrants’] where I come from. Why don’t they show that side of the story? Not that we have to justify ourselves, not in the least! My husband prays and he visits the mosque, and I don’t. That’s my own free will.’ (Resp. 23: woman, Moroccan, 28 years)

The interviewees point out that minorities are often confronted with the same *daily* problems as everyone else, but when a topic like ‘the raise of taxes’ or the release of a new movie is discussed ‘migrants’ are not asked to give their opinions. The television appearance of ‘migrants’ is in their eyes limited to (stereo)typical subjects.

In the above sections we described the perception of our respondents on misrepresentation about minorities but sometimes there can exist some discrepancy between the ‘subjective’ opinion of the individual and the ‘objective’ television reality. Nevertheless research pointed out that the misrepresentation of ethnic minorities is not an invented story. Different studies revealed that the television appearance of minorities is indeed chiefly confined to on the one hand ‘criminal acts’ or rows and on the other hand unusual, exotic events like the ending of the Ramadan or a traditional wedding (d’Haenens, 1996, pp. 107-122; Brants, 1998, pp. 10-18).

One way to overcome these problems is to increase the participation rate of ‘migrants’ in regular television news programmes (but of course also in other programmes like quiz shows, etc.). But in the opinion of the respondents ‘migrants’ are seldom included in the regular news flow. Moreover, when ‘migrants’ can give their opinion on such a ‘typical’ topic the media turn to intellectuals or politicians. There is no room for Mr. or Mrs. Average, not for ‘autochthons’ but certainly not for ‘migrants’.

So, we’ve seen that our respondents hold the opinion that Flemish television news doesn’t give a correct reflection of the ‘multicultural society’ that Flanders is. Furthermore, when ‘migrants’ appear on screen they are limited to talking about (stereo)typical topics. These comments were supported by earlier research indeed. Due to this some respondents state that the broadcastings on Flemish television are made by and for Flemish ‘autochthons’. For these interviewees, recognizing themselves in Flemish television programmes becomes difficult. They don’t feel involved. But some other respondents hold an opposite opinion. They can recognize themselves in these programmes, although they too criticise the absence of ‘migrants’ in most Flemish television news or other programmes.

‘Notwithstanding the fact that I’m used to being among Belgians, autochthons, that my social environment and friends consist for 90% out of autochthons... I still regard television as something ‘Belgian’. I mean, they’re Belgians, so to speak. The topics are Belgian, the jokes are Belgian. And when a ‘migrant’ is shown on TV you really do see s/he is portrayed by ‘Belgians’ [autochthons]. That way you notice how ‘Belgians’ look at ‘migrants’.’ (Resp. 8: woman, Moroccan, 23 years)

A last remark formulated in the interviews concerns the relation between the attention that is given to national and international news. The order isn’t criticised (first national then international news) but the time and attention provided for international news could be increased.

- How to respond to these remarks?

The respondents didn't just ventilate their criticism but some also made a few specific suggestions. The first two are meant to make Flemish news programmes more receptive for those who can't yet manage themselves fully in Dutch, like newcomers or some first generation parents. The third proposal involves the production of a 'multicultural television show'.

One suggestion was the subtitling of Flemish television news in Turkish or Arabic (for example by way of a special page on teletext).

'Omer [her husband] will certainly appreciate it. Yes, because usually, when we are watching Flemish television, I have to explain him what they're saying.' (Resp. 21: woman, Turkish, 25 years)

But respondents also mentioned the multiple practical problems that would emerge (in which languages should subtitles be available and, furthermore, illiteracy among first generation parents is still present).

The second suggestion could count on more support and concerns the broadcasting of a summary of the most important topics in Flemish television news, during weekend. These programmes could be broadcasted in Arabic or Turkish (perhaps also other languages) and shouldn't take more than 15 or 30 minutes. The older generation of 'migrants' or newcomers are sometimes unwittingly 'forced' to turn towards satellite television, so these suggestions are in the first place meant for those individuals and not for the respondents themselves.

'A summary of the news is better than subtitling. That will attract a broader public. It can be broadcasted in the weekend, like they do in the Netherlands. In some thirty minutes a reflection of the most important news items can be shown in different languages. I don't think it will harm anybody.' (Resp. 12: woman, Moroccan, 24 years)

Just like other minority youth our respondents argue that, to satisfy their information need, they turn in the first place to Flemish television. But they also state that Flemish television is ‘too autochthonous’ and doesn’t always fit their own daily lives. They also want to hear about Moroccan or Turkish music on television music shows, topics that relate more to their social environment (d’Haenens, 1996, pp. 141-150; Stiens, 2000, p. 120). In the past there were some television programmes (‘Babel’ or ‘Couleur Locale’) that explicitly discussed multicultural topics. In the Netherlands there is a ‘Nederlandse Moslim Omroep’⁴ (NMO), which discusses a lot of topics relating to Islam. Research showed that Turkish and Moroccan youth in Flanders is also longing for these programmes (Detant, 1994, pp. 21-23; d’Haenens, 1996, pp. 141-150; Stiens, 2000, p. 115). The same desire is present in our sample. The respondents kept hammering on the need for an ‘own’ programme that discusses multicultural topics, just like ‘Couleur Locale’. They think of it as necessary to make ‘autochthons’ more familiar with minority cultures, practices and religion. The respondents felt misunderstood and according to them such a television programme could stimulate the conciliation between the different ‘communities’. But the respondents were also very clear on the fact that the topics discussed should not be the (stereo)typical ones, as mentioned above. Not only the Islam or Moroccan or Turkish culture should be explained and debated but also more regular subjects and other religions or cultures. Therefore the desired audience is multicultural, consisting of ‘migrants’ and ‘autochthons’. A lot of societal relevance is given to such a programme.

‘Yes, that’s certainly important! There are prejudices among side A and side B. We’ll have to learn to break them all.’ (Resp. 26: woman, Turkish, 23 years)

‘They [autochthons] don’t have enough information. Their image about us is very biased. If such a programme provides them with the correct information they will be able to say: I don’t agree with this principle or theory in your religion or culture. And I can formulate my arguments and that way we can have a good discussion.’ (Resp. 9: woman, Turkish, 21 years)

⁴ The Dutch Muslim Broadcasting.

Use and evaluation of foreign and satellite television

Up until now we focussed on the use and evaluation of Flemish television news, in this section we will analyse the opinions of our respondents on foreign and satellite television news. A distinction can be made between foreign television from Western Europe or the USA and satellite or Turkish/Moroccan/Arabic⁵ television.

Unlike for Flemish television the respondents don't often turn to foreign or satellite television to meet their information needs. The foreign or West European television channels watched by our respondents are mainly Dutch channels, BBC World and CNN. The higher educated respondents in our sample are the only ones who refer to the Dutch channels to watch the current affaires programmes, which are considered with respect to their content of superior quality. When other respondents mention Dutch channels they refer to the NMO. Channels like CNN or BBC World are mostly consulted in case of important news facts. Not only because these television channels often have the first images of the event but also to hear *their version of the reality*.

Satellite dishes adorning house fronts or housetops induce some with the idea that 'those migrants' never watch Flemish television and aren't interested in Belgium and Flanders. We thought it important to ask the respondents, young adults of Turkish or Moroccan origin, if they watched satellite television news. And, if so, what topics can be found on satellite television that aren't provided by Flemish television.

Concerning satellite television our sample can be divided in three groups: those who aren't interested in them, those who like to watch them to hear their version of the facts and to receive specific information, and those who rely mostly on satellite television to meet their information needs. Nor the respondents sex, ethnic origin or education level have an influence on this classification. Only the higher educated women of Turkish origin mention not to be interested in Turkish television news. But this doesn't mean they never watch Turkish television, for example to hear Turkish music.

Three respondents state to rely chiefly on satellite television news. Two of them have some difficulties to understand the Dutch language. These three are very satisfied with the quality of satellite television news but other respondents argue that, like all other television channels, also satellite television tells their *subjective* version of the events.

Finally, we already touched upon this subject in the sections above, it needs to be stated that respondents question the neutrality and reliability of (all) television channels. Some are seen as pro-Western and other as pro-Arabic/Islam. Depending on the respondent, Flemish television is categorized as pro-Western or somewhat neutral

‘The media remain a question mark. I always listen with one ear to the news. Whoever it broadcasts. Even if it’s from Al Jazeera. It’s just like CNN. To have high viewer ratings they only dig up the negative news.’ (Resp. 27: man, Moroccan, 20 years)

‘I couldn’t say which one’s the most reliable. I try to read and watch as many different news sources as possible. There isn’t a television channel or news paper I fully trust.’ (Resp. 3: man, Turkish, 24 years)

Conclusions

When respondents from our research sample, young adults of Turkish or Moroccan origin, want to watch television news they turn primarily to Flemish television. Both state (VRT) and commercial (VTM) television are consulted. Nevertheless some respondents are interested in the topics or points of view on satellite television too. These results are also found in other studies.

The major point of criticism on Flemish television concerns the representation of ethnic minorities. When ‘migrants’ appear or are discussed about on screen this occurs mainly with topics like criminality and forced marriages, or exotic topics like

⁵ In Belgium some Turkish, Moroccan or Arabic television channels are also consultable

traditional cultural customs. 'Migrants' are rarely mentioned or present in discussions about for example 'taxes'. This is not only the opinion of our respondents, research has also stated this.

Crucial is the conclusion that young adults of Turkish or Moroccan origin are part of the Flemish television audience. Therefore it is important that the media take account of their remarks and grievances.

Literature

Brants, K., Crone, L., & Leurdijck, A. (1998). *Media en Migranten - Inventarisatie van onderzoek in Nederland*. Amsterdam: Werkgroep Migranten en Media van de NVJ.

Bureau Veldkamp (1993). *Mediaonderzoek etnische groepen 1992*. Hilversum: NOS.

D'Haenens, L. (1996). Kritische succesfactoren van een 'multicultureel' programma-aanbod: resultaten van een workshop. *Media en Multiculturalisme in Vlaanderen*, 141-150.

Detant, A. (1994). De radio spreekt Arabisch: Een onderzoek naar de rol van de media bij de integratie van migranten. *Media en Maatschappij*, 11-26.

Dragt, E. (2002). Media en etnische publieksgroepen in Nederland: Het aanbod en het gebruik van media. *Tijdschrift voor communicatiewetenschap*, 30, 24.

De Aguirre, P., & Saeys, F. (1993). *Anders gekeken? Media-onderzoek bij Turkse en Marokkaanse jongeren en volwassenen*. BRT: studiedienst.

De Sutter, W., & Saeys, F. (1996). *Bezit en gebruik van audio-visuele media bij allochtone populaties. Een onderzoek uitgevoerd bij Gentse scholieren*, Gent: Academia Press.

Elchardus, M. & Glorieux, I. (2002). *De Symbolische Samenleving: Een exploratie van de nieuwe sociale en culturele ruimtes*, Antwerpen: Lannoo.

Ruggiero, T. (2000). Uses and Gratifications Theory in the 21st Century. *Mass Communication & Society*, 3, 3-37.

Roussell, J. M. (1996). *Adapting Television Cultivation Theory Variables to determine the effects of P.E.TV on Middle School Viewers' Attitudes toward Physical Activity*. Virginia: Blacksburg.

Stiens, S. (2000). *Het schotelantenne-fenomeen: Kijkgedrag bij Marokkaanse jongeren*. Leuven: KULeuven - Communicatiewetenschappen.

Van Schie, K. (2001). *Nieuwsbeleving in de jaren '70 en jaren '90*. Rotterdam.

Vergeer, M. (2000). *Een gekleurde blik op de wereld: een studie naar de relatie tussen blootstelling aan media en opvattingen over etnische minderheden*. Nijmegen: KUNijmegen.

VMC (2001). *Lokaal minderhedenbeleid. 'allochtonen', vluchtelingen, woonwagenbewoners en mensen zonder papieren*. Brussel: Politeia.