# 6 'Lost in Mainstreaming'?

Ethnic Minority Audiences for Public and Private Television Broadcasting

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

European societies have always been diverse, but contemporary societies are preoccupied with diversity as a good and as an 'issue.' However it may be experienced, diversity is politically recognised and framed in different ways. It is a relatively recent development that governmental and programmatic ideas of 'multiculturalism,' 'diversity' and 'integration' have become articulated and positioned as prominent ways of conceptualising, addressing and managing social, ethnic and cultural difference within European nation-states. This chapter reflects on various ways in which public and private broadcasters in selected European countries have imagined and addressed culturally diverse audiences, and explores some of the critical issues raised by such approaches. By departing from a basic assumption that 'national audiences,' addressed by all forms of broadcast media, have become more socioculturally diverse in their composition and networked in their—globalised—media environments, the chapter considers how different mainstream media institutions articulate their role in putative processes of 'integration,' It also explores how audience research has explored the reactions of diversified audiences to these institutions.

The chapter develops this approach firstly (but not exclusively) by focussing on public service broadcasters, institutions that are historically charged with representing both the imagined unity and pluralism of audiences that share the territory of the nation-state, as well as an ethno-political status of the citizen. In the context of late twentieth-century migration and settlement, and of contested and conflicted public discussions concerning legitimacy and belonging, Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) remits have frequently shifted to include explicitly 'multicultural' and / or 'diversity' objectives. How these objectives are formulated, developed and mediated in editorial processes and programme-making, as well as how these are evaluated and critiqued by 'target' audiences, is currently a lively area of academic research.

The vast spectrum of commercial broadcasters working within the European audiovisual space—whatever that may now be—do not share the

formal expectations placed upon their PSB counterparts. Their battle for audience share, in fragmented and highly competitive media environments, involves developing strategies through which 'diversity' and 'minority' audiences can be explicitly addressed. At stake here are the various ways in which a general consumerist emphasis on difference folds into, but may also undermine, more political understandings of the need to, and the complexities involved in, representing cultural difference.

Our approach within this chapter is broadly a discursive one. It draws on relevant theoretical frameworks, on international, European and national legal frameworks, and on an heuristic selection of recent empirical work from within a variety of national contexts. Where sustainable, we draw attention to common developments and issues, but we emphasise that this short exploration cannot draw either general or representative conclusions. Given the necessary brevity of this work, we have chosen to concentrate on case studies from within our own research contexts, and while we do aim to make observations that are useful for researchers in Europe, these observations are not intended to be read as broad general conclusions.

# 2. HUMAN MOVEMENT, 'INTEGRATION' AND MEDIA IN MIGRATION SOCIETIES

As Steven Vertovec (2010) points out, contemporary global migratory flows consist of newer, smaller, transient, more socially stratified, less organised and more legally differentiated populations. However, within the context of European public spheres, migration is often spoken of in homogenising and reductive terms, these frequently being shaped by political inflections. As Castles (2010) has noted, migration plays a central role in recasting contemporary social relations. The term has also become shorthand for the wide range of cross-border flows that change the nature of state territory under conditions of accelerated globalisation. Thus, as an "expression of social change and a ferment for further change" (Castles 2010, 4), we should "conceptualise migration not merely as a result of social transformation, nor as one of its causes, but as an integral and essential part of social transformation processes" (14).

Migration is central to such processes of social transformation. The European Union is a space that is shaped by complex networks of migratory and transnational flows, even if these networks do not in any sense define the dominant identities propagated within the European communicative space. According to the European Migration Network (EMN 2012), in 2010, 32.5 million foreign citizens lived in the EU-27 Member States, of which 12.3 million (2.5% of the total population) were citizens of another EU-27 Member State, and the remaining 20.2 million (4% of the total population) were citizens of countries outside the EU-27. In 2009, 776,000 persons acquired

citizenship of one or other of the EU27 Member States. These new citizens came mainly from Africa (29% of the total number of citizenships acquired), Asia (24%), non-EU27 Europe (22%), North and South America (15%).

Of course, data of this nature can only begin to hint at the mosaic of backgrounds and experiences that characterise societies across Europe, and it says little or nothing about the sociocultural processes of settlement and adaptation that are routine to migration societies. Audience research has established itself as an interesting area of social scientific inquiry when it comes to investigating the fine-grain of cultural dwelling and social integration. While retaining cultural and affective currency, ideas of 'national audience' have gradually become increasingly relativised and decentred. Qualitative audience research has captured the various ways in which diverse audiences, particularly those from migrant backgrounds, negotiate questions of belonging through media practice. In particular, it has captured the transnational networks and practices that evade any simple designation of 'home and away.' These seamlessly integrate social media platforms and digital possibilities into dense weaves of proximate and distant communal activity, and re-shape mediascapes and particularly established forms of 'ethnic community' and 'minority' media.

For their part, media institutions, according to their remit, have, over recent decades, expended considerable energy designing ways of addressing 'diverse' audiences. Equally importantly, they have also sought to be seen to address such audiences. Such frameworks for being seen to contribute to the governance of difference are largely defined by wider political developments, but these do not determine them. The most recent rubric for the 'management' of difference involves variations on ideas of 'integration' and 'inclusion.' In an OECD report, Bevelander (2011, 238) discusses the concept of social inclusion, presenting it as 'a somewhat elusive term' and 'a powerful normative concept that can serve as a framework and an ideal in policy-making and community-building.' The author reviews literature on 'social inclusion' which contends that a basic goal of societal-level politics should be the provision of opportunities for all its members 'to participate as valued, respected and contributing members' (see also Toye and Infanti 2004; Laidlaw Foundation 2002; Council of the European Union 2001). At the same time, 'integration' processes that specifically target migrant and migrant-descended populations have been criticised for their neoliberal emphasis on individualised pathways to inclusion, and an often politically repressive undertone of assimilation. As Eleonore Kofman summarises, in western Europe ". . . immigration policies are directed towards selecting those who will be most advantageous to the economy, will fit into a preexisting national culture, and not disrupt a supposed social and community cohesion" (2005, 463).

In this context, nationally-based media institutions have attempted to shape ways of addressing audiences conceived of as possessing a commonality

stemming from inhabiting a shared territorial space, and thus requiring an emphasis on 'cohesion.' At the same time, they have also adopted specific editorial, programmatic and institutional policies, aimed at enhancing forms of 'inclusion' and recognition. However, existing research into these initiatives suggests that the media are not particularly successful in addressing or including ethnic minorities beyond a limited range of genre programmes designed to recognise and 'celebrate' lived multiculture. Audience research conducted among migrant teenagers in Finland, for example, showed that stereotyping migrants was considered an especially problematic dimension of news coverage (Nikunen 2008). For instance, ethnic minorities of Russian origin criticised news media repetitively for connecting them (and Russians in general) with crime and social problems. Further, gendered stereotyping of women from Russian and Baltic origins as prostitutes, and Muslim women as essentially subordinated, were connected to the "stickiness" of media representations and to a perceived lack of depth in current affairs programming (Nikunen 2012; Maasilta 2010). Several studies conducted among ethnic minority audiences in different European countries point to a similar dissatisfaction with the coverage of national PSB channels, and in particular with the scope and quality of the news.

Audience research conducted in Denmark, Sweden and Germany shows that ethnic minority audiences consider news broadcast by national PSB channels to be irrelevant and sometimes exclusionary. Consequently, when seeking out news, they express a distinct preference for alternative international and satellite channels (Carøe Christiansen and Sell 2000; Weibull and Wadbring 1998; Carøe Christiansen 2004). Audience studies conducted in Britain also show a sense of marginalisation experienced within ethnic minority audiences who are often confronted with predominantly 'white,' mainstream television programming (e.g., Sreberny 1999; Ross and Playdon 2001; Mano and Willems 2008). Much dissatisfaction is targeted towards PSB providers, however, and many studies discuss national television on only a very general level (Hepp, Bozdag and Suna 2011, 49-60; Alghasi 2009; Mai 2005; Carøe Christiansen 2004). Our aim here is, instead, to look more closely to the distinction between the PSB and commercial channels in terms of audience reception, drawing on available existing research literature.

As previously discussed, there is clear evidence of dissatisfaction among ethnic minorities towards national media institutions. Such forms of prevalent and established dissatisfaction need to be taken seriously by media institutions, because exclusion from the imagined space of the nation links to, and can even deepen, structural and persistent forms of socioeconomic exclusion. However, there is significant evidence that European media institutions do take this issue seriously, even though they may address it in a range of different and sometimes contradictory ways. The following sections of this chapter open up some of these approaches.

# 3. ETHNIC MINORITY AUDIENCES AND PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTERS

Today, we live in a sociocultural context within which people and groups from different cultural backgrounds happen to coexist in the same geographical space. Our societies are characterised by diversity: in identities, in ethnicities, in belongings, in religions, in cultures. As previously mentioned, in this context, a significant role is played by the media in general, and in particular by public service media, which are centrally engaged as agents of cultural diversity and as a forum within which to promote cultural diversity (McGonagle 2008).

Historically, European PSBs have always played an important role in relation to the protection of national cultures and identities. While most of these nations were long established and 'imagined' as relatively homogeneous and monoculturally white, over recent decades, PSBs also started to receive increasing responsibilities in terms of representing and addressing increasingly diverse and 'multicultural' societies. In fact, as stated in the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation of the Council of Europe (2007),

[I]n their programming and content, public service media should reflect the increasingly multi-ethnic and multicultural societies in which they operate, protecting the cultural heritage of different minorities and communities, providing possibilities for cultural expression and exchange, and promoting closer integration without obliterating cultural diversity at the national level. [. . .]. Public service media should promote respect for cultural diversity, while simultaneously introducing the audience to the cultures of other peoples around the world.

An obligation to provide programmes for all sections of the population is a condition for membership in the European Broadcasting Union (EBU Membership conditions—Union's Statutes, Article 3§3 [EBU 2010]): "[members] are under an obligation to, and actually do, provide varied and balanced programming for all sections of the population, including programmes catering for special/minority interests of various sections of the public, irrespective of the ratio of programme cost to audience."

Indeed PSBs in Europe seem to take seriously their obligation to serve diversity in terms of language. Linguistic minorities are typically well served, often with their own dedicated channels and programming. Conversely, ethnic minorities from immigrant backgrounds form a new and more contested area of diversity policy development within European PSB organisations.

In particular, over recent decades, PSBs in Europe have developed various policies in order to accomplish their mission and to address the emergence of ethnic minority groups. Their approaches have already been discussed by numerous scholars (e.g., Titley, Kerr and King-O'Riain 2010; Horsti and

Hultén 2011; Horsti 2010; Leurdijk 2006; Awad and Roth 2011; Cottle 1998). In synthesis, PSBs tend to apply three main strategies:

- 1. Offering programmes from the home countries of workers expected to return soon to those countries, and offering programmes to aid assimilation and integration into the mainstream society of migrants expected to stay in their new countries (1960s–1970s).
- 2. Policies of multiculturalism, characterised by the creation of ad hoc programmes for and about minorities (an approach pursued by many European PSBs in the 1980s and 1990s).
- 3. Policies of 'cultural diversity' in which ad hoc programmes have been replaced by cross-cultural programmes showing cultural diversity. This new policy has been implemented since 2000, firstly by the BBC and then by various other broadcasters. This policy "expects to mainstream difference to all programming and not only in topics and programs that are limited to ethnicity or immigration" (Horsti 2010, 12).

As summarised by Leurdijk (2006), there was a general move in the 1980s from assimilationist and integrationist paradigms to multicultural and antiracist policies. More recently these have tended to be replaced by paradigms of cultural diversity and calls for social cohesion. *Mainstreaming* and *integration* are now primary, replacing the former focus on catering for specific (minority) group needs.

One example of a PSB charged with the explicit task of covering different varieties of diversity, is the Swiss SRG SSR. Strongly involved in elaborating diversity policies, it nevertheless shows only low levels of success. SRG SSR has a federal structure mirroring the cultural and linguistic diversity of Switzerland (Bonfadelli and Haettenschwiler 1989, 134). Its remit clearly considers diversity to be an important issue, as "a key feature of its offering, its programming and the angles it presents" (SRG SSR 2009). In particular, the Federal Concession clearly states (Art. 2 § 2): "In its programmes, the SRG SSR promotes understanding, cohesion and exchange between the country's regions, linguistic communities, cultures, religions and social groups. It promotes the integration of foreigners in Switzerland [...]."

The main challenge encountered by SRG SSR is linked to the two main kinds of diversity found within the country: (a) the so-called intrinsic diversity, linked to the nature of Switzerland and to its multilingualism and multiculturalism; (b) the diversity linked to the considerable percentage of non-Swiss people (or people with a migratory background) now living within the country. SRG SSR's attention to diversity seems more devoted to the intrinsic diversity at the expense of cultural diversity in a broader sense. In particular, SRG SSR concentrates attention on the development of a good service in each linguistic region, thereby ensuring that the three main linguistic (and cultural) groups within established Swiss society each receive a proper programming offering. It therefore considers as being less important

the various other forms of diversity that also characterise modern Switzerland. SRG SSR's regional units pay little attention to the diversity of other Swiss regions (Trebbe 2011) and to cultural diversity in general not linked to intrinsic historical Swiss diversity. In the content of migration-related news items "migration or immigrant minorities are only side issues of news coverage. [...] Persons with a migratory background are underrepresented in news coverage compared to their percentage of the country's permanent resident population" (Signer, Puppis and Piga 2011, 429).

In contrast to the dominant European tendency, Signer et al. (2011, 435) argue in favour of considering "programmes aimed specifically at persons with a migratory background" as an option for facilitating the integration of immigrant minorities through the media. SRG SSR seems to share this point of view and to continue applying the 'multicultural policy,' already abandoned by many other PSBs in Europe. As a result, it will sometimes, in certain cases, still create ad hoc programmes (e.g., *Il Ponte*, broadcasted in the Italian-speaking region) addressed to specific ethnic minority groups.

Another example of a European PSB struggling to develop diversity policies, is the Flemish VRT. Since Belgium has one public broadcaster for each of its two language regions, VRT is only responsible for reflecting the cultural diversity of Flanders, not across the country as a whole (which would also include French-language Wallonia) Therefore, VRT does not cover linguistic diversity but is charged with the explicit task of addressing and reflecting cultural diversity in society, something that many conclude it is not quite able to do. As set out in the most recent management contract with the Flemish Government (2012–2016), the first task of VRT is to reach "all Flemings," including "new Flemings" (the term now favoured to designate people of non-European origin), through an inclusive and generalist programme offer (VRT and Vlaamse Gemeenschap 2011, 10). Although strengthening the indigenous (read: Flemish) culture and identity is a fundamental aim of public broadcasting, programming outputs should also include a reflection of diversity in society (12). More than in previous management contracts, diversity has now become a central policy, for the first time translated into measurable diversity indicators, including the presence of at least 5% new Flemings in the programmes made or ordered by the VRT (15), as measured through yearly monitoring. Equally new is the duty to reach ethnic minority audiences, a target which is also studied yearly and translated into action plans. Finally, now there are also clear aims in terms of broadening the diversity of staff employed, including targets of 2.5% non-Flemish workers by the end of 2012 and 4% by the end of 2014.

Considering these obligations and the numerous actions launched throughout 2011, one could imagine VRT to be a model of diversity. However, VRT has had diversity policies for a long time, including a 'Diversity Charter' and specific diversity measurements since 2003. Despite some successes, the overall effects of these policies have been limited. As became most apparent in the 2009 Diversity Monitor Report, VRT television

programmes were still predominantly 'white,' with 8.8% 'coloured' persons on the first, generalist channel, which was lower than the 13.4% average on all (including commercial) Flemish channels (VRT Studiedienst 2010).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, small-scale actions such as the paid internships offering job training for new Flemings, did not have a visible effect on the diversity of staff, with a mere 2.3% new Flemings being employed in 2010, well below the Flemish Government's objective of 4% for public services. The first findings of ethnic minority audience research, which will be discussed below, similarly indicate a failure to reach these 'new' audiences.

Concrete examples of PSB organisations implementing a shift from multiculturalist policies to more market-oriented policies of cultural diversity is offered by the Nordic countries. Here mainstreaming and market efficiency seem to be the primary foci of policy-makers. Horsti and Hultén (2011) even suggest that within the policy-making arena 'public' and 'market' values can sometimes collide. Examples of the shift are programmes such as *Halal-TV* in Netherlands and *Kniven i Hjärtat* (The Knife in the Heart) in Sweden. These programmes follow the policy agenda of reaching new minority audiences via more personal and individualistic approaches. Both programmes also focus on young hosts or on young actors from migrant backgrounds.

However, such specific shifts may not mean that outcomes of the wider policy are automatically a failure. Audience research carried out both in Sweden and Finland (Nikunen 2011), Rydin and Sjöberg 2007) shows that the Swedish series *Kniven i Hjärtat* was well received among ethnic minority audiences, both young and old. The series was felt to depict some of the vital problems experienced by ethnic minority youth growing up in Sweden. At the same time, for younger audiences in particular, it represented mainstream recognition as a result of placing the popular identifications of ethnic minority youth at the centre of prime-time television. Even five years after its original broadcast, episodes are still circulated on YouTube, illustrating the impact and fan base of the series (Nikunen 2011).

It is evident that such shifts in policy seem, however, to favour representations of migrants as young and trendy. This may entail the risk of disregarding other aspects of migration and other ethnic (older) minority audiences. The emphasis on young and trendy immigrants suggests an unwillingness or inability to deal with first-generation migrants born outside Europe, often perhaps with more profound cultural differences to confront. However, these are also the very audiences that PSB companies should address and serve in particular, since many may be in risk of marginalisation from society and citizenry.

It seems that despite such shifts, PSB's have not typically managed to adequately represent and attract ethnic minority audiences. The evidence from two different studies conducted in Britain indicates that the ratings for PSB channels are lower in Britain among the ethnic minorities than among the general population. This suggests that the BBC has difficulty in

attracting these particular audience groups (Holmwood 2007; Terazono 2004). According to a recent German study, the PSB channel ZDF reaches only 11% of ethnic minority youth (ages 14–29) and 29% of the whole ethnic minority population. The PSB channels Die Erste and ZDF were ranked fifth and sixth among the ethnic minority population. The most popular channel was the leading commercial channel RTL, which reached 47% of the young and 52% of the whole ethnic minority population (ARD/ZDF 2011).

Similar are the results of an Italian research project, conducted in 2010 (Bonerba 2012): the channel Rai 1 is watched by 10.4% of interviewed migrants, ranked third but very far behind the most popular channel, commercial Canale 5 (which reached 37.6% of the interviewees, followed by another commercial channel, Italia 1 with 17%). Rai 2 and Rai 3 were ranked fifth and sixth. The data are even lower when considering migrant teenagers (14–18): Rai 2 was ranked fourth with only 4.9% of migrant teenagers watching it; Rai 1 was ranked seventh (1.1%) and Rai 3 thirteenth (0.4%). Among the 10 TV programmes most viewed by immigrants, 9 are broadcast by the commercial Mediaset's channels and only 1 by the Italian PSB Rai (*Tg1*, news programme).

Research conducted in Finland during 2007–2008, revealed that Finnish television was scarcely followed by ethnic minority youth. The findings resonate with the age group in general, but the interviews also revealed that Finnish television was considered to be very Finnish, in the sense that it didn't include performers or presenters from different ethnic backgrounds or cover issues that were felt to be specifically relevant for ethnic minorities (Nikunen 2008). However, in terms of linguistic minorities, the Swedish-speaking minority is served well by the Finnish PSB YLE. The Swedish-speaking population that makes 5% of the whole population has their own television channel FST and several radio channels on YLE.

Despite various efforts to develop appropriate policies, ethnic minority audiences still represent a challenge for public service broadcasters across Europe. The examples above show that even in countries and regions that, quite explicitly, seek to develop diversity policies, it is still hard for public broadcasters to adequately address and include ethnic minority audiences. Empirical research focusing on the assessment of PSB by minority audiences is quite limited, but all the findings point in the same direction, as will be further developed in the discussion of audiences for commercial broadcasting, below. However, the examples above also highlight another similar pattern across some European public broadcasters. It seems in fact that those PSBs charged with serving different language groups (or linguistic minorities) actually do this rather well, often guided by diversity policies intended to promote such diversity. It seems that, within limited overall resources, such a focus on 'traditional' minorities seems to erode PSBs space and energy to focus on ethnic diversity linked to the various more 'recent' minorities.

# 4. ETHNIC MINORITY AUDIENCES AND MAINSTREAM COMMERCIAL BROADCASTERS

We now move to a consideration of if and how mainstream commercial television broadcasters address diversity. As seen in the preceding section of this chapter, in some countries, commercial channels are more successful in reaching ethnic minority audiences even though this is not necessarily their main objective, as they have no legal responsibility to serve multicultural audiences. Commercial broadcasters consider minorities as potential audiences and target groups for marketing (Lopez-Preciado 2008; Sinclair 2009). However, as the media have become more global and societies more multicultural, commercial media have developed new economic interests in addressing multicultural audiences. Sinclair (2009), who has researched media use among the Chinese-speaking minority in Australia and the Spanish-speaking minority in US, maintains, however, that national television remains the preferred medium for advertisers and in that realm ethnic minorities have not yet become relevant target group.

The basic economic rationale of commercial television remains paradigmatic—the free provision of scheduled information and entertainment content which attracts audiences whose attention can then be sold to whichever advertisers want to gain access to them. In the commercial logic of the industry, it follows that there is no provision of programming on mainstream television for minorities, even those whose size approaches 'critical mass.' (Sinclair 2009, 178)

There are various reasons for the reluctance to engage in minority marketing: the uncertainty of the target, diversity of the range of minorities and lack of critical mass, and a lack of measurement.

While national commercial media may ignore ethnic minority audiences, they are targeted by satellite channels that transmit programming from the former home country or from the same language area. The market for satellite television is increasingly transnational and formed as a large cultural area of certain linguistic, religious and cultural characteristics. Satellite channels are viewed by multilingual diasporic communities in different parts of the world and with various interpretative contexts. Thus, satellite programmes are often marketed to a large and inherently diverse group that shares only a similar language (e.g., Arabic, Spanish). This approach allows advertisers to address one larger group rather than several small ones. At the same time, through marketing, these groups assume an identity as part of a larger minority with assumed shared characteristics, although the only shared feature may be the language (Sinclair 2009). The transnational address seems to be also the key to the appeal of pay-TV channel Zee-TV that provides programmes in Hindi and South Asian languages in Europe. The research conducted among the British South Asian viewers illustrated "how Zee-TV

offered European South Asian viewers the possibility for imagining alternative scripts that legitimate their lives as bona fide Europeans with dual and multiple sensibilities" (Dudrah 2005, 40).

Apart from television, the internet has become an increasingly important source of media for ethnic minorities. The internet is particularly used to follow former home country media, but also to discuss and share experiences with others through various transnational online communities (Mandaville 2003; Elias and Zeltser-Shorer 2006; Mallapragada 2006; Georgiou 2007). In addition, the fragmentation of European media markets, due to deregulation and privatisation, has paved the way for various commercial and non-commercial community and diasporic media aimed at minority audiences, such as newspapers and radio stations serving particular groups. The diasporic media are also discussed as alternative media formed by diasporic communities as a space of self-expression (Bailey, Cammaerts and Carpentier 2007, 66). However, most of these operate precariously with uncertain financing. Community and diasporic media of this kind operate on combinations of private and public funding, relying on local associations or, in some cases, state subsidy. They may be unattractive to major advertisers who consider investment in such small-scale media to be both uneconomical and arduous.

As mentioned above, national commercial media are more reluctant to create separate programming for minorities. However, they do have several strategies to tackle the minority issue. Some commercial production companies simply dismiss ethnic minorities as a market group that is too small. Others identify the value of difference in terms of attention and sensationalism. Ethnic minorities are, for example, given exposure to create discussion on reality TV and "docusoaps." These representations usually draw on cultural conflicts and fetishism of the exotic others, and they are targeted mostly at the main population, without much consideration of ethnic minority audiences (Rossi 2009; Hübinette and Tigervall 2011). However, some production companies see the potential in ethnic minorities both as performers and audiences. These companies seek to create multicultural television that attracts new audiences, increasing audience ratings by attracting a combination of mainstream and minority audience members. Moreover, while commercial media do not have an obligation to enhance multiculturalism, individual producers may be personally committed to the enhancement of social values in their work and they therefore feel an obligation to present the diversity of society to the public.

### 5. ETHNIC AUDIENCES AND REALITY TV

In what follows we discuss the case of reality TV as a commercial platform that addresses ethnic minorities as a new potential audience, for example, on Finnish commercial TV. In Finland, as elsewhere in Europe, reality TV

shows have provided a new platform for ethnic minority performers. With formats based on competitions, these shows such as Talent, Big Brother, *Idols* and X-Factor seem to provide access to members of society who have not gained similar visibility in other areas of television production, such as current affairs programmes, fiction and drama (Andreassen 2011; Mano and Willems 2008; Nikunen 2008). Such visibility has particular implications in a society that is gradually transforming from being fairly homogenous to more multicultural. In the case of Finland, ethnic minority performers have been particularly visible in *Talent*. Here, ethnic minority performers were particularly supported by the producers, who saw the show as an opportunity to enhance multiculturalism (interview with a producer on 25 October 2011).<sup>3</sup> The show not only represented multiculturalism, but it also drew multicultural audiences on a large scale. It is noteworthy, however, that in the case of *Talent*, enhancing multiculturalism tied in well with the feel-good spirit of the show, thus conforming to the market values of the show and the aim of reaching new audiences without necessarily losing the old ones.

While representations of ethnic minority performers in the realm of popular entertainment may be considered to add variety and diversity, critical voices have pointed out the shortcomings of such apparently positive images. Such representations are also discussed in terms of "exotisising" the other, marginalising and stereotyping minorities (Andreassen 2011). Representations of ethnic minorities merely in the realm of entertainment may strengthen stereotypical views of ethnic minorities as mere entertainers without capacity to participate in political and social issues. However, popular representations of ethnic minorities may be politically significant in terms of citizenship and as related to questions of identity and community; to a sense of belonging (Hermes and Stello 2000). As prime-time programmes for mainstream audiences, reality television shows epitomise the nation and the making of the imagined community. Reality TV shows are discussed and shared in various social contexts from classrooms to web forums and thus contribute to the construction of national culture. The political significance of these performances can be established in the sentiments of the minority audiences themselves. Ethnic minority audiences in Finland have welcomed these performances as they make the minorities both visible and represented as part of Finnish television culture. Indeed, previous research in Finland and elsewhere in Europe shows that audiences from various minority groups hold these representations to be relevant for the identity, community and sense of belonging (Nikunen 2008; Maasilta, Simola and Af Heurlin 2008; Mano and Willems 2008). As argued by Sinclair (2009), the shared meanings of nationhood are expressed not only in politics proper but also in television and consumer culture, thus they should also be accounted for as mediators of membership of the nation.

As in the account on public service, above, from an assessment of diversity policies and representations in relation to their audience appeal, research in Finland shows that the commercial channels were actually more popular

among ethnic minorities than their PSB counterparts. Research into media use among immigrants also showed that over half of the respondents followed their former homeland television or television from their home region through satellite services (Maasilta et al. 2008, 37). Watching satellite television was most common among the respondents of Middle-eastern origins (81.4%), whereas less than half of the respondents coming from Eastern Europe followed media from their former homelands or regions. According to this research the most popular channels were Al-Jazeera, Al Arabiya, Al Iraq, Dubai TV and the cultural and entertainment channels MBC+ and Sharjah TV (Maasilta et al. 2008, 38). In Germany, the commercial channel RTL ranks the highest among the minority population as a whole (ARD/ ZDF 2011), as is the case in Italy for Mediaset channels (Canale 5 reaches 37.6%, Italia 1 17% and Rete 4 7.7%) while Al-Jazeera achieves 1.8% (8% if we consider only migrants from Africa) and only 5.2% of migrants interviewed declare that they watch TV channels from their countries of origin (Bonerba 2012). Other research in Britain and Norway also suggests that media use among ethnic minorities is often multiple and that various satellite channels are viewed concurrently with national public and commercial channels (Dudrah 2005; Alghasi 2009).

Similarly, d'Haenens et al. (2004), charting the media menu' of youngsters of Turkish and Moroccan origins in the Netherlands and Flanders, found that public channels reach these groups less, suggesting this is partly due to discontent with the way in which they are represented on such channels. Moreover, research shows a clear preference among younger ethnic minority youth for imported 'global' drama shown on the commercial channels, a preference shared by the age group in general (Dhoest 2009; Elias and Lemish 2008; Nikunen 2008; Tufte 2001). This tendency is also confirmed by a recent survey, conducted in 2011, by the public broadcaster VRT in Dutchlanguage Belgium (Flanders), responding to the above-mentioned obligation to do minority audience research. The survey included 303 respondents, half of which were of Turkish and half were of Moroccan descent, these representing the largest groups of non-European ethnic minorities in Flanders (VRT and TNSMedia 2011). For TV, and despite all the public service efforts discussed above, the main commercial channel VTM is actually the best known of all channels, but this is also the case within the broader population. Particularly respondents of Turkish origin seem to know commercial channels better, while, conversely, respondents of Moroccan origin know the first public channel Eén best. This difference is also reflected in viewing patterns: while 74% of all Flemings regularly watch Eén, only 60% of the Moroccan respondents and 43% of the Turkish do. The main commercial channel VTM is more popular: 66% of the Moroccans and 55% of the Turks watch it regularly, as opposed to 53% in the total population. Other commercial channels also score higher than average among ethnic minority audiences, in particular among Moroccans, as Turks have more access to and often prefer Turkish channels (also for news, where Moroccans do

prefer the public channel Eén). Finally, when asked about their favourite channel, commercial channel VTM again comes out first, beaten only by two Turkish channels among the respondents of Turkish origin. For radio, a similar pattern is visible: the commercial channel Q Music is best known (something which is not true across the general population), and public channels are consistently less popular among the respondents of Turkish and Moroccan descent than in the general population. Despite the market leadership of public radio in Flanders, commercial channel Q Music is the favourite channel for most ethnic minority listeners.

While there is evidence that commercial channels are appreciated among ethnic minority audiences, we have to be cautious not to create a simplistic and reductionist view of ethnicity and the media. For one thing, there are important socioeconomic factors underlying data such as the Belgian example mentioned above, including age, level of education and employment. These factors could well explain many of the differences among the overall population mentioned above, as was also concluded in other research on Flemish ethnic minority media uses (e.g., Sinardet and Mortelmans 2006). Audiences are not 'determined' by the ethnic groups they belong to, and indeed, many of the younger ethnic minority members have Belgian nationality as well as hybrid or multiple cultural identifications. That being said, it is a fact that the Flemish public broadcaster, like other PSB operators across Europe, does not manage to appeal equally to the multitude of audiences it is charged to serve and represent. The increasing research focus on these groups is a first step towards a better understanding of the needs and wishes of ethnic minority audiences, which are more often than not invisible (and probably mostly absent) in industry research into media use.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION
Several studies 1... \*\* Several studies in Europe have documented the frustration experienced by minorities concerning the invisibility and inaccuracy of the ways in which they find themselves addressed or represented on national television (Weibull and Wadbring 1998; Sreberny 1999; Carøe Christiansen and Sell 2000; Ross and Playdon 2001; Mai 2005; Mano and Willems 2008; Alghasi 2009; Nikunen 2008, 2012). As PSB operations across Europe have increasingly embraced market values (which were previously already well established in some countries with mixed finance models), there is a risk that ethnic minority audiences remain disregarded completely. PSB has tended to give up special minority oriented programming replacing this policy with mainstreaming. Even though the examples mentioned above show how PSBs struggle to reach ethnic minority audiences, it is important that these organisations continue to elaborate new and efficient strategies, in order to properly fulfil their obligations. As the Belgian case shows, the viewing and listening patterns of audiences of Turkish and Moroccan descent underlines a preference for

commercial broadcasters. However, when explicitly asked which channel they think best represents different cultures and which channel gives the most correct representation of the Turkish and Moroccan communities in Flanders, the public channel Eén is clearly ranked first (VRT and TNSMedia 2011). This, again, highlights the irony of the matter: even when they recognise its efforts to address diversity, ethnic minority audiences still do not prefer public broadcasting. The absence of new policies may mean, in the worst case, that multicultural programmes are expected to emerge without any structural policy support. As gender studies have shown, a lack of policy for minority issues results in disappearance of special programming (Ruoho 2009).

On the other hand, commercial mainstream television may, in particular contexts, enhance diversity in terms of ethnic minority representations. We must remember, however, that these cases are distinctly bound by context, and it is important to notice that commercial mainstream television hardly offers any programming that caters for specific diasporic groups, even if such groups are large enough to attract at least some advertisers. In Finland, for example, the largest immigrant group, the Russian minority, already forms a financially viable target, but there are no programmes offered to this minority. Investment in ethnic minorities by commercial television seems to be realised through mainstream programming and due to the commitment of individual producers. With this kind of strategy, commercial television approaches ethnic minorities as part of the mainstream and therefore, perhaps paradoxically, avoids creating separate, differentiating programming that has been seen, to some extent, as problematic within PSB policies. However, commercial media do not invest specifically in ethnic minorities either, so in most cases these audiences are simply ignored as a result. Therefore, it would appear that, commercial mainstream media are following the path already chosen by PSB organisations: to offer cross-cultural programming that attracts wide audiences and in particular the trendy multicultural urban youth (Leurdijk 2006).

All these considerations suggest an overall mainstreaming of ethnic minorities in European television, whether it is public or private. Consequences of mainstreaming may include specific implications for the on-going development of nationhood, since the way national media address minorities is relevant to the sense of identity and belonging. Without proper investment in the needs of ethnic minority audiences by public or private media, and without the capability to address audiences as multicultural, national mainstream media face the risk of losing ethnic minority audiences altogether, as they choose the services offered by satellite and online media instead.

#### **NOTES**

1. For example, media use by Polish, Nigerian and Chinese in Ireland (Titley, Kerr and King-O'Riain 2010); media use by immigrants in Finland (Nikunen 2008; Maasilta 2010); media use in immigrant families in Sweden (Rydin and

- Sjöberg 2008); media use by Iranians in Norway (Alghasi 2009); media use among Iranian, Turkish, South Asian, Greek-Cypriot, Arab, Filipino, African, Indian or Punjabi communities in Britain (Sreberny 1999; Robins and Aksoy 2001; Tsagarousianou 2001; Georgiou 2001, 2012; Ong 2009; Bailey 2012; Harindranath 2000; Gillespie 1995).
- Public channels Eén and Ketnet/Canvas; commercial channels VTM, 2Be, VT4, VijfTV and Vitaya.
- 3. Interviews with three *Talent* producers were conducted by Kaarina Nikunen on 13 September 2011 and 4 and 25 October 2011, concerning the first three seasons of *Talent*. These semi-structured interviews were conducted over the phone and lasted 30–50 minutes. For reasons of anonymity, no name is mentioned.

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