

Thursday, June 21st 2007 14.30-15.15h

Media Integration – Ideas on this Concept among Turkish, Italian and Russian Migrants in Germany

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Media integration – our key concept – means integration of ethnic minorities into media system and public sphere. Media integration is a middle course between media assimilation (ethnic minorities are an assimilated part of the German public sphere) and media segregation (ethnic minorities are excluded from the German public sphere and use their own ethnic media). It is based on the principle of mutual communication and mutual knowledge of mainstream and minority cultures.

Based on the concept of media integration, we studied the media reception of 673 Turkish, 1023 Italian and 512 Russo-German migrants living in Germany and assigned them to the three mentioned models. In addition, we asked for their opinions on the coverage of ethnic minorities in German and ethnic media, and tried to find out if they share important demands derived from the concept of media integration (e.g. more participation and better coverage in German media).

Results - Of the three complexes media use, media content, and media production, the use made of the media corresponds most closely to our model of media integration. The majority of migrants makes use of both German and ethnic media. Thus, the German public sphere and ethnic sub-spheres are in general interconnected with one another. Only small minorities live in media ghettos. In contrast, media content – of both German and ethnic media – meets with a great deal of skepticism on the part of migrants. Mass media programs are judged to be substantially lacking in integrating effects. This sort of criticism is most common among Turks, most rare among Russo-Germans. Large segments of the Russo-German population have undergone assimilative media integration. Such differences can be plausibly explained by the hypothesis of cultural conflict: the more remote from one another the cultures of migrant and indigenous groups are, the more complications are involved in media integration. Migrants also note a distinct lack of integrating effects in the production of German mainstream mass media. For these groups, increased participation of migrants in media production is an important demand to counteract the dominance of negative images in the media's representation of migrants.

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