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*David Buckingham*

# CHILDREN AND MEDIA

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## ***David Buckingham:***

# **CHILDREN AND MEDIA OVERVIEW**

Centre for the Study of Children Youth and Media Institute of Education, University of London. (April 2002)

## **1. Globalisation, media and children's culture**

As we have seen in Part One of this report, academic discussions of globalisation and its consequences have been quite diverse – and in some areas, quite strongly contested. For some authors, globalisation is merely a further logical stage in the development of capitalist modernity; while for others, it represents a distinctive break with the past, as embodied in the form of the modern nation state. For some, it is primarily a cultural phenomenon, while for others it is essentially driven by economic and political forces. And while some are keen to celebrate the emergence of a new global dialogue that will create tolerance and mutual understanding, others see only an extension of already well-established relationships of oppression and inequality.

Interpretations of the role of the media in these developments have been equally double-edged. On the one hand, there are those who view media globalisation as the belated arrival of McLuhan's 'global village': it is seen to encourage the free flow of images and ideas, to offer new possibilities for self-expression, and to foster the development of cultural understanding. On the other are those who see it merely as a further extension of 'Coca-colonisation' – that is, as a form of cultural imperialism which merely consolidates the economic and ideological power of (primarily US-based) multinational corporations.

Clearly, there are elements of truth in both positions. The globalisation of media has been brought about not only by technological developments but also by the widespread acceptance of so-called 'free market' policies. In many countries, national public broadcasting has been undermined by deregulation and by the global move towards

commercially-provided media services. A growing proportion of the trade in global media markets is now dominated by a small number of vertically integrated, multi-media corporations, which national governments seem powerless to resist. The economic logic of these developments might be seen to result in a form of homogenisation – identified many years ago in the title of Jeremy Tunstall's book *The Media Are American* (1977). And there is little doubt that media globalisation is a deliberate cultural and ideological strategy on the part of the major superpowers of the post-War period – most obviously the United States, and more recently Japan.

On the other hand, globalisation also reflects the fact that companies are now conceiving of their markets in international rather than national terms. Viable global audiences can be constituted from groups which in national contexts are perceived merely as 'minorities', and therefore tend to be poorly served.

As we shall see, this has particular consequences for migrant communities. At least in some areas, consumer culture also plays a significant role in the reassertion (or indeed the invention) of local or national traditions: 'ethnic' culture – for example in the form of so-called 'World Music' or 'heritage culture' – becomes internationally marketable, albeit often only in more palatable forms. Meanwhile, some technological developments – particularly the internet – represent a fundamental decentralisation of control over the means of cultural expression and dissemination. And here again, migrant communities have been among the first to realise their potential for transnational or 'diasporic' communication.

As this implies, globalisation is more accurately seen as a reconfiguration of the relations between the global and the local, rather than simply as a matter of the global destroying the local. Yet however we perceive it, the globalisation of media has significant consequences in terms of cultural identities (Morley and Robins, 1995). For example, public broadcasting has traditionally been seen as a means of unifying the nation, overcoming inequalities and differences of cultural capital, and providing access to a shared public sphere. The growing commercialisation of media could be seen to undermine this project – and in the process, it may result in a redefinition of the citizen as merely a consumer. Yet commercial competition and the necessity of 'niche marketing' may also encourage the recognition of cultural difference and diversity, and create the possibility for more plural public spheres. The advent of transnational broadcasting may

have similarly contradictory consequences. For older generations of migrants, the media may continue to serve as a key resource in maintaining the 'imagined community' of the home nation – and may therefore make it more difficult for host nations to assimilate them into the dominant national culture. Yet particularly for younger generations, the diversification of media may create the possibility of new hybrid or 'cosmopolitan' identities that offer greater fluidity and diversity of cultural expression. In this process, the distinction between the global and the local may be harder to sustain, since each is necessarily defined and experienced through the other; and in the era of instantaneous digital communication, 'locality' (and related terms like 'community') can no longer be defined simply as a matter of geographical proximity.

Generational or age differences may be particularly significant in this respect (Drotner, 2001a). In terms of broadcasting, for example, the most popular programmes among adults generally remain those which are produced in the home country; although this is less the case with children and young people, whose preference for imported programming may represent a more general rejection of the somewhat paternalistic – or simply less expensively-produced – approach of much domestic material. Likewise, children and young people are likely to be the most enthusiastic users of new media technologies, particularly those (like the internet and mobile phones) that offer possibilities for interpersonal communication. In these respects, the international dissemination of media has undoubtedly encouraged the emergence of global youth cultures (and children's cultures) that transcend national and cultural differences. Here again, some have welcomed these developments as evidence of a growing 'global consciousness' among the young (Taspcott, 1998); while others fear that the continuities between generations may have been lost – and that children today may have more in common with children in other countries than they do with their own parents (Ohmae, 1995).

Of course, the reality is more complex and diverse. Children are not passive recipients of transnational media output: like adults, they interpret and 'filter' global media through their own local cultural experiences (Tomlinson, 1991). For example, global studies of the reception of the American soap opera *Dallas*, conducted in the 1980s, showed that the programme was attributed with very different ideological meanings, and responded to in very different ways, by different national and ethnic groups (Ang, 1985; Liebes and Katz,

1990; Silj, 1992). Furthermore, different cultures continue to perceive and define 'childhood' in diverse ways, not least in terms of the kind of access children gain to the media (Stephens, 1995).

Two recent international studies address some of these issues in contrasting ways. The Global Disney Project studied the reception of Disney texts and products in a variety of national contexts – albeit primarily among young adults, rather than children (Wasko, Phillips and Meehan, 2001). While there were several differences among the countries studied, Disney was found to be globally pervasive; and there was also a broad consensus about the 'values' that the company was seen to purvey. Yet the study also suggests that there is considerable resistance to Disney, and particularly to its perceived 'commercialism', even among its most enthusiastic consumers. In terms of cultural identity, there was frequently a degree of ambivalence here. While a minority rejected Disney as a force of 'Americanization', others saw it as representing universal values rather than culturally specific ones. However, most read Disney more selectively, rejecting negative aspects as 'American', while simultaneously celebrating positive aspects as universal – or at least as being more in line with their own national cultures. The 'Americanness' of Disney was often recuperated – or in some instances, simply ignored. As one of the young Danish respondents in Drotner's (2001b) study put it, 'Donald [Duck] seems so Danish'.

While it had fewer directly comparative intentions, the Pokémon Project also considered the reception of global (in this case, Japanese) children's culture in several countries – in this instance, focusing primarily on children themselves (Tobin, 2002). Again, there is evidence here that children selectively interpret and use global products in the light of their own cultural traditions and priorities; that the products can serve as a form of 'common culture' that is shared between different cultural groups; and indeed that the products themselves are already to some extent 'hybridised' at the point of production or distribution, in order to make them accessible or adaptable to local markets. The detailed ethnographic studies undertaken here suggest that some children manipulate, adapt and play with the artefacts of global culture in creative – and in some instances, subversive – ways. On the other hand, of course, all this could be seen merely as testament to the power of the market: children may all be active consumers, busily creating their own



meanings, but ultimately they are all consuming the same things. Yet the rapid demise of Pokémon – and the failure of many similar attempts to generate children's 'crazes' - also suggests that children are far from merely passive victims of global marketing.

## **2. Media and childhood: a European perspective**

As this discussion implies, children's experiences of media are characterised by a complex interaction between the global and the local. As such, we should expect there to be some significant differences – as well as similarities - in the media experiences of children in the European member states. Although our research is not primarily comparative, the reviews contained in this part of the report clearly illustrate this. Different media systems, as well as different definitions of childhood, mean that children do still live in distinctive 'media cultures' that combine the global and the local in quite particular ways. The recent Europe-wide comparative study *Children and their Changing Media Environment* (Livingstone and Bovill, 2001) quantifies and explores many of these similarities and differences in great detail. These researchers see children's media use as a phenomenon that is situated in the context of other social activities; and as such, it can only be understood in the light of broader social and cultural differences. Thus, the media that are available to children depend upon factors such as the size of the country or the language community (and hence the ability to sustain national production) and the average level of income among the population, as well as on policies concerned with media regulation and technological innovation. Family structures and education systems vary between countries, creating different opportunities and constraints in terms of children's leisure experiences. The ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of the population is also significant here – as is the extent to which that diversity is acknowledged in cultural policy in the first place. All these factors affect the kinds of media that are available, and the extent to which children can gain access to them. Among the 12 countries they studied, the authors identify four broad 'clusters', as follows:

1. Countries with a strong focus on national television and relatively low dissemination of new technologies: Spain, Italy and France.
2. Countries with a multi-channel environment and moderate uses of new technologies, but with different preferences regarding television and newspapers: Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and Israel.

3. Countries that are pioneers of new technologies, but are integrating them within a media environment focused primarily on newspapers and radio, rather than television: the Netherlands and the Nordic countries.
4. The United Kingdom, which combines a strong orientation towards television with relatively high figures for new technologies.

These differences clearly reflect several of the broader cultural differences identified above. Thus, countries with smaller language communities seem not to define screen media as inherently inferior to print media, and hence to be more enthusiastic about ICTs; whereas larger countries tend to have more invested in older, nationally-based media. Language is also a crucial variable in the response to globalisation: children in countries with smaller language communities tend to favour imported TV programmes, whereas those in larger communities (where more funding can be invested in production) are more inclined to favour domestically-produced material. Meanwhile, children in more 'family-oriented' cultures tend to have less private access to media, as compared with those in more 'peer-oriented' cultures, where a media-rich 'bedroom culture' tends to dominate. Countries with strong national policies on ICT provision tend to be ahead of others in this respect; although in some instances, there are discrepancies between provision in the home and in school.

Despite these differences, the study identifies a number of general patterns that seem to apply across Europe. These include:

- The increasingly restricted, domestic character of children's leisure time
- The 'privatisation' of children's media use, via the provision of television and other media in the bedroom
- Inequalities of access to new media (ICTs) in the home, in terms of socioeconomic status
- Gender differences in terms of uses and preferences for particular media or genres
- The ongoing struggle for control over access to media between parents and children
- The continuing dominance of television, and the exponential take-up of digital media.

In general, the study concludes that children in the industrialised countries of western Europe are increasingly participating in a global or transnational culture of childhood and youth. Indeed, several of the differences they identify may already have become less significant since this research was undertaken in 1997.

Several of the observations made in this research are confirmed by the national surveys contained in Part One of this report, along with some additional observations. In general, the picture is one of growing use of global cultures reflected in imported television or cable and satellite, both for children and adults; in the important place of computer games, in most cases more prominent than the use of PCs; and in growing access to the Internet. At the same time, we can at least speculate that in many cases (shared gaming, mobile phone use, chatrooms) the new media are increasingly amenable to user-determined, local social uses and needs.

Inequality of access across age and socio-economic groups is confirmed in this report, though with wide variations across the countries represented.

Levels of access to all media are generally higher in the UK, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands; and across age groups, with growing numbers of children owning their own televisions and, increasingly, computers. By contrast, in Italy and Greece, though access to television is also available in almost all households, access to computers is much lower, and access to the Internet lower still. There is some evidence that availability of computers at school can improve access for children in Greece, allowing up to half of children to use computers; though even in schools, levels of access to new technologies are reported as much lower than elsewhere in the EU. Also, there is no reliable data to suggest how school-based ICTs might provide access to specific uses young people might require; or how they might redress imbalanced access for particular social groups or for girls. The impact of socio-economic status on media access is, again, much more marked in Greece, where poverty extensively limits ownership of new technologies, than in, say, Sweden, where a majority of families who measure lowest on socio-economic indicators have computers in the home. It may be the case that the picture in Italy is similar to that in Greece; though, since the focus and extent of research is different in each of the countries, it is difficult to draw this comparison with confidence.

The dominance of television is also confirmed in this report, though with considerable variation in the balance of domestic as against imported programming, access to cable and satellite provision, and provision of programming for children, both domestic and imported. For instance, UK cable/satellite packages have at least six dedicated children's channels, whereas four children's satellite channels are available in Italy and the

Netherlands; and only one in Greece. Domestic public service production for children has a long tradition in the UK, and in Sweden, where children will watch Swedish programmes by choice, especially soap operas. In the Netherlands, the evidence suggests that younger children's viewing is often steered towards children's programmes on the public (non-commercial) channels, whereas older children watch more of the imported children's channels. However, children's viewing preferences generally are moving both towards imported children's programmes, and towards programming for a general or adult audience, whether domestic or imported. These trends were generally reported across this study. This is even more the case where domestic output is small, as in Greece.

Access to and use of video games varies. In all countries except Sweden, games feature more prominently in the lives of young people than computers, though this ranges from a fairly mixed picture in the UK to a marked distinction in Greece, where PC access is lowest but 91% of 11-15 year-olds play games. In Sweden, the picture is reversed, with the highest PC access, and a far smaller proportion playing games. Games are the only new medium where use is higher than ownership, reflecting the social context of gaming, both in arcades and with children playing in each others' homes. The other technology clearly rooted in forms of social exchange is the use of mobile phones, again widely reported across the study.

Regulatory regimes also vary across the countries, though some form of regulation intended to protect children operates in all of them. This ranges from a low (but increasing) regulatory regime in the Netherlands, which has only recently introduced a TV rating system; through broad indications of timing for children's programming, including threshold times in the UK and Italy; to strict categorisation of programmes in Greece, along with strict restrictions on the advertising of children's toys. (This in turn has had a limiting effect on the extent of cable and satellite broadcasting for children, due to their loss of advertising revenue).

Finally, the notion of children as producers of media also varies considerably across the countries participating in the project (see part 3 of this report). In Greece and Italy, there is little evidence of child-production in any medium being recognised in any sustained way. To a greater or lesser extent, this is true of social and educational policy elsewhere also; though one-off media production community projects are reported in Germany, the UK

and the Netherlands sometimes addressing specific social concerns; and Sweden alone reports a mandatory element of media production in its educational programme across the age phases although schools based media production work is increasing in both the Netherlands and the UK. There is some evidence that, in Germany, the UK, the Netherlands and Sweden, new technologies offer greater possibilities for the creation and exhibition of children's media texts than the (still dominant) broadcast media.

### **3. Childhood, migration and media**

One of the notable absences in the European comparative study described above (Livingstone and Bovill, 2001) is that of migrant children: indeed, 'race' or ethnicity do not seem to feature as variables in any of the national studies. As the following surveys in this report suggest, this is not unrepresentative of research in this field in general. There are very few studies that have looked in any detail at the media experiences of migrant children (or even 'ethnic minority' children more broadly). In this section, we look first at the nature of provision for migrant communities in general, both in mainstream and in specialist media; and secondly at patterns of use.

#### **3.1 Provision**

Several of our country surveys touch on the debate about 'ethnic minority' or 'multicultural' media, both on mainstream channels and in the form of specialist cable/satellite channels, or in other media. As Riggins (1992) suggests, 'ethnic minority media' may have a dual role. They can function as a means of cultural maintenance or survival – although in doing so, they clearly need to recognise cultural change as well as cultural tradition. On the other hand, they can also function - however unintentionally – as a means of assimilation, in so far as they enable minorities to inform themselves about the dominant values and practices of the host society. These functions apply – albeit in different ways - both to immigrant groups and to indigenous or 'aboriginal' minorities, whose claims to cultural and linguistic protection may be perceived as more valid by the majority population. As Riggins suggests, the balance between these two roles and the ways in which they may be combined is likely to change over time; and it is clearly dependent upon issues such as the training of media workers, the organisational structure of media companies and the existence of support from the state or from social movements.

While mainstream channels in Europe – particularly public service stations – have made attempts to provide specialist programming for particular groups over the years (Husband, 1994), this has frequently been criticised as tokenistic and inadequate. Meanwhile, ethnic minority producers and audiences are both keen to see greater representation in mainstream programmes, not least because they believe this serves an educational function for the population as a whole (Ross, 2000). Ethnic minority audiences clearly do not wish to be ‘ghettoised’ – although as audiences for television and other media have become increasingly fragmented, the notion that the media might serve as a form of social integration may itself be somewhat outdated (Mullan, 1996).

This debate also applies to the provision of specialist cable/satellite channels. As Frachon and Vergaftig (1995) point out, the existence of more than 13 million people ‘of foreign origin’ across Europe represents a lucrative market for niche channels – and indeed the growth of television channels and other media catering for minorities could be seen as an ironic consequence of media deregulation (Tsagarousianou, 1999). Economic and technological developments suggest that there is likely to be even greater segmentation of the audience in the coming years, not just along the lines of ethnicity, but also in terms of generational differences (Husband, 1998). Yet while subscriptions to specialised channels and the readership of ‘ethnic’ newspapers have grown steadily – and the media outlets themselves have proliferated – there is concern among ethnic minority groups that they may come to serve as a substitute for more satisfactory representation in the mainstream media (Mercer, 1989).

A more frequent concern among elements of the majority community is that these channels may undermine their attempts at assimilation. In Germany, for example, there has been concern that older Turkish migrants are choosing to retreat into their own ‘private media world’ rather than participating in mainstream (that is, German) social life (see Aksoy and Robins, 2000: 344). Similar concerns have been voiced in relation to Islamic groups in France (see Hargreaves, 2001: 197) – although these complaints appear to blame migrants themselves for their failure to assimilate.

Aksoy and Robins (2000) argue that – at least in the case of Turkish television – the picture is more complex. These channels do not in fact offer an homogeneous image of the Turkish homeland, catering to traditional (and supposedly nostalgic) ideas of the

'imagined community'. On the contrary, the commercial channels in particular offer diverse images of life in modern Turkey, and thereby enable Turkish migrants to create more flexible, 'cosmopolitan' identities. How far this argument applies to other migrant groups – for example, those whose home countries may have less developed media industries – is open to question, however. Aksoy and Robins also seem to promote a rather benign view of Turkish diversity (they do not discuss the blocking of Kurdish satellite signals by the Turkish in the UK, for example), and do not address the need for television that addresses the specific experiences of migrants.

Ultimately, these channels – like niche channels in general – are subject to the commercial logic of global media markets. As Mullan (1996) points out, the high start-up costs of such channels mean that they tend to operate by recycling old material (particularly music, soap operas and movies), or constantly repeating newer programmes (although of course this is a feature of cable/satellite channels in general). In some instances, they are able to rely on the enormous stock of films and programmes from countries like India and Hong Kong, which may be particularly attractive for first-generation immigrants; but second-generation immigrants also wish to see the realities of their current lives represented in locally-produced programming (Frachon and Vergafig, 1995; Mullan, 1996: 30). Yet in a more crowded, competitive market, the funding of local programming is bound to remain limited; and as Tsagarousianou (1999) indicates, economic pressures seem to result in a homogenising of diverse communities. Yet while some of these channels are owned by powerful global players (e.g. Murdoch's Star TV), they can nevertheless provide a powerful alternative to the mainstream channels – not just in the host country, but also in the home country. In this respect, the controversy surrounding the role of the Arabic channel, Al-Jazeera in the recent Afghan war is a telling case in point.

Our country surveys provide further evidence regarding the diverse and uneven nature of media provision for ethnic minority and migrant groups. Several of the reports mention a tension between the use of media for assimilation and for cultural maintenance both on the part of providers and users. In Germany, for example, the minimal state broadcasting aimed at the Turkish community, broadly with a social education aim, has declined as satellite take up has increased. In the Netherlands there is no specialist public service



minority programming but general programming has a multicultural gloss and presenters from minority backgrounds are now widely found. Local radio and television cable stations provide specialist programmes and there is widespread use of satellite programmes from home countries. Turkish families in particular use satellite access for a wide range of programmes, especially news (to get a different view) and sport. In Sweden there is official recognition of the need for multicultural media output but its provision is minimal, and there is a recognition that minorities will use both local and global television. However, in both Greece (Albanians and Russians) and Sweden (Finnish and Lappish) large and socially significant minorities which have the potential to put political and social pressure on government have achieved some specialist public service provision. On the other hand minorities which do not form either a lucrative global niche market nor a significant group in the host countries, such as the Moroccan Berber speakers in the Netherlands, have little choice. In the UK the tension between media ghettoisation or specialism and the desire to reflect a culturally diverse society is acute. These issues are only beginning to be discussed in those countries of new immigration, such as Greece and Italy. However, nearly all the reports, including those from Greece and Italy, reflect the difficulties of separating ethnicity from other variables. Both socio-economic status and gender are significant factors in youth access to new technologies, for example. There are also some universals. Soaps, both national and global were among the most popular programmes crossing national and ethnic divides.

The debate on these issues implicitly raises broader issues to do with access to the public sphere. The presence of diverse ethnic voices within the public sphere potentially disrupts the seamless production of the 'imagined community' of the nation. Yet the question of how ethnicity itself is defined and recognised in debates around media policy is very complex. 'Ethnic groups' are clearly heterogeneous in themselves; and ethnicity is only one dimension of identity, that is likely to come into play (and indeed be deliberately invoked) in specific situations for specific purposes (Husband, 1994). As such, it could be argued that there is no such thing as an essential ethnicity – or a singular 'ethnic experience' – that can be unproblematically represented or reflected in the media.

At the same time, it is vital that the increased provision for ethnic minorities is not seen to sanction a form of 'media apartheid'. Traditional notions of a single national 'public sphere'



may be giving way to a more pluralistic conception of multiple public spheres (Cunningham, 2001); yet there is clearly a need for ongoing dialogue, not just within ethnic groups, but also between them – and of course, between minority groups and the majority population as well. As Husband (1998: 31) suggests, ‘a viable multi-ethnic public sphere... requires both a media infrastructure that can address and reflect the interests of specific ethnic communities, and media which facilitate dialogue and engagement across ethnic boundaries’.

### **3.2 Use**

As we have implied above, there are likely to be different patterns of media use among different generations of migrants. To some degree, these differences might appear to follow the ‘logic of assimilation’. Hargreaves and Mahdjoub (1997), for example, found that while parents in Maghrebi families were tuning in to Arabic-language satellite channels, their children were more interested in French stations. Similar patterns are reflected to some degree in the contributions in this part of the report. In Germany younger generation Turkish and Italian migrants tend to watch more German programmes than their parents and this is seen by some as an indication of greater participation, even if passive, in German society.

However, as several of the studies cited in our review also suggest, this ‘generation gap’ is not always quite so straightforward. Children and young people may turn to the media of the host country for some purposes, and to transnational media for others; and this is likely to depend upon a range of factors, not least those of production quality. The overwhelming impression is that the younger generations are taking a pick and mix approach. Where they have access they do watch transnational satellite or local specialist programming (often for language retention) but not as intensively as their parents, often preferring to watch host national programming. Studies in the Netherlands indicate that historical connections to the host countries are significant here, with the viewing patterns of younger migrants from former colonies being closer to Dutch youth than those from countries with no such connection. The German report notes the important role that music plays in this pick and mix approach and the development of hybrid and new music styles. The UK report points out that for second generation migrants there is a feeling that neither

the 'home' transnational broadcasts nor the host country programming really meet their needs.

Aside from these accounts of patterns of media use, there appear to be very few studies of media interpretation among migrant groups. Nevertheless, some studies do offer some suggestive hypotheses. Aksoy and Robins (2000), for example, suggest that the migrant viewing experience may be qualitatively different from the non-migrant experience. They refute the idea that migrants viewing transnational television are straightforwardly and unproblematically 'keeping in touch with home' – and hence that television functions as a kind of 'cultural holding device'. By contrast, they argue that migrant viewers (in this case, adults) are more self-aware and ambivalent about this experience, moving between emotional engagement and distanced critique.

These authors are not alone in pointing to the role of the media in developing 'hybrid' or 'cosmopolitan' identities (cf. Hannerz, 1996). In the Australian context, for example, Cunningham (2001) has analysed the use of 'hybrid' popular media forms among migrant youth – forms which, they argue, are more relevant to them than the more traditional aestheticised forms favoured by their parents. According to these authors, these media generate a 'sophisticated cosmopolitanism'; and, as in Aksoy and Robins study, it is the commercially-produced rather than the 'official' state-sponsored media that appear to offer most potential in this respect. Likewise, Gillespie's (1995) study of South Asian youth in London points to the role of the media in the construction of assertive hybrid identities – 'new ethnicities' – which are not simply a form of assimilation to the dominant culture. In relation to children, Drotner (2001a) raises the issue of how 'otherness' is perceived by migrant viewers. As she suggests, there are many different types of 'otherness' potentially at stake here; and it would be a mistake to conceive either of the dominant 'host' culture or of the minority 'foreign' culture as somehow homogeneous and utterly distinct from each other.

Generally speaking, however, we still have very little evidence about how migrant children make sense of the range of media representations available to them. For many, their media experiences are likely to be a complex mixture of the global and the local. They may share aspects of global media culture (Disney or Pokémon) with children from the host culture – even though these texts may be equally alien to both groups. Ironically,

such material may provide just as much connection with their memories of their home country as the programming on specialist satellite channels. The particular combination of cultural specificity and universality ('otherness' and 'sameness') of a global production like *The Simpsons* may paradoxically unite Turkish children living in Germany both with their German peers and with their cousins back home in Turkey – and potentially with children in England or in Hong Kong or in Nigeria. Quite how they might interpret such a text – not least (in this instance) in the light of their own very different experiences of family life – and how they might discuss it with their friends and family is the kind of issue that researchers have barely begun to address.

#### **4. From consumption to production**

The large majority of studies referred to in this part of the report are concerned with media consumption. Yet – at least in principle - new media technologies offer significant new opportunities for young people to engage in media production in their own right. The retail price of video camcorders, digital cameras and multimedia PCs has steadily fallen as their capabilities have increased; and at least in principle, the internet represents a means of communication and distribution that is no longer exclusively controlled by a small elite. In the process, it is argued, the boundaries between production and consumption, and between mass communication and interpersonal communication, are beginning to break down. More and more teenagers have home computers in their bedrooms that can be used to create music, to manipulate images or to edit video to a relatively professional standard. These technologies also permit a highly conscious, and potentially subversive, manipulation of commercially-produced media texts, for example through sampling and re-editing found material, alongside 'original' creative production. In the process, they make a mockery of copyright and of notions of intellectual property.

Of course, it is important not to exaggerate the scale of these developments. Even in the industrialised countries of Western Europe, only a minority of children are regular users of the internet, for example. Likewise, very few children are exploiting the creative potential of digital media: their home computers are primarily used for playing games and for word-processing homework (Sefton-Green and Buckingham, 1998). Levels of access will certainly increase significantly in the coming years, as prices fall; yet there is also a growing polarisation here between the 'technology rich' and the 'technology poor'. In the

UK, for example, fewer than half as many workingclass children have access to a PC at home, as compared with middle-class children; while the percentage with internet links is one tenth of the figure for middle-class children (Livingstone and Bovill, 2001). As with other new technologies (not least television in the 1950s), those with greater disposable income are almost always the 'early adopters': they have newer and more powerful equipment, and more opportunities to develop the skills and competencies that are needed to use it.

Despite these developments, there has been very little discussion in the research literature of children's involvement in media production. The international contributors to Livingstone and Bovill's (2001) comparative study, for example, make no mention of children's access to cameras, video camcorders or the production possibilities of multimedia computers. Yet such work clearly is taking place, in the context of the home, in 'informal' educational settings such as youth projects, and in the more 'formal' context of media education in schools. Our appendix describes a range of such projects; and others have been previously identified elsewhere (Feilitzen and Carlsson, 1999; Vergaftig, 1996).

As yet, most research in this field has focused on the uses of media production in educational contexts; and this has been particularly evident in countries with a relatively strong tradition of media education (see the reports on Germany and the UK). Accounts of more 'spontaneous' or 'informal' media production by young people have been few and far between; and those that do exist are brief and largely descriptive (Feilitzen and Carlsson, 1999).

Perhaps the most obvious precedent for the CHICAM project was the VideoCulture project, directed by our German partner Professor Horst Niesyto (see Buckingham, 2001; Niesyto, forthcoming). VideoCulture was an international research project which set out to explore the potential of audio-visual media production as a means of intercultural communication. The project investigated how young people from different countries produce, exchange and interpret each other's video productions. The research aimed to discover whether there were any forms of transcultural audio-visual language in these productions, and how young people's competencies in media production might be developed and enhanced. The exchange and mutual interpretation of these films represented an 'encounter with others' and showed in different ways the need for

communication on an aesthetic level as well as on the level of meaning. By focusing on visual and symbolic forms of expression, the project aimed to open up new possibilities for young people to express their emotions, moods, experiences and fantasies through images and music. VideoCulture thus offered an approach to intercultural communication through media that largely bypassed verbal language, and moved beyond 'logocentric' models of communication. The CHICAM research represents an opportunity to extend and develop the approaches of this earlier project, both by developing a more systematic set of connections between a broader range of countries and by making use of new technologies for distribution and communication between the participants. It also focuses specifically on migrant young people, and thereby attempts to make good at least some of the absences in previous research identified in this report. Perhaps above all, it aims to develop a model of educational and cultural practice that will empower these young people themselves, and make it possible for their voices to be heard more directly and forcefully within the public domain.

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## ***Peter Holzwarth and Bjorn Maurer:***

### **CHILDREN AND MEDIA - GERMANY**

Department of Media Education/Media Centre, University of Ludwigsburg. (April 2002)

#### **1. The media landscape**

##### **1.1 Facts and figures**

Most private (commercial) and public television channels in Germany broadcast programmes at specific times that are intended for children (e.g. "Sesamstraße" (Sesame Street), "Sandmännchen" or "Teletubbies"). In particular, RTL 2, a private channel, offers a large number of children's programmes, and the "Children's Channel", sees itself as *the* channel exclusively for children. In South Germany there is a radio station named "Das Ding" which broadcasts programmes for children and adolescents. A children's news programme named "Logo" (ZDF, Second German Broadcasting Company) has become fairly wellknown. However, Aufenanger concludes, as a result of his analysis of "children's

programmes” as a whole and of a survey of experts that: “programmes for children, and programmes that children enjoy watching often, are not identical” (Aufenanger 1998, p. 235). Children and Media, KIM '99, is a basis study of 6 – 13 year olds’ use of media in Germany. The study shows how well-equipped the families are, and that the children grow up in a living environment full of media. This fact alone does not, of course, tell us if and when they use them. The data on media which the children own personally is a clearer indication of this.

Media equipment owned by children (with German family background) in percentages (according to parent/guardian)

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>
Walkman/Discman	54	53	54
Portable radio	41	40	43
Television set	29	27	32
Video game equipment	28	22	34
Stereo system	28	28	27
CD Player	26	28	24
Computer	11	8	14
Video recorder	10	8	11

(KIM '99, p. 56)

Almost a third of the children owns a television set. It is noticeable that more boys than girls possess a computer and/or video game equipment.

When asked which were their favourite kinds of television programmes, 25% replied children’s programmes, 23% daily soaps, 18% cartoon films and 16% television series. Children’s series are, as might be expected, very popular with younger children, whereas



daily soaps are more popular among the older ones. (ibid., p. 16). 80% watched video cassettes (ibid., p. 25).

Music and sound equipment are so far the second most frequently used medium. According to a report by the Institute for Applied Children's Media Research (IfaK) in Stuttgart, almost fifty percent of all children aged between three and thirteen listen to either music cassettes or CDs every day. In the KIM study 2000 52% of the children who were interviewed said that they listened to cassettes and compact discs at least once a week (KIM-2000, p. 8). As regards computers and the internet, the KIM-2000 study (covering all of the Federal Republic) revealed a considerable increase in the use of these media:

"Whilst 34% of the six and seven year-olds are computer users, among the twelve to thirteen year-olds the figure rises to 80%. 16% of the children interviewed said that using the computer was their favourite leisure activity; almost twice as many as the year before. "Meeting friends" (40%) and "watching television" were, at the same time, in first and second place on the list of favourite leisure activities. Almost a third of the PC-users said they had experience of using the internet; three times as many as in 1999. Three quarters of the internet users in 2000 were ten or older and the boys slightly outnumbered the girls (57% to 47%).

## **1.2 Migration and Media**

People from migrant backgrounds have only recently come into focus as media users and culture producers. Migrants are also an important target group for the media and in the field of culture (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Ausländerfragen 2000, p. 164 ff.). According to Eckhardt (2000, p. 265) the significance for migrants of using media to become integrated in their host country is often not sufficiently recognised. The collection of essays "Migranten und Medien. Neue Herausforderungen an die Integrationsfunktion von Presse und Rundfunk" ("Migrants and Media. A new challenge to press and broadcasting in their function as integrators") deals exclusively with questions concerning the possibilities of integration through and with media (Schatz/Holtz-Bacha/Nieland 1999).

The non-German-speaking media landscape is diverse. There is a variety of auditory and audiovisual media material on offer. The 'official' public radio stations produce

programmes in languages other than German for specific minority groups. Since 1996 15 television programmes in Turkish go on the air regularly (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1998, p. 72). 99% of all Turkish households in Germany possess a television, 74% have a video recorder, 44% are able to watch cable tv, and 71% satellite. (Zentrum für Türkeistudien 1996<sup>1</sup> in: Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1998, p. 72). Additionally, so-called 'open channels' have come into existence which consider themselves to be a medium for citizens and which offer people from migrant backgrounds the opportunity to express themselves through their own self-made productions (cf. Kamp 1989).

According to a study carried out by the West German Broadcasting Company (WDR), television' consumption is higher among allochthonous users than among autochthonous (Holzapfel 1999, p. 108). In families with a Turkish migration background, in particular, the television is often on all day (ibid.). Young people from migration contexts come closer in their viewing habits to those of their German counterparts and programmes from their countries of origin are watched less often (ibid.). The medium of television is favoured by many migrants because a lack of language competency can be compensated through visual information (cf. Eckhardt 2000, p. 268). The interest in foreign language programmes on German television (designed to help migrants with insufficient knowledge of German to get to know the country), which was initially quite high, fell when programmes from the migrants' country of origin could be transmitted here via satellite (Eckhardt 2000, S. 269).

The medium of video plays a cardinal role in families with a migration background. Videos in the language of the country of origin are used on purpose to help the children retain their competence in their native language (Holzapfel 1999, p. 110). Media which can store material are of particular importance as they make it possible to re-play media products from the country of origin (Eckhardt 2000, p. 268).

It is, on the one hand, conceivable that concentrating on programmes from the culture of origin whilst at the same time ignoring programmes in German, could endanger or hinder the integration process (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend

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1 In the survey of media use among people from Turkish migration contexts in Germany 2,052 private households were contacted by phone (Güntürk 2000, S. 272).

1998, p. 72 ff.; Eckhardt 2000, p. 270). On the other hand, access to media productions from the country of origin can be the means of staying, culturally and linguistically, in contact with one's homeland and hence of strengthening one's sense of identity (cf. Holzapfel 1999, p. 108). In their study "Media Use and the Integration of the Turkish Minority in Germany"<sup>2</sup> Weiß and Trebbe interpret the appropriation of German language media as "a form of passive social participation in German society" (Weiß & Trebbe 2001, p. 5).

## **2. Research paradigms, methods and issues**

### **2.1 Theoretical Approaches**

In the field of media education, the current leading idea could be described as the concept of "media competence" (Schell/Stolzenburg/Theunert 1999). The focus is less on the question: "What do media do to people?" and far more on: "What do people do with media?"<sup>3</sup>. Media competence is not limited solely to technical know-how, but can be understood as a part of general, overall communication competency and includes, according to Baacke, media criticism, media use and media production (Weidemann 200, p.4). As regards the question of the effect of media, the view of the media user and his/her socio-cultural reception context and conditions of acquisition has shifted. The behaviourist-based picture of the relationship between media and user as stimulus-response and a relatively simple cause and effect mechanism has been replaced by the idea of the user as a competent, active<sup>4</sup> subject, who directs his/her attention to the media for reasons of personal interest or need (at a particular stage in his/her development). The user chooses from the media meanings on offer, selectively acquires them and constructs her/his own subjective connotations (summary: Vollbrecht 2001). Most media research studies so far have been in the field of reception. Self-made media productions by children and adolescents are an integral part of media education and there are various reports on pilot projects. Systematic scientific research in this area is, however, lacking. Exceptions

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2 The study maintains that it is representative of the Turkish inhabitants from the age of fourteen upwards in private households. At the end of 2000 1,842 people aged fourteen and over were interviewed (face to face) (Weiß & Trebbe 2001, p. 6).

3 Charlton & Neumann-Braun (1992, p. 24) contrast the image of a "passive recipient and the effect of the medium" with an "active recipient and use of the medium".

4 Winter (1995) emphasises the activity of the recipient; cf. also Bachmair (1996) on the process of media-transmitted constitution of meaning using television as an example.

in the field of practical media work with children are, for example, the research work by Neuss (1999) and the studies based on the project “Eigenproduktionen mit Medien” (self-made media productions) (Niesyto 2001a).

## 2.2 Research Paradigms

Research approaches which concentrate solely on the media product (e.g. content analyses) have an inherent difficulty, in that it is barely possible to make any claims or statements about the process of appropriation (Charlton & Neumann 1990, p. 13; Göttlich 1999, p. 39). For this reason it is important to look at the processes of reception and appropriation empirically. A few of the relevant approaches are briefly described below:

**Socialisation theory concepts** emphasise the increasing significance of the media as socializing agents besides the family, school and peer group. The concept of “self socialization” highlights the possibility of children taking an active part in the process of socialisation and becoming a member of a social group (Fromme et al 1999). The **socio-ecological approach** puts the emphasis on the environmental, temporal and social context of media use (Baacke et al 1990). This approach looks at the importance of media-structured spaces (e.g. discotheques) and the varying degrees of media structuring in living environments. The **biographical media approach** (cf. Vollbrecht 2001) examines the role, function and significance of media in relation to a person’s life in its chronological development. The idea that certain life stages involve certain developmental challenges and that experience with media can act as a trigger to work them through is also a part of this approach.

**Structural analysis of reception** (cf. Charlton/Schneider 1997) considers the use of media as a multi-layered process in which a socially situated and biographically formed/influenced recipient interprets what is offered by the media according to his or her background. Media reception is seen as a mediating activity between social structures and subjective action and is analysed in relation to Piaget’s thoughts on child development, Kohlberg’s stage theory of social cognition and moral action, as well as Chomsky’s structural-generative theories of language.

Research into **self-made media productions** works from the assumption that researchers rely upon the children’s and adolescents’ current modes of expression and on

their self-made media productions (e.g. children's drawings, photographs, self-made videos) in order to come closer to – in the ethnographic sense – these subjective living environments and media worlds (Niesyto 2001a; 2001b). This approach, then, moves from analysis of media reception to observation and analysis of media production.

Theoretical concepts and studies from the field of **Cultural Studies** have been adopted in Germany and media research has been conducted in this area (Mikos 1994, Hepp 1998, Hepp & Winter 1999). Hepp (1999; 1998) examined, for example the communicative appropriation processes among adolescent television viewers. The socio-cultural dimension and the economic contexts of media appropriation are particularly significant here.<sup>5</sup> There has been to date only very little research in the field of active media production (self-made productions by children and adolescents) in connection with cultural studies in Germany.

### 2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Information on the quantity, frequency, and distribution of media, which types are preferred, how often and how long they are used etc. is often gathered by means of standardised quantitative survey instruments (e.g. KIM '99, JIM 2000). Besides surveys, data is also gathered through fieldwork in the form of participant observation.

Interpretative analysis of self-portraits (personal testimonials), documentation and analyses of production processes, as well as reflection on educational (media) counselling and support are important methods, in particular with regard to the approach “self-made media productions”, together with Glaser and Strauss's “Grounded Theory” (Flick 1998, p. 197 ff.). By and large, the principles of “openness”, “communication” (including forms of communicative validation) and “process orientation” have gained in importance.

Simultaneously, systems of triangulation have been tried out in projects, in order to check analyses, and to compare and contrast them. There is, at the same time, much to be done and there are changes to be made. The use of theories which pre-date modern media experience and study, such as those of Piaget, is often not sufficiently thought out. The survey form and interpretation models are often too adult-oriented. There is an almost complete lack of longitudinal and panel investigations and too few studies on the psychological processes of media experience in children. (cf. Kübler 2000).

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<sup>5</sup> Schorb und Theunert (2000) have developed the media concept “contextual understanding of media appropriation”.

## **2.4 Fields of Research**

Generally speaking, studies can relate to particular media, to specific media content or genres, or to specific recipient or user groups. The object of research in such a study often encompasses more than one of these dimensions. As television assumes a special role in the lives of children and adolescents, the appropriation process with regard to this medium in particular has often been the object of investigation. Children's responses to media violence and advertising are subjects on which a great deal of work has been done (Kunczik 1996; Charlton et al. 1995). Other areas that have become more important in recent years are:

- Media and the construction of identity;
- gender-related use of media;
- Use of media in early childhood;
- Analysis of web-based communication
- Accompanying research in e-learning projects.

## **3. Children as producers**

A number of studies have been carried out in Germany since the mid-eighties on media production with children and adolescents. Worth mentioning is the pilot study conducted by the Institute for Young People's Film and Television in Munich (Theunert/Schorb, 1989), which, through active video work (product and process) gave outsiders access to the group-specific self-images of adolescents. In the Odenwald rural youth study (Niesyto 1991) this approach is adopted and developed further: the significance of subjective style and symbol creation beyond cognitive and linguistically oriented working methods was emphasised and integrated as a concept. As an approach "Youth research by means of video" established itself over a number of years and was last used in an international research project entitled "Video Culture" discussed in the overview to this part of the report. The age spectrum in this and other projects (13 and upwards) suggests they belong to the area of research into adolescence rather than childhood. Projects focussing specifically and exclusively on children are rare. Research into children's drawing has a long tradition. Neuß examined children's media reception and processing strategies through communicative discourse analysis of children's drawings (Neuß 1999). Television

experiences can, according to Neuß, be transformed into aesthetic experience by means of children's drawings, through which the researcher can gain insight into the way in which children comprehend media.

Recently children's aesthetic behaviour when producing *digital* drawings on the computer has become the subject of art education research (Von Criegern/Mohr 1999, Kirchner 2000). The question is: in what way do the peculiarities of the computer medium and its corresponding software influence the digital production of pictures? The results are interesting, in that they relate directly to that part of the CHICAM project concerned with the appropriation and use of digital video processing. Storing results in a cache memory, the ability to reverse steps, and the special effects are all specific to this medium and encourage children to experiment, to discover the possibilities the software affords them by trying things out themselves. (von Criegern/Mohr 1999, p. 259 and 264). The internet is well on the way to establishing itself as a children's medium. Compared to the previous year, the KIM study 2000 revealed a large increase in the number of children using the internet (MPFS 2001). 32% of the children interviewed stated that they used the internet rarely (MPFS 2001, p. 42). Of recent qualitative studies of children as producers and recipients of the internet, the latter are in the majority.

Children as text producers in virtual internet rooms and spaces are the subject of a research project currently being carried out by the University of Berlin.<sup>6</sup> On the assumption that the internet as a medium will influence, through its characteristics, the process of communication and interaction among those involved, the communication between children and adolescents aged 10 to 17 in chat rooms is being analysed. The aim is to discover the ways in which forms of verbal communication differ when affected by sensitivity to the context in which they are taking place (e.g. private chat, public chat, e-mail). Up to now, only interim findings have been published.

The project "internet – extra-curricular courses for children under 14" is investigating, among other things, how children represent themselves on the internet and what subjects they communicate about. Writing work shops, visitors' books, notice boards and discussion forums are the places where children using the internet mainly leave their traces (Feil 2000, p. 21). Usually, children can be observed creating their own home

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6 <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~abele/projekt.htm>



pages when they are advised and helped by adults (ibid.). Generally speaking, children using the internet have to rely on other people's advice. Insufficient knowledge of English, difficulties when it comes to storing and retrieving all kinds of data formats, downloading and installing supplementary programs are all obstacles that cannot be overcome without outside help (cf. Feil 2000, p. 21/22).

The experiment "children's traces in the net"<sup>7</sup> conducted by SIN (Studio im Netz e.V. München) takes this into account. It has provided 100 children with their own virtual room which they can arrange, organise and decorate (with continual, individual help from media trainers/educators) to their liking, using text, photos, short video clips, audio files and pictures (cf. Palme/Friedrich 2001, p. 124). The virtual room will exist for a total of 13 years, and can be up-dated by the children, as they grow older, as often as they wish (cf. Palme/Friedrich 2001, p. 129). The aim, apart from creating a virtual home in the World Wide Web and observing and evaluating the content and aesthetic development within it, is to enable the children to use the new medium in a natural and productive way (cf. Palme/Friedrich 2001, p. 127). Hence this project has two aims: one, in the field of research, the other in media education. In the latter, at the same time as teaching specific media skills, concepts in media education can be developed further.

The qualitative study "media education and socio-cultural differences" (Niesyto 2000) looks into previous projects in media education involving children and adolescents from disadvantaged social backgrounds, in order to develop concepts derived from past experience for similar projects in the future. Niesyto's project group interviewed 67 experts, who, at the time of the survey, had already been working in the field of practical media education for a considerable number of years. The results are sobering. Active media work centres mainly on the middle classes. Low-threshold projects aimed at specific target groups, which are geared toward the individual strengths of children and adolescents from socially and educationally disadvantaged contexts, are rare. For these reasons Niesyto concludes that concepts in media education must be more finely tuned, with greater differentiation, so that children and adolescents who are linguistically challenged can be given access to production work with media.

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7 cf. <http://www.sin-net.de/Projekte/projekt-uebersicht/uebers-ki-spu.htm>



#### 4. Ethnic minority/migrant children

In her study “leisure activities and the use of media among children of Turkish origin”, Granato conducted a survey of the equipment which children of Turkish origin living in Germany have at their disposal. 255 children of Turkish origin, aged between 6 and 13 were interviewed (2/3 had Turkish citizenship, 1/3 had German citizenship).

Equipment at the disposal of children of Turkish origin, living in Germany, aged 6 to 13, in percentages

Walkman/Discman	50
Television	40
Video game console	31
Radio	30
CD player	22
Stereo system	19
Portable radio	19
Computer	16
Video recorder	14

The following table shows a somewhat different picture as the children have been divided into two age groups (results in percentages):

	<b>age group 6-9</b>	<b>age group 10-13</b>
Walkman/Discman	38	63
Television	35	46
Radio	19	43
CD player	14	30
Stereo system	14	25
Computer	11	22

(Granato 2000, p. 11)

Granato went on to ask the children about their viewing preferences. The following table provides information on which language the children of Turkish origin preferred watching/listening to on television:

Viewing preference with regard to language among children of Turkish origin aged 6 – 13, in Percentages

<b>Television preference</b>	in total	female	male	6-9 years old	10-13 years old

<b>Preferred TV programmes in German</b>	63	59	67	61	65
<b>Preferred TV programmes in Turkish</b>	7	6	8	8	7
<b>no preference</b>	30	35	25	31	28

Source: BPA Mediennutzung und Integration türkischer Kinder 2000 (Granato 2000, p. 32)

63% of the 255 6-13 year olds of Turkish origin who were interviewed preferred watching programmes in German. Only 7% preferred television programmes in Turkish. 30% said they liked both equally. (Granato 2001, p. 32). As part of the Shell Youth Study 2000 young people from migration backgrounds were asked about their (TV) viewing preferences (Fritsche 2000, p. 204): Young people with Italian migration backgrounds most often preferred German language channels and watched programmes from their homeland least often. 81% stated that they watched German channels most of the time.

	Total n=360	Italian adolescent males n=197	Italian adolescent females n=163	Total n=455	Turkish adolescent males N=239	Turkish adolescent females n=216
mostly programmes in German	81	84	77	54	58	50
mostly programmes in language of country of origin	4	3	6	16	10	23

The number of adolescents possessing mobile phones:

Italian adolescents	41%
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Foreign adolescents	31%
Turkish adolescents	28%
German adolescents	28%

It is noticeable that there is no difference between autochthonous adolescents and adolescents from Turkish migration backgrounds. The difference between male and female adolescents from Turkish migration backgrounds is, however, greater: 17% of female and 39% of male Turkish adolescents possess a mobile phone (Fritsche 2000, p. 200).

Research into active, creative work with media among children with migration backgrounds has not yet been carried out in Germany. On the other hand, a large number of media practice projects are to be found, which aim to make a contribution towards integrating young migrants in Germany. Projects which are designed *exclusively* for migrant *children* are the exception, however. Institutions offering intercultural media work are, generally speaking, looking to strengthen selfesteem, reduce prejudice on both sides, prevent violence and to teach various kinds of media competence in order to improve migrants' chances of integration generally, and, more specifically, in their future careers. Most of these projects take place in the context of youth culture work (e.g. citizens' radio,<sup>8</sup> open channels,<sup>9</sup> youth and media centres or film clubs).

For CHICAM, the conclusions of an expert's report on intercultural media work in Nordrhein-Westfalen are relevant as they attribute specific qualities to photography and videos as visual and audio-visual media which are particularly appropriate for intercultural media work (cf. MfJfG 2000). Röhl makes the connection between the realisation that position determines perception, by showing one object from different perspectives, and the development of a tolerant perception of foreignness, not only in the aesthetic context, but also in the context of person to person relationships (cf. Röhl 1996, p. 277).

There are various forms of expression (feature films, magazines, documentation, video clips) which encourage a flexible approach to aesthetic and content questions. As with photography, non-verbal, visual expression helps to overcome verbal language barriers. Children and adolescents thereby find a voice which enables them to intervene in social contexts in order to improve their own situation (cf. MfJfG 2000, p.62 u. 63). The institution

8 e.g.. <http://www.kaktus-net.de>

9 e.g. <http://www.isi-tv.de>

“Durchblick e.V.” in Munich sponsors film work with marginalized groups such as refugee children. The central aims are to work through formative experiences (flight/escape), to re-adjust or bring into clearer focus distorted pictures and prejudices and to trigger new lines of thought in the general public.

The violent attacks on migrants in Germany, which have been on the increase since the nineties, were and still are the reason behind intercultural media projects on the subject of racism and xenophobia. In 2000, as part of the competition “seeing – hearing – acting”, people living in Bielefeld (particularly children) were invited by the Bielefelder Jugendring e.V. to produce something for the theatre, film or radio in protest against violence motivated by racism.<sup>10</sup> At the end of 2001 a competition entitled “Intercultural Youth Media Work – Mixed Linx” was sponsored by the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen. Media productions with anti-racist themes or with innovative concepts for intercultural media work were singled out for acclaim.<sup>11</sup> Intercultural media work in Germany is not limited to the theme of right-wing extremism and violence. In the context of linking up the intercultural youth media work within both Germany and Europe, the network “Crossculture” (cf. <http://www.crossculture.de>) was set up. It is a forum for presenting projects and a contacting point for exchanges of all kinds throughout Europe. Another form of intercultural communication by video was investigated in the international research project “VideoCulture” which was carried out in Germany, Britain, the Czech Republic, Hungary and the U.S.A. between 1997 and 2000. Young people aged 14 to 19 were given the opportunity of making a short video on one or more aspects of the subjects “Being Young” and “Opposites Attract”. Their special task was to express their feelings, thoughts, events and stories using as little verbal language as possible and concentrating instead on music and images. The video tapes were then exchanged and interpreted. The researchers observed the contexts in which the videos were made, made surveys, using various methods, of the adolescents’ interpretations and formulated a list of observations and findings on the competence of the young people against the background of different socio-cultural conditions (cf. Journal of Educational Media 2001; Niesyto 2001a).

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10 cf. <http://www.bielefelder-jugendring.de>.

11 cf. <http://www.mfjfg.nrw.de/aufgaben/jugend/jug-re-mixedlinx.htm>

Not only photography and video are used in intercultural media education. The new media are being increasingly utilised in projects with migrant children and adolescents. The “Interkulturellen Jugendmedienprojekt” (I JUMP)<sup>12</sup> has, as its centre, a virtual chat room which can be individually created by registered members. Children and adolescents of different nationalities meet there in order to get to know each other and to come in contact with, or confront, both their own and foreign cultural backgrounds.

When characterising educational media approaches, attributes such “artistically creative” “action or process oriented” are often used (cf. MfJfG 2000, p. 63). Particular emphasis is laid on the role of the media educator, trainer or counsellor working on a project. S/he should be both interculturally competent *and* trained/experienced in the field of media education and media aesthetics (Niesyto 1999, Maurer 2001, p. 183).

## **5. A brief conclusion summarising key questions or issues for research relating to the CHICAM project**

The controversy surrounding the question as to whether certain ways of using media ease integration processes or whether they encourage separation, seems to offer an interesting field of study. It would be important here to differentiate between specific kinds of use and their corresponding social effect. Which way of using the media are symptoms, indicators or signs of what kind of integration? It would be interesting to investigate the relationship between linguistic competency and use of the media on offer in the language of the respective host country.

As regards children from refugee and migration backgrounds and intercultural communication about migration, the central question is: What forms of educational media support and counselling or advice will prove helpful? The relationship between structured and open forms, with regard to media work over time, as well, is also of interest.

In the field of research into children from migration and refugee backgrounds, media-biographical approaches could prove interesting because within these contexts the particularities of migration and socialisation narratives can be taken fully into account through media (e. g. the importance of media experience in the country of origin, the

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<sup>12</sup> cf. <http://www.i-jump.de/>

importance of media experience in the immigration country, and possibly the importance of international or global experience of media).

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## **Litsa Kourti:**

# **CHILDREN AND MEDIA - GREECE**

**Greek Council for Refugees, Athens (April 2002)**

## **1. The Media Landscape**

### **1.1 Access and Use**

Everyday observation indicates that Greek children, like children in many parts of the world, live in a media environment with extensive access to information and

entertainment. In Greece, however, research, statistics and analyses providing precise documentation on media accessibility to children are absent. The percentages indicated below concern the ownership of media by household, which at least provides some indication of the accessibility of various types of media to children. According to this data television remains the dominant medium in Greek households since virtually all households (99.4%) have colour TV, while 43.7% have two televisions and 12.9% three sets. 22.5% of those with a second TV set have it located in the children's bedroom. Of all households 47.2% have video, 4.6% have a video camera and 8.3% a Multi-choice decoder. Just 17.2% have a computer in the home and approximately 7.1% are connected to the Internet in their home (AGB Hellas, 2000-01).

With reference to children's access to new media at school, amongst all those in primary and secondary education, there is one computer for every 40 pupils. 18% of all secondary schools are connected to the Internet while for pupils aged 6-12 years access to the Internet is more difficult since only 5% of primary schools are connected (Panagiotopoulou, 2001).

There is no recent research on the use of media by children. Older research (in 1997) concerning primary school pupils aged 7-12 in Athens established that 72% of the children preferred to devote their free time to watching television. In terms of their preferences for other outside school activities, 23.6% declared that they used computers. In a more recent sample survey research of children aged 13-17 years living in urban areas (in 2000), it was found that over half (56.9%) used computers and approximately a tenth (10.9%) used the Internet, with 31.6% of these being pupils (Panagiotopoulou, 2001).

Children under 14 years of age constitute 7% of the television audience with the average daily time devoted to watching, in the period 1.1.01-31.12.01, being 137 minutes on a weekday and 180 minutes at the weekend (AGB Hellas, 2000-2001).

There is no data on the use by children of videogames. In a research study conducted in Thessaloniki (Tsitouridou, Vryzas, Semenderiadis, 1999), it appears the overwhelming majority of children aged 11-12 and 14-15 (91.8%) play with videogames, the majority within their home (73.1%) and the rest at friends or other places. Their use is affected by age, gender and social class origins. As already mentioned, the use of the Internet by Greek children is not widespread. According to a Pan Hellenic study (at the end of 2000)

the main places where users of the Internet are connected are the home (47%) and work (36%). It is thus obvious that some children do have access to the Internet either at home, or at school or through friends or other public access points (Panagiotopoulou, 2001). From the above it would appear that Greece is an indicative example of the time needed for the dissemination of new technologies in a small country whose economic development is one of the lowest amongst the developed industrial nations. Despite improved living conditions and the substantial rise in average consumption by household in recent years, 21% of the population, including 330,000 children, continue to live below the poverty line (\$330). Thus, there are large economic inequalities in terms of income and consumer behaviour (Panagiotopoulou, 2001). A large percentage of young people, almost certainly including the children of recently arrived economic migrants and refugees in Greece, do not have the possibility of easy access to the new media, in so far as they do not have the necessary technical equipment in their schools since, as already mentioned, Greek schools remain substantially behind other schools in the EU in terms of the possibilities of pupils familiarizing themselves with the new technologies. Also characteristic in Greece is the ambivalence of both businesses and consumers of multimedia. Businesses are concerned about bringing out software and educational materials using the new media since the availability of the necessary technological infrastructure in Greek homes has still not reached a satisfactory level. On the other hand both parents and teachers, though aware of the educational value and possibilities offered by their use, are consumed by worry about their actual use (Diamandaki, Davou, Panousis, 2001; Davou, 2001; Davou, in press). This attitude is dictated by the absence of information about and familiarity with the new media, mainly because the major changes bringing about the use of the computer and Internet have occurred within just one generation. Finally another fear which periodically appears in the media is "the danger" that the use of new technologies will fundamentally eclipse many cultural aspects of Greek society and more specifically of the Greek language - because of limited software in Greek - since the use of Greek and the market for Greek products are both limited<sup>13</sup>.

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13 In the very few conferences on the subject of children and the mass media in Greece there have been a satisfactory number of papers on language and media, both in terms of the role of media in the development of speech as well as the use of "greeklish" on the Internet (Koutsouvanou, 1991; Hatzisavvidis, 1996; Mandyla et al. 1996).

## 1.2 Provision for Children

Only one channel (Fox kids/ subscription) and some local channels (e.g. “0-6” in Athens) broadcast exclusively children’s programmes for some hours. Access to these channels, which do not broadcast Greek produced programmes, is very limited. It should also be underlined that in recent years children’s programmes have contracted substantially on both private and publicly owned television stations broadcasting nationally since in Greece advertisements for toys are prohibited from 7a.m. till 10.p.m. The distribution of children’s programmes in 2001 (AGB Hellas, 2000-2001) on the various private channels varies (from 1-12.6%). One private channel (Star) holds the baton for children’s programmes (particularly at the weekends) while the state channel (ET1) is second in terms of children’s programmes with 6.1% (a percentage that is less than in 1999-2000)<sup>14</sup>. Children, for their part, prefer the private stations which broadcast imported children’s programmes<sup>15</sup>. The state owned station ET1 which does broadcast Greek produced productions, is 5<sup>th</sup> in children’s preferences. Generally as all measurements underline, children watch programmes of foreign origin mainly intended for adults<sup>16</sup>. The multiple possibilities offered by using CD Rom have started to be widely disseminated in the Greek market and a systematic increase is observable in the production by both private, not for profit and public bodies involved with education or the dissemination of Greek culture. The entertainment-educational software available currently to children in Greece is quite substantial given the situation in the country: in circulation in early 2001 were over 50 titles with Greek applications of multimedia (Panagiotopoulou, 2001). Additionally 3 portals for children are available in Greek, mainly with the aim of advertising. ([www.ktv.gr](http://www.ktv.gr), [www.netkids.gr](http://www.netkids.gr), [www.junior.gr](http://www.junior.gr))

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14 And appears to have been declining steadily. In 1977 when ERT began its policy for a children’s time zone, 9.76% of the weekly broadcasting hours were devoted to them- with ERT internally producing 1.9%, external producers 1.9% and foreign programmes constituting the remaining 5.8%. From Mestheneos E. (1983) unpublished Ph.D. thesis, on *Culture and Society in Greece: the Case of Greek television*. Univ. of Kent, U.K.

15 According to the data from AGB Greece in 2001 the best loved children’s programmes were – in order of preference – Bernstein Bears, Pokemon, The Smurfs, Mr .Men and Little Miss, Little Monsters, Charley and Mimmo, X-Men, Babar, Digimon, Tibuctoo.

16 In order of preference: Foreign weekly drama series, foreign sitcoms, other foreign soap operas – telenovelas (AGB Hellas, 2000-2001).

### 1.3 Regulation

The complete protection of children in Greece is provided for under the Presidential Decree 100/2000, published in March 2000, harmonizing the law governing Greek radio-TV with the regulations of the Directive "Television without Borders". The order basically codifies existing legislation, while also foreseeing the obligatory classification of television programmes in line with the degree of negative effects that their contents could have on the personality and development of the child (IOM, 2000). All television programmes (except for advertising messages and telesales) are classified in categories in line with their possibly negative effects. For each category is an associated sound sign and special symbol which is projected on screen during the whole programme or a special section of it in line with the original marking used in France. The categories of programmes, the symbols and the hours permitted for broadcasting were defined by decision of the Ministry for the Press and Mass Media. Greek legislation also attempts to protect underage viewers found at the centre of news events and who appear in news programmes, as well as ensuring their legal rights in terms of TV advertising which aims to exploit the inexperience and gullibility of young consumers (under 14 years). The advertising of children's games is considered a special category of advertising with special legal protection, which, along with that in Sweden, is distinct from that in the other European countries (the forbidding of adverts for children's toys between 07.00 and 22.00, and the absolute forbidding of war toys.). The television authorities, both state television stations (ERT) as well as the private stations, are bound to implement the law. Each TV station requesting a license or a renewal of its license, is obliged to submit to the National Radio-TV Council (an independent administrative body charged with controlling the operation of radio-TV media) codes of journalist ethics, programming and advertising ethics, for which it holds itself accountable. The ethical code of ERT<sup>17</sup> constitutes the only text containing a self binding initiative from a television body which includes clauses on the positive protection of the underaged, foreseeing the obligation of the public television body to programme a special viewing zone for children's programmes, taking into consideration the hours and days when children watch, particularly given school obligations, as well as supporting the production of children's programmes and ensuring their quality. With

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17 The Coded Schedule for self-commitment for the protection of minors in the field of radio and television was published as an initiative of the General Secretariat for Youth. See Gen.Sec.Youth (1999) *Ethical Code for the protection of minors* Athens.

reference to the control of internet sites visited by children, in recent years a not-for profit company was founded: The Greek Self Regulatory Body for Internet Content, which co-operates with other similar international organizations and provides information and advice to children and parents on to how to avoid possible dangers on the Internet. It also provides information on filters. The use of filters in Greece is very limited both because of the lack of information, but also because many parents are unaware of how to install and use this kind of software.

## **1.4 Ethnic Minorities**

In Greece, apart from the press (newspapers, magazines), there are no other refugee and migrant media. Only one state television (ET3 – from Northern Greece) broadcasts on Sunday a 30-minute newsmagazine programme for migrants (mainly Albanians and Russian speakers). Worth mentioning is an intercultural educational kit designed for pupils aged 9-12 years. The material, based on the concept of encouraging teachers and pupils to acknowledge differences, is designed to circulate amongst primary schools through the Greek Ministry of Education. It includes a teacher's animation handbook and various tools (maps, puzzles, photocards etc). Children develop the story of people who have recently arrived in different parts of the world and then play out an itinerary for their own family (Androussou, 1996).

## **2. Research paradigms, methods and issues**

Whether focusing on the 'older' media, such as TV and video, or the 'newer' media, such as computer games and the Internet, one should observe that the bibliography of research is very limited compared with other countries. Thus while in the international bibliography one usually faces the problem of choice, in Greece there is that of collecting references. Until now Greek authors on the media and children have published approximately 100 articles and hardly any books<sup>18</sup>. Of these the majority are syntheses and reviews of the international bibliography, and refer to television and hardly at all to other media. Research work represents approximately a third of publications on the mass media and the child, but consists of isolated efforts and piecemeal approaches. Those researchers

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<sup>18</sup> Translations of foreign authors on these themes are even less. Only one such book (Greenfield, P., *Mind and Media: The effects of television, video games and computers.*) has been translated in Greek (IOM, 1999).



whose work is devoted exclusively to the mass media and children are extremely few; while there is no research centre in the country concerned with this subject.

Research began in Greece during the 1970s<sup>19</sup>. This was the result, in large part, of the long delays in the start of TV in Greece<sup>20</sup>. The first writers were drawn from practical education, particularly primary education, and were not familiar with the essentially strict research methodology, knowledge and experience in social research. Of approximately 16 publications in the 1970s, all on television, only 7 can be described as research<sup>21</sup>.

Research studies were accomplished through simple questionnaires and interviews and aimed at investigating the television practices of children (what, how much and where children watched). The main themes of these studies revolved around the effect of the media on family relationships and on behaviour at school, and can be termed alarmist research, demonizing television, mobilizing against it and adopting mostly what can be called a religious and moral stance.

From the 1980s onwards research on the mass media and children did not increase numerically but qualitatively improved since it originated no longer from primary education pedagogues but the universities and funded research by state bodies<sup>22</sup>. The research was still focused on television with few exceptions (advertising, cartoons). However, in this context, over and above descriptions of television practices and the effects of television based on interviews and questionnaires, one finds few investigations into issues concerning the social representation of children in media through media content analysis and semiological approaches.

Simultaneously children are given the right to self expression, particularly on what they believe concerns them on TV and what kinds of programmes they believe are suitable for

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19 Perdikopoulos M. (1973) "Television and book: is the book threatened by television?" was the first relevant research published in Greece.

20 The first television station started in 1968 in Thessaloniki during the International Exhibition with the programme lasting from 4-6 hours

21 Perdikopoulos, 1973; Ghizelis, 1976; \_alaka-Zafeiriou et al. 1977 (see Diamandaki, Davou & Panousis, 2001), Voltis, 1977; Papandreou, 1978; Tsardakis, 1978/ 1984 .

22 See the research "The child and television" undertaken by the Laboratory for Communication and Audio-visual media in the University of Ioannina, funded by the General Secretariat for Youth. Research results were published in Navridis K., Dimitrakopoulos G., Paskalidis G. (1988) (eds). See also, the research "*The child as advertising object*" funded by the Institute for the Child and the General Secretariat for Youth. Results were published in Navridis, Solman, Tsaoula (1986).



their age. Other research originated from the fields of Social Psychology (Beze, 1988) and Sociology (Doulkeri, 1980, 1989). These researchers demystify to a considerable extent the fears of pedagogues of the previous decade and set research on a higher level. However, they remain marginal voices in the field of so called research on the mass media, which saw a huge increase in the 1980s in Greece. Additionally, the dissemination of these views meets difficulties since the arena is flooded by collected works mainly by pedagogues from primary and secondary education who are alarmist about the effects of television on children's behaviour.

Over time and although the number of theoretical articles doubled – a regurgitation of the international bibliography – research studies in the 1990s remain rare. They are made up of isolated efforts by researchers who originate within the new university departments: Educational Departments (beginning in 1984)<sup>23</sup> and Departments of Mass Media and Communication (beginning in 1990)<sup>24</sup>. These researchers belong within the disciplines of Social Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Sociology and Communication Studies. The object of research remains television despite the fact that video games, computers and the Internet have swamped the market and children's everyday lives. The large numbers of studies observable on new technologies are concerned exclusively with their use as a method of teaching. In terms of the methods of conducting most research on media and children, one can observe that they use more precise statistical methods for surveys and analysis and rarely qualitative approaches. More recent research studies (published after 2000 or to be published) indicate that researchers are beginning to focus on themes such as media literacy (Davou, 2001) media content (Kourti, 2001, Kourti, Koka & Lafazanis, 2002, Davou, in press), media reception considering children as active viewers (Aslanidou, 2000; Sakka, in press). Of considerable importance in this new orientation is the research by Sofia Aslanidou in her book *The myth of the passive viewer* which both analyses the news itself and the children's reception of news. The essential concern of this research was to pose a question on the utility of Media Education and to investigate its limits.

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23 See Vrizas, 1992 a, 1992 b, 1997, 1997 a, 1997 b, 1997c; Kakavoulis, 1996; Kanakis, 1996; Koronaiou, 1992; Koutsouvanou, 1991.

24 See Doulkeri, 1997; Davou, 1999; Papathanasopoulos 1997, 1999.

### 3. Children as media producers

Despite the fact that there are a large number of newspapers by pupils, in recent years and on a very limited scale, there have been honourable efforts aiming at the development of what is often called in Greece “Audio-visual communication and expression by children”. Media education is not part of the school curriculum and is taught through the initiative of some directors and educators in Athens and the Regions, both in<sup>25</sup> and out of school (in particular at municipalities and cultural centers)<sup>26</sup>.

Only rare and discrete efforts are found, in the Greek context, of research examining children as producers. The limited bibliography is mainly concerned with theoretical positions that give emphasis to the creativity of children so as to ensure an understanding of how the media need to be constructed and operated and the need for the importation of the lesson “Media Education” into the analytical programme of Greek schools<sup>27</sup>.

Perhaps the only effort that looked at children as producers was that by Lembesi (1983) who in Rhodes in 1983 presented her experiences and the results of her efforts in the context of Educational Television (based on cooperation between the state TV and the Ministry of Education). Lembesi, in cooperation with her pupils in various schools and areas, and with considerable difficulty, tried to produce television programmes adapted to their interests. This research has only historic interest now.

Amongst the most important efforts to develop children’s expression using both old and new media are:

- The „Melina’ Project: Education and Culture“ a co-operative venture between the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and the General Secretariat of Adult Education aimed at bringing children into contact with art through the educational process, where amongst other things they have created a workshop where groups of children are introduced to the world of media and new technology.

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25 See the workshop “The cycle of animated pictures” by the Hill School in Athens (primary school) in the framework of the school’s extension programme, as well as individual efforts by few teachers with their pupils. 15 videos by Greek pupils were shown at the *1st European Meeting for Audiovisual Creation for Children and Young People* (2001) in the context of the *International Cinema Festival in Ancient Olympia for Young people and Children* ([www.olympiafest.gr](http://www.olympiafest.gr)).

26 See “Youth Club” in the Municipality of Neapoli in Thessaloniki, or the project “Media in the hands of children” organised by the European Children’s Television Centre (E.C.T.C.) and the Municipality of Aghioi Anargyroi. E.C.T.C.

27 Koronaïou, 1983 ; Theodoridis, 1994a,1994b; Pashalidis, 2000 ; Haramis, 2001; Davou 2001, Semoglou 2002.

- The *Thessaloniki International Festival* project (in cooperation with the Ministry of Education) “Let’s go to the cinema” for children aged 9-12 years and pupils in Gymnasia (secondary) schools where the children besides obtaining theoretical information on the cinema also produce short video films with the help of directors..

Also, in the context of European programmes and/or in cooperation with Ministries (Culture, Education etc.) or Municipalities, not for profit bodies promote the development of children’s self expression using both old and new media<sup>28</sup>.

#### **4. Ethnic minority/migrant children**

There is a lack of developed research in Greece on the subject of ethnic minority use of the media, and certainly nothing on ethnic minority and migrant children in relation to, for instance, their use of cable and satellite specialist programmes, although generally across Greece cable and satellite is an area of use expanded recently (there are 8.3% households with a Multi-choice decoder). There is some informal research observation that Greek Muslim families in northern Greece watch mostly (sometimes only) Turkish satellite TV, but nothing further.

The only programme known to have some relation to the use of media by the children of ethnic minorities is “The photographic workshop for gypsies” created by the Ministry of Culture in areas of Athens where gypsies live. The children learn photography and subsequently through photographs “externalize” their lives and feelings.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Empirical Greek research and even theoretical interest on the subject of media and children has historically been very limited. The later development of television and the delays in the adoption of the newest forms of media (computers, Internet) is reflected in the very late development of serious research studies that treat the child as both receiver and active participant in the process of communication and interacting with the media. And while studies of Greek children are rare, those on migrant and refugee children are unknown.

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28 See *Youth Plan project* “We express ourselves in pictures and sound” with pupils from Gymnasia (secondary school) in Pyrgos/Peloponisos and Vyrnas/Athens in the context of the Action III (EPEAK) of the Ministry of Education with the general title “Audiovisual Communication and Expression of pupils”. See also *The European Children’s Television Center* (E.C.T.C.) projects on young people using multimedia tools to express their feelings about current environmental trends (1994,95), the production of video-museum in Livadia (1991).

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## **Fondazione Censis:**

### **CHILDREN AND MEDIA – ITALY**

#### **1.The media landscape**

##### **1.1 Facts and figures**

There is no systematic national data collection on the use of media by children, except for television. Since 1994, ISTAT, the national statistics institute, has collected data on television viewing, by age groups, according to the frequency of viewing. All other data come from ad hoc research projects and do not necessarily cover all media. According to ISTAT, TV use is very high among children: 88.6% of children between 3 and 5, 92.6% for those between 6 and 10, and 94% for those between 11 and 14. Among these, the great majority watch TV almost every day, while very few are sporadic viewers (just a few times a week), just 8.4%, 3.3% and 4.1% in each age category (tab. 1).

A 2001 Censis study looked at the presence of media in Italian homes, providing a way to measure children's access to media. "Old media" are widespread: TVs are almost ubiquitous (98.7% of homes); 73.3% have a VCR. As far as "new media" are concerned, the most widespread devices are the cell phone (85.1%), PC (43.4%), Internet access (30%), videogames (26.7%) and cable TV decoders (15%) (tab. 2). Media use was, unsurprisingly, closely related to possession. TV and cell phones were used by all those who had them, while VCRs were often unused (56.1% don't use them) (tab. 3).

For teenagers (14-17), the study found heavy TV use (almost every day for 92.2%) and cell phone use (75.9%), while PC and internet use were lower (37.3% and 10.8%).

Videogames were the only medium used by more teenagers than possess them: 33.8% played at least 4 times a week, half of whom played 1-2 hours at a time, while only 26.7% owned them. Many were playing outside their homes, either in arcades or at friends' homes (tab. 4). In 2000, an ISTAT survey looked at PC use by children and adolescents,



distinguishing between use for study and for entertainment. Internet reaches even small children – 11.2% of 3-5 year olds, 34.8% of children between 6 and 10, and 55.4% of children 11-14. 91.6% of users use it for entertainment, and 58.3% for study. Girls are slightly more likely to use the Internet than boys (tab. 5 and 6).

There are no studies looking at the use of media by children according to their social status nor their ethnicity. This makes it impossible to use statistics to examine any digital divide. One study can be cited, however. A RAI (public television) research project in 1998, “Multicultural Communication”, involved a sample of more than 1000 non-EU immigrants, conducting interviews on media and especially television use. The survey also included a small of households with children over 3, whose television viewing patterns were examined. 97% of these children had watched television in the 3 months prior to the interview, for an average of 6.6 days/week and 2.4 hours/day. Their use patterns are therefore quite similar to those of their Italian peers. Similarly, the penetration of television is comparable (95%), while more advanced technology is less likely to be found, with 55% having VCRs, 11% having PC’s, and 5% owning a decoder (tab. 7).

One difference between children in immigrant families and their Italian peers is the company of those with whom they watch TV. While immigrant children tend to watch TV with relatives (67%), evidence indicates that Italian children tend to watch TV alone (no data available). Immigrant children also watch TV at home (94%) and favour children’s programming (67%), as well as films (41%) and light entertainment (25%) (tab. 8).

## **1.2 Thematic Channels and Children’s TV stations**

There are 7 stations broadcast nationally, 3 public (Rai 1-3) and 4 private (Canale 5, Italia 1, Rete 4, La7), and numerous private local stations with limited viewership. 3 of the 4 national private networks belong to the same owner, the Prime Minister’s Fininvest holding company. There are 4 satellite TV stations aimed specifically at children, of which only one, Raisat Ragazzi, is Italian. Raisat is also the only station offering children’s programming that goes beyond cartoons, providing documentaries, edutainment and telemagazines.

Only 15% of Italian households have satellite television access. There are no minority or ethnic stations for children. Children’s television programming is included in the line-up on



both public and private TV stations, varying between weekday and weekend. The channel with the most is Italia 1, while the least children's programming is on Rai 1. Italia 1 seems more aimed at adolescents. Rai 1 has a programme for small children, l'Albero Azzurro, which is, however, relegated to the weekend in a dead slot: Saturday from 10-11 AM and Sunday from 7-8 AM. Local television stations often offer Japanese cartoons during the afternoon.

Most of the national network shows for children are cartoons and sitcoms, except for a few rarities such as l'Albero Azzurro and the afternoon children's variety shows on Rai 3. There are 5 hours of children's shows on weekdays on Rai 2, 2 hours on Rai 3, 6 on weekdays on Italia 1. On the weekend there are 12 hours on Italia 1 on Sundays, 3 on Rai 1, and 3 on Rai 2. Children would have to "mix and match" between different stations and odd hours; what seems to happen, instead, is that children end up watching adult TV. Some time frames, such as that between 18:00 and 19:00, have no children's programming at all on any national network. The overlapping schedule for television news also makes it likely that young people watch some part of the national network news programmes. "Tom and Jerry", for example, precedes the evening news on the most sensationalistic of the public networks, Rai 2.

### **1.3 Laws, codes and policies on media and children**

Starting in the '90s, "protection" of children from television and advertising expanded rapidly.

The rules regarding children come from three sources:

- national law
- codes of conduct
- Parliamentary commissions.

The first laws were the „Disposizioni sulla stampa“ and the „Revisione dei film e dei lavori teatrali“ in 1948 and 1962. It wasn't until 1990 that a specific law for radio and television was approved, with the „Disciplina del sistema radiotelevisivo pubblico e privato“, along with the implementation of the Community Directive on Advertising for Tobacco and Alcohol (1991). Since 1995, there has been more legislation covering children and radio

and television, including the creation of the Authority for Communication, the parliamentary Commission for Children and the National Child Observatory (1997).

Codes of conduct started appearing in 1990; there are now many. The first and most important is the Charter of Treviso, signed by the Italian National Press Federation and the Order of Journalists in 1990. In 1993, the Radio Television Federation and associations representing families, schools and consumers signed the elaborately titled “Codes of Conventional Regulation of Principles, Norms and Rules for Commercial Television to Guarantee the Respect of Rights and the Needs for a Harmonious Development of Growing Viewers”. In 1995 the Rai signed the Charter for Information and Programming that Guarantees Users and Staff of the Public Service (television). In 1997 the Prime Minister created a Committee for the Creation of Codes of Conduct for TV and Children, and the Authority, mentioned above, formulated a Project for Monitoring TV, which includes the protection of children. In 1997 a Self-Governing Code of Conduct for TV and Children was published by the Prime Minister’s Committee.

In addition to the laws and codes of conduct, two mechanisms were also proposed to protect children. The first, unsuccessful since never applied, was to install a chip which would allow parents to filter their children’s viewing. The other, successful and still in force, was the imposition of restrictions on what could be broadcast at different times of the day. Certain categories of TV programmes must be broadcast during the night: 10:30 PM to 7 AM for those movies for children over 14, 11PM to 7AM for anything with violent or sexual images which might “negatively affect children”, and midnight to 7AM for interactive audio- or videotext such as hotlines, voice mailboxes, chats, and so on). There is also a complete ban on any films rated for adults only, on obscene programs or any programs which “contain gratuitous violence or pornography which might harm the psychic or moral development of children.”

## **2. Research on children as consumers**

In Italy, the debate over the effects of media on children, which in America had been running since the ‘20s and ‘30s regarding cinema, developed in the ‘70s and became much more diversified and widespread in the ‘80s. These were years in which there was suddenly much more children’s television, especially Japanese cartoons. At the same

time the quality changed: early children's TV was distinct from TV for adults, with a clear division in the programming schedule. For example, *Carosello*, a half-hour series of 110-second advertisements which started in 1957, marked the end of the children's viewing period, and therefore all programming before Carosello was considered appropriate for children. In the '80s, TV started to show all kinds of programmes at different times, many of which were not appropriate for children. Although some attempts were made to require that programmes be appropriate for children during the daytime, research showed otherwise (notably an analysis by the University of Bologna of children's opinions of "daytime" programming).

There are three main phases in research on children and media in Italy:

- From the '60s, with a pedagogic approach to examining content;
- From the '70s to the mid-'80s, using a sociological approach to the effect of media on children;
- From the mid-'80s to the present, with research in different disciplines, ranging from developmental psychology to sociology to pedagogy (or media education), medical research on physical effects of TV viewing, and even some interdisciplinary research. There is also some very limited research into the prosocial functions of media, although there is awareness that excessive or inappropriate use may be harmful. The methodology used was at first mainly experimental research and content analysis. Later, sample-based studies were added, using open and structured questionnaires. Most recently, qualitative analysis has emerged, using focus groups and in-depth interviews. Neither a theoretical common ground nor conclusive results can be said to have been reached in Italy. In general, however, four positions emerge, each related to a theoretical framework and an epoch. These positions regard both television and so-called new media (especially internet and videogames).
- The "apocalyptic" thesis, developed in the '70s (best represented by AIART, the Italian Radio and Television Users Association), according to which media have an absolutely negative effect on children, both in psychological terms (personality development, ability to distinguish between real and imaginary, increased tolerance for certain stimuli and harm to healthy mental development, increased violent or aggressive behaviour, etc.) and in sociological and cultural terms (vulnerability of children, exposure to negative cultural models, conformity).
- The "integrated" thesis, which holds that media, especially TV, is an important means of socialisation, a way to level social inequality, capable of stimulating rather than substituting other cultural consumption, helping language and behavioural development (Morcellini 1986, 1992 and 1999).
- The thesis of the "moderates", who discard the worst assessments but do not share the enthusiasm of the integrationists. Children's media use is filtered by family and school,

so that children have critical tools for interpretation which they receive from adults. The child, when exposed to other appropriate stimuli as well, becomes a “competent user”, able to understand, filter and critically process what is seen (Statera 1990).

- The fourth thesis might be called “neo-apocalyptic”, because it picks up many of the concerns of the researchers from the ‘70s, notwithstanding the radical changes in children’s programming since then. The enormous supply of media, both TV and otherwise, is seen as a cause for caution and concern. New media include the internet, increased use of video and computer games, and cell phones which are more than just communication; these have all become virtual worlds for young people. What concerns the “neo-apocalyptic”, however, are other factors, especially the sensation among observers, whether sociologists, psychologists, politicians or teachers, that the world of children and youth is outside the control and understanding of adults. There is therefore a temptation to at least control what is being consumed. Further, there is a conviction that family and school are unsuccessful in filtering media content. Finally, legislation meant to govern and reduce any harmful effects of media has been shown to be ineffective (Manna 1997, Olivero Ferraris 1997).

### **3. Research on children as producers**

In recent years there have been many experiments, especially in the media education area in schools, involving children in media production (classroom news, cartoons, short films and documentaries, web site creation, etc.). No research has systematically examined these experiences. At most, unpublished or internal documents describe specific experiences.

### **4. Media use by children of immigrant origin**

No research has concentrated on media use by ethnic minority or immigrant children, nor are there any media products meant for this specific group.

What can be found, however, are experiences from the past decade and promoted by multicultural or antiracist associations on the “children and media” theme, including multicultural teaching material (books, CD-ROMs, videos) meant for elementary and middle school children. These are products and not research. Nonetheless, one of these products, a part of “Multimedia Intercultural Education Package” by L. Galliani, does include a theoretical consideration of the cultural and pedagogic basis for media education in a multicultural and multiethnic society.

## 5. Key Questions and Issues

One of the key questions yet to be studied is that of the digital divide between newcomers to Italy and the native population. Current analyses have compared north and south, but not the population within a single city. Further, little is known of the pro-social uses of new media for any groups of children.

### Tables

**Tab. 1 - Italian children's TV viewing patterns, by age and sex; %**

	age		
	3-5	6-10	11-14
BOYS			
Watch TV	88,4	92,9	94,8
Sometimes weekly	7,9	2,8	6,1
Almost every day	92,1	97,2	93,9
GIRLS			
Watch TV	88,8	92,3	93,1
Sometimes weekly	8,9	3,7	4,8
Almost every day	91,1	96,3	95,2
TOTAL			
Watch TV	88,6	92,6	94,0
Sometimes weekly	8,4	3,3	4,1
Almost every day	91,6	96,7	95,9

Source: *Censis* - Istat, 2000

**Tab. 2 - Presence of media in Italian Households**

	%
TV	98,7
Cell Phone	85,1
Teletext	76,0
VCR - DVD	73,3
Personal computer	43,4
Internet connection	30,0
Satellite/Cable Decoder	15,0
Videogames	26,7

Source: Survey by *Censis*, 2001

**Tab. 3 - Media use by Italian families**

	%
TV	95,8
Cell Phone	72,8
Teletext	37,9
VCR - DVD	32,2
Personal computer	31,3
Internet connection	20,1
Satellite/Cable Decoder	11,9
Videogames	11,2

Source: Survey by *Censis*, 2001

**Tab. 4 - Media consumption by Italian adolescents (14-17)**

	%
Watch TV almost every day	92,2
Watch 2-4 hours of TV every day	78,9
Use a computer almost every day	37,3
Use Internet almost every day	10,8
Play videogames at least 4 times a week	33,8
Play videogames 1-2 hours a day	48,1
Own a cell phone	75,9

Source: Survey by *Censis*, 2001

**Tab. 5 – PC use by Italian children (%)**

Age	Boys	Girls	Total
3-5	11,6	10,7	11,2
6-10	33,7	35,7	34,8
11-14	53,7	56,9	55,4
Total	35,5	36,9	36,9

Source: *Censis* based on Istat, 2000

**Tab. 6 - Children 6-14 who use a PC, according to intent (%)**

	6-10 anni	11-14 anni	Total
Entertainment			
Boys	30,5	46,9	36,1

Girls	28,0	41,2	34,3
Total	29,3	44,1	36,2
Study			
Boys	10,7	35,0	22,0
Girls	10,3	32,6	20,9
Total	10,5	33,8	21,5

Source: *Censis* based on Istat, 2000

**Tab. 7 – Media present in immigrant households (%)**

	%
TV	95,0
Radio	82,0
Fixed line phone	55,0
VCR	55,0
Cell Phone	20,0
Satellite dish	17,0
Videocamera	14,0
PC	11,0
Decoder	5,0

Source: Rai - *VPQT*, 1999

**Tab. 8 – TV use by children over 3 in immigrant households ( %)**

Watch TV with...		
	Family members	67,0
	Alone	33,0
	With friends	2,0
	Don't know	2,0
Where...		
	At home	94,0
	At friend's homes	3,0
	Don't know	4,0
What...		
	Kid's TV / Cartoons	67,0
	Films	41,0
	Light entertainment	25,0
	Sports	17,0
	Cultural programming	15,0
	Series / Soap operas	12,0
	News	3,0
	Theatre / Classical music	3,0
	Infotainment	2,0

Source: Rai - *VPQT*, 1999

### **Chart 1 Pay satellite channels offering only children's television programs in Italy**

Channel	Content
RaiSat Ragazzi	Children's Edutainment (3-12 y.o.), magazines, tv series, cartoons, documentaries, etc...
Disney Channel	cartoons and some entertainment programming
Fox Kids	Mostly cartoons
Cartoon Network	Mostly cartoons

Source: Rai, 2002

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# **Susan Bink, Ad van Dam & Leen d'Haenens:**

## **CHILDREN AND MEDIA - THE NETHERLANDS**

**Forum Institute of Multicultural Development, Utrecht. (April 2002)**

### **1. The media landscape**

A clear trend is noticeable regarding the changes in ownership and use of media by children and youth. Within a short time span youth have exchanged printed media (- 2,7 hours a week) for electronic media (+3,8 hours a week) (Wittebrood & Keuzenkamp, 2000). The young people have en masse discovered the possibilities of using the Internet; computer games are also very popular among the Dutch youth.

Likewise the use of GSM among youth is increasing. They phone a lot, send GSMtext messages and play by 'mobile'. Children younger than 12 years are less active with computers and mobiles. Often they discover the new land of media by playing; usually having more knowledge of this new technology than their parents have.

Nevertheless, watching television remains the main leisure activity among youth. High school students mainly watch the commercial stations, the youngest age groups do watch children's programmes on the public stations. It also depends on the parents' preference, as they often supervise their children's watching of television. Parents consider the children's programmes on the public stations more safe/proper.

#### **1.1 Owning Media**

In 1997 a large-scale research on owning and using media among Dutch children was done as part of a European comparative study on children and media. In order to create a clear picture of the situation of the using of media by children and youth, we must first look at what kind of media the youth in the Netherlands own. Having a television or a video recorder in their own bedrooms is strongly dependent on the sex of the child (more boys than girls), the age (more among older than younger children) and SES (more with a lower SES than a higher SES). In 1997a large-scale research was done among children in the

age category of 6-17 years old. The results of this research concerning having media in their own rooms have been categorised in the following table:

**Table 1. The percentage of 6-17 years old (N=1355) having media in their own rooms**

	TV	Video	Games machines	PC	Books
Total group	30	5	37	12	95
Gender					
Boys	32	5	46	17	94
Girls	29	4	28	7	96
Age					
6-8	12	1	28	6	96
9-11	23	2	43	10	98
12-14	37	4	41	13	95
15-17	49	10	35	19	89
SES					
Low	40	6	41	13	92
Medium	25	3	32	10	97
High	21	4	36	13	97

Source: Van der Voort et al., 1998

The percentages owning a PC are low: few children have a computer in their bedroom. Another factor is the fact that these figures date from four years ago and have risen in the meantime. However, the figures differ regarding ownership of PC within the parental home in general (see Table 2). In 1997 85% of households with children in the age category 6-17 a PC had a television (only 12% had a PC in their own bedroom). That number now has increased, we see that 30% of the children in the age category of 6-17 have a television in their bedroom (Van der Voort et al., 1998).

The research done on how time is spent (by the *Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau*), made clear that in 1995 74% of children living with their parents had the use of more than one television, and regularly the household had three (26%) or four (12%) televisions (Wittebrood & Keuzenkamp, 2000).

**Table 2. The percentage 6-17 year olds (N=1355) having the availability of a PC within their parental home**

	PC	Internet link (modem)
--	----	-----------------------

Total group	85	19
Sex		
Boys	84	19
Girls	87	19
Age		
6-8	80	19
9-11	86	18
12-14	88	17
15-17	89	23
SES		
Low	78	10
Medium	89	24
High	94	30

Source: Van der Voort et al., 1998

Computers have acquired a place, amongst the other media, in the homes of most Dutch children. The PC has recently pushed reading books down to the fifth place in the list of media activities, but still lags well behind CD/tapes, the radio and in particular television (Beentjes, 2000).

## 1.2 Using Media

Although PC and the computer games have already achieved an important place in the lives of children, children still prefer other media (especially television) when it comes to acquiring knowledge or determining their mood. Sex differences in the use of interactive media seem to be stubborn. Computers at school are, just as computers at home, used more by boys than by girls (Beentjes, 2000). Young people (12-24 year olds) spend 14 hours a week in front of the television / computer screen, so about a third of their spare time. The collective time among the youth used for television and computer is more than 60% of the free time spent at home.

Taking into account the number of minutes per day for watching television, we can see that those children between 12 and 14 years old watch television the most (123 minutes per day). Children with a low social economic status (SES) watch more television than children having a high SES (125 min/day compared with 97 min/day). No significant differences between peer groups have been discovered regarding watching videos (an average of 15 minutes a day) (Van der Voort et al, 1998).

In the Netherlands the number of children's programmes offered by television channels has increased more than ten times within ten years (1989–1999). This is mainly a result of

the arrival of commercial stations for children: KinderNet, Fox Kids, Yorkiddin' (the new programme for children) and Cartoon Network. The non-commercial (public) station extended its offer of children's programmes only a little during the period 1989-1999. Therefore it is surprising that the average viewing figures for the non-commercial station among children of various ages has not dramatically decreased. Nevertheless, it is especially among the youngest viewers (under 8 years) of television that the three public stations have reached a high level of viewers (Nikken, 2001).

Qualitative research by the NOS made clear that children between 6 and 8 years old can be divided into two groups. On the one hand there is a group of children being closely supervised by their parents and for that reason mainly watching children's programmes at set times on the 'public' stations, with the exception of KinderNet. On the other hand there is a group of children that turn on the television as soon as they wake up and also watch television as soon as they get home from school. They mainly watch commercial stations: Fox Kids and Cartoon Network. The oldest group (9-12 year olds) watches a lot of television and is less supervised by their parents.

They watch a lot of cartoons on the commercial stations and don't have such a set pattern for watching television. They 'zap' a lot (switching channels) and more often watch 'out of boredom' (Verheij & Bochove, 1999).

## **2. Research on Children and Media**

Until now scientific research on children and media has mainly been done outside the Netherlands. Within the Netherlands little research has been done on the effects and the possibilities of identifying the various sorts of media used among children. However, for quite some time there has been concern regarding the possibility of the influence television can have on the behaviour of children. This is expressed in, for example, the development of criteria for the quality of children's programmes and the setting up/implementing of the '*kijkwijzer*'. The *Kijkwijzer* is the Dutch rating system that has been in use since the Spring of 2001 to rate television programmes, movies, and home videos in the Netherlands (Valkenburg, Beentjes, Nikken & Tan, 2001). The growing concern about the influence of images of sex and violence entering the living room and the possibility of effects of this on the behaviour of children are the main reasons for these

developments. The possibility of influence by violent computer games has for some time also been of interest to scientists.

## **2.1 Research paradigms**

The first general theories about the effects/influence of mass media on people ascribed much power to the media. They took it for granted that mass media had a lot of influence and that people were passive and easy to influence. Until the early fifties this idea of the 'media almighty' was the dominant model concerning media effects. After empirical research showed that the effects of media were not as big and universal as first thought, the model of *uniform* effects/influence was replaced by the model of limited effects (Valkenburg, 2002).

This model was developed by the American Klapper (1960) and has until today been the current/prevaling paradigm within Dutch communication studies, also regarding children and media. Research has shown that children, like adults, are not passive receivers of media, but actually deal critically with media contents. Their environment and frame of reference appear to be of great importance concerning the possibility of influence and possibilities for identification with media.

## **2.2 General Theories**

Since the sixties two main streams of research have existed with regard to research on children and media. These streams regard children as active and motivated users of media.

Firstly, we can speak of the (media) psychological approach. At first this approach was mainly focused on changes in the behaviour of children being influenced by the media, but later the approach was broadened to cognitive effects. Psychologists became mainly involved with studying variables like attention, understanding and memory of the content of media.

The second research approach, cultural studies, is very much focused on children and media. Cultural researchers are interested in other questions than mediapsychologists. They are more concerned with the question of whether different groups of children actually have similar access to culture. They are also more focused on research on the content of media (Valkenburg, 2002). The children's context in which usage of media

takes place is of importance to the tradition of cultural studies. In other words, research is mainly done on how children deal with media within their daily activities and what part family, friends and classmates play in this.

## **2.3 Methods**

There are many different methods for research on children and media. In the Netherlands the '*Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau*' investigates every five years how free time is spent among the youth. During this research the spending (managing) of free time is kept track of by being written down in a diary for one week. In this manner how much time youth spend on media weekly can also be measured. The survey is another much used method. This was used for the research on migrant youth and Internet (d'Haenens et al., 2001). Questionnaires were passed out in schools to youth who individually answered the questions in the classrooms. The method of group interviews is also regularly used, often in schools. This method was used among migrant youth during research done by the Catholic University in Nijmegen on 'The Experience of Media by Migrants in the Netherlands' (d'Haenens, Beentjes & Bink, 2000).

## **2.4 Important Themes**

Within research on media and children the focus has mainly been on the influence of violence seen on television. The educationalist Tom van de Voort (1997) in the Netherlands has done research on the influence of violence seen on television. His research has a diversity of conclusions. For example it is clear that violence on television influences children, but this is not always negative; for example, it can be objectively observed that violence is used in a Tom & Jerry cartoon, in all kind of ways someone is consciously being molested. However, the violent actions are strongly humorous, which is why the child experiences them differently. Van der Voort makes clear how the child actively processes the aggression seen on television. He shows that the effects of aggression shown on television should not be regarded as just negative; the context in which the violence is shown is important.

Also, the people raising children have influence on the child's reactions to violence seen on television. Van den Bulck (2001) indicates as well that violence shown on television does not just cause aggressive behaviour among children. The parents and others raising

children play an important role in explaining what children see. A television programme can only have influence if it has been interpreted and this leaves room for intervention.

In the Netherlands minimum attention is paid to how children use media in general and the effects of its usage on knowledge and behaviour. In the last couple of years the impact of ICT-usage among children and youth has been acknowledged.

Marketing and research bureaux are now doing research in this area, but scientifically this research is still in its infancy.

### **3. Children as Producers**

Since 1993 audio-visual education has been included in high schools in the Netherlands as one of the seven 'art' subjects. The subject is not compulsory. In all of the Netherlands there are centres for art education in which advisers support the teachers in performing a range of art forms. Advisers on audio-visual training offer various courses, usually involving production activities: computer, video and photography courses are given, and plays, animations, reports, web-sites and films are produced in co-operation with children and youth. The products are mainly shown to small groups. Unfortunately, no scientific research is being done within this area. In Appendix I an overview is given of relevant teaching material and Dutch literature on audio-visual education.

### **4. Migrant Children and Media**

Brants, Crone and Leurdijk (1998) inventoried the relatively small amount of research with respect to media and ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. The amount of research on ethnic minority *children* and media is even scarcer. The only large-scale research in the Netherlands into access to and use of media by ethnic minority youth was performed by the market research agency *Veldkamp Marktonderzoek* (1998).

Other research generally consists of limited *ad hoc* random samples, case studies and unpublished material, the scientific nature of which, in most cases, leaves something to be desired. Attention to the use of new, interactive media among ethnic minority youth is – in the Veldkamp studies too – extremely limited. In 2001, d'Haenens et al. conducted research on the ownership and use of 'old' and 'new' media among ethnic minority youth in the Netherlands. The main results of this study are described below.

## 4.1 Usage of Media

The focus of the Veldkamp research done in 1998 was on media usage of Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese children in the age categories 3-7 years, 8-12 years and 13-17 years. From the results it is clear that migrant children and youth from all age categories watch considerably more television than Dutch children do. Because of their access to a large number of television stations, these children were able to watch whatever they wanted: mainly for entertainment and a few informative programmes.

Turkish children are the ones mostly watching stations from their country of origin, Moroccan and Surinamese children mainly watch Dutch (commercial) stations (Veldkamp Marktonderzoek, 1998). But the fact is that, besides the range of Dutch media that is offered, Turkish children have a much wider range of options in media from their country of origin than the Moroccan and Surinamese youths. Turkish youths like to have a broader picture of what is going on in Turkey, not only from the Dutch news, but the news provided by the Turkish media as well. Also, they watch Turkish channels to see sports coverage not shown on Dutch television. Moroccan, Surinamese and Antilles/Aruban youths do not follow the news in their own-language media. Many young Moroccans have problems with the Arabic language spoken on most Arabic or Moroccan channels, because many of the Moroccans living in the Netherlands speak Berber and not Arabic (d'Haenens, Beentjes & Bink, 2000).

The aim of the study by d'Haenens et al. (2001) was to investigate which environmental and cultural factors play a role in the media behaviour of ethnic minority youth (aged 12 to 19). Three numerically important groups of ethnic minority youth were under study: Turks, Moroccans (as examples of greater cultural distance from indigenous Dutch youth) and Surinamese (with less cultural distance from indigenous Dutch youth). At thirteen secondary schools in the Netherlands, 368 students with an ethnic minority background had to fill in a questionnaire, along with 98 Dutch students.

In terms of *ownership* of 'older' media, the Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and indigenous Dutch groups studied are practically identical to one another. With regard to the ownership of new, interactive media, however, ethnic minority youth are indeed lagging behind in comparison with their indigenous Dutch peers. In terms of individual media ownership, the Surinamese participants in this study are the most comparable to



their indigenous Dutch peers. The standard socio-demographic characteristics, and in particular the *gender* of the ethnic minority youth in the Netherlands, are the background variables that exert the most influence on the ownership of both 'old' (television and radio) and 'new' (cable modem, mobile phone and computer) media. The extent to which the ethnic minority participants are oriented towards their country of origin has no influence whatever on the personal ownership or other home-based ownership of 'old' and 'new' media.

Where *media use* is concerned we may conclude that television is the pre-eminent medium in the everyday life of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and indigenous Dutch youth in the Netherlands. Despite the advent of new media, television dominates the leisure-time budget pattern of both ethnic minority youth and indigenous Dutch youth in this study. Ethnic minority participants, especially the Moroccans, display more intensive viewing behaviour than the indigenous Dutch respondents. In addition, Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and indigenous Dutch students of age 12 to 19 make considerable use of the *Internet*. They do this primarily for the purpose of chatting and e-mailing. The Internet is also often used to search for information for their studies or hobbies. Antilles and Aruban teenagers also use the Internet to look up information about their home countries. In a number of cases, these are Antilles and Aruban youths who have come to the Netherlands to study, so the bond with their home country is still very strong (d'Haenens, Beentjes & Bink, 2000). Furthermore, practically all ethnic minority and indigenous Dutch participants were found to occasionally telephone with a *mobile phone*.

The *school computer* and likewise the computer in the library are found to fill a remedial role as regards the relatively less home-based computer experience of the ethnic minority youth involved in this study; the fact is that they have access to a home computer, with or without an Internet connection, substantially less often than the indigenous Dutch respondents. The ethnic minority youth make more use of the computer at school than the indigenous Dutch youth. The computer applications most used at school are the Internet, searching for information and doing homework.

In the Netherlands no programmes specially focused on migrant children and migrant youth are produced. The daily set of children's programmes on the public stations does try to give a multicultural gloss to the presentation and subjects of some of their programmes.

Actors and presenters from Surinamese, Turkish or Antilles backgrounds participate in these programmes. But for the time being, to watch children's programmes in the mother tongue, migrant children rely on satellite stations in the land of origin, and to a lesser extent on the local 'migrant television' in the big cities.

## **5. Conclusion**

From the above it can be concluded that relative little research has been done in the Netherlands on children and media. Also striking is the small number of studies in which ethnicity is a variable within the research. Researchers at the universities of Amsterdam, Leiden and Nijmegen are active in this area, but the research is still in its infancy. Also, there are few children's programmes focused on a multicultural public and in schools little attention is paid to media education and media projects.

Qualitative research into the motives for the use of new media in the leisure-time context of ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands should be carried out, whereby different Internet applications, such as e-mail and chatting, are addressed and attention is also devoted to topics that concern ethnic minorities domiciled in the Netherlands. Work is currently progressing at the Department of Communication Science of the University of Nijmegen on an in-depth qualitative study into the leisuretime use of the Internet and Internet applications by Turkish, Moroccan and Surinam youth in the Netherlands.

During the CHICAM project various aspects regarding children, media and ethnicity will be discussed. During the period of the project as much relevant research data on this subject as possible will be gathered. Together with universities possibilities for future research will be discussed. Also, during the project the emphasis will be on media training in education and the amount this will contribute to critical usage of media among migrant youth.

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## Ingegerd Rydin:

### CHILDREN AND MEDIA - SWEDEN

Centre for Research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations (CEIFO),  
Stockholm University. (April 2002)

#### 1. The Media Landscape

##### 1.1 Access

Today, all Swedish households have access to three public service channels. When it comes to cable and satellite television, about 62 per cent of the population has access to TV 3, 52 per cent has access to Channel 5. And finally, 42 per cent of the population has access to MTV, a channel which particularly attracts a younger audience.

There are a number of children's channels. However, only a small proportion of the population has access to them:

The reach of children's channels:

Children's Channel	7 per cent
Fox Kids	4
Nickelodeon	5
TNT/Cartoon	0

(Source: TV-tittandet 2000, MMS)

## 1.2 Use

### A. *Children between 7-10 years old:*

**Table 1:** Media use (minutes /an average day) of children aged 7-8\* (7-10\*\*) years (2000/01)<sup>29</sup>

Radio	5*
Audio cassettes	4*
CD	25*
Television	95**
VCR	23**
Comics	7*
Paper, magazine	5*
Books	16*
Total:	180

As can be seen from Table 1 children aged 7-10 devote 3 hours per day to the media. The main part of this time is spent with television and, in second place comes CD listening. In third place, comes the VCR and in the fourth place, reading books.

From the same study it is shown that most children **aged 7-8** have access to computer in the home — 79 percent — and that there **are** no differences between boys and girls. There are some differences between socio-economic groups (**as defined by** parents' education). About 68 percent of children from low-education homes have access to a computer, 79 percent from middleeducation homes and 85 percent from high-education homes.

### B. *Children from 9 and upwards:*

**Table 2:** Media use (minutes /an average day) of children aged 9 – 14 (2000)<sup>30</sup>:

29 Data comes from the Children's Barometer 2001/2001. (3-8 åringars kultur- och medievanor). Leni Filipsson och Anna Abrahamsson. MMS (Mediamätning Skandinavien AB).

30 The data comes from The Media Barometer a yearly research series carried out by Nordicom (The Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research), Gothenburg University, Sweden. The series, which started in 1979, examines media access and media use among a national representative sample of the Swedish population. The aim is to elucidate what proportions of the population use the different media on an average day, as well as to describe tendencies and changes in people's media use. Data are collected via telephone interviews with a random sample of about 3,000 individuals aged 9-79 taken from the census register. The interview are conducted on a stratified random sample of 28 days during the year, and the questions asked refer to media use on the previous day.

Radio	42
Audio cassettes	6
CD	19
Television	90
Text-TV	2
VCR	30
Internet	11
Morning paper	5
Evening paper	3
Magazine	9
Specialist press	3
Books	28
Total:	248

As can be seen from Table 2, television constitutes the dominant medium in the lives of children between the ages of 9 and 14 years, with an average use of 90 minutes per day. In second place comes radio with 42 minutes, primarily used as a music medium. In third place comes video watching with 30 minutes followed by book reading with 28 minutes. The time devoted to internet is only 11 minutes on average.

In summary: The total amount of time spent with the media is 4 hours and 8 minutes, This implies that the proportions of usage for the most frequently used media are as follows:

Television	36 percent
Radio	17
VCR	12
Books	11
Internet	4

Table 3 presents the proportion of 9 to 18 year-olds who used each medium the preceding day, in 2000. It appears that boys use audio-visual media more than girls do, whereas girls use music media and books more than boys. However, the greatest differences concern digital media. Boys use computers, the Internet, and video/computer games, considerably more frequently than girls do.

**Table 3:** Proportion of children who used each medium the preceding day (reach), by age and gender, 2000 (per cent)

Medium	9-13 years	14-18 years	Boys	Girls	9-18 years
Morning paper	33	60	48	46	47
Radio	57	75	63	69	66
Cassette tapes	18	18	15	21	18
CDs	45	72	60	59	59
Television	93	91	93	91	92
Text-TV	19	34	32	21	27
VCR	37	28	37	28	32
Video games	18	11	22	6	14
Computer*	37	44	46	35	41
Internet**	22	49	37	36	37
Evening paper	15	26	26	16	21
Magazines	32	27	26	33	29
Specialist press	15	13	17	11	4
Books	68	51	55	64	59
n=	150	170	161	159	320

Note: \* Used at home. \*\* Used at home or at school/work. Source: From Outlooks on Children and Media. The Unesco Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen at Nordicom, Yearbook 2001. (Original data from Sveriges Nordicom- Mediebarometern 2000.)

### 1.3 Television programme preferences

Generally, the most popular programmes among children and young people (7-16 years of age) are Swedish soap operas. Nine out of ten of the most popular programs are within the fiction genre, except for sports programs (in fifth place). However, there are significant gender- and age differences in programme preferences. Girls prefer Swedish soap operas to a much greater extent than boys do. Fiction series, which deal with human and social relations are significantly more popular among girls than among boys. Of the international series, the most popular series in 1996 were *Savannah*, *Friends* and *Melrose Place*. Boys seem to prefer series such as *Millennium* and *Archive X* to a greater extent (Johnsson-Smaragdi, 1998).

There is a clear discrepancy between 7-8 year olds and older age groups in programme preferences. Younger children prefer a mixture of Swedish soap operas, children's programmes and international animated cartoons such as Disney cartoons. Older children prefer a mixture of Swedish soap operas, foreign soap operas and adventure action series (Johnsson-Smaragdi, 1998).

## **1.4 Computer games preferences**

The most popular computer games among children and young people are adventure games and competition games. In second place come war games and in third place come various kinds of sport games. However, there are significant gender differences in preferences. Girls prefer adventure and competition games to a higher extent, whereas boys prefer war games. Other popular games among girls are educational games of various kinds. Next after war games, boys prefer adventure games, competition games, sport games and car and areoplane games (Johnsson-Smaragdi, 1998).

## **1.5 Children's programming**

The main distributor of children's programmes in Sweden is the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation (Sveriges Radio/SR). The company has a public service commission and has held a monopoly position for more than 50 years. Right from the start in 1925, particular programs aimed at children and young people have been produced. Since the 1940s, there have been special departments for children's radio programming. However, today radio broadcasting for younger children has decreased considerably, although there still are children's programs on the radio, and quite an extensive output for teenagers, mostly music programmes.

In 1956 the company was authorised to begin television broadcasting. A onechannel system was introduced. Children's programmes were part of the output from the very beginning. In 1969 the government commissioned SR to launch its second television channel (TV 2). This channel was to provide "stimulating competition" with TV 1 and it was directed towards "a younger audience" in general. At this point the output of programmes aimed at children increased considerably. However, it was stated that children's programmes should not be exposed to competition from other programmes (Rydin, 2000a). Today children's programmes are produced by three different companies, all offshoots of the original Sveriges Radio. The main body of programmes is broadcast by Sveriges Television (SVT), which has an extensive production of programmes for children and young people. More than half of the output is domestically produced. Children's programmes are broadcast at prime time with the particular aim of gathering the whole family in front of the set. In other words, programmes directed at children and young people, start at 18.00 and end at 20.00. The programme schedule has a clear age profile:



preschool children 18.00—18.30, programmes for 7-10 year olds 18.30—19.00, and programmes for young people 19.00—20.00. There are also programmes on Saturday and Sunday mornings. (Public Service-uppföljning 2000). The output for children and young people is about 10 percent of the total output from SVT. This proportion has been maintained since the beginning of the 1970s. The output from SVT is supposed to be a miniature version of the output for the general audience. This means that the programmes represent a whole range of categories: News, entertainment, magazines, drama, science, sports e t c., (Rydin, 2000a). A very general and subjective statement might summarize the profile as quite similar to that which the BBC offers its young audience, but somewhat less entertaining and with more emphasis on serious social relationship matters. During the last ten years there have been a number of magazines for younger (7-10) and older children (11-13), which on one hand deal with serious social issues such as social exclusion/inclusion, divorce, anorexia, homosexuality and suicide; although on the other hand, the same programmes also deal with lighter issues such as music, cosmetics and clothes.

In the 1980s the television market was deregulated, initially only through cable and satellite networks. However, a terrestrial channel with public service commission (TV 4), financed by advertisements, was launched in 1992 (Hadenius, 1998). TV 4 has a limited production of domestic children's programs. Most of the programs are imports, primarily entertainment such as drama fiction, action adventures and animated cartoons (Rydin, 2000b). In the same wave as TV 4 was introduced, satellite and cable channels gradually increased in number and access to these are increasing as well.

## **1.6 Media representations in commercial channels**

The increase of media contents might suggest that violent portrayals, pornography and advertising might have become more widespread. Apart from niche channels (specialising in sports, news, children's programming), satellite television often contains more entertainment violence than public television. For example, two content analyses made in 1995 and 1997, respectively, of six TV channels in Sweden showed that portrayals of physical violence were much more common on the only commercial national public service channel than on the two national public service channels without advertising (Cronström 1996, Cronström 1999). Most sequences of violence were found in fiction.

Animated children's programmes also often contain violence. Of the violent portrayals in satellite TV's fiction programmes, 70-90 per cent were produced in the U.S.A. (this section is adapted from von Feilitzen, 2001)

### **1.7 Ethnic and minority channels and broadcasting**

There are no particular channels for minorities in the regular output. However, about 25 percent of the immigrant population (first and second generation) has access to a parabolic aerial, which means that they can receive channels from the mother country (Weibull & Wadbring, 1999).

In the concession for the Swedish Television (SVT), the Swedish Radio (SR) and the Educational Broadcasting Company (UR) there is a special commission concerning the immigrant population. Special programmes aimed at the Finnish minority group as well as the Lappish minority group are broadcast on a regular basis. There are also special children's programmes in both Finnish and Lappish. Once a week a magazine program called MOSAIK is broadcast in prime time. MOSAIK has a young profile and has its eye on the young audience. According to the official declarations (annual reports), the programme is supposed to "reflect the multicultural society". The overall purpose is to highlight ethnic issues of relevance. For example, SVT's annual report for 2000 says: "The multicultural perspective in the output for children and young people is expressed in the imported output, in co-productions as well as domestic programs." In the regular output for children there is also an ambition to highlight multicultural issues, both for preschool children and for older ones (Public Service-uppföljning 2000). The Prix Mosaik is awarded annually to a producer or writer who has contributed most to "the reflection of the multicultural society". The producer of the fiction series *Det nya landet*, a humorous road movie, which portrays two young men who seek asylum in Sweden, received the prize in the year of 2000 (Public Service-uppföljning 2000). The same spirit as *Det nya landet*, characterized two movies that were released quite recently: *Vingar av glas* and *Jalla! Jalla!* They both deal in a humorous style with social relations within immigrant families, such as generational and gender conflicts, as well as their struggle to fit into the Swedish society. Both films have been very well received by critics and audience. *Jalla! Jalla!* reached number one on the "Top-ten-list" of the most popular Swedish films in 2001

(Svenska Filminstitutet). All these examples have immigrants in the production team as either director and/or writer.

## 2. Research paradigms

Academic research in this field derives mainly from sociology, developmental psychology and social psychology. Today, there is no particular institute or academic department that has children and the media on their research agenda as a main topic. Presently, there are no major projects going on. The sociology department at Lund University used to run a large-scale project called Media Panel, from which a number of books and articles have been published, for example *Media Matter. TV Use in Childhood and Adolescence*. (1990) and the book *Media Effects and Beyond* (1994). Its director was Professor Karl-Erik Rosengren. Media Panel is one of the few longitudinal projects studying the effects of growing up with television. It has an emphasis on survey data collected in schools. By using advanced statistical methods, various correlational data are achieved. One of Karl-Erik Rosengren's former students, Professor Ulla Johnson-Smaragdi, has pursued his line of research and has participated in the Himmelweit project. She is now at Växjö University. Media Panel, which is the largest coherent project on children and media conducted in Sweden, is basically following the positivistic tradition within sociology.

Also the Audience and Programme Research Department at the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation has contributed extensively to the development of media research concerning children and young people. The department ceased to exist in 1993, as a consequence of an organizational change in connection to the introduction of the people meter. This department was unique in the sense that it was not only carrying out applied research but also research on basic theoretical issues. Disciplines represented were sociology, statistics and psychology; but also literary studies and film studies. The research was primarily positivistic as in large-scale and regular studies on media use and media habits and various kinds of experimental and formative research. Some projects could, however, take an interpretative and hermeneutic approach such as small-scale in-depth studies focussing on particular audiences, sometimes using methods such as ethnographic field work. The department had a group with a particular commission to study children and young people. Both Cecilia von Feilitzen (now coordinator at the UNESCO Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen and lecturer in media and communication at

University of Södertörn) and Ingegerd Rydin, now lecturer in media and communication at Halmstad University have been working within the Children's Study Group. The department had an extensive production of publications (in Swedish as well as in English and a regular international newsletter). The Children's Study Group was for a period of twenty-five years responsible for the major part of the research on children and media in Sweden.

Media research taking a purely cultural perspective (Cultural Studies) has mainly been located at the Department of Media and Communication, Stockholm University; however, this focuses on young people rather than children. Johan Fornäs has run a number of projects studying youth cultures and subcultures. Individual projects have been carried out at other universities as well. So far the Cultural Studies perspective has hardly considered children below the teenage period, except for an undergraduate programme run by the Centre for Children's Culture at Stockholm University. However, the department has only a very small permanent staff. They mostly hire their teachers from other universities. The courses cover a number of topics, such as music, dance, drama, literature and the media. A recent initiative was taken by Helene Brembeck at the Department of Ethnology, the University of Gothenburg, where a group of researchers presently are studying children as consumers, focusing on topics such as computer games and toys. Their approach ties into the Cultural Studies tradition. The Department of Child Studies, Linköping University, is a cross-disciplinary research unit, which is highly influenced by the Sociology of Childhood tradition and has also a sociohistorical approach on childhood and growing up. Individual projects are oriented towards issues dealing with the media.

Finally, the UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen is located and administrated by Nordicom, which is an organ of cooperation between the Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The overriding goal and purpose is to make the media and communication efforts undertaken in the Nordic countries known, both throughout and far beyond our part of the world. The UNESCO Clearinghouse has as its main task to inform various groups of users – researchers, policy makers, media professionals, teachers, voluntary organisations and interested individuals about:

- research on children, young people and media violence

- children's access to mass media and their media use,
- media literacy and children's participation in the media, and
- regulatory and voluntary measures and activities in the area

### **3. Children as producers and media education**

Very briefly, I will make some comments on the the state of the art of media education in Sweden. Today, the compulsory school curriculum states that media education should be implemented through all stages from preschool and primary school through secondary school. In order to accomplish such a curriculum some teacher training colleges have adopted a "media profile", implying courses in media and communication studies, media education (critical media literacy) as well as basic education in media production (eg. film making, editing, photography, radio production). Moreover, most universities and colleges provide special courses in media education aimed particularly for teachers. These courses are normally administered by the units for media and communication studies.

#### **3.1 Special projects:**

*Animation at School. A Model for Media Teaching Developed in Sweden.*

Erling Ericson, animator and TV producer, working at the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company has found a film making technique, which could be implemented by teachers without their having to acquire special knowledge. An art teacher constructed a box, a container with lighting and a mount for a camera, which enabled the pupils to work independently. After making their storyboards with pictures and text, they animate the pictures. This can be done in various ways, but cutting out and then moving the figures directly in shot became the most frequently adopted technique. When the visual ingredients have been prepared, you take them to the box and bring them to life. Sound is added to the film when the animation has been shot. The results of the children's work in film have been shown on Swedish television. Co-operation with schools in many other countries has also occurred. Ericsson's conclusion is: "We now know that film language is very well suited to pupils with problems in reading and writing —pupils, who do not, as a matter of course, fit in at school, but whose talents often come to the fore when they are given the chance to work with a film." (from von Feilitzen & Bucht, 2001, p. 84).

*Children and Media Association BMK-NIMECO, Sweden.*

Barn Media Kunskap (BMK) (Children Media Knowledge) or Niños Medicos de comunicacion y su conocimiento (NIMECO) is a voluntary association but above all a method, whose objective is to introduce theoretical and practical study with and about the media. The BMK (NIMECO) methodology is addressed to preschoolers, children, young people and adults alike in curricular as well as extracurricular activities — from kindergarten to higher education including teacher training. The pedagogical aim of the method, created in the early 80s, is to propose ideas and inspiration to help people initiate a process of awareness, allowing them to critically read and understand the media's representations of reality. The method has served as a basis for educational, audio-visual projects in several countries. (From von Feilitzen & Bucht, 2001, p. 101.)

#### **4. Ethnic minority/migrant children**

Here one thesis will be highlighted: *"Video som språk och kommunikation"* (Video as language and communication), by Helena Danielsson, Department of Education, Stockholm University, 1998. To my knowledge, this is the only project that has dealt particularly with ethnic minority children and the media. The purpose was to study the stories children and teenagers tell, when they express themselves by using video cameras, as well as with animations. A second aim was to study the context in which the activities took place by using methods such as interviews and observations including both teachers, media educators and children. One of the main findings was that children with difficulties in expressing themselves in Swedish, appreciated the chance to express themselves by audio-visual means. And the teachers stressed that the production process challenged the children's communicative skills. Another finding was that some children who normally were low-achievers did themselves justice in this new educational context.

I will also mention a report from Gothenburg University titled: *De nya svenskarna möter svenska massmedier*. (The new Swedes encounter Swedish mass media), 1999. The report deals with quantitative data on media habits and access to various media among immigrants as compared to Swedes. However, the study does not include children. The youngest group is aged 15-29 years old. From this study the following conclusions of interest for the CHICAM project can be drawn:

Demographic variables:

- As compared to Swedes the population of immigrants are better educated.
- As compared to Swedes the population of immigrants are younger. (Note: Younger people are generally better educated than older people.)

Access to media:

- As compared to Swedes the population of immigrants have slightly less access to various media.
- As compared to Swedes the population of immigrants have *much less* access to (subscription) print news media. About 75 percent of the Swedish population has a morning paper subscription as compared to 40 percent of the immigrant population.
- As compared to Swedes the population of immigrants has slightly less access to a personal computer and internet. As compared to Swedes the population of immigrants has higher access to cable television. However, there is no difference between the two groups concerning CD-player, video and parabolic antenna. (Note: The parabolic antenna is often used to receive programmes from the mother country.)

## 5. Concluding remarks

Conclusions from media education projects often seem to represent a kind of wish fulfilment from the media educator's point of view. They are so dedicated in what they are doing that subjective rhetorical statements are confounded with the empirical findings. There has to be much more careful examination of the processes in "the classroom" in order to find out what really is happening. A more transparent reporting of research processes should be undertaken. Perhaps by using ethnographic field work, field notes as well as video techniques, one could gain more insightful and relevant knowledge of the interactions going on. In other words, we need more "thick descriptions", both of the production process *per se* and the products themselves, for example by using narrative and discursive methods in a systematic manner. I hope CHICAM will take a step further and improve the quality of the documentation of media educational projects.

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## **Professor David Buckingham and Liesbeth de**

### **Block:**

## **CHILDREN AND MEDIA - UK**

**Centre for the Study of Children Youth and Media Institute of Education, University of London. (April 2002)**



## **1. The media landscape**

### **1.1. Access and use**

Even by comparison with other European countries, the UK is a media-rich society. Children's uses of media are generally dominated by screen-based entertainment media, particularly broadcast television; although access to multimedia computers and the internet is now increasing rapidly. The most recent comprehensive survey of children's media use, conducted in 1997, notes that British children watch television for an average of two and a half hours a day; that four in five watch videos for around six hours per week; and that two thirds play computer games for around five hours per week (Livingstone and Bovill, 1999). Current projections suggest that internet access is likely to reach a majority of households with children by 2003 (Family Expenditure Survey, 1999-2000). Livingstone and Bovill (1999) argue that this relatively high level of media use can be explained by the lack of attractive alternative activities, and by parental fears about children's safety. British children now spend more time confined to the home and are less independently mobile than they were two decades ago (Ward, 1994). Possibly as a form of compensation, parents now appear keen to provide children with a media-rich environment in the home – and in particular, to provide media for personal use. More than two thirds of British children now have television sets in their bedrooms, more than one third have games consoles and more than a quarter have a VCR.

Nevertheless, there are significant social differences in children's access to, and use of, media. Working class children are more likely to have personal access to screen entertainment media (TVs, games machines and VCRs), and less likely to have access to books. Middle-class children have significantly greater access to personal computers and to the internet, although less to games consoles.

Although girls have greater access to PCs, boys are more likely to have access in their bedrooms. Boys and girls also display predictable differences in terms of tastes, for example in relation to sport or soap operas. Access obviously increases with age, although this is not necessarily reflected in use: British teenagers, for example, watch the least television of any age group, as alternative activities become more easily available. These patterns of media use therefore reflect a complex combination of parents' social

attitudes, available family income and children's own tastes or dispositions, as well as the imperatives and preoccupations of the wider society.

## **1.2. Provision for children**

Technological developments and global economic deregulation within the media industries have resulted in a significant proliferation of channels and outlets in recent years. Compared with other European countries, cable and satellite television are relative newcomers in British homes, although a majority of households with children now subscribe. Children have been a key target market for these new services, and most cable/satellite packages offer at least six dedicated children's channels. Thus far, all the new channels have been US-owned, and are dominated by US content. The only domestically-based children's channel was an early casualty in this process, although the BBC (the public broadcaster) will be launching two new children's channels in 2002.

As this implies, children have become an increasingly significant target market for media companies (and, of course, for advertisers); although as competition intensifies, the audience is also fragmenting. Children who have access to cable/satellite are steadily abandoning terrestrial television, but the audience share of the new channels is very small, and certainly insufficient to justify significant expenditure on new UK production. At the same time, the child audience is increasingly merging with the youth audience, causing some to argue that the 'end' of childhood is arriving ever earlier. In general, children have always preferred to watch programmes aimed at the general audience, rather than children's programmes specifically; and – despite the global spread of US media – many of their favourite programmes are also British-made (Buckingham et al., 1999).

In respect of other media, British children are much less well served. Radio programmes specifically aimed at children are almost non-existent; while hardly any newspapers contain sections or supplements for children. Those that do exist are clearly aimed at middle-class children (or parents). Compared with other European countries, there are many fewer comics or cartoon books for children; and this medium as a whole is perceived as lacking in cultural status. Magazines for teenagers are sharply divided along gender lines.

### **1.3. Regulation**

Despite the overall climate of economic deregulation, screen media in the UK are comparatively strictly regulated in respect of moral issues, and in relation to children. Film and video classification is among the tightest in Europe, and there is an elaborate sequence of age-based categories (which is also applied to computer games). Although there is good evidence that the majority of children have seen prohibited material, the legal penalties for supplying it are very high. In the case of television, there is also strong positive regulation – that is, to do with provision rather than protection. Terrestrial channels are required to provide fixed numbers of hours of children's programming, of which some must be domestically produced; and to cover a range of genres. There is also regulation on the grounds of 'quality', although this is somewhat loosely defined. These regulations apply to terrestrial commercial broadcasters, although not to cable/satellite providers.

While there have been recurrent 'moral panics' about media effects, the climate of media regulation in the UK is slowly becoming more liberal. There appears to be a growing recognition that, with the advent of new technologies, children's access to media can no longer be so centrally controlled. As in many other countries, the emphasis seems to be shifting away from censorship towards consumer advice and education. This is particularly the case in relation to debates about internet safety, where centralised regulation is even less likely to be effective. The forthcoming Communications Act (2002) will create a new overarching regulator (Ofcom) combining media and telecommunications, which will have responsibility for 'media literacy' as part of its remit.

### **1.4. Ethnic minorities**

There has been little discussion or research about the place of ethnic minority and migrant children in this context. As the media system becomes steadily more commercialised, they could be seen to be at risk of exclusion, in common with other economically disadvantaged groups. Thus, research from the early 1990s suggests that Asian and African-Caribbean groups are likely to have fewer television sets than the rest of the population, and that sets are much less likely to be located in children's bedrooms – perhaps reflecting a greater emphasis on 'family togetherness' (Mullan, 1996). On the other hand, the same research suggests that Asians were more likely to have access to

VCRs, home computers and video cameras than the rest of the population; although African-Caribbeans had less of this technology than average. Clearly, access to media depends not only on the amount of disposable income, but on how that income is spent – and this reflects broader cultural dispositions and priorities. As we shall see below, media can serve specific social and cultural functions for migrant groups; and hence their patterns of access and use should not simply be deduced from their socio-economic position.

There is a long history in Britain of specialist ‘ethnic minority’ programming on mainstream channels, but it has only ever been a token presence (Cottle, 2000). Channel 4, which has a specific remit to address ethnic minorities, offered significant support for ethnic minority film and video production workshops during the 1980s, although this has since been dissipated (Hussein, 1994). Some critics have argued that specialist programming of this kind amounts to little more than a form of ghettoisation in the first place; and it seems to be important for ethnic minority audiences that they are visible to mainstream viewers, and not just to themselves (Halloran et al., 1995; Mullan, 1996; Ross, 2000; Sreberny, 1999). Several studies have criticised mainstream media for failing to reflect the multicultural nature of modern Britain (e.g. Ross, 1996; van Dijk, 2000) – a view that is also clearly reflected in the views of ethnic minority audiences (Halloran et al., 1995; Mullan, 1996; Sreberny, 1999). However, others have suggested that, when compared with some other European countries, representations of ethnic minority groups in the UK are found in a wider range of programming, rather than simply being confined to news and current affairs (Hargreaves, 2001). Following vigorous debates on these issues during the 1970s and 1980s (Daniels and Gerson, 1989; Mullan, 1996: Chapter One), there are now industry codes of practice governing the representation of ethnic minority groups, and equal opportunities policies are slowly leading to increases in the proportions of such groups both on screen and in production roles – although progress in this respect has been fraught with obstacles and resistances (Cottle, 2000). Meanwhile, more established ethnic minority communities in the UK have their own thriving economic infrastructures, and are increasingly being recognised as a valuable target market. Particularly in the case of radio, the concentration of Britain’s ethnic minority populations in urban centres results in a ‘critical mass’ of potential consumers for locally-based services (Hussein, 1994). In general, Britains ethnic minorities have significantly gained from the deregulation of British

media described above. Thus, cable/satellite providers now offer a wide range of Indian, Bangladeshi, Greek, Arabic, Chinese, Kurdish, African, Iranian and other channels, some of which target several nationalities; and major cities have a range of specialist community radio stations aimed at particular ethnic groups (such as, in areas of London, Greek Cypriots and South Asians: see Tsagarousianou, 1999), and in some cases a strong 'ethnic' local press (for example, in the case of the Pakistani population in Bradford: see Husband, 1998). A recent listing of broadcast licence holders by the Independent Television Commission contained more than 40 organisations defining themselves as producing programmes for particular linguistic or ethnic groups (Sreberny, 1999), although many of these organisations are relatively short-lived.

Licenses for such channels must be granted by the relevant authorities (the Independent Television Commission or the Radio Authority), and in some instances there have been political disputes surrounding this (as in the case of Turkish opposition to the UK's Kurdish channel). Audiences for such programming are inevitably small, and the costs of subscription to specialist channels are prohibitive for some; although the rate of expansion of such services does suggest that some at least are highly economically viable. Yet while services of this kind are certainly growing, ethnic minority groups themselves show little enthusiasm for what Halloran et al. (1995) call 'broadcasting apartheid' – whether in the form of specialist programming on mainstream television, or in the form of separate channels.

## **2. Research paradigms, methods and issues**

In the UK, academic research on children and media has been undertaken within a range of theoretical paradigms. Hilde Himmelweit's pioneering study *Television and the Child* (1958) established the value of social psychology as a distinctive and productive approach to studying children's relations with the media. Likewise, Ray Brown's collection *Children and Television* (1976) was one of the first to apply the 'uses and gratifications' approach to this field. Work in these traditions continues. The Livingstone and Bovill study (1999), mentioned above, extends the social psychological approach; while a more developmental perspective is represented in the work of researchers such as Young (1990) and Davies (1997).

In general, British researchers working in these fields have been sceptical of exaggerated claims about the impact of the media on children. They have focused on how media interact with other social influences in children's lives; and on the 'active' ways in which children interpret and use what they watch and read. Young (1990), for example, questions the common view of children as vulnerable victims of advertising, and studies how they develop the ability to evaluate commercial messages critically; while Davies (1997) has investigated the complex ways in which children make judgments about what is 'real' on television, and decisively rejects the view that children simply mistake fantasy for reality.

A more sociological approach has been adopted by researchers within Cultural Studies. This focuses not so much on the encounter between mind and media, as on the roles that media play in the everyday 'lived cultures' of particular social groupings. Some of the best-known work in this tradition is concerned with youth culture - for example, with how young people use and appropriate popular music and fashion in constructing distinctive social identities (e.g. McRobbie, 1991;

Willis, 1990). There is also a growing body of research which looks at the social dynamics of children's everyday uses of media such as television. The focus here is on how audiences 'read' media texts, and on the ways in which media use is embedded within social activities and relationships (Buckingham, 2000).

In terms of research methods, there are two broad approaches here. First, there are studies that have adopted an 'ethnographic' or observational approach to studying children's uses of media within the context of the home and the peer group. Gillespie's (1995) study of the use of television among a South Asian community in London, for example, combines an analysis of the role of television in the family with an account of children's responses to specific genres such as news and soap opera. Other studies of this kind have examined (for example) how young girls use television to claim a 'gendered' space within the home, or how groups of teenage boys use the viewing of 'forbidden' movies on video to define a particular form of masculinity (Buckingham, 1993a). Secondly, there have been several studies that investigate how children define and negotiate their social identities through talk about television. Children's judgments about genre and representation, and their reconstructions of television narrative, for

example, are seen here as inherently social processes – and hence as issues of power and difference. These studies use a form of discourse analysis which regards talk as a form of ‘social action’. Thus, Buckingham (1993b) analyses how boys’ talk about soap operas - and their judgments about what is or is not realistic or plausible - is inextricably related to their construction of their own masculinity; or how black and white children’s discussions of ‘positive images’ in a programme like *The Cosby Show* are bound up with the dynamics of inter-racial friendships.

In broad terms, both psychological and sociological researchers are now inclined to regard children as ‘active’ participants in the process of making meaning - as competent social actors, rather than as passive victims. However, there is a risk here of adopting a rather simplistic ‘child-centred’ approach, which seeks merely to celebrate the sophistication of the ‘media-wise’ child. This research often attempts to take the child’s perspective: it tries to make sense of children’s experience of the media in children’s own terms, rather than in adults’ terms. However, there is a methodological danger here in assuming that this perspective is something that can simply be revealed, and that research is merely providing a forum in which children’s voices can be heard. These ethical and methodological questions about the relations between researchers and researched obviously take on a particular force when the children concerned are from ethnic minority groups (de Block, 2002).

### **3. Children as media producers**

Children have largely been excluded from participation in the mainstream media in Britain. While more and more media are targeted at them, they have very little control over what is produced. In the UK, there have been a few interesting initiatives in this field: Channel 4 have produced several series of ‘access’ programmes made by children (most notably *Wise Up*); and the children’s news agency *Children’s Express* has been very effective in representing children’s views in mainstream newspapers and occasionally on television. Yet it is still rare to hear children speaking for themselves in the British media.

However, recent technological developments do offer increasing opportunities for children to engage in media production in their own right. Falling prices, combined with the increasing ‘user friendliness’ both of the equipment and the software, have made



production a much more accessible option. Sales of video camcorders and digital cameras appear to be booming. At least in principle, more and more young people have home computers in their bedrooms that can be used to create music, to manipulate images or to edit video to a relatively professional standard. As yet, however, there has been comparatively little research in this field in the UK.

Some researchers have used media production essentially as an alternative method of audience research. Gauntlett (1997), for example, looks at how the production of short videotapes enabled groups of young children to express and develop their own perspectives on environmental issues. The primary concern here is still to do with children as 'readers' of media (in this case, of environmental messages on television); but the study also illustrates the potential value of enabling children to become producers of media in their own right. Other researchers have investigated the role of media production in educational settings. Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994), for example, examined students' productions generated in Media Studies classes in one secondary school; Buckingham, Grahame and Sefton-Green (1995) considered production activities in a wider range of classes; while Burn (1999) has looked at students' digital media production work. These studies raise several questions about the relation between 'theory' (or media analysis) and 'practice' (that is, production) in media teaching, and about the social dynamics of group production. They clearly show that production is a multi-faceted process, that involves cognitive, aesthetic, interpersonal and emotional aspects. However, in most instances, the aims of these classroom activities were defined by teachers more in terms of conceptual learning about the media than in terms of learning production skills or 'self-expression'. Production was seen as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. Only in a couple of instances (Buckingham, Grahame and Sefton-Green, 1995, Chapter 4; Buckingham and Harvey, 2001) have these researchers considered 'informal' educational settings – and even here, the work described is very much defined by its pedagogic context.

The question of how children might engage in more 'spontaneous' forms of media production – or at least, in activities that are not instigated or monitored by adults – largely remains to be explored. A study by Sefton-Green and Buckingham (1998) found little evidence of sustained creative media production in homes: the children surveyed were



aware of the possibilities offered by their multimedia computers, but were generally happy to 'mess about' in their spare moments rather than engaging in more purposeful, motivated production work –although it might have been unrealistic to have expected anything more. Whether this situation is changing with the increasing diffusion of production technology remains to be explored.

#### **4. Ethnic minority and migrant children**

Amid all the research and debate in this area, questions of ethnic difference have remained largely invisible. Existing surveys of children's media access and use generally fail to include ethnicity as a variable; or when they do so, tend to have small samples of particular ethnic groups and hence are unable to produce reliable findings. More qualitative case studies have occasionally raised such issues (e. g. Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1994: Chapter 9; Buckingham, Grahame and Sefton-Green: Chapter 2), although they have rarely been able to investigate them systematically.

Equally, studies of ethnic minorities' uses of media have rarely addressed children as a specific group. Here, as in so many other areas of social research, children are largely subsumed within the family or the community (e.g. Halloran et al., 1995; Mullan, 1996; Ross, 2000; Sreberny, 1999). Such studies generally conclude that ethnic groups are dissatisfied with how they are portrayed, and that the British media do not do justice to the complex cultural mixes in which people live their lives. There is frequently complaint about stereotyping, 'negative images', marginalisation and tokenism, and the way in which individual characters are made to carry the 'burden of representation' for entire groups. However, there is also evidence that ethnic minority parents use television as a tool for cultural acclimatisation; and that, conversely, children might persuade their parents to watch particular programmes in order to familiarise them both with the contemporary popular culture of the host country and with their own dilemmas (Gillespie, 1995: Chapter Five; Ross, 2000: 139; Sreberny, 1999: 52, 49).

One particular focus in a number of recent studies has been the use of 'ethnic' or 'specialist' media, including satellite TV channels containing news and entertainment broadcasts in home languages, produced in the country of origin (e. g. Siew-Peng, 2001), and minority radio stations based in the host country (e. g. Tsagarousianou, 2001). These

media are often seen to assist in the creation and maintenance of transnational or diasporic communities and cultural attachments – albeit ones that may be partly based on ‘imagined’ or merely nostalgic ideas about the home nation (Sreberny, 2000). Yet while they may enable migrants to feel ‘at home’ in their situation of exile, and hence to combat feelings of isolation, it has been argued that they can also undermine the assimilationist aims of the host country (Wood and King, 2001).

Some researchers note significant generational differences in responses to these media: younger people tend to be more critical of minority ethnic media on the grounds of their perceived ‘lack of professionalism’, and for failing to acknowledge the specific experiences of the second-generation audience (Tsagarousianou, 2001: 164). Likewise, second-generation Chinese migrants complain that their parents’ preference for the specialist Chinese channels prevents them from keeping up with the British soaps, and hence being able to discuss them with UK peers – although some elements of Chinese popular culture (such as music videos) remain very popular with them (Siew-Peng, 2001). The young British-Asians in the studies by Halloran et al. (1995) and Husband (1998) also show little enthusiasm for TV programming or newspapers in minority languages, in some cases because they are less fluent in those languages themselves. Halloran et al. (1995) and Mullan (1996) also provide some evidence of struggles between parents and children over the viewing of morally ‘inappropriate’ content – although whether these are any more intense than generational conflicts within any other ethnic group is perhaps debatable. Despite this, there have been very few studies of younger audiences’ uses of the mainstream media of the host country. Gillespie’s (1995) book, mentioned above, remains one of the very few such studies in the UK, although – as in the work mentioned above – the young people concerned are mostly second-generation rather than recent immigrants. In line with the Cultural Studies approach, Gillespie is primarily concerned with how her respondents use the increasingly transnational array of media available to them, both to facilitate interpersonal relationships and to understand their place in the social world. Gillespie notes some perhaps unlikely ‘homologies’ here – for example between the representation of extended (and reconstructed) families in Australian and British soap operas and her viewers’ perceptions of their own South Asian family lives. There are also significant generational differences: while the children participate in parentally-governed rituals of ‘devotional viewing’, they are also quite critical of what they perceive as the lack

of realism and professionalism of popular Hindi films, as compared with Hollywood. Meanwhile, news viewing is seen to provide a means of access to 'adult citizenship' in the host culture, while also occasionally posing significant dilemmas in terms of young people's political and cultural identifications (as in the case of the media coverage of the Gulf War). Gillespie's analysis offers a relatively optimistic view of the role of media in the construction of 'new ethnicities', primarily among second- and third-generation migrants in the UK (cf. Hall, 1992). What emerges here is a view of young South Asian viewers not as 'caught between cultures' and hence as deprived of a coherent sense of identity (as they are often described within mainstream 'race relations' literature), but on the contrary as positively cosmopolitan, constructing hybrid or multiple identities that enable them to enjoy 'the best of both worlds' (see also Gillespie, 2000).

Barker (1997, 1998) develops this discussion in his analysis of how British Asian teenage girls 'reflexively construct hybrid identities' in the process of peer-group talk about soap operas. Their discussions of 'ethnic' representations and moral dilemmas in the programmes enable them to construct a positive identity as both British and Asian; while these multiple identities are also cross-cut by – and in some cases, in tension with – other identifications based (in this case) on age, social class and gender. In line with the work on 'new ethnicities', and with recent debates in social theory (e.g. Giddens, 1991), Barker sees identity not as fixed and given, but as something which is instantiated and achieved in the process of social interaction. From this anti-essentialist perspective, identity is never complete or finally accomplished, but perpetually constituted and re-constituted within forms of representation (Hall, 1992) – and not least by the increasing range of representational resources made available by globalisation. Whether this account can be sustained in the light of other contemporary changes such as the resurgence of ethnic and religious nationalism – and indeed whether it applies to more recent migrants – remains to be seen.

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