



## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**An alternative self-representation?  
Ethnic minority media,  
between hegemony and resistances**

18-19 March 2010

MSHS, Poitiers - France

### CALL FOR PAPERS

An international conference organised by the EU Excellence Team MINORITYMEDIA (University of Poitiers) together with the research centre MIGRINTER (CNRS-UMR 6588).

*The conference will be held in English, with a possible simultaneous translation into French, depending on funding.*

#### Keynote speakers:

Prof. Sirma BILGE (CEETUM, University of Montréal) *(to be confirmed)*  
Prof. Robin COHEN (IMI, University of Oxford) *(to be confirmed)*  
Prof. Daya THUSSU (University of Westminster)

Why study ethnic minority media, a subject with such little legitimacy? If English literature has devoted several books and many seminars, it remains rarely studied in the academic field because it suffers some kind of dual domination: on the one hand, these media are generally not visible, with an often limited lifetime, an uncertain economic viability and situated on the periphery of the journalism field; on the other hand, these groups are frequently minorised, and / or poorly represented in mainstream media (amongst journalists as well as in media content) and more widely in political and union bodies. However, this subject seems rather interesting because it is at a crossroads of several disciplines and allows to combine and discuss the contributions of several research fields.

This conference, above all, is in the field of cultural studies, subaltern studies and the sociology of mobilisation by both the choice of the subject – the minoritised cultural media practices – and its ambition to show and analyse resistances but also the various forms of adherence of individuals and minority groups to the hegemonic ideology. It draws on anthropology and sociology of migration and interethnic relations, by its interest in the process of identification and othering at work in the permanent construction of ethnicity and its borders.

It also leans towards sociology of journalism, through its attention focused on the process of information production, organisational constraints (from the press, editorials) that shape the media practices. In addition, it touches on geography, for its interest in the physical and symbolic exchanges in various areas. Finally, it appeals to political science, with its objective to compare many very different fieldworks in terms of both management policies for cultural diversity as well as communication policies.

Globalisation is reflected not only by an increase but also by a diversification of material and immaterial flows. Trade and the movement of ideas were first allowed by the physical movement of people across national and regional borders. Nowadays, globalisation has taken a new turn since the popularisation of new technologies, especially in information and communication. The movement is not only physical but virtual, information and communication technologies (ICTs) helping to redefine the notion of space. Thus, alongside new 'circulatory territories' appear new spatial logics. One of the direct consequences of these upheavals is a questioning of national frameworks and construction, induced by the reorganisation and renegotiation of individuals and the various groups that form our multicultural societies.

The reference to media is overwhelmingly in relation to mainstream media. Beside them, a multitude of ethnic minority media do coexist, created by and for people living in a context of ethnic minorisation. To what extent do they contribute, both in their existence and by their positions, in redefining majority and minority identifications? Products of global migration and proliferation of minority cultures, ethnic minority media are both producers and containers of identity. A number of influential theorists have argued in favour of ethnic media as an important tool in furthering and supporting democracy and participation in the public sphere. To what extent, by increasing opportunities for participation in the journalistic field and offering new ways to contribute in the public sphere, has the advent of Web 2.0 amplified the abilities, methods and types of expression of cultural and religious actors? Among the issues that this conference wishes to address, will be to question the effects of these developments by attempting to see past the enchanted vision of accessibility to ICTs for all as well as the pessimistic visions of atomisation / communitising the public sphere that would lead to not being able to speak even of a public space.

This international conference focuses on people who experience deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation and who develop or sustain distinct identities and social relations within and across nation-states, through ethnic minority media. The purpose is to understand the growing role of mediated communication in defining meanings, uses and appropriations of cultural, religious and social space. It aims to analyse, within the framework of ethnic minority media, the *perception* of the feeling of belonging, the collective (*re*)*presentation* of the Self, as well as the cultural and religious *practices*. The central question is: what role the ethnic minority media play in imagining and mobilising new communities of belonging, or transforming them in the context of globalisation and cultural diversity?

Proposals of communication based on extensive field surveys will be particularly appreciated, as well as those offering a theoretical reading fed by a previous empirical work. All disciplines of humanities and social sciences are encouraged to participate, especially sociology, anthropology, geography, history, information and communication sciences and political science. Proposals for papers must fit into one of the following sessions:

### **1. Re-presentation, production, identity construction**

The ethnic minority media feed on and reinvent alternately identification with a 'community' (readers, listeners) who revive the feeling of having an identity and of belonging to a common history. They are one of the privileged places of unification and identity construction. The social sciences have shown how the identities and affiliations - religious, political, ethnic, national, linguistic - are intertwined and blended. How media actors adapt to the possible contradictory nature of various identity 'mobilisers'? What are the strategies of

representation and visibility? How do the minority and the majority feed off one another? What is the role of religion? Do the ethnic minority media, especially electronic contribute to what might be qualified as a transnational identity unification movement? How are multiple identities expressed on the Net at the time of technological, political and social transformation in the globalised world?

## **2. Mobilisation and citizenship**

This session will examine the role of ethnic minority media in the public sphere. In the tradition of cultural studies, which is interested in cultural production as a form of political participation, the communication papers will try to analyse the relationship between ethnic minority media and collective mobilisation. The ethnic minority media may first help to raise a debate on the public sphere. They can provide an arena where dominated social groups identify their problems, express their demands and formalise their interest on the public sphere. In sum, these media are involved in transforming specific concerns into public issues, to include them in the policy agenda and to get answers in terms of public policy. Secondly, the ethnic minority media can promote activities that go beyond the single media activities and enroll directly in the register of social movements. This axis will therefore clarify the contribution of ethnic minority media in public debate and understand how they fit in (which) public space.

## **3. Mobility, spaces, territories**

Studies on transnational and translocal mobilisation of migrants helped to illuminate the links between areas of mobilisation and areas of migration and movement. The social sciences are traversed by a recent increase in the qualifying words: circulatory, migratory, transnational, translocal, glocal... Rather than judge the respective relevance of these qualifiers, the purpose is to recognise that they all belong to the same paradigm of mobility, whereby any movement in space is accompanied by the crossing of social and political spaces. Does the space represent a material support to the media actors, a strategic resource, a symbolic reference, or all of these combined? Is the formation of migratory territorialities accompanied by the emergence of new militant territorialities? Can the ethnic minority media be a factor of social mobility? This session will explore the multiple linkages between mobility (identity, social, economic, political), space and territory, and the ways in which the media actors experience them.

## **4. Ethnic minority media in the journalistic field**

Ethnic minorities have invested the media space by the margin – whether in special pages or dedicated sections in the mainstream media, or in specific (ethnic) media – as did the women in the Anglo-Saxon press of the nineteenth century. In this context, are minorities successful at innovating editorials and at making other/alternative subjects heard in the journalistic and media sphere? Do the ethnic minority media share a vision of the political, cultural and social role of the minorities different from that played in the mass media? Have they led to new ways of doing journalism? Is there an adversarial relationship between the ethnic minority media and mainstream media? Or rather, to what extent do the ethnic media reproduce organisational forms, systems of constraint, and divisions of labour, similar to the hegemonic models in the more legitimate media?

## **5. Gender and interlocking systems of domination**

This session focuses on ethnic minority media as gendered organisations. As identified in the mainstream media, does the trend towards feminisation, not only in numerical terms, but also in terms of the division of power, access to high positions and prestigious informational fields also hold true in the ethnic minority media? Can we identify areas assigned to the ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’? What is the contribution of minorised individuals

and groups in terms of gender to the recent developments in journalism writing? Does a greater representation of these people allow them to offer a different image of themselves and to promote different topics or to question differently issues associated with them? Compared to mainstream media, do the ethnic minority media take more into account the interlocking systems of domination (gender, class, race) as explanatory factors of topical phenomena or, more broadly, social relations? What self-representation do women and men set up on the public space and especially in the media they initiated? Do these modes of representation differ according to gender, ethnicity or class?

## **6. Local, national and supranational frameworks and dynamics**

The development of ethnic minority media is influenced by different state policies, both in terms of communication as in terms of relation to minority phenomenon and ethnic diversity. Moreover, collective identity construction and development of self-representation on public space depend on dominant societal and legal frameworks. In this context, and despite the emergence of institutional Europe and transnational practices, what signification do the national frameworks have in political, legal and institutional terms as well as in historical and social contexts? How can the political representation of minority groups in countries with opposed patterns of diversity management be compared? To what extent the existence – or nonexistence – of means from the public sphere affected to minority media, favour – or not – the development of an area of confrontation of political positions more or less loyal or otherwise radical?

## **7. The ethnic minority media in history**

The ethnic minority media are a historically rooted phenomenon, contemporary of the first waves of migration – internal and external – both in Europe and across the Atlantic. If the Chicago School produced the first research on this topic early in the twentieth century, the scientific output on the historical period are still lacking. What was the impact of ethnic minority media in Europe still largely marked by internal and regional migration? How have these media been able to contribute to the development and the strengthening of the cohesive identity of diaspora (Jews, Armenians...) or groups of immigrants (Belgians, Italians, Poles...)?

## **8. Trajectories at the intersection of media, political and social spheres**

This session will discuss the individual trajectories of media actors. We are inspired here by the paradigm of mobility according to which any movement in space is accompanied by the crossing of social and political hierarchies. Does the popularisation of ICTs allow the access to the media sphere by the most minorised groups/persons? Does the use of ICTs by ethnic minorities, with the boom of virtual ethnic social networks in all countries of immigration, constitute a bottom-up reappropriation of new types of media?

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

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## ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

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## CONTACTS

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## SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Communication proposals, in English, should include:

- Page 1:        Title  
                  Author  
                  Full contact information (including: name / institutional affiliation / address / country of residence / telephone / e-mail)
- Page 2:        Title of the communication  
                  Title of the session  
                  Abstract (500-750 words, single-spaced), for publication in the conference program. The abstract should provide a summary of the paper, including conceptualisation, method, and major findings.

Panel sessions last 2:30 hours. The number of discussants participating in the panel is between four and six. Ample time will be provided for engaging the audience (conference participants) in the discussion.

Intending participants to the conference should electronically submit their communication papers proposals to both Isabelle Rigoni ([isabelle.rigoni@univ-poitiers.fr](mailto:isabelle.rigoni@univ-poitiers.fr)) and Françoise Braud ([francoise.braud@cegetel.net](mailto:francoise.braud@cegetel.net)) as well as to [conference@minoritymedia.eu](mailto:conference@minoritymedia.eu) by the **30 October 2009** for consideration. All submitted proposals will be peer-reviewed by the scientific committee of the conference by the **30 November 2009**.

Eligible participants should submit their full papers (+/- 8000 words) by the **31 January 2010**. All submitted manuscripts must be original papers of scientific quality in regard to theoretical and methodological criteria.

