

Worst Case and Best Practice in European and North American Media Integration: What Can We Learn from One Another?

Round Table Discussion

Participants

Prof. Dr. Heinz Bonfadelli (University of Zürich)

Prof. Dr. Rainer Geißler (Siegen University)

Prof. Dr. Leen d'Haenens (Radbouw University Nijmegen)

Souley Hassane (University of Poitiers)

Dr. Petra Herczeg (University of Vienna)

Prof. Dr. Horst Pöttker (University of Dortmund)

Prof. Dr. Kenneth Starck (Zayed University, United Arab Emirates)

Chair

Augie Fleras (University of Waterloo, Canada)

Augie Fleras

Good afternoon to everyone and welcome to this final session that will be a round-table colloquium.

The theme of the conference is to see what media and journalists need to do in order to make minorities and migrants feel at home. I think, that we use that terminology is quite interesting, because it goes beyond abstractions like just integration or inclusion, but brings it really down to the fundamental issue – of making migrants feel at home – in terms of reaching out, in terms of inviting in, and in terms of inquiring: where are experiences of discriminatory barriers and what could be done to modify or eliminate these barriers? What kind of indicators do we have with feeling at home? We like to think that feeling at home means that your sense of belonging is as much to your country as to the one that you left behind; that your sense of identity is as great as the one that you left behind. So the notion of indicators – what constitutes this concept of integration in general and feeling at home more specifically? – is an important one.

In the appendix of my paper, at page 23, I've reproduced a paraphrase of what the European Commission has defined as a working set of criteria for what constitutes integration. What I liked about it is that it seems to very much reinforce this notion of a two-way process in terms of "You adjust, we adapt. We adjust, you adapt". It seems that the news media is one of the more important sources in terms of making migrants feel at home.

The second theme is the idea of what kind of practices are likely to discourage migrants from feeling at home? What kind of structures, what kind of mind-sets? Many of these have been discussed in the sessions and papers we had today.

Finally, and I suppose it's a theme that is more specifically aimed at this afternoon session, is this notion of what can we learn from others. What are the best practices that we can absorb from other jurisdictions, from other places? One of the terms is: What can we learn from North American societies, which we regard as classic immigration societies who have had to deal with the challenges of immigration for generations? We [as North American Societies] like to think that we finally developed models that more or less work. Now the interesting issue is whether or not these models have legs. In other words: They may work well in a classic immigration society, but they may not necessarily work well in countries that historically have been emigrant societies – or as Mark J. Miller and Stephen Castles point out, that are regarded as complete societies. That kind of collective mind-set could be an obstacle in terms of creating the kind of responsiveness, accessibility and the kind of equity that we normally associate as part of an inclusive society.

So, with this warm preamble I'll turn over to the other members of the panel or the colloquium.

Horst Pöttker

I want to answer your questions: What can media do to make migrants feel at home? And what are the barriers for migrants to feel at home that are made by the media?

It was a very important finding for me that local German newspapers before the First World War did not take any notice of the Polish minority. So, I think the answer to the first and the second question is: The worst case is that the mainstream media don't take any notice of the migrants and the minorities. I think it is a very deep reason for migrants *not* to feel at home in a country, when they don't have any access to the public discourse. And if the media don't take any notice of them, there is no chance to get into the public discourse. This is a very important point. Very often we start the discussion and say: well,

there are negative stereotypes, the minorities are portrayed in a negative way, they are only criminals, and so on. But this is the second step. It is not really the worst case; the worst case is that migrants are not mentioned in the media at all.

Petra Herczeg

There seem to be different problems on different levels. If we see the structural level, the media producers have to see the migrants as a very important audience, which has economic power. So they have to see that they have to produce for these people, to broadcast to these people. This is a relevant group in society, so they have to be recognized.

On the content level, I think that in a democracy there is not only a question of quantitative variety, but also of qualitative variety. These two things have to be combined to make sure that it would be good for the society to have more reportings about migrants.

Leen d'Haenens

I'd just like to add on this last point. The Dutch anthropologist Shadid had a good theoretical perspective. He said we should go beyond the "us/them"-perspective, we should try to adopt a so-called third perspective, that brings in also the diversity and the perspective of the other combined with your own. So that it can lead towards bridges between so-called ethnic media workers and the mainstream media workers. I think it's very important to have a tool for journalists, a source where you can look for experts of other origins than the mainstream origins, with all kinds of expertises.

Souley Hassane

First point: the experience of France. The problem in our country is that the place of minorities in the media can be compared with their place in the economy. I think that the situation of the minorities in the mainstream media in France is the translation of their own social situation. Another problem is the representation of minorities in the mainstream media. In 2004, France adapted a law for the representation of all minorities in the mainstream media. The real problem of France, and probably of all these countries, is the implementation. To implement the law, to implement the good practice.

Kenneth Starck

The media, I think, have to be very pro-active in terms of identifying as many segments of the community as possible and making sure that extra steps are taken to provide them with a voice. And the extra steps may be in terms of hiring people who have special language abilities or special intercultural abilities to be able to reflect a story.

These groups often do not know how the system operates. Language could be a problem, cultural barriers are a problem, and as a result, I think, the media have to go this extra mile if they are really discharging their responsibility to their communities. Having said that, I've worked as a journalist. I know the real world out there, and unfortunately the kind of idealism that my comments reflect and that some of the other comments are pretty far from reality. Because of some factors that already have been mentioned: the competition, the profit factors, the advertising. If a group of people doesn't have the economic ability to respond to advertising, then it's all likely that this group is not going to get very serious coverage in the media. I despair a little bit, insofar as the US commercial media are concerned.

It seems to me that we have to find some other model that bridges the public, the populist if you will, with – let's say – some aspects of the commercial. This may mean some kind of special government subsidy, or something that makes it at least viable financially for the media to go this extra mile.

Heinz Bonfadelli

Another point is to have more journalists with a migrant background. For instance, we just finished a representative journalists survey. In the private broadcast media in Switzerland there is a share of five per cent of journalists with a migrant background. And in the United States, about 15 per cent of the journalists seem to have a migrant background in a way.

When we talk about journalism in general, I think, what we try in Switzerland is to build partnerships with institutions in Switzerland that are educating journalists. And until now there is no module or educational unit dealing with intercultural communication or, for instance, discussing the examples that you're presenting with the new journalists. So I think education in journalism and more journalists – these are two important points to the question of what can be done.

Rainer Geißler

I have another approach to your question: I tried to compare the countries presented here. The criteria of comparison are your criteria: How do migrants feel? Do they feel at home in these countries? And a second criterion: How many and intensive ethnic conflicts are in these countries? These two criteria are combined by another. And if I say it very briefly – worst case and best practice – I think, best practice is Canada, worst case is France. I don't dare to evaluate the USA. Perhaps the Central European countries: there's not much difference between them, a similar situation in Switzerland and in Austria and in the Netherlands. Perhaps in the Netherlands it has been a little bit more complicated for the last two or three years than in other countries. In this ranking, the media play only a very limited role. I think, they reflect the situation in the country.

In Canada, we have a traditional multiculturalism, which is, in my opinion, the best practice to manage this diversity. Once I've heard a slogan which is typical of Canada. They say to migrants: "You're welcome to join us." In Germany, they don't say that. They say: "You're welcome to work here. If we don't need you, please go home." That's the guest-worker-ideology. And I think this guest-worker-ideology is dominant in Germany, and perhaps also in Switzerland and in Austria. Within this ideology the migrants don't feel at home. And this situation is reflected in the media. I think, in the Canadian media migrants are well-represented and ethnic media are no problem. In our countries they are more misrepresented and ethnic media perhaps are problems.

From the audience

What do the French say in your opinion? What do the French say to the immigrants? The Canadians say "You're welcome".

Rainer Geißler

I think a big mistake was made in France when the Arab migrants came in the 1950's and 60's. They were concentrated in certain areas with socio-economic disadvantages. It's a socio-economic problem they had, which now provokes these conflicts; conflicts we don't have in Germany. This concentration policy created ethnic ghettos, Arab ghettos or black ghettos. And if they are concentrated in these ghettos and not included in society, one day they will explode. They exploded two years ago.

Souley Hassane

I want to say that the greatest problem in France is our relation between ethnic minorities and the mainstream media. As I see it, it's a combination of an economic situation and a political situation in which the minorities don't have a real place. If you consider the French Law against discrimination – a very good law. But the real problem of France is the implementation of this law. It is not a problem of language, because – immigrants for example – most of them are French, they speak French very well, and they respect the law. But the real problem is that they don't have equal opportunities like other citizens. That's why sometimes the suburbs of France and the people who live in the suburbs of France, they consider themselves as “under-citizens”.

This ideology is very real; it's in the culture of the mainstream media and the journalists who are making the media. For example, during the riots of 2005, the mainstream media hired people who live in the suburbs to report from there. We were not in war, but they hired people who live there. They could not go there to interview people. The journalists who are in Paris cannot go ten kilometers away from Paris to make a report! Why? We are not on a warfield. We are in France. The problem is the culture of journalism. When you take the majority of French journalists, they come from the same class, the same cultural and social class. Their function in writing the papers is a translation of their own social position.

That's why I say it's necessary to inject, to push diversity into journalism. It may be colour, because the mainstream is very uncoloured. It's necessary, it's a symbolic revolution.

Augie Fleras

Just in relation to Rainer's comment: I do appreciate your positive attitude towards Canada. It's possible that we may have the most workable multicultural model. I use that term deliberately, workable, that doesn't mean that it's best or perfect, but it's workable. And part of its workability (if there is such a word) is that it doesn't focus on diversity or ethnicity or “celebrate differences” and so on. Canada's multicultural model is very clearly focused on integration, inclusion, removing the discriminatory barriers. The idea is to incorporate all the new Canadians into society by the way of making them feel comfortable about themselves in making that transition. I suppose the underlying logic to official multiculturalism in Canada is the notion that we treat everyone the same in Canada, regardless of your difference, and we do this as a matter of course. But we will also treat you differently if

necessary, in order to surmount certain obstacles in society. So it's that kind of Ying-Yang between uniformity and diversity. The commonality proceeds, but the exception, the difference is workable if necessary. That's the theory; the practice is much more different.

Now, just a comment: I think that this kind of multicultural model can also be applied to the news media and to journalism. This notion, this idea that the content should not be about extremism or sensationalism or about ethnic exotica but in fact should focus on the responsibility that the news media have towards inclusion and integration. Which means that they have to very seriously rethink some of the news values that are associated with what constitutes newsworthiness – which brings me to the point that Ken and Leen made. I agree with you that a world in which we undermine this distinction between “us” and “them” and create a “we” is in fact an ideal world. But as Ken pointed out, there are certain ideals within the news media that are very difficult to implement in the 21st century. That notion of newsworthiness is based precisely on an us-them dichotomy, the notion of protagonists. So this medium of the negative continuity tries to frame the world in terms of conflicts – which of course makes it very difficult to achieve a “we”, because it's the “us” and “them” that constitutes a core, if not THE core news value. Without conflict, you have no news. I think most people live in that scheme.

Leen d'Haenens

I agree with this and it's also a matter of extending the “we”. And there is a market for that, if you get more members of your society to read your news. We know this from our research about youngsters. The Turks and the Moroccan youngsters, especially the Moroccans, experience a lot of hunger for Dutch news – so there is a market in the market logic. If you look at a certain event from a broader perspective you can have it really much more overall on the news agenda – because you reach different kinds of readers. A certain topic may be out of the news after a week, although the Turks are still looking for more news. So it's just a matter of broadness. You know – and you mentioned it too, Heinz, yesterday – that the Turkish and Moroccan youngsters are experiencing much more news hunger in general than their Swiss counterparts. So there's a market for you as a newsmaker.

I wonder about what you were saying about Canada and the Canadian model: Of course, as you said, Canada has a conditional immigration policy: In order to become a new Canadian you have to respond to a certain profile – agewise, languagewise, in professional terms also, right?

Augie Fleras

I'm not quite sure what you mean by that.

Leen d'Haenens

I mean, it's a conditional policy, and that's why also in Europe conditions are developed now. Look at the Netherlands and the change: it's more complex now, since five years ago. Before that, there was no entry condition whatsoever. Now there are a few conditions in terms of knowledge of the language. And Canada has had it from the start. I wonder how ready the Canadians are or will be for a news presenter wearing a veil now.

From the audience

Would you be ready?

Augie Fleras

Would I be ready? Of course. Again, I wonder how important it is what we see in public, in terms of news casting. I suppose we could open it up for debate. Because these are just the faces of people who are mechanically delivering the news. I'm much more interested in what is the social construction involved in terms of creating the news, regardless of who presents it, which seems to be a much more important issue with respect to how news items are framed, how they are placed within the news cast itself. And, you know, as a sociologist, I think I came to acknowledge some of the structural difficulties in making these kinds of changes. What we have is really a form of systemic bias towards news casting as negativity, which is deemed to be normal. It's not like a systematic bias, which one can see as an abnormality that can be isolated and removed with the right kind of attitude and action. It's systematically embedded and it truly does require a transformative change. But I think a woman with a veil on the news cast really would be more of a cosmetic change.

I don't know if somebody has heard of it, because apparently it was no international success, but we have the show "Little Mosque on the Prairie", a CBC special. The show has attracted enormous attention because it does feature Muslims who are trying to adjust themselves in a small prairie town. And as you can appreciate, the humour arises from the fish-out-of-water context, both for the white residents who are completely baffled by what is going on, as well as the Muslims who have to cope with the idiosyncrasies of that.

It would strike me that it would be a fairly short step to have a woman with a veil doing the news cast, especially now that “Little Mosque on the Prairie” has made the way. That’s like the easy part. The tougher part is, get the media to move away from “us vs. them” and to think of news as “we”.

From the audience

Regarding this ranking of Rainer Geißler, there’s one remark I’d like to make, linking it with what Augie Fleras said about the immigration societies. There, of course, this acceptance by the population was built into the system. Canada was open, largely; therefore immigration was the norm for centuries. And in the United States, it was the same. All Americans, the sole exception may be the Native Americans, were descendants of immigrants and aware of it. And even if they didn’t like the late comers – the protestants didn’t like the Irish, the Irish didn’t like the Germans, the Germans didn’t like the South-East Europeans, the South-East Europeans didn’t like the Asians, okay. But they took them all in; that was the norm. Whereas in Europe they didn’t have this ideology. I think this is very much an elite discourse, which is typical of Europe: You have an elite discourse, then maybe you hold a referendum and then the Dutch and the French, just like with the European Constitution, say “no”. Then you say: “Well, what do we do?” And you go around it. The consensus in the German society, in Swiss society, in Dutch society is missing. So the elites don’t know what to do because the population hasn’t been born into it. In Canada, in America, there’s much criticism – “So many Hispanics” – but there’s by and large a consensus “We are an immigrant country”. This consensus has now arrived in the elites. The German elites say: “Yes, we are a country of immigration.” But that’s only the elites. The population says: “Well, we’re not overly happy about it.” So that’s the problem. Because, of course, these are the constituents, this is the mass of the media audience. So it is a media problem, but it is also a democracy problem. The majority of the population is not very much pro-immigration – unlike in the U.S., unlike in Canada. Which I think explains, to a certain degree, why North Americans do better in such a ranking.

Augie Fleras

I would like to point out that we mainly use the term “immigrant society” not only in a descriptive sense to indicate that there are, let’s say, 250,000 new Canadians. And note that the term we use is “New Canadians”: They are Canadians, or we assume that they are going to be Canadians. But there is also a kind of

prescriptive component to being an immigrant society, in so far as you have to fulfil certain criteria to become an immigrant society.

First, there are laws and regulations that are made to regulate the intake – so that the new Canadians we get tend to be pre-selected in terms of they are liberal in value, they are well-equipped in terms of skills, and they tend to be legal. They come through normal channels, which is not a luxury that a number of European countries face, with open and increasingly borderless borders. So, first there is a set of laws in place, and second, there is an extensive post-immigration settlement service package. So that immigration is not just coming into the country, it's also being serviced in terms of access to whatever is required to settle down, to fit in and to move up. And it's quite extensive, because the immigration process is seen as extending beyond arrival at "Piercing Airport" in Toronto.

Thirdly, immigrants tend to be seen as assets to society. Not everyone would agree with that and the government works hard to remind us that in an ageing economy we need immigrants, that they are good for society and that they provide us with a lot of benefits. Not the least of which is the idea of sustained economic development. 262,000 immigrants per year require food, shelter, start-up costs in terms of transportation and so on – a remarkable boost to the economy. And the service offered is seen as a basis for a kind of long-term sustained growth.

So there are these three components of an immigrant society, and all of them work together to create a kind of accommodativeness that makes both multiculturalism and immigration safe options for Canada.

From the audience

You didn't quite answer my question, I'm afraid. It's very short: You said immigrants are useful, very good. But if the population isn't persuaded and the majority actually doesn't buy it – you said some don't buy it, but if the majority actually doesn't buy it – what do you do? The majority in Germany is still sceptical, I would say: And they say: "Migrants, are they useful? Rather no!" What do you do?

Augie Fleras

Step up the government propaganda. Crank it up until they don't hear anything else except a humanistic version of 1984.

Horst Pöttker

I think there should be added one criterion for what is an immigrant society. And there is also the question what is a non-immigrant

society, of course. I think, it's not only a question of the objective criteria – how is the share of immigrants and so on – but also a question of self-definition. I think, a non-immigrant society is a society where it is accepted that for integration or for the being of a societal whole, cultural homogeneity is necessary. But an immigrant society is a society with a self-definition where cultural homogeneity is not necessary for integration. Cultural differences are not only legal but they are accepted.

The question of integration is a question beyond the question of cultural homogeneity. I think this a very important difference. A non-immigrant society is a cultural nation. You have to speak good English, not only English, but good English, to give a sign that you are belonging to the society. And you can see this difference also, let's say, between the British society and the North American societies, Canada and the US. From the very beginning, almost all of them were immigrants – except the Native Americans. And I think, this is very important that from the very beginning you have no definition of your nation as a cultural nation – as a nation of people, “all the same colour, all the same religion, the same language” and so on.

Heinz Bonfadelli

Just a short remark about the American Society. They are discussing now illegal immigration from Mexico. I think President Bush wants to build a fence – so even in the United States it's a dilemma.

Rainer Geißler

Augie, I like very much your three criteria for an immigration country. And I think the Central European countries are 50 years beyond Canada. Canada is an immigration country since the 60's or 70's. Germany makes its first tentative steps to begin to be an immigration country. Still we are “Deutschland”, that means the “country of the Germans”, and not yet an immigration country. For one or two years now, we have the first act of immigration to manage who comes in. We have the first steps. For three or four years, we have been discussing the concept of integration, how to manage the diversity. And it's a very controversial discussion, not multicultural like in Canada. It has just been said that our elite accepts that we need immigrants. That's only a part of the elite.

And in the last years they stopped migration. There's no immigration and emigration that was balanced. There was not one person who came to Germany. We had a loss of population.

Now we made the first steps and perhaps, I hope, that in half a century we will have made some progress, but I think not to a multicultural society, because we have another history. We don't have this immigration history, Horst explained. We have other conditions. There are structural differences between the classic immigration countries, North America or Australia or New Zealand, and those modern immigration countries that now need immigration for demographic reasons.

Kenneth Starck

It may well be that there is some kind of timeline of development or activation that takes place here. This might be a starting point: Whether the land is relatively open and being settled versus a society that has already been settled. But nonetheless it may be that the timeline is still in effect. One of the reasons why I think this is the reference to French newspapers not having reporters who are able to go into a war-like zone for coverage. Because I remember, back in the 1960's in the United States, the Los Angeles Times was covering the Watts riots – those of you who are interested in history will know that – and there was not a black reporter at the Los Angeles Times at all. They did find an African American who was working in the classified advertising section and they persuaded him to go into the area and telephone back to the news desk what was taking place. Now, in the United States that occurred almost 50 years ago and that was, I think, a watershed event in terms of integrating, in this case, African Americans into society. Because coming from that was something called the Kerner Commission Report which made a very close analysis of the media handling of minority groups in the society, especially the African Americans. And it made some dramatic recommendations which ultimately were picked up by many institutions in society, including most especially journalism and mass media schools. As well as professional journalism associations who suddenly recognized that they had to set up special programmes to bring minorities into the recording pool of talent. And I think this had a very positive effect subsequently. It certainly hasn't solved all the problems by any means, but anyway: the point is that it may be possible over time that these various things have to recur in different societies and different times.

Augie Fleras

That brings us back to the first question – the notion of what we can do to make minorities feel at home, what the media can do to make minorities feel at home. And of course, the notion of journalists of colour, of credibility and accessibility strikes me as one useful practice. It would be nice to push it a step further and have gatekeepers and editors who take the news and reformat it in a way that reflects the realities of diversity – that's still another hurdle that needs to be taken.

It strikes me that, with few exceptions, the panel has monopolized the conversation – so perhaps if anyone from the audience ...

From the audience

I feel, you cannot feel at home in a class society when you are belonging to the lowest class. And that doesn't depend on the media. So a comparison between Canada and France seems very inappropriate because you have to think that this is also the heritage of colonialism France has to deal with now. It is also a problem of hopes, maybe illusions, of people who are coming to France. You have the whole Mediterranean which is full of people who want to come to Europe with a lot of hopes. And the people in the countries where they want to go to, don't want to fulfill any hope because they fear they have too much problems on their own. And in this field you cannot blame the media. You can describe the situation, but I fear that the media are more a mirror of society than able to change it.

Rainer Geißler

I agree. I will explain it with an observation from Germany. I explained before that in Germany the elites, and also the population, are changing their opinion, becoming more open to immigration and integration. And we can see that there are only a few studies which compare the situation in 2006 to the 1990s for instance. A student in Siegen made a comparison of the local newspapers and looked: are they also more open to immigrants and immigration? And the negativity is not totally gone, but they are more open. That means that newspapers reflect the change of opinion of the elites and the population. Policies change, and the newspapers change with them. And also the discussion about journalists with a migrant background – that's totally new, and without this change of opinion, I would say, that wouldn't have happened. Media reflect the changes or situations within the society and within politics.

Heinz Bonfadelli

I think, we altogether see the problem. It's complicated, and there are different levels. I showed you the data on the school level. That shows how children from migrant families don't have equal chances at school – what about the language, their first language at school? Are they allowed to use their own language at school or do they get lessons at school? So I think the school system is very important as well.

We talked about the media system and now we focused on the level of journalists, but then we have the level of media organizations and media outlets. You know, minority media are quite small, and we have an increasing commercialization of the media system. And normally, the big media market is where you can make money. We see small markets in Switzerland in the Alpine region, for instance, where there is not enough money to have local radio stations in rural areas. But in Switzerland we have a system where in those small rural areas local radio stations get subsidies. So I think here again, on this structural level of media financing, there are options and the government can put money into it and do more for a pluralistic media landscape.

From the audience

Dr. Hassane mentioned it yesterday, Augie Fleras mentioned it now. I think there's too much emphasis on this behind-the-camera aspect. That may be important. But especially regarding media effects, I would say the symbolic value of this black French anchorman on French prime time news is very important. And I would say even such non-creative roles as being actors in TV series are very important for representation, for how these people see themselves even if they don't write the script. The symbolic value of seeing a black person, reading the news in perfect French to the French mainstream audience, is very high. I would say that even if you write some more or less hostile texts about what happens in the Banlieues, the symbolic value is the most important one in the effect field. I would give this as a little hint to Augie, and I would stress this “before the camera” more than behind.

Leen d'Haenens

I read people want to see themselves.

Augie Fleras

Didn't you argue against the symbolic value of something this morning?

From the audience

If a news pronouncer in France would come up and say: "This is the evening news. We are in France all multicultural. Now the news." That's not enough. You must have something real. In Russia it was very much like this. I have many books at home about Stavropol for example. 200 pages, and on the first page: "In Stavropol there live 150 nationalities. Now on to the real topics." That's not enough. (*Laughter*) It's true, I can show it to you, but it's in Russian. That was less than symbolic, that was only affirmative about being "a multicultural nation". But in the rest of the book there were no minorities. All Russians. I would say that was pseudo-symbolic.

Petra Herczeg

Yes, I also think that we need symbols to create a better image of migrants. You can only create a new image via communication campaigns and a lot of communication. You have to speak to the population and we see that there's a very big difference between the opinions in the heads of the politicians and a lot of journalists. They are in favour of intercultural communication. But if you ask the people "How do you think about intercultural communication?", no one is in favour of intercultural communication. Perhaps because they made some bad experiences, because they are living in houses with a lot of foreigners, they are too loud and so on. This means we need a long time to change the minds and this has to be a big topic to the European Union to make image campaigns for example, to show that migration is a positive thing in our society and that we need migration.

Horst Pöttker

We are still working on the question what the media should do that people feel at home in a country. And I want to come back to this question, because I think there is a possible misunderstanding how it should be answered. Perhaps people might think migrants feel at home only if they are portrayed very good, as the better guys. That Journalists should not be allowed to say that Turkish people are criminal and such things. I think this is very dangerous because if the migrants are portrayed as better guys – and not as normal guys, as we

all are – then what will happen when it comes to the point that in reality they are only normal guys and no better guys? That must lead to a special disappointment and I think this is very dangerous, too. So I think the best practice is not to portray them in a very good and friendly way, but in a way which shows that they can have all roles which are possible in a normal society.

Leen d’Haenens

Journalists should avoid extremism then, too positive and too negative portrayal.

Petra Herczeg

I think too, journalists are not the better people. And I think it is a case of fair reporting. It is better to show both sides. No one is the perfect good guy, and no one is the perfect bad guy.

From the audience

I would say that journalists should reflect reality. That's the most important point to me. We're not politicians, we don't have to create a picture of how migrants are. The only job we have to do is to show what reality is like. And another comment: I agree with you that the representation of migrants in the media is very important. So the topic of “having journalists with a migrant background” is the most important issue to me. But it's only one function, the other is the broader perspective on reality, which you mentioned – to me it is not a broader perspective but the only correct perspective on reality. Those people live in our society; they shape society, so this must be reflected in the media. I give you an example: Whenever I hear the term “German taxpayers” in our radionews, I phone the newseditor, because it's incorrect. We have taxpayers *in* Germany, we don't have German taxpayers. And I think journalists with migrant backgrounds help to remind us that we have sometimes an ethnic perspective and don't realize this. This is why migrant journalists are important in our business.

Augie Fleras

I would like to comment on the notion that the primary role of the news media or journalists is to report reality. Think about a hypothetical situation. As an investigative reporter you collect a story on a daycare in the inner city. A positive story about children getting a head start involving minorities. The other

investigative reporter collects a story on drug dealing among gangs within the inner city. Both reporters present the story to the editor. I wonder which one will get published. Both are reality. But one reality is a little bit more angled than the other. I really wonder what we can do to change these newsvalues. In the past, America had some companies that started up "good news newspapers". Newspapers that only have good news. They didn't last long. But one has to admire the courage for just presenting good news.

But even reporting stories exclusively dealing with gangs and drugs and guns and so on would have less of an impact if there were neutralizing devices in society outside, where there were positive role models. So that people would see that these stories in the news are simply isolated incidents, that there are people of colour in positions of power, in positions of authority and so on. We need to talk about comprehensive change, which can also be a cowardly way, because comprehensive change is so difficult to achieve that it's like using a platitude, knowing well that the platitude will never be real.

Kenneth Starck

This question of making migrants feel at home, for some reason, has kind of annoyed me. Because I try to figure out what usually plays a role that a migrant feels at home. And I suspected in many cases it may drive him away, because they left home to begin with. It seems to me, if they come to our homeland, our homeland, then it is for some rationale, there are some reasons and it is not necessary to make them feel as though they're back home again. Otherwise they can just go back. It seems to me that we are going to be talking about a hope, a future, an expectation for family, for the children, an educational equality and so forth.

Heinz Bonfadelli

I would add a second level. I think journalism is not only to represent reality but it needs a reflective; I call this meta-journalism. I think it is important to add a level of reflection to the coverage. Especially in the commercial electronic media in Switzerland we have lots of very young journalists, with low wages and with a low level of education. And I think, here it's necessary to have more education to bring in this kind of level of reflection. For instance, we did observations in local TV-stations and there was an incident that happened in a Swiss court: some young guys from Morocco had sex with some young girls and they caught these young people. Then there is one camera team, they get the story, they have to go out just straight to the location. Without any possibility to, say, do some thinking about the

backgrounds. They just go, film, take statements, lift the micro to school boys and these school boys tell things. So I think one thing is commercialization, is having no time for background thinking, for doing it on a deeper level, and no time to bring in some reflection.

Leen d'Haenens

What about the allusion of self-censorship? Look at the Netherlands after the murder of Theo van Gogh. Two months after the crisis itself you can see that there's a lot of framing on who's responsible for this. The conflict is framed heavily there. And if you look at the year 2005, you see there is much less framing going on. So what could be the reason for that rational phenomenon? Could it be that journalists are afraid or have become afraid of opinion, of polarising – are they self-censoring themselves? Because there is this whole conflict of freedom of expression and offending people. They want to keep away from van Gogh's practice as a journalist. So now we have this portraying in a very neutral fashion. And I have the impression that for the French reporters, opinion matters much more than just coverage and transmitting the information.

Souley Hassane

I think the real problem in France, you can say, is a cultural, an ideological problem. It is not only the mainstream media. Because when I hear a politician, who declares publicly, he is against Muslims or Arabs or Blacks, the consequence is that he pushes the media to produce the information, because the media need this information. The politicians understand that sometimes it is useful for them to produce a negative public discourse about minorities. Because they always want to be on the media. The function of this discourse in the public space is the creation of opinion. And I think there is negative dynamic of producing information on minorities between politicians and the mainstream media. I think it is a bad practice in France to use the minority, the negative opinion on minorities as an instrument of politics. I think that they can contribute to make the migrants feel at home by avoiding this manner which considers the minorities as instruments of the production of a political opinion.

Augie Fleras

I have to admit that Kenneth's probing comment, on what we mean by making people feel "at home", might be an interesting one to play through in terms of your own person's experiences. When you go and live in someone else's home on a visit,

what does actually make you feel at home? Admittedly, there will be a variety of responses, but it's quite possible that there are certain communalities in terms of obeying the rules of the house but still having enough free space to move around in. That could be something that each one of us could think personally and see whether he wants it to be applied to the first question. In terms of worst practices we are heading to share some that seem to have emerged from the sessions or from your personal experiences. Horst mentioned that a worse practice will be just to shift stereotypes from the bad guys to the good guys and create, you know, all kinds of unrealistic expectations.

Horst Pöttker

Yes, but in the beginning I also mentioned another kind of worst case. And this is not to take notice of the minorities – not to take notice of the fact, that there are people who are not Christians but Muslims, who are not white but coloured, who have another language, and so on. I think it is the first and very important step to take notice. Even if it is a criticism and negative notice, it's better than not to take notice at all. I learned this from my historical material about the Polish minority in Germany before World War I. But you also know this from your personal relationships, to your relatives and to your wife and your children and so on – not to take notice of the other is the worst case.

Augie Fleras

Just in response to your comment. I mean, would you say that, prior to the First World War, German presses actually did see themselves as exclusively ethnic presses? With the result, that they made no bones about the fact that if we are white, ethnic press, we're not interested in you. We are only interested in ourselves or we are only interested in you when you provoke or create problems. That notion of the mainstream media as ethnic media provides us with plausible answers why the media don't do what one will assume to be the right and responsible thing to do, but that they invisibilize minorities unless there is a crisis or a catastrophe.

From the audience

I think that in this case, like Horst mentioned in his paper, there was a dialogue of silence. You had the Polish papers with completely no reports about Germans, as far as they could: not to buy in German shops, not to read German newspapers, not to marry Germans, not to take any notice of Germans. So it was a dialogue between two who didn't want to talk. I would say, one should take this kind of worst-case scenario of ignoring each other. I am now reading a Turkish

newspaper and I would say we can compare this Turkish newspaper, for example, to the Polish papers of the late 19th century and early 20th century. This huge Turkish paper produces a European edition, half of which is produced in Frankfurt. That's 20 pages every day from Frankfurt and 20 other pages from Istanbul. The Germans hardly ever occur. If they occur, they occur only insofar as they interact with Turks, positively and negatively. But it doesn't appear if Angela Merkel announces that welfare will go down, or train fares will go up, or electricity bills will rise, although this is very important for the Turks. Normal life in Germany doesn't appear at all in these 20 pages. So they are restricted to their own ethnic community.

Rainer Geißler

But nobody of the Germans knows that they don't appear. It's totally irrelevant. That's not the right comparison. Because no one reads these Turkish newspapers in Germany and so I don't know that I...

From the audience

The Turkish minority reads them. Horst has talked about the Polish newspapers for the Polish minority, in Polish, written in Germany. The Poles couldn't learn about the Germans either. They didn't write about their German co-citizens in the same city, with which they were interacting everyday. The German papers didn't write about the Poles, the Polish papers didn't write about the Germans. And the modern Turkish press here, available in Germany, produced here for the Turks, in Turkish, doesn't write about the Germans, if it's avoidable. Let's say there's a huge football match in Germany, with two million people watching on television, including half a million Turks. They would not report it, because there is no Turkish involvement. That's not dialogical, because the German media report on Turks – very negatively, but they don't ignore them. But the German elites are in power, they pass the laws. And about these laws, which affect the Turks who live here, you don't learn anything in the Turkish papers in Germany. For 50 years they haven't learned anything about this in these papers.

Rainer Geißler

Perhaps one sentence I would add to Horst's: Ignoring the immigrants is not the worst case, but insulting the immigrants. Mentioning them, but insulting them. Negative pictures are worse than ignoring them.

Horst Pöttker

I don't think so, Rainer. Kenneth and I are in the same boat in this case, because we are journalism educators and we think about what is the task of journalism – it is to create public. To make things visible. And even if it is a negative visibility, it is better than no visibility.

Heinz Bonfadelli

I want to add a point from communication researchers. 60 to 70 percent of the daily articles are generated by public relation sources. The question of the sources is important as well. Normally you have, say, organizations with money, which can afford to produce texts. And I think the minority organizations should as well have the chance or should be motivated to produce more news. Not only for daily media but as well for a channel of special-interest media. Here you have lots of texts that are subsidized and paid by industry, by interest groups and here, I think, one could influence a little bit more or pay a little bit more to have more sources, more input into the media system, coming from minority organizations.

Souley Hassane

I want to tell you something about a bad practice. First, for me, this is a binary vision of the mainstream media and journalists. This binary vision you can see everywhere in the French mainstream, for example about the suburbs: Bad? Good? Devil? God? This is, I think, the worst part. It's the worst practice. If we want to change the image of minorities, I think it is necessary to educate the journalists to produce information without this binary vision. Because a binary vision creates binary practise, and binary practise creates binary papers. Another important aspect is the relations between journalists, businessmen, politicians. I think that these are corrupted relations. I don't say corrupted by money, but by ideology. Because if journalists started to be in the suburbs, they could also adopt the view of the suburbs.

Kenneth Starck

I can add something about the danger of indifference with a little anecdote: Elie Wiesel often asks his audience what is the opposite of love. When I first heard him say that I thought it was hate, which seems to be logical. But that's not the answer. It's indifference, not giving a care at all, that's the worst practice. But coming back to the question: I used to belong to the organization of news ombudsmen

and I was an ombudsman for a news organization for a while. I have written some columns in response to readers who were objecting to things, as they pertained to nationalities and ethnic groups and so forth: reporters confusing different nationalities or ethnic groups, for example, referring to them as part of a certain sector or group, when they weren't. You know, they just happened to have a funny hat or something like this and the reporters drew an immediate conclusion. Occasionally we would get complaints about that. But also about crime reporting: reference to nationality or the ethnic origin of someone who committed a crime. Simply asking the question, is it relevant to identify an individual in that way? Often it is not. It may be on occasion, but there should be a rationale for inclusion of that information. The website of ONO, the organization of news ombudsmen, will list different topics that news ombudsmen around the world have written about. And, I believe, there is one dealing with ethnicity reporting, which will provide again a list of practices, maybe not the worst, but pretty bad practices.

Petra Herczeg

I think the worst practice in Austria is that the population expects assimilation of the migrants and there's no discussion in the public about the meaning of the words "assimilation" and "integration". There has to be more information about these topics and about these basic words: what do they mean? They're mixed up all the time. And that's the fault of the journalists. Therefore, I think it is necessary to have more education for journalists on this field.

From the audience

I just want to add what Horst Pöttker has said about taking notice. It's not only important to take notice but it's, in doing so, important to take a minute and think about who you ask, who you make your source for the article and who you give a voice in the article that you write. I can give a little example from Dortmund. There is a discussion about a mosque being built or not being built, and in relation to that there have been demonstrations and also discussions in the newspapers about how migrants feel living in Dortmund and whether they arrived here and feel at home or not. And the journalist who wrote this article asked representatives of the church, representatives of the local government and of the trade unions – but no migrants themselves. Members of the church said that the migrants of the second generation feel a little better, but they didn't get the chance themselves to have a voice in this article. I think this is

a good example how journalists sometimes should take a while and think who they ask.

From the audience

In a study that is part of our research project “Media Integration of Ethnic Minorities in Germany, the U.S., and Canada” we’re asking journalists here in Dortmund two sets of questions. First we ask: What are minority organizations doing in the field of public relations? Are they sending in material? If they are sending in material, what are you doing with it? Are you taking it into account like the other? If you have language problems, do you put that special input into it, so you can print it or do you throw it away, or what do you do with it? And the journalists all say that they hardly send anything. But if they do, we do make a special effort. They seem very sincere. But at the same time, something else is also true. I asked them: and you, have you ever contacted any ethnic minority on your own? “Well, maybe.” In what case? Then they admit “well, I can't remember.” Some outright said “no”. I've asked some 40 journalists now and I had one or two who had an example. And in these cases, it weren't even minority organizations. This was another context; they had personal connections to someone, whom they could phone on a private line. The barrier seems to be high. The public relations are bad and the journalists are also afraid, so to speak, to ask those people most concerned.

From the audience

One of the worst practices in journalism is not to ask why in a serious way. If you ask why, everything gets better.

Augie Fleras

We are getting very close to four o'clock and I think that four o'clock is a great time to end the proceedings of our assembly. Just one question remains to be responded. What can we learn from other media, from other countries or more specifically, what can your European media learn from experiences in the classic countries of immigration in North America? And if you recall, that in this morning presentation, it was quite revelatory for me to study ethnic aboriginal media in Canada and to come away with the absolute other conviction. It strikes me that the confusion of ethnic media can only collectively move the yardsticks forward in terms of creating a process by which new Canadians can make the transition into Canada at a pace and a degree that they feel comfortable with, not

having to be customized or standardized to “one size fits all”. Does someone like to have the last word for this afternoon?

Horst Pöttker

A very short last word. I think what European and especially German journalists can learn from the classic North American immigration societies is to contribute to a self-definition and a self-understanding of society in which cultural homogeneity is not necessary for integration. I think this is a very important point. If you look at things and if you cover events from this perspective, then you can contribute to integration as a journalist.

Augie Fleras

It is true. I have to agree with you that we managed to find a model in which you can live together with differences. But in order to do that you have to have a vision. You have to have a vision that everyone buys into. And if you have that vision, then these differences become supporting, become inclusive, become non-threatening. So “yes” to diversity and diversity with a coverage. Rainer, the final word goes to you as the organizer.

Rainer Geißler

Yes, the programme gives me the last word. And I will use it, but only for a very few remarks. We had a conference concerning central basic problems of every immigration society, the classical ones, and the modern ones in Europe. We discussed and listened for two days. Yesterday evening I expressed my thanks to our speakers and I express them again, especially to Augie as the chairman of the last session and also to the chairwoman, who has left already. But at a conference, speakers, chairmen and chairwomen need an audience who listens to them and who discusses with them. I thank all participants for their interesting contributions.

People in the limelight need also people in the darkness, the invisible helpers. They have to remain in the background although they are the backbone of such a conference. They organize it, they manage it, they provide food, a wonderful lunch today, they take care of the electronics, so that PowerPoint works, they do a lot of things, which are done invisibly. I express my thanks to Angelika Schomann. (Applause) I have mentioned it several times. The last conference was in Siegen, this conference is in Dortmund and the Dortmund team did a very good job, many thanks. And many thanks also to the Siegen

team, who were helpers with a secondary status at this conference – I thank you all. I wish everybody a nice journey home. Those who use the plane are the lucky ones. Those who have to use the car are the unlucky ones, because Angelika told me: traffic jams everywhere, because of the beginning of holidays in North Rhine Westfalia today. And the weather also caused a lot of problems on the motorways. Nevertheless, have a good journey home and I bid you, as the programme says, farewell. Not only farewell but also adieu, au revoir, auf Wiedersehen, tschüss!

