

**Mapping Diasporic Media across  
the EU:  
Addressing Cultural Exclusion**

**Key Deliverable  
The European Media and Technology in  
Everyday Life Network, 2000-2003**

Dr Myria Georgiou  
[Media@LSE](mailto:Media@LSE), London School of Economics and Political Science

## **Executive Summary**

Peoples who at some stage in their history migrated from an original homeland and settled in a European country – that is, diasporic groups – is estimated to be between ten and 30 million across a total population in the European Union (EU) of about 380 million. In addition to that millions of members of the older diasporas – for instance, Jewish, Roma, Armenians – have been integral components of the European past and present. Almost five million out of the world's 20 million refugees are hosted in Europe for longer or shorter periods.

Cultural diversity has always characterised Europe, but growing potential for mobility and communication has led to new forms of inclusion and exclusion in transnational communities and multicultural societies. The quantitative and qualitative elements of cultural diversity give rise to important and timely questions for the Europe of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Does diversity threaten unity? How do cultural expressions of difference relate to questions of exclusion and inclusion? Can European culture(s) be inclusive? These questions are points of departure for this project, which has been structured along two main theoretical and methodological axes. On the one hand, it attempts to create a cross-European mapping of cultural diversity and on the other hand, it focuses on cultural questions about exclusion and participation - crucial points that are often overlooked in academic and policy discourse.

### **Focusing on the Cultural and Everyday**

The exclusion of diasporas and migrant minorities is at the core of many national and European academic and policy debates but little attention has been paid to cultural exclusion. That is, to the informal, ordinary processes that take place in everyday life and which can allow or restrict inclusion in local, national and transnational spaces. Media cultures are essential elements shaping and being shaped by everyday life and so this project investigates the significance of informal and communication processes and developments for our understanding of diasporic minorities' experience of inclusion and exclusion.

The local, the national and the transnational are the three crucial spatial and cultural contexts where the experience of diasporic groups evolves. The local is where the everyday is lived; the national is where citizens' (or residents') rights and obligations are formed and formal rules for political and cultural exclusion/inclusion are set; the transnational is the space where global diasporic networks expand and where diasporic communities are sustained. New information and communication technologies gain a growing role in

sustaining communication and networks in and across the three spatial positions; in representing diasporic groups to themselves and to the rest of the society; and in finding a voice and establishing visible presence for excluded groups.

This project studies the cross-European expression of these issues. The methodological choice of mapping allows the researcher to identify the large-scale and multiple geographical elements of diasporisation and media cultures as well as facilitates their examination at local, national and transnational levels. Thirteen national reports and a series of case studies inform the analysis. The mapping methodology enabled the to: (i) Draw the large-scale picture of the trends and flows of diasporic mobility and communication across Europe. (ii) Seek meaningful comparisons between different forms of media production and ICT appropriation. (iii) Cross-examine the macro and descriptive with the specific and qualitative based on a theme-based analysis.

## Main Findings

The theme-based analysis identifies six areas as the most important in addressing the relation between diasporic media cultures and exclusion/inclusion.

### Examining Exclusion from a Cultural Perspective

<b>The Local</b>	<b>The National</b>	<b>The Transnational</b>
The (Re-)construction of Urban Space <sup>1</sup>	The National and the Policy Context: Enabling or Restricting Minority Voices <sup>2</sup>	Satellite Television Map: The Transnational as the Alternative <sup>3</sup>
The Multicultural and Mediated Local – Multicultural Media Projects <sup>4</sup>	Minority Media as a Challenge to the Mainstream National Media <sup>5</sup>	The Internet: Active participation in a Community <sup>6</sup>

In the analysis of these themes, three main theoretical points emerge in relation to diasporic media cultures' role in processes of exclusion/inclusion.

- The triangular positioning of diasporic cultural experience. A consideration of exclusion/inclusion only in terms of formal political and economic processes – inevitably bounded within the nation – undermines an understanding of the processes that take place in the local and the transnational. These other dimensions can challenge the limitations set by the national context – for example, diasporic participation in transnational mediated networks while excluded from national networks.
- Representation and self-representation. All cultures are increasingly media(ted) cultures and as a result, mediated representation is of growing significance. Crucial questions with cultural and political implications include who is represented, by whom and how. As diasporic groups develop their own (self-) representations as an

alternative to the mainstream, they challenge their exclusion, stereotyping and homogenised representation in the mainstream media cultures.

- Finding a Voice – *Global Commons*. There are power struggles among different groups, minorities and majorities in an attempt to gain a space in media cultures and to make their voice heard (issues of concentration of power and resources and sustainability are of particular relevance here). The decentralisation and deregulation of mediated communication through digitalisation – and especially with the Internet – has allowed some of those excluded groups a space of expression and possible empowerment. Although the “global commons” is not all-inclusive, it still destabilises old forms of exclusion.

### **Main Policy Implications**

The research findings raise the following policy implications: (i) Not all diasporic media cultures nor diasporic media are homogenous. This makes a theme-based analysis and approach in policy more useful especially if this takes into account the economic viability of minority media; representation/self-representation of excluded populations; and access to ICTs. (ii) European Information Society policies should go beyond the functional and linear perspectives of the significance of ICTs for inclusion. Not only do ICTs help with the development of skills, they also expand communication potential for excluded communities and thus have consequences for their cultural inclusion and empowerment. (iii) There should be more interconnection between national and European policies on exclusion, integration, communication and culture.