Chapter 1
Public Broadcasting and Migration: Media Representation of Turkish “Guest Workers” in Germany

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents an analysis of how migrants were represented in the Turkish media after the historic, cultural, and socio-economic development of the labour migration that started in the 1960s from Turkey to Germany. In this respect, the aim of the study was to reveal how a public television channel covered “guest worker” experience through its broadcasts. In the meantime, the news programs that the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) produced about the migrants that went to Germany in the second half of the 20th century have been analyzed via content analysis method. This study explored the media representation of migrants’ families including working women and young people; the manner in which the challenges of migrants’ families were portrayed in the public space through public broadcasting; the projection of the politics of governments regarding the migrants; and the exposition of the transnational space where the migrants carry out their socio-cultural productions in Germany.

INTRODUCTION

Europe, in general, experienced huge waves of migration between 1945 and 1980. Whether temporary or permanent, labour migration in this period was generally viewed positively because of its economic benefits, from the perspective of both the sending and the receiving countries (Van Mol & De Valk, 2016). After the Second World War, several countries rapidly introduced systems of temporary labour recruitment to speed up reconstruction and to compensate in part for wartime manpower losses (Castles 1986:761-762). When the industrialized European economies like Germany perceived a need for
manual labour, the idea of importing workforces from various countries, especially Turkey, came up on the agenda (Schmidt, 1997: 379). Furthermore, priorities such as gaining a young workforce, to do in energy-sapping works that Germans do not want which also pay low-wages initiated the realization of workforce importation. Thus, aside from Turkey, countries such as Italy (1955), Spain (1960), Greece (1960), Portugal (1964), Morocco (1964), Tunisia (1964) and Yugoslavia (1968) workforces were exported to West Germany through bilateral agreements (Soysal, 1994:19).

The labour migration that began with the agreement made between Turkey and Federal Republic of Germany in 1961 initiated a socio-cultural communication, interaction and transformation process between the Turkish and German societies. In this respect, the changes that Turkish migrants experienced (Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2003; Ehrkamp, 2005 Abadan-Unat, 2011), the problem of integrating with German society (Kaya, 2009; Ersanilli & Koopmans, 2010; Mueller, 2006) and the adaptation problems experienced by migrant youths and German policies (Mandel, 1995; Soysal, 2001; Kristen, Reimer & Kogan, 2008; Güney, Kabaş & Çömlekçi, 2019) have been the subject of various studies. The media representation of migrant workers and their families that came to Germany from Turkey is also prominent in terms of migration studies. For example, Kosnick (2000 & 2007) and Vertovec (2000) analyzed the radio and television broadcasts that were aired in Turkish and aimed at Turkish migrants in Germany in terms of integration arguments and Germany’s multicultural politics. Çağlar (2004) focused on the contributions these broadcasts made to the formation of a cosmopolitan society. Furthermore, in the study that Aksoy and Robins (2010) carried out on the Turkish television broadcasts in Germany, it was emphasized that the widespread notion that these broadcasts created a cultural ghetto for Turkish viewers was more complex than it seemed and that these broadcasts created a new media culture by causing the migrants to think about their own transnational identities. In a study conducted by Genel (2014) regarding the news that appeared in the Turkish national press about the first generation Turkish migrants that went to Germany, it was concluded that due to reasons such as the political atmosphere of the time (1961-1964), technological deficiencies and the general economic situation newspapers did not/could not show enough attention to the migration process.

The aim of the current study was to, however, research the socio-cultural journey of the migrant labour force that began in the 1960s from Turkey to Germany through its projection in the media and to reveal how a public television represented and covered “guest workers” experience through its broadcasts. Thus, the main question of the study is how the migrants’ experience and identity were presented to society through broadcasting. The media presentation of the aforementioned “migrants’ situation” and workers’ transfer phenomenon is examined in terms of the workforce agreement between Turkey and Germany and by analyzing the TRT’s (the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation’s) programmes. Thus, the representation in the media of migrant worker families, working women and young people, the forms of approaches to migrant workers problems and the transnational space where the migrants’ socio-cultural production took place in Germany are explored through the content analysis of the TRT programmes.

BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Historical Background of the Migration to Germany

A bilateral agreement was made between Turkey and Federal Germany on October 30, 1961. Through this agreement, the procedures, conditions and salaries to be applied in the supply of workers from Tur-