Exploring a Model of De-ethnicization:
The case of Turkish Television in the Netherlands[1]

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Abstract

While ethnicization refers to the formation of social boundaries aiming to protect the integrity of (presumed) ethnic-cultural heritages, de-ethnicization refers to the 'undoing' of such boundaries. Media can support developments in either direction. The conceptual model that is developed in this article distinguishes between two dimensions of discursive (de) - ethnicization, the first dimension addressing ethnic-cultural difference as such, and the second dimension addressing social and political implications. The model is subsequently applied to make sense of empirical findings which suggest that Turkish satellite television, viewed in the context of the Netherlands, has the rather unexpected effect of <u>de-ethnicizing</u> young Turkish' migrants' perceptions of cultural difference.

Keywords: media, (de-)ethnicization, Turkish, migrants, the Netherlands.

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Introduction

Since Turkish satellite television made its entrance in the Netherlands during the early nineties, it has rapidly gained a large audience. Within years, over forty percent of Turkish households in the Netherlands had acquired a satellite dish by means of which a choice of Turkish commercial channels could be picked up. That these channels were indeed avidly watched was confirmed by two surveys (Veldkamp 1995, 1996). Of an average weekly viewing time of 32 hours, Turkish dish-owners spent as many as 24 hours with Turkish channels.[1]

This preference for Turkish over Dutch television channels was received as a disturbing piece of news. Should the interest in Turkish TV be taken as an indication that integration policies had failed? Writing about Turks in Germany, Heitmeyer, Müller and Schröder (1997) suggested that it should. They also proposed that Turkish satellite television would encourage the sons (though not, perhaps, the daughters) of Turkish migrants to embrace Turkish brands of right wing political and religious extremism as a response to their various disappointments with the country of immigration. Though informed Dutch commentaries were markedly less extreme in their judgements and predictions,[2] it was assumed by most that the daily immersion in Turkish affairs and Turkish culture could not help but reinforce Turkish migrants' consciousness of the cultural differences that set them apart from the society of immigration. By perpetually reminding people of the cultural boundaries separating them from the Dutch, Turkish television, it was reasoned, could become a factor in the ethnicization of Dutch multicultural society.

These notions have considerable face value plausibility.[3] However, in the course of interviewing young television watchers with a Turkish background, I have arrived at a different assessment. Turkish satellite television, I have come to think, contributes to the questioning of previously established ethnic-cultural boundaries rather than to their confirmation and reinforcement.[4] According to many of my informants, Turkish commercial satellite television helps Turkish migrants, and in particular their children, to liberate themselves from certain outdated and culturally imprisoning notions of Turkishness, which had survived in the isolation of migration. Commercial television performs this role by showing Turkey for what it is: a rapidly modernizing country, with a population that is as culturally, politically and religiously various as it is large.[5]

If this is true, it would mean that Turkish television, watched in the context of Dutch society, <u>de-ethnicizes</u> rather than <u>ethnicizes</u> viewers' perception of cultural difference. In this article I want to investigate this proposition from a theoretical point of view. In the first part, a model is introduced for the analysis of ethnicization and de-ethnicization in modern multicultural societies. In the second part, the model is applied to analyse the influence of Turkish television in the Netherlands.

<u>Preliminary considerations</u>

'Culture' in multicultural societies

As happens in other modern multicultural countries, Dutch society is sorting itself out anew. In this process of sorting, ethnicity and culture have become keywords, while distinctions based on class, and political affiliation have lost much of their prominence. In the context of multicultural thinking, the concept of culture seems to have acquired new meanings that sometimes implicitly contradict historically accepted ones. In social theory the concept of culture implies the presence of agency. Saying that a given behaviour is cultural indicates that it is learned and therefore subject to change (Vermeulen, 1992). In multiculturalist usage, however, such a statement could have an the opposite meaning: it is cultural, and <u>therefore</u> given (Baumann, 1996; Baumann and Sunnier, 1996). This confusing terminological situation inspired Baumann (1996) to investigate the contextual determinants of the new usage. In his introduction, the author eloquently words the exasperation he felt when, returning to England after a long spell of anthropological fieldwork in Africa, the whole of Britain, from left to right, from black to white, and from 'Asian' to English, appeared to have embraced the premise that ethnic being determines social consciousness:

> 'Whatever any 'Asian' informant was reported to have said or done was interpreted with stunning regularity as a consequence of their 'Asianness', their 'ethnicity', or the 'culture' of their 'community'', Baumann reports. 'All agency seemed to be absent, and culture an imprisoning cocoon or a determining force (1996: 1)'. [6]

Yet it is also possible to look at the dominant discourse from a less bleak perspective. As Baumann demonstrates in his subsequent chapters, people are not so entrapped by the dominant discourse as to have become blind to other aspects of social reality. I would go even further and suggest that the dominant discourse may have its benefits. It offers a vocabulary tool kit that can deal with the complexities and contradictions of modern multicultural social existence *without* presuming too much about the hows and the why's of nature, nurture,

ethnicity, and culture. There are good reasons for such an approach. In everyday settings the term culture is used loosely, to indicate a plenitude of differences which in other contexts might be identified as either national, or ethnic, or racial, or religious, or political (see Saharto, 1995, and Baumann, 1996 for examples[7]). These multiple meanings are in fact implied by the term <u>multicultural society</u> itself. The countries which are now called multicultural all have a long history of social cleavage and cultural difference; in that sense, they have never been monocultural. What is new is the recent influx of people with different nationalities, languages, histories, religions, colours, experiences, customs, and values. What is also new is that assimilation is no longer viewed as a self evident solution, and that modern nation states are more concerned about economic inequality than about cultural difference (Vermeulen en Penninx, 1996). It is this entire complex of newness that the term multicultural has come to cover.

Ethnicity in the multicultural context

A tendency that *is* potentially harmful is ethnicization. Referring to the international literature, Penninx (1988) defines ethnicization as "a form of social organization based on (presumed) common descent, (elements of) culture, and symbols." Thus, ethnicization is primarily a form social organization. Its business is boundary formation, and its mission is the protection of the integrity of a (presumed) cultural heritage. By the logic of ethnicization, people inherit 'a culture' as part of their 'ethnicity'. It is this conceptual circularity Baumann (1996: 17) refers to when he observes that the dominant discourse can

> 'reduce all social complexities, both within communities and across whole plural societies, to an astonishingly simple equation: 'Culture = community = ethnic identity = nature = culture'.'

This is indeed a conceptual trap, and one with a very bad record.[8] Why should people believe that the inheritance of culture, in the sense of consciousness, works 'by way of the blood', when this is so manifestly untrue? According to Roosens (1995, 1998), the assumptions underlying the ethnicization of culture can acquire face value validity when they are supported by the logic of experience. Ethnicization, he argues, builds on a primordial sense of belonging and kinship. The sense of belonging comes first, and sets the psychological and social scene for later comparisons and explanations. He calls this the genealogical dimension of ethnicity, which is expressed by the family metaphor. This family metaphor <u>naturalizes</u> the concepts of origin and heritage, by relating it to everyday experience. Roosens' expose can certainly serve

as an explanation of the habitual fusion of the natural and cultural dimensions of ethnic identity in every day multicultural consciousness (Baumann, 1996; Baumann and Sunnier, 1995). Within a family context - real or metaphorical - nature and culture are part of the same 'inherited' experience. Taking these dimensions apart is a very cultural effort.

As I have argued above, the concept of culture is difficult to pin down. The same goes for ethnic cultural heritages. It seems to me that this lack of specification is one of the distinguishing characteristic of ethnicization processes in modern multicultural societies. It is the elusiveness of its assumptions and implications that makes ethnicization, at present, so different from traditional forms of social organization. In modern societies, religious and political organizations have their well-established purposes - serving God and influencing government – and their domains have been hemmed in by legislation and convention. Religion and politics can thus be kept 'in their place'. Ethnicization lacks such a defining purpose and has no established domain. This makes it into a dark horse, comparatively. When ethnic-cultural heritages are essentially unspecified as to the kind of 'stuff' they may carry, it follows that there are no a priori limits to the domains they can be brought to bear on. There seem to be few givens here.

If ethnicization processes have no obvious boundaries by definition or convention, what does stop them from eating their way into any layer and level of society? I'm asking this question here in a conceptual, not an empirical, sense. I am searching for the proper term. What is the conceptual anti-thesis to ethnicization? Which name are we to give to the set of influences that keeps - or could keep - ethnicization within bounds? A popular candidate is integration. But integration will not do, since it is a) a much broader concept than ethnicization and b) not necessarily anti-thetic to it. In some views, integration and (some forms of) ethnicization may even be positively related (Fennema & Tillie, 1999; Vermeulen & Penninx, 1996). So integration is no solution. An other candidate is individualization. But individualization can be pitched against any kind of collectivization, so it is not a proper anti-thesis either. Neither are democratization or modernization. All these concepts have some potential anti-thetic relationship to ethnicization, but none in a sufficiently straightforward manner. The only adequate solution that I can see is simply to match ethnicization with de-ethnicization, which can then be defined as its particular denier. De-ethnicization thus refers to the set of influences that 'undo' ethnicization, in thought or in practice.

Ethnicization and de-ethnicization in modern multicultural societies are to be viewed, in sum, as opposite forces in a series boundary games played under new conditions and by

unsettled rules. While ethnicization works at reproducing and strengthening ethnic social boundaries, de-ethnicization works at undoing them.

Situating ethnicization and de-ethnicization

How is the situation at any kick-off time to be described in terms of balance of power between the forces of ethnicization and those of de-ethnicization? This is not so easy to determine. In the first place, the answer depends on the viewpoint from which the assessment is made. In the second place, it depends on one's definition of boundaries.

I'll first address the problem of viewpoints. Let me explain it by returning to the time of the great influx of Turks into the Netherlands. The immigrants were met by a modern, individualized welfare society, which had come a long way to free itself from the constraints which inherited identities – notably those of class, gender, religion, ethnicity and political affiliation – used to put on individual lives. The resulting de-collectivization and de-ideologization of Dutch citizenship was confidently felt to lead to a better and happier society, with more equality and more freedom for all. From this viewpoint, any claim, assertion or acknowledgement of an inherent collective cultural difference, from the migrant groups themselves or from the host-society, and any measure based on such claims, could be called steps toward ethnicization.

An opposed but equally valid viewpoint departs from this collective cultural difference as a real phenomenon, brought about by the immigration wave itself. In several respects, the immigrants from Turkey had in actual fact less in common with the Dutch than with their fellow Turkish migrants. From this viewpoint, ethnicization was the inescapable result of the migration wave. The boundaries came in with the people themselves. So any step in the direction of 'undoing' these boundaries is to be booked under the heading of de-ethnicization.

The conclusion must be, I think, that ethnicization and de-ethnicization are locked together by patterns of circumstances to which they both respond, be it in opposite ways. This means that we cannot identity the relevant moves without taking these circumstances into close account. 'What is what' will vary between groups, and between moments in time. It depends on how a particular 'ethnic heritage' is, at that particular moment, defined by the group itself and by the surrounding society.

Boundaries in the multicultural context

An other problem that must be solved is the definition of ethnic cultural boundaries within a modern multicultural society as the Netherlands. Since ethnic boundaries have a subjective element (Barth, 1969, 1996; Baumann & Sunnier, 1995; Vermeulen & Govers, 1996), they may take a different shape and outlook for each individual. But if a boundary did not distinguish between common viewpoints, there would be no boundary at all. We must therefore assume that there is a division between two sides, each of which has to be granted its own subjectivity and its own dynamics. How are these 'sides' to be defined, in the context of postmigration ethnicity?

Several approaches are possible. Starting from the <u>ethnic</u>, the boundary under consideration would distinguish between 'ethnic' Turks and 'ethnic' Dutch, or between people who consider themselves to be one of these. In the present context, this approach is evidently unsatisfactory. Dutch culture, as met by the Turkish migrants, was not an ethnic, but a national culture. One of the characteristics of this particular national culture was that it had become de-ethnicized, and, in general, individualized. As understood by the inhabitants of the Netherlands, the term Dutch referred to citizenship rather than to ethnicity.

An other approach would be to start from the <u>cultural</u>. From such a viewpoint, the boundaries would distinguish representatives of 'Dutch culture', from representatives of 'Turkish culture'. This is, in fact, how the boundary is frequently framed. In the Netherlands, the new ethnic and cultural distinctions are usually made terms of <u>national</u> origin. Thus, new minorities will be identified as Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, or Antillians (= Dutch Carribeans). This is also how people belonging to those groups will mostly identify themselves within the Dutch national context.

That nationality has come to function as the 'default' multicultural distinguisher is not entirely self-evident. For example: Baumann (1996) and Gillespie (1995) have found that in Southall, England, young people define 'the different cultures' in their town primarily in terms of religion. In the Netherlands, Turks and Moroccans are only identified as Muslims when religion is (considered to be) relevant to the issue under consideration. So, adapted to the Dutch context Baumann's equation (1996: 17, see above) would read: 'national origin = ethnicity = culture = national origin'.

The Turkish minority, in particular, tends to define the boundaries between themselves and the society of immigration in terms *national* distinctions: we are, think and act in certain ways *because* we are Turkish.[9] This is not to say that people who reason so are unaware of

other distinctions. Far from that: regional differences, differences between right and left, between rich and poor, between Sunni's and Alevites, between religious and non-religious people, between rural people and city people, between Kurds and Turks, are prominent in the consciousness of many immigrants from Turkey. But all such distinctions were, during the first decades of immigration, framed within the general context of 'Turkishness' as a prime cultural distinguisher.

By defining the ethnic-cultural boundary in national terms, an important cultural difference between the Turkish migrants and the society of immigration was left unaccounted for. This is the difference between traditional and post-traditional outlooks and customs. By silent agreement, the distinction between Turkishness versus Dutchness has come to cover that difference also. This is to say that the differences between traditional and post-traditional social customs and values were ethnicized. The rules and anxious prohibitions governing Turkish migrant culture in the name of an ethnic national cultural heritage were – and are – especially hard on women and girls (de Vries, 1987). The boundaries were framed in such a way that 'being Turkish' could become a prison with no acceptable escape, since to escape would mean 'becoming Dutch'. Turkish girls did not want to become Dutch. Neither did they want to hurt their parents, emotionally or socially. But they did want more freedom and equality than the dominant definition of Turkishness, as it had evolved in the context of migration, allowed for. It is in this context that Turkish commercial television could come to play its de-ethnicizing role.

Ideas and issues

Ethnicization and de-ethnicization can be analysed not only in terms of social organization, but also in terms of discourse, that is the social exchange of thoughts and ideas. Ideas are an important factor in the dynamics of ethnicization and de-ethnicization. Ideas and behavior do interact, but work by different rules and different logics, on the individual as well as on the social level. That ideas and behaviour are relatively independent phenomena is nicely illustrated by Baumann's summary of the responses of young 'Asian' Southallians to a series of questions exploring their attitudes to the issue of mixed marriages (1996: 151). While only 25 percent of the respondents would prepared to go against their parents if they wanted a mixed marriage for themselves, a great majority (78 percent) did endorse the proposition that people should be free to marry whom they like. This shows that people may behave in accordance with a given boundary, while at the same time questioning its legitimacy.

Obviously, the presence or absence of convictions supporting ethnicization must make a difference to its social influence.[10]

In everyday settings ethnicizing and de-ethnicizing positions are seldom expressed in abstract terms. They usually take the form of positions on issues. Since ethnicization *is* social boundary formation, only those issues that address, or can be made to address, the boundaries in question are potentially ethnicizing. This is well illustrated by the study of Gamson (1992) in which four controversial issues are discussed by small groups of Americans. Most groups were either all-black, or all-white. While on an overall comparison black and white groups were found to disagree on the issue of positive action, there were no such disagreement on the issues nuclear power, government subsidy to industry, or the Arab-Israeli conflict. Positive action addresses the legitimacy of black-white social inequalities – which makes it sensitive to this particular boundary.

<u>The model</u>

Discourse dimensions

An important feature of the proposed model is that it distinguishes between two different conceptual dimensions of ethnicization. The first conceptual dimension is concerned with ethnic difference per se. It addresses the validity of assumed or proposed ethnic differences. Is it *true* that the populations under consideration are so different with respect to a given issue or characteristic? The ethnicizing answer is yes, the de-ethnicizing answer is no. Thus, ethnicization works toward the enhancement of difference as perceived, while de-ethnicization works toward the reduction of perceived difference.

The second dimension is concerned with social and political implications of ethnic difference. *If* the difference exists, what, then, should be the implications of this particular difference for the organization of society? On this dimension, ethnicization works toward the enhancement of socially divisive implications, while de-ethnicization works toward the reduction of these.

The first dimension: reducing difference

On the first dimension, de-ethnicizing positions[11] question if proposed ethnic differences *are* ethnic, or even exist at all. Two strategies can serve this purpose. The first works by proposing similaritie*s* between the publics and their behaviours on both sides of the boundary. By doing so, it puts the difference into perspective. I will call this <u>the similarity strategy</u>. When religion

is under discussion in its function of boundary marker, the drawing of parallels between religions would be an instance of this strategy. In the context of an other issue the reference to non-ethnic contingencies, such as migration, as an alternative explanation for certain behaviours would be an instance. In this vein, informants have pointed out to me that, when it came to clinging to old customs, Dutch immigrants in Australia did not behave so different from Turks in the Netherlands. The message was that this was not Turkish but human behaviour.

The second strategy on the first dimension questions ethnic difference by referring to variance within the ethnic group, or within the population at the other side of the boundary. I will call this the variance strategy. This strategy follows logically from certain alternative outlooks on society. In the socialist tradition it is class, rather than ethnicity, that defines people socially.[12] In the feminist tradition it is gender rather than ethnicity. But the strategy need not be informed by an overall alternative approach or theory; it can also be developed ad hoc, in the context of a specific issue. Thus, many of my respondents reported differences in television preferences between older and younger Turkish people, they distinguished between people with a rural and an urban background, and between modern and old-fashioned attitudes. This type of observation questions the significance of ethnic difference in a particular context by introducing other sources of variance.

Of course, the statistical connotations are not accidental here. A statistical comparison of means is based on the same principles. The difference that is tested for can lose its significance either when the compared populations are more similar than was expected, or when they prove more internally diverse. It is not so surprising that everyday discourse about the validity of social distinctions works by the same logic. It would be more surprising if statistical and every day reasoning had no such notions of validity in common.

The second dimension: undoing social implications
On the second dimension, de-ethnicization does not question the existence of ethnic difference per se, but is concerned with reducing unjust or socially divisive implications. On this dimension, ethnic difference is defined and dealt with in contexts of social and political problem solving. The complexities of this dimension can best be illustrated by a case. Let me briefly consider the adaptation of Dutch society to the growing presence of Islam.

Turkey and Morocco are Islamic countries. By tradition, the Netherlands is Christian, or Christian-Judaic. During the first phase of Turkish and Moroccan immigration, the religious-

cultural difference remained, as it were, underground. But in the context of permanent settlement Islam came to assert itself more strongly, and institutionalization set in (Rath, Penninx, Groenendijk, & Meijer, 1996). The interest here is in the different ways the issue has been framed. When Islam began to make its presence more strongly known, the resulting problems were often framed in terms of an all encompassing clash between cultures. It was 'their' values versus 'ours'. Gradually, this framework has lost terrain to an approach in terms of constitutional and rights and values. By this approach, religious difference can be accommodated and expressed within a common civic framework (Buijs, 1998; Rath, Penninx, Groenendijk, & Meijer, 1996; Sunnier, 1996).

This case is relevant here for several reasons. To begin with, it shows that the relationship between de-ethnicization on the two dimensions is not straightforward. In the context of social problem solving, the acknowledgement of a particular difference can be helpful to reducing its public implications. It also demonstrates that de-ethnicization consists of finding solutions to complex social problems. The framing of religious difference as subordinate to a common civic framework may demand a restructuring of personal and collective priorities and values. As a religious person, an individual may believe that his faith is the only true faith and its values the only true values. But as a citizen he has to respect the equality of religions before the law, accepting that constitutional values prevail over religious values. Such flexibility does not come natural; it is part of a civic culture (Putnam, 1993, Fennema & Tillie, 1999). As a final point, it can be observed that when problems are framed and approached in civic term, their solutions will become more various and specialized; depending, for instance, on specific opportunity structures and specific forms of knowledge. From an abstract ideological difference, which lends itself well to divisive interpretations and rhetoric, it will gradually be transformed into a series of particular problems, asking for particular solutions.

Divisive potential

This two dimensional model can be used as a heuristic tool to identify issues according to their socially divisive potential. Potentially divisive issues, I would argue, are issues that address, or can be made to address, ethnic cultural difference on *both* of these dimensions. There are many cultural differences that have little relevance in terms of social implications. By the logic of this model, such differences have little cleavage potential. A good example are differences in musical taste. Young people with a Turkish background love Turkish popular music; for many of them, it is one of the strongest attractions of Turkish television. They

consider this difference in musical taste to be an important ethnic cultural distinguisher. But in terms of the second dimension, the divisive potential of this particular difference is very small indeed. In the first place, this particular cultural difference has no political implications at all; on neither side of the boundary would this difference be constructed as a politically divisive item. In the second place, is has certain commercial implications which could work toward de-ethnicizing the taste for Turkish pop music. Some Turkish singers are actively marketed at present, and seem to attract non-Turkish youth also. Such a development would heighten the cultural prestige of Turkishness among young people, just as rap music has heightened the cultural prestige of blackness.[13] By doing so, it would further communication between ethnic cultures rather than hinder it.

Differences in values about sexuality, gender, and family may have more of a divisive potential (Roosens, 1998). In such matters, traditional values and customs are often different from post-traditional attitudes, and these differences *do* have potential political implications. Issues that have to do with the organization of sexuality, gender and family is a matter of high interest to any society. They are also of high interest to most individuals, which makes them potential targets for political mobilization.

Applying the model to Turkish media

In this section I will use the model to investigate the case of Turkish satellite television in the Netherlands. I will consider if and how Turkish television could further ethnicization or de-ethnicization in terms of the two-dimensional model. The first part of the analysis will be theoretical. That is: I will consider what possible roles Turkish television could play in the context of Dutch society, given its nature of a national public medium. In the second part, I will compare the outcomes of this theoretical exercise with some of my empirical observations.

For a medium to have a public function, it needs to be available in more than a technical sense. The presence of Turkish newspapers in an Amsterdam kiosk, for instance, does not make its information available to the general Dutch public. The same goes for the Turkish public channel TRT-Int, which, though available on the Amsterdam cable, is not watched by the non-Turkish speaking public. It follows that the discourses on the two sides of the ethnic cultural boundary have different media inputs. While Dutch media can influence both discourses, Turkish media can only influence one.

Enhancing and reducing difference

The next step is to consider the potential relevance of Turkish television to the model's dimensions. The first dimension addresses ethnic difference per se, and questions or affirms its significance by making between-group and within-group comparisons. Could information obtained from Turkish television be useful to either of these first dimensional strategies? Let us look at the similarity strategy first. This strategy involves comparisons between the publics on the different sides of the ethnic cultural boundary, that is, between the Dutch and the Turks. Though it is not impossible that Turkish media should incidentally make such comparisons, it is unlikely that these would be high on their agenda. Turkish national media are, obviously, not primarily concerned with the difference between Turks and Dutch. That Turkish television pays in fact little attention to the Netherlands is confirmed by a content analysis of the news programs on several Turkish channels (Ogan and Milikowski, 1998), as well as by the people whom I have interviewed. This means that Turkish television will not, as a rule, directly influence Turkish migrants' perception of the Dutch-Turkish difference. On the other hand, the information it offers could influence this perception indirectly. I will return to this point later.

The second strategy on the first dimension discusses ethnic difference in terms of variance on both sides of the ethnic cultural boundary. It is evident that Turkish media information can be of immediate relevance here. Though Dutch-Dutch comparisons cannot be expected to take a high place on these media's agenda, Turkish-Turkish comparisons can. Informing the public about such differences is the one of a national media's principle raisons d'être. Thus, watching Turkish television will directly inform people about within-Turkish variance on a regular basis.

Enhancing and reducing implications

On the second dimension, the possible influence of Turkish television on boundary-developments in the Netherlands is constrained by two factors. The first factor is its lack of expertise and interest (see above) in Dutch public affairs. Though such expertise may not be a prerequisite when problems and issues are only framed ideologically, it becomes one when solutions are sought and negotiated in terms of civic opportunities and desirables. This puts a considerable a priori limitation on the possibilities of Turkish national television directly to influence the process of social problem solving in the Netherlands.

The second factor that must be taken into account is that Turkish satellite television, as received in the Netherlands, offers a choice of seven or more channels, which are run on a commercial basis. Since commercial television has come to dominate the scene, ideological cultural identities have lost much of their grip on programming and presentation. Just as happens elsewhere, Turkish commercial television channels are driven to compete over audiences, advertizing and sponsoring money. This development has profoundly affected the relationship between television and its publics. Political and religious difference between channels have become less visible, and audiences have become more difficult to capture (Ang, 1996). Turkish channels and Turkish audiences are no exception to that rule (Tekinalp, 1996; Tokgöz, 1996). It is evident that these two factors put considerable a priori restrictions on the power of Turkish television directly to influence the framing of political problems in the Netherlands. In the first place, it lacks the relevant knowledge and expertise to be of much effect in any particular context. In the second place, commercial interests have come prevail over traditional political and religious identities, the attendant effect of which is a de-ideologization of both programming choices and audience behaviour.

Using the model to evaluate some empirical findings

It now becomes more clear why Turkish television could be intensively watched *without* contributing to the ethnicization of Dutch-Turkish cultural boundary in the Netherlands in any substantial sense. The main reason is that Turkish television would not have much to say about this boundary in any particular sense. Its strength would be informing viewers about Turkey and, by implication, about different Turkish viewpoints and identities. Most of its information could therefore be relevant to Turkish migrants' boundary perceptions only in an indirect sense.

Having arrived at this point, I will now return to my empirical observations, and discuss them in terms of the model. A provision that should be made here is that the people whom I have interviewed are all relatively young and most are fluent Dutch speakers. Since the first aim of the research was to develop some basic understanding of the role Turkish televisions plays in the lives of Turkish-Dutch people, I have sought out respondents who could inform me by telling and explaining; comparing, for instance, Turkish with Dutch television. As a consequence, I can use the information obtained by those interviews only to illustrate my points. The one piece of quantitative research we did was a brief survey of television preferences in a large school in Amsterdam, attended by many students with a Turkish or

Moroccan background, in the ages of 12 to 18.[14] I'll use some of these findings here to introduce my more informal observations.

Going by the survey-data, television preferences of Turkish, Moroccan and Dutch students are very similar. For each of the three groups, the highest ranking programs are popular items on Dutch television: series, soaps and sports programs. While Dutch television culture thus seems to be an important frame of reference for young people, it is of less importance to their parents. By the students reports, many Turkish and Moroccan parents prefer watching Turkish and Moroccan channels, and their favourite programs are news programs. These findings are not really surprising. They only confirm the general trend of cultural developments after migration.

A more particular point of interest is that, while Moroccan students do not include any program from Moroccan television in their 'top five', Turkish students do. They give a fifth place to Televole, an entertainment program featuring Turkish soccer heroes and other popular stars. This suggests that Turkish television has an intrinsic interest for young Turkish-Dutch people themselves, and that they do not just watch it to please their parents. This is also my impression from the interviews. Turkish television has something to offer that is relevant to the second generation also.

Affective and informational interests

The interest young people take in Turkish television is partly affective, and partly informational. By watching Turkish television, viewers feel affirmed in their love of and affinity to Turkish people, Turkish landscapes and Turkish cultural sights and sounds. Though many informants claim that they feel the same way about the Netherlands when they are in Turkey, this does not, of course, cancel the affective tie to Turkey. It just confirms the particular 'two-ness'[15] of this second generation's cultural experience. What is striking, though, is how often the comparisons are made in terms of a warm-cold contrast. By people's descriptions, Turkey is *warmer* than the Netherlands in all kinds of senses. The sun is out more often and shines more brightly there. There is more warmth between family members and between friends. Partisanships as well as conflicts are more heated among Turks. On Islamic Holidays, which in the Netherlands have to be celebrated in relative isolation, watching the ceremonies and festivities on Turkish television is warming, even for people who are not particularly religious themselves. Turkish television, in sum, takes its viewers in the Netherlands out of the cold.

Most of these warm-cold comparisons are relevant to the first dimension of the model only. They state a difference that is felt to be an important ethnic cultural distinguisher, but not in any ideological or political sense. The only issue that *is* sometimes discussed in terms of social rights and wrongs is the issue of Islamic holidays. Here, it is felt, the cultural needs of Muslims and, in general, people from Islamic countries, should be taken better care of by Dutch public institutions, including media. Some bitterness can be detected in how the issue is framed: of course, one respondent observes, *they won't do this for us*. Even so, the ideological connotations are, if there, rather vague. Most people define the problem as one of Dutch society not living up to its own commitments to cultural diversity.

The attraction of Turkish television has also an informational aspect, on which the needs and satisfactions of the generations differ. Being raised in the Netherlands, the second generation has no difficulties following Dutch television programs, though many of their parents do. While these parents will thus rely on Turkish television for the satisfaction of basic information and entertainment needs, people belonging to the second generation use Turkish television as a particular form of education. In this vein, informants report that their command of the Turkish language has become much better since satellite television has made its entrance in their homes. In general, their knowledge of Turkey has become more extensive, which many of them appreciate. Though this particular education, which is not shared by their Dutch peers, makes Turkish people more different in a sense, it is not a difference with divisive implications for the public organization of Dutch society. It is a form of expertise that can be put to many uses, and need not interfere with other capabilities.

There is one informational attraction of Turkish television mentioned by many informants that seems to address both dimensions of the model. Turkish television is attractive because it highlights certain differences between customs and ideas in Turkey itself, and customs and ideas of Turkish migrants in the Netherlands. In Turkey, informants will observe, girls are allowed to go out and have fun with boys, while Turkish girls here aren't. In Turkey, girls can dress just as they like; whether they choose to wear a bikini or a veil is their own business. In Turkey, homosexuals can come out as such, even on television. In Turkey, girls talk back to their fathers. Part of the attraction thus consist in how issues of sexuality, gender and family are depicted and framed on Turkish television. When the rights and wrongs of different behaviors, customs and values are publicly discussed in Turkish television talk shows, they can also, more legitimately and more conveniently, be brought up in one's own family. In such matters the information of Turkish television is described as helpful and illuminating.

According to several informants, Turkish commercial satellite television has made them aware that the some of the values by which they were raised represent a narrow and stagnant concept of Turkishness. They observe that customs which, in the context of migration, have come to define the boundaries between Dutch and Turks are not really an intrinsic part of Turkish culture, seeing that many Turks think and act otherwise.

These are, as such, de-ethnicizing reflections. In terms of the model, they would be identified as instances of the similarity strategy. Though Turkish television does not explicitly make Dutch-Turkish comparisons, its viewers in the Netherlands can use the information it offers to question the cultural between the Dutch and the Turks. As one informant observed, about the behaviour of young people: when you watch Turkish television, you don't even see the difference. This informant felt that Turks in Turkey are more similar to the Dutch then they are to Turkish migrants in the Netherlands.

These observations would suggest that Turkish television is used to contest the legitimacy of a particular category of boundary markers that separate traditional from post-traditional ways of organizing sexuality, gender and family. By the logic of post-migration developments, the difference between traditional and post-traditional outlooks and values had become part of the ethnic cultural boundary between Turks and Dutch. In this context, differences in outlook on issues concerning sexuality, gender and family had become ethnicized. As I have suggested, such differences can become divisive when politicized. My observations indicate that the information on Turkish television is used to contest the significance of such differences as boundary markers. In that sense, Turkish television can be said to have a potential de-ethnicizing influence on social relations in the Netherlands.

Discussion

I'll focus my discussion on two different matters. The first is the interpretation of the role of Turkish television. The second are the possibilities of the model. I will address these one by one, starting with television. In this article, I have taken a wide berth around some issues that have been rather prominent in defining 'the Turkish question' in the Dutch media. These issues are Islamist fundamentalism and political extremism, from the left (PKK), and from the right (Grey Wolves). There are several reasons why I have chosen to avoid a confrontation with these issues in the present context. In the first place, I have wanted to focus on the *ordinary*. In my opinion, a phenomenon that is so widespread as the involvement in Turkish satellite television, should first be investigated in terms of ordinary uses and gratifications.

From what we know about popular tastes, there is no reason why special motives should be brought in at forehand. Non ideological and non political gratifications usually go a long way to explain a certain popular interest, and by my findings the present case is no exception to that rule. As one informant commented somewhat surprised when I asked her to show me a program she liked: "It is just television, you know." When she switched on the TV-set I saw what she meant. Her favourite program was a game show which could have been copied from Dutch television – or the other way round. Being a bilingual, and liking that kind of program, she usually watched both.

A second reason for avoiding ideological issues here is that my data do not allow me to pronounce on them. I have not selected my informants to represent different political or religious alliances, nor have I, in most cases, inquired after such alliances post hoc. When one of the above issues was brought up by an informant, it was usually to distance herself or himself from any polarizing way of framing them, be that way Turkish or Dutch. Such an approach is by several indications somewhat more typical for the well educated than for the less well educated. This could mean that, by selecting my informants on their command of the Dutch language and their knowledge of Dutch television, I have built in a certain bias toward moderation. It could also mean that the average Turkish-Dutch citizen is more moderate, politically and religiously, than media coverage of Turkish affairs would suggest. Either or both could be the case, but my data leave the issue undecided. The bottom line is that I have not investigated possible special, that is political, forms of usage of Turkish television in the Netherlands.

It could also be questioned if interviews with viewers would be the most adequate way to investigate such political usage. As have argued before, Turkish national media do not as a rule inform their publics about issues in the Netherlands. Their information is aimed at the Turkish political arena, which has very little overlap with the Dutch one. To construct such an overlap on a less than incidental basis would have to be an organized endeavour. It would involve 'translating' Turkish television information to bring it to bear on Dutch issues, and communicating the results to (parts of) the Turkish public in the Netherlands. The most sensible way to check if this happens and how it is done would be to study the various television programs of Turkish organizations on the Dutch cable. It would certainly be interesting to investigate how public issues in the Netherlands are framed in different programs and by different organizations, if and how particular frames have changed, and which factors influence such changes.

This brings me to the second subject to be addressed in the discussion: <u>the possibilities of the model</u>. The first point that I want to make in this context is that de-ethnicization is a useful concept. Though it is easy to see that ethnicization is not an unidirectional process, the lack of a proper anti-thesis has made it somewhat difficult to conceptualize the various tendencies that oppose ethnicization in thought and in practice. Typically, such tendencies have been described in terms with strong moral connotations. Thus, we have anti-racism, the struggle against anti-Semitism, and more in general the struggle against discrimination. One notorious problem with these concepts is that they fall mute in the face of ethnicization that is initiated by the not-to be-discriminated-against group itself. There are good moral reasons for such muteness, particularly when the people under consideration have a long history of being culturally, socially or even physically oppressed. Moreover, collective emancipation often goes with forms of ethnicization that are, essentially, expressions of pride or and positive self-awareness. Taking a moral stand against such forms of collective assertion would therefore often be beside the point from a political point of view. One benefit of <u>de-ethnicization</u> as a concept is that it has no such moral and political overtones. An other benefit is that it is broad, and can be used to study different phenomena under one conceptual heading.

The second point concerns the conceptual distinction between difference per se, and difference in terms of social implications. These two dimensions are not always so easy to distinguish in public discourse on ethnic difference. In discussions of racism, for instance, the conceptual distinction between difference as such, and difference as a legitimization for social and civic inequality, is not always explicitly made. The resulting conceptual confounding of acknowledged difference with implied social inequality has been notably unhelpful to the identification of racism and discrimination, to which the present subject bears considerable affinity. The need of making such a distinction has for long been a recurrent theme in discussions about discrimination, and it may grow in proportion to the number of cultures a society will publicly accommodate.

The benefits of the model are, so far, mainly heuristic. It offers a global instrument that can be used to stake out a subject conceptually. If it also could be used to investigate relationships between developments on the different dimensions, or on the different sides of a given boundary, is an interesting question, which I will have to leave unanswered here. The same goes for it applicability to other than ethnic boundaries. Obviously, there are other differences that are discoursed on, asserted and denied, in terms of difference 'as such' and in terms of social implications. A good example are differences between men and women. The

changes that were initiated by 'the second wave' of feminism could also serve as an illustration of the complexity of the relationship between the developments on the two dimensions; the 'genderization' of issues in the context of feminism has certainly been helpful, and arguably even preconditional, to the 'de-genderization' of public institutions (Van Zoonen, 1994).

In the present article, I have only looked at (de-)ethnicization in terms of comparisons that are made on the Turkish side of ethnic boundary in the Netherlands. I have suggested that the comparisons between Dutch and Turks would be positively influenced by television information about differences between Turks and Turks. Even if we could take this for proven, which we can not, it would be far from evident how such a development would affect 'the grand picture' of Dutch Turkish relationships in the Netherlands. Obviously, much will depend on what happens on the majority side of the boundary, and in the public sphere in which boundary issues are framed. This public sphere is dominated by the Dutch media which, by their nature, have access to both sides of the ethnic cultural boundary.

Though there is no reason to assume that Dutch national media would have a vested and uniform interest in the ethnicization of Dutch society, their portrayal of Turkish-Dutch individuals and Turkish-Dutch issues and affairs are a source of irritation to the people concerned.[16] It is certainly not appreciated by my most of my informants. Dutch media, I was told again and again, either neglect Turkish citizens, or depict them as dangerous fanatics or criminals. Dutch media coverage of 'Turkish matters' was in fact often served up as evidence of Dutch public institutions not living up to their own multicultural pretensions.

At the same time, there are considerable differences between media, between program, and between individual journalists. Thus Andra Leurdijk (1997, 1999), who has analysed the content of television programs multicultural issues and interviewed many journalists and producers, has found that talk shows are considerably more open to the contribution and perspectives of newcomers than are news programs. She has also found that there is not one definition of adequate professional performance, but several more or less competing ones. That media-approaches can also vary with issues was demonstrated after the recent Turkish earthquake. During the disaster and its immediate aftermath, Turkish-Dutch individuals were given an as yet unparalleled degree of exposure by Dutch media. Interestingly, they were also, on this occasion, explicitly <u>defined</u> as Turkish-Dutch, and not, as had been the custom, as Turks. An important ratio behind this change of framework is probably the ratio of news room. Considering their involvement in the quake, the Turkish part of people's identity could,

as it were, be taken for granted. What made them interesting now was that they were also Dutch. Fellow Dutch had died, had been wounded, had lost their family in Turkey. By their presence, their knowledge and their stories, the Netherlands came to share in the disaster. In this context, Turkish-Dutch people were presented as fellow Dutch citizens, who had stories to tell of high general interest. Watching television during these days was like watching a case of instant de-ethnicization. This particular media event certainly affirmed that Dutch media perspectives can change. At the same time it should be considered that the enabling conditions for such a change do not develop overnight, and that they do not disappear when the event is over. It would certainly be interesting to investigate the various antecedents to the change in perspective, as well as its followings-up.

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[1] Turkish immigrants established two records by one stroke: they were both champion TV-watchers, and champion watchers of television from the country of origin. In the table below, the viewing habits of Turkish TV watchers are compared with those of the Dutch general public, and with those of Moroccan immigrants.

Table 1. Self-reported viewing habits of different publics in the Netherlands (See Veldkamp 1996.)

	Turks	Moroccans	Dutch
Hours per week	32.4 hrs	19.7 hrs	17.7 hrs
Owns satellite dish:	42 %	18 %	n.s.
Hours per week			
dish-owners:	34.1 hrs	21.0	
non-owners	31.8	19.4	
Spent with T/M tv			
dish-owners:	28.5 hrs	16.5 hrs	
non-owners	19.8	10.1	

[2] Staring and Zorlu (1996) argued that the popularity of Turkish satellite television was easy to understand. One reason is that many older immigrants have no sufficient command of Dutch to understand Dutch television. An other reason is that most Dutch Turks have close relatives and friends in Turkey about whose well-being they want to keep themselves informed. According to these authors, dissatisfaction with the multicultural performance Dutch television is also a contributing factor.

[3] That media can indeed be instrumental in breaking up society along ethnic lines is evident. See for instance Turow (1997), and Mendelsohn & Nadeau (1996).

[4] See also Milikowski (1999).

[5] The present research was performed before the disastrous earthquake of August 17, 1999.

[6] The problem with the dominant discourse as Baumann sees it is twofold. In the first place it is conceptually circular, since it can "reduce all social complexities, both within communities and across whole plural societies, to an astonishingly simple equation: 'Culture = community = ethnic identity = nature = culture'" (1966: 17). And secondly it is socially undesirable, since a) it denies agency, that is people's ability to choose and intervene, and b)this denial is aimed in particular at individuals belonging to relatively powerless 'ethnic' groups or 'communities'.

[7] Sawitri Saharso (1992) noticed that young 'ethnic' people in the Netherlands often use the term race in the sense of ethnic group or cultural minority. For example: "MacDonalds is rather multi- uh, -race, it is of all races." (1992: 123). Baumann (1996) observes that people will use the term culture in the sense of race or ethnic group.

[8] In his novel The Girl at the Lion D'Or, the novelist Sebastian Faulks shows how 'culture' can be tricked from its proper place, the mind, to a a seemingly obvious quality named 'blood'. The first perspective allows for agency: "My grandfather was Jewish, you see, but my father was an atheist and rather proud of it (p.59)." The second does not: "He's always been like that', said Mattlin, ordering an other drink. "It's the Jewish blood, you

know." And later: "Just because he didn't practice doesn't mean it wasn't in the blood (p.213). The novel is set in France on the eve of the Second World War, which gives the exchange such an ominous meaning.

[9] Writing about the political self-images of politicians with an immigrant background, Cadat and Fennema (1996, p. 657) define ethnic identity as 'an identity derived from the country of origin', that is, 'a national identity outside of the national context.' In their research, this definition was found to fit Turkish migrant politicians best of the three groups they compared.

[10] The position expressed by those young Southallians is essentially one of public tolerance. It could even be offered as an example of political liberalism (as distinct from ideological liberalism). Compare Slijper, 1999.

[11] For purposes of economy I will limit my descriptions to *de-ethnicization*. Ethnicization must be considered to work in the opposite direction.

[12] "Among Africanist anthropologists, it had become a common place that is was wrong to 'tribalize' people. It was wrong both politically and academically to say that what Africans did, they did *because* they were Massai or Kikuyu, Luo or some other ethnic group. 'An African miner is a miner' was a neat phrase that, lifted from the work of Max Gluckman, served as a slogan against reducing people's culture to their tribal or ethnic identity" (Baumann 1996:.1).

[13] According to Marie Gillespie (1995), black boys in Southall have, in the context of popular music, come to be viewed as 'honorary Americans'.

[14] Questionnaires were filled out by 402 students of the Mondriaan Lyceum in Amsterdam-West. See Berkvens en Schippers (1997).

[15] A term of W.E.B. Du Bois, cited in Lasch (1995: 133).

[16] See, for example, El-Fers and Nibbering (1998).