

Spaces of Global Media

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Steve asked me to talk about media in the context of globalisation and transformations going on at the present time, so that will be the focus of what I want to say. Looking really at the media as being one of the key factors in contemporary society promoting transnationalism I am going to focus particularly on broadcasting, and specifically on television and the focus of what I say will have primarily a European concern, as that's what I have mostly been working on, and in the discussion I don't want to develop a very theoretical kind of account, I am really interested in trying to raise some of the policy and political issues relating to media and the development of transnational communities, so that will be the primary focus, trying to address some of the issues, some of the possibilities inherent in developments going on at the present time in media. But also I want to come back at the end to look at some of the difficulties because I don't want to suggest that developments in transnational media are automatically going to lead to some kind of new transnational space in Europe so I will try to balance possibilities with some of the difficulties.

Let me begin with a slightly kind of historical perspective and talk about broadcasting up until now, or up until really the mid '80s. It's a point very familiar and very widely discussed in media studies that broadcasting has been very central to the development of national societies and national communities within Europe. The media have been implicated in producing and reproducing the national imaginary, and I think that's a very important starting point. This is the kind of topic that often gets linked to the theme from Benedict Anderson about the imagined community, and it is often said that earlier media publishing newspapers were linked to the creation of an imagined community and broadcasting in the 20th century radio and then television have been central in the creation of modern imagined communities, that the television, for example, has made visible to us all of those people who we feel are part of the same national community but whom we would never otherwise generally have seen.

And the point I think to be made, or the point that is made quite rightly in relation to broadcasting is that it doesn't simply reflect the nation, it isn't as if there is a pre-given national community which television simply reflects. Television has been central in actually producing that community, in instituting that community. This was apparent from the very early days when it was a very conscious strategy of Reith, of John Reith in that period of the formation of the BBC in the 1920s to create a culture in common. The objective was to create a common unified culture within Britain and also to use broadcasting as a means to create a political public space as well. Reith talked about broadcasting as the integrator of democracy, so I think that's a very important point, that broadcasting has been central not just to the cultural unity of Britain (or to the attempt to create a cultural unity) but it has also been central to democratic culture. I think it is has done this to the point where in many respects we have often come to feel that broadcasting is somehow in its nature a national medium, a national institution. We were, I think, for a great period of time through this century unaware in some sense of how the broadcasting system had been constructed, how originally it had been a contested system, and how in some respects it was therefore

an arbitrary system, we had come to accept if you like the kind of hegemony of national broadcasting systems.

And of course it is important to recognise that in the early days of broadcasting there were challenges to this national model. First it is important to emphasise that television and radio signals are not in their nature national, I mean television signals just spread across borders so the development of a national television system was part of instituting a social, political and legal system whereby television could be regulated on a national basis, a medium which one might say in its technology is inherently a transnational medium and had to be regulated as a national medium, and the history of broadcasting is in some respects the history of the development of legal and regulatory systems to try to inhibit that transnational tendency in the medium.

The objective, of course, was to promote a national coherence and this led to the attempt to block all sorts of signals coming from outside. From Radio Luxembourg back in the 1960s, or say Radio Luxembourg earlier than that, and through into pirate radio in the 1960s there was an attempt to create a kind of audio-visual sovereignty within the national culture, and signals from outside were seen as a threat to the integrity of the national cultural life.

So that was one sort of dimension of regulating broadcasting on a national basis. The other was that broadcasting also had tendencies towards being a sub-national medium, as well. In the early days there was a great push for the development of local broadcasting systems, particularly in parts of the north, and also there have been constantly agendas throughout the history of broadcasting in the 20th century for regional broadcasting systems as well. So the national system was also forged at the expense of recognising the diversity of regional and local systems within Britain, to take that particular example. The internal diversity, the differences within the country, the disagreements between different parts of the country, were basically, if you like, suppressed in favour of trying to play up those elements that different parts of the country had in common. The marginalised elements were then designated as minority elements within the culture and dealt with on that basis, so there was a possibility for the regions within Britain to opt out, as the phrase went, to actually leave the national service and to have some programming for their particular region.

The important point to notice as well, or to emphasise is that generally the minority interests within national broadcasting were defined in territorial terms, they were the regions, those cultures which had a territory rather than ethnic minorities in the early days.

So this is to say, then, as the kind of introductory point, and to emphasise here that broadcasting was instituted, and I use the term in the sense drawing on the phrase of Kastoriodis of the idea of an imaginary institution. Television, or broadcasting, came into existence as an imaginary institution articulating a national culture and serving as the communications medium for a national public sphere. This is what we mean by the phrase “public service broadcasting” which has been the model and the ideal really of what broadcasting should strive to achieve in Europe, I think, through most of the century. A model rooted in the national imaginary.

Now to move on from that. Of course what has become clear since the mid-80s really is that this model has increasingly come to be undermined as a consequence of

a whole array of economical developments, the unleashing of competition within the broadcasting industry as a consequence of regulatory transformations as national governments came to recognise the inevitability of transnational broadcasting, and thirdly, as a consequence of technological developments, and particularly the development of satellite and cable television. So we have had a real challenge to the national public service regime as a consequence really of a strong corporate push built around new technologies, and a push which national governments have basically had to acquiesce to.

So transnationalisation then began, or appeared to begin, in the 80s as a strategy being brought about by the interests, the profit interests, the competitive interests of large media conglomerates. Companies like Time Warner, News Corporation, Sony and so on have become the figureheads of this agenda and their strategy is clearly to try to get their products to the largest number of consumers that are possible. The imperative is to break down what are now perceived as the anachronistic boundaries and frontiers of national communities, these boundaries are now ones which are seen to impose an anachronistic limitation on the expansion of markets, and are seen as being arbitrary and unreasonable obstacles to the overall objective, which is for these companies to rationalise their business strategies. So we saw through the 80s a whole set of new slogans intended to confront the hegemony, the dominance, of public service. We had the slogans around the free flow of information, the right of companies to market their audio-visual products and services across borders. In Europe we had the kind of famous phrase of developing television without frontiers. There are some very strong slogans around overcoming old national boundaries and seeking to create what might be seen as the new universal culture of global consumerism.

What we have then in this corporate agenda is a particular model of transnationalism being developed in the 80's, and one I think that we consider rather than simply dismiss. We need to consider it carefully because I think it's a model which has a particular resonance, which has actually captured certain people's imagination and we should take seriously as well because it is also a deeply problematical vision which is being sold to people.

So lets come to this agenda by turning to a speech that was made at the beginning of the 90s by the late Steve Ross, who was then head of Time Warner, who made a very powerful plea on behalf of Transnational Media, in what was called his World Address at the Edinburgh Television Festival in 1990. He says the new reality of international media is driven more by market opportunity than by national identity. So, market against nation. The competitive market place of ideas, he goes on, and of experience can only bring the world together. So, this notion of the market then against the nation and the market bringing the world together, reminiscent of the kind of coca-cola advertising ideology. With new technologies, says Ross, we can bring services and ideas that would help to draw even the most remote areas of the world into the international media community. So there is this idea of an international media community being created. Ross goes on 'its up to us, the producers and distributors of ideas to facilitate this movement and to participate in it with an acute awareness of our responsibility as citizens of one world'. You see emerging a particular notion of a common agenda, a common set of values that we all as citizens of a shared world, of one world will have. On the basis of what Ross calls consumers'

tastes and desires he envisages then a new order characterised by the interconnection of cultures.

This is an agenda which I think has developed and gathered pace since then, it is an agenda or idea of one world that has been taken up in many of the debates around the internet - the information super highway. Bill Gates talks about the information highway making all communication easier, bulletin boards and other on-line forums allow people to be in touch with each other, one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-many in very efficient ways. I don't know what efficient ways means but there is that sense again of a common focus for all peoples from around the world to come together. Or Al Gore for example in relation to the US Information Super Highway project, our goal is a kind of global conversation in which everyone who wants can have his or her say. Again this idea of a global conversation, this notion that we are all sitting around on an equal basis with shared ideas and values and so on.

So the vision that is being put forward then by Ross, in relation to broadcasting, and by people like Bill Gates, Clinton and Gore in relation to the Information Super Highway expresses a certain aspiration, a certain ideal of creating what might be called a kind of post-national ecuminicism, an new cosmopolitanism, if you like, in the world. I'm sure most people will be as sceptical about this kind of idea as I am, in many respect one feels a kind of resistance against this kind of idea. Sceptical about what appears to be rather a banal kind of vision in the end, it's a very commonly heard agenda and people who in fact are claiming to be creating something quite revolutionary and when you hear it, it is actually a very bland and familiar kind of agenda. So I think there is reason to be sceptical about that and I want to go on to say that this rhetoric is something which we should also be sceptical about because I think in many respects it doesn't really correspond with the reality of contemporary developments. I'll come back to this reality issue and what's actually going on in a moment but first I'll just touch on this rhetoric because I think than rather than simply dismissing this rhetoric of a kind of one world global conversation and so on, we should just look at it and consider the appeal, wherein lies the appeal, in so far as it does have an appeal.

I want to draw up 3 key issues that seem to run through this kind of discourse, the media discourse and also the internet discourse. The first theme that is very prevalent is the idea of a community, that the new transnationalism is about building something called a transnational community, and the media, a global media community, a community where we can all take part in a single conversation. What I want to suggest is that what we are being offered is really the national imaginary, the way of thinking about a national community, simply scaled up, as if its not possible to think about transnationalism other than in terms of this big version of a national imaginary with its shared values, its common culture, its common objectives.

The second theme is a very familiar and hackneyed and corney notion about communication, an idea that goes back way into the 19th century and an idea that has been mobilised at every occasion that a new communication technology has come along. The idea that this technology will promote communication and that the promotion of more efficient communication, and I guess that's what Bill Gates means, will promote greater social harmony. So we have there what might be called the ideology of communication which has perhaps in the 20th century almost come to rival the ideology of progress, communication linked to increased intelligibility,

linked to mutual comprehension and then to some kind of mutual solidarity and agreement between those people who are communicating. The problematical ideology of communication.

The third agenda which runs throughout the whole agenda is something to do with the overcoming of distance, the transcendence of what is seen as being the barriers of distance, the problems of the frictions of time and distance. These new technologies it is assumed, both media and internet technologies, will bring people closer together and create this global village. In a sense underlying it, lurking underneath the whole thing is a kind of communitarian agenda extrapolated to a global level in which people again overcome the barriers of distance and communicate directly with one another as they would in a face to face community through these new technologies and can thereby come close to each other.

So a set of issues then, problematical issues but I think resonate ones, things that for many people do have a certain resonance, an idea about a one world future, what is effectively a global consumer order. And one I think which has a certain appeal because it does tap into a certain discourse about creating electronic utopias, what James Carey has called the rhetoric of the electronic sublime - that the electronic media will allow us in the future to create some kind of new communicative order, and I'll come back to this.

So, that's one issue then. I emphasise here that the rhetoric of the corporate discourse about transnational media. Now we come to the second thing I wanted to talk about, the realities of what is actually going on, to what extent is this idea of one global conversation a reality. Of course, what we have to recognise immediately is that the realities are a great deal more complex than this Steve Ross, Time Warner would have us believe. What I want to argue is that the process is much more complex and actually it is in the complexities of this new order that is emerging that perhaps certain possibilities exist. It's the realities of what I might call actual globalisation as opposed to corporate project of globalisation that may allow certain possibilities to emerge. In terms of these realities, let's consider it from two perspectives, we might firstly adopt a certain defensive perspective and try to draw attention to those aspects of contemporary society that resist and obstruct and make difficult the market expansion of organisations like CNN, News Corporation, Time Warner or MTV. There are certain factors about the complexity and the inertia very often of the real world that make corporate marketing strategies to simply expand markets on a daily basis extremely difficult. First of all we have to recognise the realities of geocultural and geopolitical borders and recognise that many cultures, many national cultures throughout the world are extremely defensive with respect to transborder broadcasting. I refer to countries like Indonesia or Iran, the most obvious example is Iran with its strategy of self-reliance in relation to broadcasting. I refer to other countries which are seeking to negotiate this order in some way rather than simply resisting seeking some kind of domestication of the international satellite order, countries like Malaysia, Singapore and China. We have seen recently the kind of complexities Rupert Murdoch has been facing in terms of trying to negotiate this domestication strategy on behalf of the Chinese Government.

So that's one aspect then, the geopolitical realities. Another obvious and clear one for most observers is that the factors of cultural difference in the world clearly make

global marketing strategies difficult. The fact of religious difference, ethnic and cultural identity issues, the problems particularly of language, the problems of historically evolved taste and sensibility in certain parts of the world is another factor which inhibits the marketing strategy and companies in the 90s have come to recognise this and a whole new kind of corporate speak has begun to emerge about global and local, this has become another very hackneyed pairing. I think the problem with many of these terms is that at the beginning they were very useful and then have become exhausted. This one has been taken over by companies to recognise that they have to make some kind of adjustment between their attempts to achieve economies of scale and the need to recognise cultural borderlines and frontiers. So we have organisations like CNN having to recognise that once you go down the socio-economic scale it becomes much more difficult to reach audiences unless you take account of their cultural differences. Similarly Murdock's strategies in Asia with Star Television have had to recognise regional differences and MTV has had to recognise that it needs to adjust and tailor its programmes for European, Latino and Asian markets.

So that's a second issue, a resistance on the basis of culture. A third factor is that many parts of the world, in Europe for example, have to use this global-local terminology for their own objectives. So we have had within Europe the problem that initial attempts in the 80s to create a pan European space, to create a common market across Europe in broadcasting has faced resistance, as within certain regions of Europe and within certain Directorates within the European Commission there has been an emphasis on trying to see Europe in terms of a mosaic rather than the melting pot strategy, the idea of a Europe of the regions. There is a campaign almost for regional and small national television which again has operated as a resisting counterforce to the attempts to create a single large market. Again, it is important to note that this Europe of the regions strategy which sounds harmless and quaint is also a strategy which is also very territorially driven. It is to do with those cultures which have region or small national territories lobbying for their own national interests and again the ethnic dimension is marginalised.

Finally, there is a factor of resistance from the continuing importance and perhaps even still centrality of national broadcasting systems. National broadcasting in terms of consumer interest is still extremely important and perhaps in the short to middle term inescapable. There is still a very powerful attachment. We might say that if some kind of new media order is being brought into existence it's the case also that the old order is not disappearing. The new order is simply building across the old order and the national order remains very significant, and I will come back to this.

So far then in terms of the realities of broadcasting developments we might say that there are certain factors then which inhibit the corporate logic. They slow it down and make it more complicated it has to negotiate a complexity. On this basis we can probably affirm that cultural diversity and difference will not be eroded, that there will have to be some kind of negotiation. Notions that we can simply create these big global products and global markets are rather overstated. We might note the observations of Theodore Levitt who was one of the big advocates of global advertising in the 80s and in the book called 'The Marketing Imagination' he was very much playing up this line of trying to maximise the scale of markets when he says in his book that it is necessary to achieve the respectable accommodation of

multinational corporations to what they believe are fixed local preferences. He notes that:

.....such differences as remain are vestiges of the hardened inherited past as to cultural preferences, national taste and the institutions of business itself.

So in a sense his agenda is to recognise that there are these residual vestiges that you are not going to get rid of.

So, there are factors of resistance to the corporate blueprint for a transnational media order but of course this remains a rather defensive strategy and a rather limited strategy. In the case of Levitt, he is talking about simply the preservation of vestiges of the past which he reluctantly accepts and there is a danger that we might persuade ourselves into thinking about how we might preserve the multicultural map. There is always this tendency when thinking about culture to feel all the time that factors are diluting culture or homogenising or standardising, there is a reflex in us so we can think about it we can distance ourselves from it but there is a certain reflex to constantly feel that there is dilution going on and we must try to preserve cultures, preserve national or regional difference and preserve these old imagined communities.

What I want to now go on to suggest is that we might take a further step and talk about possibly more positive aspirations.

This brings me on to trying to develop some observations about what I think are the real realities of the development of global transnationalism and the area of broadcasting and the media. I draw here on some work that has been done in Newcastle for the European Broadcasting Union, a study looking at the future of broadcasting around the world, public service broadcasting particularly, where we drew on 24 different countries seeking to explore issues to do with multiculturalism, public culture, public sphere and so on. The project was actually funded by Rte, the Italian Public Service Broadcasting Corporation which was very interested itself in trying to think through how it could reinvent its remit as a public service broadcaster to take into account issues of cultural difference and of multinationalism. The agenda within this study was to move forward and think about broadcasting in terms not simply of this defensiveness, how can we preserve things, but are there new possibilities of opening up new directions in public service issues, are there new possibility spaces being opened up in broadcasting. What I think began to emerge in this study was that there is a certain disorderliness in the way media are developing in the world. And I am using very explicitly and deliberately this term disorderliness drawing on the kind of notion that Richard Sennett uses in various writings about the city when he talks about the uses of disorder. What I want to suggest without being too idealistic is that there are developments occurring in broadcasting on a global basis now, often as a consequence of commercial developments which are not bringing about a new order in some sort of automatic sense but are creating a new disorder which may be a productive disorder when thinking about some of the issues which we got rather stuck on in the 80s with our very exclusively national perspective about public service versus the market in relation to broadcasting. There may be some new developments occurring that allow us to go a bit beyond this rigid public service versus the market to thinking about how maybe the market itself is throwing up all sorts of changes which perhaps political debates need to take into account. The

issues that we were beginning to explore in this study were to do with issues of cultural rights versus political and democratic responsibilities but beyond the national framework. What began to be clear to us was that there is an interestingly new global media map coming into place which the big corporate actors like Time Warner and Sony are part of it but it's a great deal more complex. We find a whole set of issues which came out in the first study we did. Firstly, that there are whole new global broadcasting regions that are coming into developments like Star Television in Asia or an organisation called Central European Media Enterprises in Central Europe. These developments are bringing together populations of adjacent countries into a new cultural space. One of the contributors to our report talked about the coming in to being of what he characterised as an East Asian imagined community now that was transcending the old national communities. Then we have a whole set of developments linked to channels that are targeting particular ethnic, national or religious communities around the world, diasporic television if you like. You have organisations like MBC reaching the Arab world, Med TV which is broadcasting to Kurdish communities across Europe, ?? Television which is reaching Indian communities in Europe, North America South Africa, West Asia and so on. This is an important development. And then a whole set of new voices. In Macedonia, for example, you have some of the first Gypsy channels developing, you have a channel or part of the national channel broadcasting Vlack television (again a small ethnic group in Macedonia). There are whole new developments, new voices, new representations in South Africa. There are developments like the BBC's Asian programming unit. There are community channels being developed on a transnational basis by small independent radical organisations like Deep Dish Network in the US. So you have a whole new set of voices that are finding expression through television, a new diversity, what three writers Sinclair, Jacker and Cunningham describe in a book called 'New patterns in global television'. Global, regional, national and even local circuits of programme now overlap and interact in a multifaceted way, no doubt with a great variety of cultural effects which are impossible to conceptualise within the more concentric perspective appropriate to the previous decades. So, the old map in a sense is becoming more problematical.

Let me illustrate what this means with reference to one particular example which is the example that we will be looking at in our project within the Transnational Communities Programme. This is a development linked to the development television to Turkish Communities across Europe, an example of this phenomenon of diasporic television. It is now possible for populations in cities like Berlin, Paris, Vienna or Amsterdam to watch Turkish channels. There has been a whole proliferation of new channels within Turkey which are now reaching out, so channels like the state television service TRT are broadcasting specifically to the communities outside of the country. You've got new commercial developments, and again this is commercial television doing this, organisations like show television, interstar, ATV broadcasting to populations in Germany, France and Scandanavia. And you have new religious channels, ?????????? channel 7, broadcasting to these communities. And as well as this of course there is the whole proliferation of other media, of radio, newspapers, magazines and so on. So you have a whole new set of developments created by this whole new set of organisations broadcasting to their diasporic populations. Of course it is very commercially driven, these organisations are able to add these populations on to their existing market base.

I think that this is leading to a disorder, a productive disorder in the European Media and cultural space. Firstly, I think it is leading to a new transnational Turkish space, which I think is quite an interesting development, where communities in different parts of Europe are now connecting back to their homeland and potentially also connecting horizontally amongst each other. And also of course Europe isn't the only space, there is a whole Turkish expansion in central Asia, where Turkish broadcasters are exploring possibilities of reaching Turkish populations from the old Soviet Union. What we have then is a calling into question of the agendas within the nation states of Europe. Previously, taking the example of Germany where the biggest Turkish population exists, it was the remit of the national broadcasters to provide programming to the minority Turkish audience. There was a whole set of issues to do with resources, finances as to how you did that. Now suddenly this becomes completely redundant because people don't want minority German provided services when they can switch on their television and watch the news coming from Ankara or Istanbul. The Turks are now in a sense picking up the real Turkish television and not these minority services that are being provided for them. This is being done on the basis of good economics by the companies that are doing it. You suddenly have a shift from a dilemma where the national broadcasters are struggling for the resources to do this to one where the Turkish broadcasters can add this new audience to their existing one creating new advertising markets as well. What they are effectively doing is simply targeting their ethnic and linguistic market wherever they can find it across the globe. Along with this you have some quite interesting transformations of ethnic identity as well. You have I think a new mobility where Turks in Europe are mentally as well as physically switching their perspective between two places. The fact that they can actually travel quite quickly to and fro adds to this. You have a shift in the way in which these populations relate to a sense of time as well. Ten years ago migrant communities used to remember the Turkey that they came from, if they had been living in Germany for 10 years they had this frozen image of the Turkey they had left behind and of all the conflicts that were going on there. Suddenly they are in a new situation where they are synchronised with day to day politics back in Turkey and are thinking about these issues and the issues going on in Turkey become very salient in terms of demarkation within the diasporic community.

So, I think there is something positive going on then and I would see it in terms of a kind of confounding of the old order, of the old nationally structured order in Europe, with new flows occurring across cultural boundaries, new cultural spaces being mapped on top of the old national structures without them ever disappearing but new cultural spaces, new kinds of juxtaposition occurring within Europe. I think this can be productive if it makes us think about these questions, cultural rights and of democratic agendas in a new European, larger perhaps, cultural space and political space. But of course, at the same time there are certain kinds of problem with this, one shouldn't discard the problems. There is a danger of cultural ghettoisation. One Turkish commentator in German talks about the problem that in the context of German society he says, especially in the face of racist denegration, Turks have closed in on themselves. Germany has become not a multicultural society now but a bicultural one - the German majority and the Turkish minority. So, there is a problem if it develops in such a way that Turks now only watch Turkish media or if secular Turks only watch secular Turkish media or if religious Turks only watch religious media. And it's a problem if Germans don't watch Turkish media. It is a

danger if people become channelled into these narrow ghettos. We create a series of parallel and mutually exclusive media communities.

The danger then is that Turkish nationalism might be reinforced but now in ways that don't simply coincide with the national space of Turkish territory. The danger is that you have bits of off-shore Turkey if you like, that link back to the mainland and don't mix in to the bits of territory around them. So I think the point is that cultural diversity and juxtaposition are not enough the problem is that what I call the uses of disorder really entails the importance, the need for cultural encounter, for cultural confrontation and negotiation, for cultural transformation and I don't think this can happen unless, as in this case, both Turks and Germans are prepared to engage in each others cultures. Of course, the point of our research is to actually explore exactly what is going on because one can easily jump to the assumption that Turks only watch their own programmes, we need to understand much more about what is going on.

Now I come to the concluding point of what I want to say. I've tried to talk about some of the possibilities and I have tried to emphasise that there are productive possibilities. There is a disorder that we can try to work with and make productive if we have the imagination but we can't assume that things will turn out for the best. I want just finally to raise a few points about why we can't just assume this and why we have to think about the forces and factors that might inhibit change. I will do this in relation to two final points, I want to come back to this question of community and to this notion of imagined community I started out with, the continuing appeal and force of the idea of the imagined community, and then secondly I want to say something about communication again and this idea that media exists in order to communicate and that communication will bring about a better world.

Firstly..... an imagined community implicates us in a particular way of relating to cultural identity, a particular of thinking and inhabiting cultural identity, it involves us in this belonging to the group illusion. The imagined community or the group illusion has existed in terms of a certain set of factors. Firstly the imagined community presents itself as a singular coherent and unitary culture. This is what the imagined community of the nation has been. It emphasises the elements that people within the community hold in common at the expense of their diversity, their difference. It argues that these factors that are held in common are the primary elements in the cultural life of that particular group. The imagined community works towards maintaining the stability of that culture, the continuity of that culture over time. It works towards sustaining and reinforcing the significance of these shared elements and it emphasises the demarcation of that culture from other cultures which also have the right to exist in this way. So its demarking our particular community from the other community and asserting the right from our sovereignty vis-a-vis those communities.

So that's how the imagined community of the nation has worked, the imagined community is a particular kind of community, a particular kind of way about thinking of identity, belonging, attachment. Now what I want to claim is that this kind of thinking, which I think is a rather closed and problematical way of thinking about identity in a context of where we think that questions of culture are changing but this kind of belonging is being sustained and preserved beyond the context of the national community. What I am saying is that we seem to find it difficult to think about

identity in ways other than those underwritten by this paradigm of the imagined community. So for example, the seemingly new development of European regionalism is simply this form of imagined community at a more fragmented level. It may well be that there is less space for encompassing ethnic and cultural and religious difference as we begin to scale communities down much more. It is present in the way that for the most part the official European Institutions think about the European community, the European community is effectively a scaled up nation state trying to establish its boundaries and its whole discourse is to do with European Union, community, cohesion, the integration and so on. There is a kind of way in which I think it has become imprisoned in this whole discourse and we can talk about this in terms of the way in which people at a global scale are trying to think about the new communities linked to the internet. The idea of communities of affinity, communities of interest, virtual communities. Again they are thought of in the same way, you often see people talking about the internet in terms of the creation of new kinds of imagined community. Communities which are bounded by or sort of defined by their interest in a particular topic. It is again a community of shared values. The one I touched on earlier, Steven Ross's, Al Gore's idea of the imagined global society is really this scaled up version of a nation state with its notion of a global conversation.

So, all of these images, these models of what a community might be aspire to create some kind of unified collective with shared values, shared objectives. And what I am arguing is that this way of thinking about identity is deeply problematical in times that are throwing up much more complex forms of cultural experience, times that require much more open and inventive ways of responding. My question really is how are we to move beyond this idea of community and its illusion of self containment and self sufficiency within the community and I would suggest that some of the factors that are crucial is that we have to begin to recognise that particular cultures suppose the existence of other cultures in order to exist. Cultures can only exist if they incorporate and transform foreign elements, they are never self contained. They have to incorporate and process foreign elements, alien elements if you like and therefore, of course, the reality is that cultural development must be seen as being discontinuous, a series of transformations as opposed to this stability and sustaining identity over time that has been essential to our thinking about national community.

Secondly, I would suggest that we need to shift away from thinking about identity which is this kind of tortoise shell we carry around with us as if we are born with it, and which we curl up into sometimes when we are feeling insecure. We have to move away from identity perhaps to beginning to develop a language around identification. Something we do. Identity is not something we have to have or require, to some extent it is of course but it is also something we can do. We can identify, identification is an active thing. We can withdraw identifications, we can place them in new context in relation to our lives. There is a very nice quotation that I have been carrying around with me for some time, by a French psychoanalyst who is talking about individual development but I think it can be extrapolated to collective identity. He says:

..One could go on forever about the happy consequences of multiple identifications.

I think that is a very important point because when we have multiple identifications then, of course, we have mobility of identification we can shift, we can migrate across positions.

And thirdly, I think that rather than thinking about cultural identity why don't we shift the language to think about cultural experience as well. I think experience is a very important thing because experience is a term rooted in relationship, identity is something we can appear to be self-contained in respect to. Experience is something that requires us to come into some form of encounter and with the hope or expectation that this encounter will transform us and, of course, I think recognising that that is part of cultural progression and development, we can recognise that there is a certain exciting aspect to that and also there are aspects of fear and anxiety wrapped up in it. I think that that is the important part that cultural experience and cultural anxiety must be seen as always being present in coexistence. So I am raising a subset of issues then which is saying that we can't go forward in terms of thinking about identities if we remain imprisoned in this way of thinking. We have to begin to pose the question about whether the challenge to identity, which I think is important in the right circumstances and conditions because the challenge to identity can in many contexts appear to me very dangerous, can be as satisfying as the confirmation of identity has always seemed to be.

My final point is to come back to this question of communication and media in this context, in relation to the points I have been making about trying to push our thinking about identity along. I want to just raise a couple of final points about broadcasting with reference to the transnational agenda. Now I've talked about broadcasting as an institution which has developed very much in Europe within the context of the national community. The imaginary institution of broadcasting and the imaginary institution of the nation state were very closely related. I want to just raise some issues about the future of broadcasting because I think we can't simply assume that broadcasting can easily be changed to take into account this new transnational agenda. Or, at least if we do think it's going to be changed we have to think very deeply about what needs to be changed in it.

Now as I said, television in Europe, television in Britain has been used to mediate the life of the national community and this has been absolutely central to it to give visibility to the nation and thereby to give substance to what is held in common or what is imagined to be held in common. So, television has tended through the history of public service to nurture the familiar. We look at television very often because we want to be confirmed, we want to recognise the familiar, familiar sights, familiar faces, familiar voices, familiar events. Television has sustained the national culture over time, over the calendar of the year with all the events, from Christmas through to the Derby and the FA Cup Final, so all of the national events and then it sustains the memory of the community over time. What I'm arguing is that one of the dilemmas we confront is that television as an institution, and I'm not talking about a medium, but I'm talking about an institution, a set of practices, television has developed as an institution which confirms and affirms the life of the nation. As one observer wrote, television is in a sense the private life of the nation state. Television then has not been mobilised significantly to communicate beyond the imagined community of the nation. There is something perhaps rather autistic about television as an institution. It has supported cultural integrity and it has resisted cultural mixture, cultural

promiscuity. It has not been a travelling medium as we might say about other cultural forms. So the question that I end with having tried to talk about the possibilities in broadcasting is how we might begin to reinstitute broadcasting as a medium, and this applies to other media as well, in a way that would allow them to come to terms with the disunity within the spaces that they operate across with the imperative to promote interaction to try to promote cultural encounter, cultural experience. Is this at all possible. Of course, I'm not going to suggest any kind of blueprint for this. I don't have any real notion. I'm opening this up as part of a debate about how we might think about broadcasting in terms of new possibility spaces. I would take as my final point, a sort of anecdotal example which actually come from something that Steve wrote about Berlin's Radio Multikulti which is a radio station which has been set up, although I don't think at this stage with massive success. It is set up on the basis of developing a multilingual schedule, and I think this language issues is one that is very important, on a time banded basis so that there are different language segments at different parts of the day. The aim being, as Steve describes it in his article, to try and change the oral space of Berlin and therefore, to help citizens of the city to be able to think about the city in some other way and particularly how the city links in to the wider global community from whence its population has come.

I think this kind of development is a very important one, it's a very small and modest one but my point is not particularly to advocate or speak on behalf of Radio Multikulti but to simply make the point that perhaps one of the most important points about this radio station is that it is city based and not a national station. I think that in relation to the national space one can easily get pulled into the illusion of some kind of unity and homogeneity. I think that when it comes to the city I think it is much more difficult to do that because the city is clearly the place of meeting, the place where different cultural groups come into encounter, the place of disorder, the place where disorder has to be made productive. It's the place of cultural experience. What I might suggest is that perhaps one thing we think about as we begin to think about how cultures and identities relate to spaces and places is that we might take seriously this notion that perhaps the urban space might be something worth exploring more fully rather than focusing our attentions excessively as we have tended to do on the space that I started out with, which is the national space.