

# Migration Reporting in Germany: Perspectives from Russian and Turkish Exile and Diaspora Media

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## Migration Reporting in Germany: Perspectives from Russian and Turkish Exile and Diaspora Media (WP6)

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## 1. Control Sheet

Version History			
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## 2. List of Participants

Participant No.	Participant Organisation Name	Country
1 (Coordinator)	University of Goettingen (UGOE)	Germany
2	Bocconi University (UB)	Italy
3	University of St. Andrews (USTAN)	Great Britain
4	Institute for Population and Human Studies (IPHS)	Bulgaria
5	Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar (IPI)	Croatia
6	Max Planck Society (MPG)/Population Europe	Germany
7	Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)	IGO, Sweden
8	THE CIVICS Innovation Hub (CIVICS)	Germany



### 3. Objectives

The European Union's promise of prosperity and security is based on the principle of "unity in diversity" and the guarantee of fundamental freedoms, rights and democratic participation of its citizens. The vast majority of EU citizens share these values. At the same time, democracies are in crisis. Populist parties are fuelling fears and spreading the narrative that migration leads to a loss of identity. There is no doubt that migration always raises the question of identity and belonging. How do we organize integration and participation in such a way that cohesion is created despite diverse identities? The project "Identities - Migration - Democracy" (We-ID) is therefore concerned with the transformation of individual and collective identities, social and territorial cohesion and democracy under the conditions of demographic change, particularly with regard to migration and growing population diversity. We-ID follows an innovative research path by a) analysing the impact of migration on identities, belonging, cohesion and democracy, taking into account both the impact on host communities and the changes in the identities of migrants and their descendants, and b) elaborating the interrelationship between identities, cohesion, resilience and democracy. In addition to quantitative data analysis, we will use qualitative methods at the local level (e.g. pilot study in a border region, content analysis, case studies) to look for factors that strengthen resilient democratic communities. By consistently pursuing a transdisciplinary approach within our Policy, Advocacy and Research Lab (We-PARL) throughout the project, we will create a platform for mutual learning between different stakeholders from the European to the local level, while at the same time contributing to evidence-based and thoroughly discussed policy recommendations. In addition, based on our findings, we will develop materials such as toolboxes that can be used by practitioners and local actors (We-SCOUTS).

In detail, We-ID pursues the following objectives:

- Objective 1:** Revise and evaluate the relevant conceptual issues concerning identities, belonging and cohesion, and establish their relationship with resilience and democracy, with a particular emphasis on migration.
- Objective 2:** Map trends and patterns of identities, belonging and cohesion together with their drivers, including geographic differences, gender, age and education, as well as immigrant status and employment.
- Objective 3:** Investigate how the social identities and political participation of immigrants and their descendants differ across European countries, what factors influence identity and participation of immigrants, and what assumptions can be made for the future.
- Objective 4:** Extending objectives 2 and 3 through a regional pilot study in a Bulgarian border region. To analyse, how migration flows affect both the migrant communities themselves and their identities, and the communities exposed to new and large-scale immigration.
- Objective 5:** Development of an inclusive concept for resilient democratic communities (ReDeCos), through the identification (five case studies) of local factors that hinder or strengthen belonging.



- Objective 6:** In addition, development of a Civic Competences Toolbox (CCT) for local actors (We-SCOUTS) equipped with civic skills and competences to support local communities, moderate conflicts and controversies and create spaces for participation.
- Objective 7:** Establish the We-PARL - Policy, Advocacy and Research Lab - transdisciplinary platform, the tool which supports all thematic research areas foreseen in the project.
- Objective 8:** To disseminate We-ID findings, drawing on the outcomes and findings from the We-PARL, communicating them to a broader audience.
- Objective 9:** The project will identify factors at both national and local level that hinder social and political participation and at the same time develop policy recommendations on how to achieve equality and mitigate discrimination against women, LGBTIQ+ and ethnic minorities.

## 4. Introduction

Against the backdrop of the ongoing media focus on migration, it is important for a comprehensive analysis to take a closer look at ethnic media from an academic perspective. Digital and transnational media offerings in particular have changed the way migrant communities receive and process information. Ethnic media, including diaspora and exile media, refer to media offerings produced by migrants for a migrant audience in their respective languages of origin. These media fulfill several key functions in the integration process. First, they open up spaces for communication in which social, political, and cultural issues can be discussed from a migrant perspective. In this way, they facilitate orientation in the social and institutional fabric of the host country (Weber-Menges, 2005, 242; Tsapanos 1995, 328f.).

On the other hand, ethnic media contribute to strengthening a collective sense of belonging within the diaspora. By cultivating shared cultural references, values, and linguistic practices, they serve as a resource for identity formation. They also function as an important symbolic bridge to the country of origin by providing access to current information, cultural content, and debates. In this way, they enable a form of transnational connectedness that can be a central component of identity construction for many migrants (Bozdag, 2013; Geißler & Pöttker, 2005).

Even in traditional immigration countries such as the USA, there is growing recognition that the integration of migrant groups can be a lengthy and complex process. It is precisely here that ethnic media can play an important role in providing guidance that cannot be provided in this form by the national media of the immigration country (Geißler & Pöttker, 2005).

The analysis presented here is part of the research project “We-ID - Identities - Migration - Democracy,” which is based at Georg August University in Göttingen and funded by the EU. The project establishes the connection between identity, belonging, cohesion, and democracy under conditions of ongoing migration in order to develop a concept for resilient democratic communities. While the previous content analysis shows how migration is portrayed in the German media, the focus groups allow us to explore how these portrayals are actually received in migrant communities, especially under conditions of transnational media use.

Against this backdrop, the focus groups will examine how the Turkish and Russian diasporas perceive migration reporting and what role diaspora and exile media play in their interpretation of migration and in social cohesion.

## 5. State of Research

Academic research into diaspora and exile media in Germany has gradually established itself since the early 2000s, but remains a relatively small field of research to this day. While migration, integration, and media use have been addressed in numerous studies, explicit examination of diaspora and exile media themselves—their structures, functions, and developments—has only been conducted intensively during certain periods. A look at the existing literature shows that research initially focused heavily on issues of media-mediated integration, with diaspora and exile media usually considered only as a sub-aspect of broader investigations. It was only with the emergence of digital media landscapes and the growing need to understand diasporic publics in a more differentiated way that the topic temporarily moved more into the center of academic analysis. The following presentation

brings together key works from this early and middle phase of research and at the same time highlights existing research gaps with regard to more recent developments.

Sonja Weber-Menges writes in “Die Entwicklung der Ethnomedien in Deutschland” (The Development of Ethnomedia in Germany, 2006) that the number of ethnomedia has increased significantly since 2006 compared to previous decades – this refers to both media produced in the countries of origin and available here, as well as those published specifically in Germany for diaspora groups. In addition, the media landscape of ethnic media has become more diverse, primarily due to digitalization and new media offerings, expanding the range of media not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. Weber-Menges' work thus makes a key contribution to research on ethnic media, also from a historical perspective. Rainer Geißler's research often focuses on the contribution of media to the integration of migrants. Although ethnomedia are repeatedly discussed, they are not explicitly the focus of his analysis (Geißler, 2008; Geißler & Pöttker, 2005).

Hepp, Bozdag, and Suna also address ethnomedia in their research and have published articles such as “Diaspora Media as a Focus for Networking” (Hepp et al., 2011) and “Appropriation of Diaspora Websites: A Media Ethnographic Study in the Moroccan and Turkish Diaspora” (Bozdag, 2013). The research examines diaspora media as central spaces for transnational networking and shows how diaspora communities actively use digital media to establish and maintain social relationships, identity, and belonging across national borders.

In ethnomedia research from the early 2000s to the 2010s, it can be seen overall that the focus of research concentrated primarily on the question of whether diaspora media promote integration or segregation.

Some academics attribute a form of digital isolation to migrants, which creates parallel worlds and can lead to segregation (Weiß & Trebbe, 2001). Other studies, however, show that transcultural media use primarily facilitates orientation and belonging (Hepp et al., 2011). Research has therefore not arrived at a clear answer, but rather shows that diaspora media can have both integrative and segregating effects. Which effect predominates depends on several factors, such as the type of media, the generation, individual usage patterns, and the respective user groups.

Other studies often deal very generally with media use among migrants and how this has changed over the years; examples include the study “Media Cultures of Young Turkish Migrants and German Resettlers in Germany” by Heft & Paasch-Colberg (2013) and the study by Sauer (2010) on the motives for media use among migrants of Turkish origin in Germany.

Since the 2010s, academic debates explicitly dealing with ethnomedia have been sporadic. There are only a few broad-based studies that examine the development, use, and impact of ethnomedia up to the late 2010s and beyond. Against this backdrop, focus groups were chosen as the central method for this project: they enable the perception, use, and classification of ethnomedia to be captured in a differentiated manner through discussions with experts, and also allow new aspects, such as the importance of social media, to be addressed in a targeted manner.



## 6. Method

### *Preparation of focus groups*

The study follows a qualitative approach and uses focus groups as a survey method to capture the subjective perceptions and experiences of the participants (Morgan, 1996).

Subjectivity does not represent a methodological shortcoming; rather, the aim is to gain deep qualitative insights from the participants' perspective. At the same time, existing research assumptions can be questioned and space created for new, previously unanticipated perspectives (Hoinville & Jowell, 1978). The group size of five participants was deliberately chosen to enable an intensive and in-depth exchange within the focus groups. Accordingly, this study does not claim to be representative or to constitute a sufficient sample. Rather, focus groups serve exploratory research purposes (Lewis et al., 2003).

The focus groups were conducted in the form of semi-structured interviews, which provided an initial framework for the content while also offering sufficient openness to address individual topics and narratives of the participants without predetermining the course of the discussion (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

The study follows a responsible research approach and complies with the fundamental ethical principles of scientific research. All participants were informed in advance about the aim, procedure, and purpose of the study by means of an information sheet. All participants took part in the focus group voluntarily. In addition, the anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed by anonymizing personal data (Flick, 2022). The data collected will be treated confidentially and used exclusively for the specified scientific purposes.

In addition to the content analysis that preceded this step, focus groups are intended to shed light on other areas of migration reporting in Germany. While an analysis of reporting shows how migration is portrayed in the media, individual perceptions and interpretations often remain invisible. For this reason, focus groups were used to reveal subjective views, discussion patterns, and interpretations within the diaspora and to supplement the results of the content analysis. Media use and communication play an important role in how shared views and interpretations arise within the diaspora (Georgiou, 2006).

Given the existing research gap, it made sense to conduct these interviews with five experts from the field of diaspora and exile media. They were able to provide in-depth insights into the structures, functions, and effects of these media, which have been insufficiently documented in current research to date. The deliberately small group size encourages more intensive interaction and in-depth exchange among the participants (Kitzinger, 1995).

A total of two focus groups were conducted, one focusing on Turkey and one on Russia. Recruitment took place in advance via various channels; in most cases, participants were selected specifically based on their professional background and diaspora background.

The Russian focus group consisted mainly of people with a background in journalism, with the exception of one person from the field of Russian cultural studies who had not previously worked as a journalist. Among the participants was also a person who had already written investigative reports on Russian politicians and who now works in Germany as both a journalist and a researcher. All



participants have a Russian diaspora background and/or have been living in Germany, in some cases for only a few years.

The same applies to the Turkish focus group. This group is also predominantly made up of journalists and/or writers, three of whom have worked for Turkish diaspora media or continue to do so. Three participants also work in public broadcasting. One person previously worked as a journalist but is now involved in research on migration and integration. Four out of five participants have a diaspora background; all were born and raised in Germany.

### *Conducting the focus groups*

The Russian focus group meeting lasted just over an hour, while the Turkish focus group meeting lasted approximately 1.5 hours. The same guidelines were used for both rounds; there was a lively discussion among the participants in the Turkish group. The Russian focus group was conducted in English, while the Turkish focus group was conducted in German.

The focus groups were conducted online via Zoom, which ensured greater diversity among participants and meant that the group was not limited to individual states, for example due to travel costs. The sessions were recorded via Zoom and then transcribed verbatim. All names in the transcript were subsequently anonymized.

### *Guidelines for focus group discussions*

The guidelines followed the established principles of qualitative focus group research (see, for example, Morgan 1997; Krueger & Casey 2015), beginning with more general, everyday introductory questions and gradually moving from broader topics to specific aspects. The guide served as a flexible orientation structure rather than a rigid question scheme in order to allow for open discussion.

For both focus groups, the guidelines were structured in such a way that participants first discussed their general media consumption and then moved on to reflect on migration reporting in German as well as Turkish or Russian exile and diaspora media. However, the focus was on group discussion and exchange among participants, independent of the moderators. To facilitate the start of the discussion, each group began with a short round of introductions, although some participants already knew each other from work contexts. To stimulate discussion, a few introductory questions were asked about media consumption – both of diaspora and exile media as well as German media – and about preferred topics. This provided an initial overview of the range of media use and thematic interests within the diaspora. In addition, participants were asked how migration is portrayed in Turkish and Russian exile and diaspora media and what narratives or dominant perspectives are discernible.

In another section of the guide, the focus groups were presented with headlines from German media outlets such as the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the *FAZ*, *Die Welt*, the *taz*, and the *Junge Freiheit*. The headlines were selected as examples to illustrate the narratives that were also identified in the content analysis. Participants were asked to describe the feelings that arose when reading these headlines, which perspectives dominated, and which they felt were missing. The aim of this comparison was to examine how migration reporting is perceived and evaluated by members of the diaspora. In the subsequent reflection phase, participants were asked to assess how German media reporting differs from exile and diaspora media and from the national media in their countries of origin. Finally, there was a joint discussion on how responsible and balanced reporting on migration should be structured from their point of view. This section thus enables a connection between individual media experiences and broader questions of democracy, participation, and social cohesion.



## 7. Results

### 7.1 Focus Group Russia

#### 7.1.1. *Media Landscape and Media Consumption*

The results of the focus group analyses are presented below in order to shed light on the perception and use of diaspora and exile media within the two communities studied. The analysis aims to show how different media offerings are received, what functions they fulfill, and what role they play in terms of identity, cohesion, and access to information—all with a particular focus on reporting on migration in Germany.

The participants first emphasize the important distinction between exile media and diaspora media within Russian-speaking communities. Russian exile media emerged predominantly after 2022 and consist of formerly independent editorial offices that now report from abroad for an audience within Russia. Diaspora media, on the other hand—such as Russian-German newspapers or older post-Soviet media structures—have existed for decades and serve other target groups with their own, strongly post-Soviet perspective. The participants emphasize that many of those present do not operate in this traditional diasporic media landscape.

There are various exile media outlets in Germany and internationally that are used by both Russians living in the diaspora and people within Russia, despite increased censorship and state information restrictions. Examples include Meduza, Verstka, and Holod. Social media such as YouTube also play a major role. Telegram is also frequently used as a primary news channel to get quick updates. Exile media primarily serve to stay informed about Russia.

In addition, bloggers and so-called newsfluencers are increasingly taking on the role of conveying information related to exile. Roman Super, Andrei Loshak, and Ilya Krasilshchik were mentioned as examples. They mainly report on the everyday problems of Russian migrants in Germany, such as the difficulties children have in making friends in German schools, or other challenges of everyday life. This blurs the line between traditional media and these online actors, with the latter increasingly taking on a role similar to that of traditional media.

The participants' consumption of German media is mainly limited to quality media such as the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Der Spiegel*, or *Tagesschau*. Here, too, frequent use of social media is evident. Journalists with a migration background outside Russia, such as Dunya Hayali or Düzen Tekkal, are also of particular interest to the research group, as they bring their own diaspora perspective to reporting on their personal channels.

#### 7.1.2. *Migration Reporting and other Narratives in Exile Media*

The group first emphasizes that it is important to understand that Russian exile media primarily work for an audience within Russia and therefore focus heavily on Russian issues. Their main goal is to continue reaching people in Russia despite increasing state censorship and information isolation. Compared to media within the country, exile media are characterized above all by the absence of state censorship and greater thematic openness.

Participants report that journalists in exile face the challenge of living physically in Germany but working mentally and professionally in the Russian information space. Topics such as migration, for example to Germany, are hardly addressed – on the one hand because they are of limited relevance



to Russian readers, and on the other because the focus tends to be on problems relating to visa issuance, labor market situations, and bureaucratic hurdles.

At the same time, the focus group points out that although migration within Russia is an important social issue, particularly with regard to labor migration from Central Asia and the associated discrimination, this topic is rarely covered in the Russian media.

A concrete example of this was the “cityscape” statement by German Chancellor Friedrich Merz (tagesschau, 2025). The statement was not discussed in Russian exile media, as members of the Russian diaspora did not feel addressed by Merz's statement; one participant commented: *“I think this Merz comment is mostly part of this racist narrative, which [...] doesn't really reflect Russian society.”* The diaspora media often reports on “far-right movements” because their policies can potentially have a direct impact on the Russian diaspora, for example through entry restrictions to Germany or the risk that citizens with German passports could be excluded. The focus of the exile media, on the other hand, is primarily on political and economic issues. According to the participants, the latter relate in particular to the effects of European sanctions on Russia. As an example, one participant cites the reporting on frozen assets of non-sanctioned Russian private individuals in the EU. This topic was briefly present in the exile media in 2022, but then disappeared almost completely – as it did in the German and European media. At the same time, the participant observes that Russian business media within Russia report on this topic extensively and continuously. This illustrates how media outlets prioritize topics differently depending on their location, censorship conditions, and audience interests.

Another member of the focus group also highlights the pronounced tensions within the Russian exile community. According to them, after 2022, exile media will be strongly influenced by debates about victim status, Russia's responsibility, different anti-war positions, and conflicts between various groups, such as political refugees, professional migrants, and different generations of post-Soviet migrants. The tense relations between the Ukrainian and Russian diasporas are also said to have an impact on the media landscape. According to the participants, some newer exile media outlets also focus on niche topics, such as postcolonial debates in Russia or the situation of Central Asian migrants, which traditionally receive little attention in Russian media.

### 7.1.3 Migration Reporting and other Narratives in Russian Propaganda Media

The discussion reveals that Russian state media uses the topic of migration for propaganda purposes by deliberately presenting the situation of Russian exiles in Germany (and other countries) in a highly distorted manner. Accordingly, they often portray the lives of Russian migrants in Europe as difficult and problematic. One participant reports: *“They, of course, weaponize and instrumentalize the topic of migration, talking about Syrians in Germany, etc., as if Russians here who consume Russian media would really see a lot of problematic issues about Europe, that Europe is, you know, on the edge of distinction because of migration, whatever.”*

In some cases, content from social media is used in a manipulative way for propaganda purposes. One example of this is an Instagram video by a Russian blogger in Germany, which was falsified and repurposed by Russian or Belarusian propaganda channels to spread a negatively distorted image of the lives of Russian migrants in Europe. In this context, Russian state media such as Sputnik and Russia Today are particularly often mentioned. According to the participants, the series of attacks at the end of 2024/early 2025 (see, for example, BR24, 2025) were also exploited for their own purposes by framing Germany and, by extension, Europe as dangerous. Furthermore, the issue of migration within Russia (for example, from Tajikistan) is a major topic for the country, but is underrepresented in the



media. One participant commented: *“I have never encountered the idea, for example, that there should be diversity in the Russian media, that people from Tajikistan, for example, should also work in the Russian media and thus write about their issues.”* Another participant added: *“Inside Russia, [...] we have a lot of migrants, but from other countries, and there is no great dialogue about it. And so I am used to this situation, that migration is something that is not broadly discussed.”* The lack of diversity in reporting also means that discrimination and government measures against migrants—and Tajiks in particular—are not covered in the media.

### 7.1.4. Perception of Migration Reporting in German Media

In the discussion about migration reporting in the German media, there was clear criticism that migration is often not portrayed as a normal part of social reality, but rather as a phenomenon. *“Germany is such a multicultural society, but now and still, migration is covered as a kind of phenomenon,”* said one participant. As a result, migrants are often portrayed as “cases” rather than as full-fledged actors in society. One participant also noted that, in their opinion, the reporting is primarily aimed at a German audience: *“[...] from the German with the German target group, not for the international target group.”* This is particularly evident in the fact that the individual life stories of migrants are hardly visible. If anything, it is mostly “success stories” that are presented, in which migrants only receive positive attention if they are considered to be particularly well integrated or high achievers. One participant agreed: *“I also have a problem with these positive narratives and success stories. I think it sometimes comes from a slightly racist perspective, that we value immigrants when they are doctors, when they are saving someone and not telling complex stories.”* The dominant German narratives on migration are clearly linked to visible differences and racialization, so that Russian migrants, for example, hardly ever report experiences of discrimination based on their appearance, but rather on bureaucracy, language, or other problems.

In the discussion with the focus group about different narratives in reporting, one participant repeatedly mentioned that different forms of government also influence the behavior and writing of journalistic work and articles. The participant noticed this particularly in an article they had read in the German press. The article dealt with a dispute between residents of a neighborhood and young people who gather there to party. The participant recounts: *“And it was a long struggle. [...] One sentence really impressed me. It was a very simple sentence, [...] they wrote that perhaps, perhaps we can all solve this problem through democratic discussion, democratic dialogue, and that impressed me so much because I had never read such sentences in the Russian media. Because in the Russian media, there is no hope for dialogue. And I have the impression that, for example, we have been very divided in recent years. The politicians were in their sphere, and they are very powerful, and the journalists are in their own space, and they have no hope, and we have no hope. For the possibility of a dialogue with the authorities or with people from other social bubbles. [...] I believe we have no dialogue in Russian society, and this sentence that comes up, perhaps we can discuss it. Perhaps we can do something, with our democratic means.”* Different political systems can thus also shape the ideas of dialogue and democratic negotiation conveyed in media coverage.

## 7.2. Focus Group Turkey

### 7.2.1. Media Landscape and Media Consumption

The Turkish diaspora in Germany is characterized by different waves of migration, which continue to influence their communities and perspectives to this day. Against this backdrop, the focus group



examines how Turkish migrants consume media and what role ethnic media offerings play in meeting their information and orientation needs.

The participants first point out structural differences between the Turkish and German media landscapes. While German media are more strongly influenced by institutionalized journalistic standards—such as the clear separation of news and commentary—the Turkish media system is dominated by opinion-based, column-oriented reporting. Under conditions of restricted press freedom, research-intensive, fact-based formats are increasingly being pushed back, while individual columnists are increasingly able to act as political mouthpieces. According to the participants, these figures, known as *doyens*, have a considerable influence on public opinion and often act as an extension of the Turkish government. The participants emphasize that this form of reporting leaves little room for critical, constructive, or solution-oriented reporting. At the same time, participants also point to positive examples of opposition media, such as *Bianet*, which, however, often come under financial and political pressure and primarily reach a young target audience. The situation is similar for YouTube formats, investigative collectives, and confrontational talk shows. Media consumption by the diaspora/exile media is also very fragmented:

While older generations (the first guest workers of the 1960s/70s) were not yet able to consume any real diaspora media, these age groups were more frequently influenced by pro-government and/or opposition media. The situation was different for the following generation, in which the first exile media (*taz Gazete*, offerings from *Can Dündar*, and later YouTube formats) were able to establish themselves as sources of information. Participants observe non-propagandistic reporting on Turkey and, at the same time, guidance for life in Germany. Many migrants *"were naturally looking for some kind of support [...] and Can Dündar was, of course, someone with whom some could identify. And for them, it was important to know. I've arrived here now, and what do I have to do next, and above all, how can I consume news from Turkey or in Turkey without being brainwashed myself, according to the motto: objective, factual, well-researched journalistic news."*

At the same time, the focus group points out that these media offerings are predominantly consumed by Turkish diaspora living in Germany, but hardly by people living in Turkey. In general, the Turkish target groups of diaspora and exile media are very heterogeneous, so that they cannot be reached via a uniform media denominator. As one participant explained: *"It's not just German and Turkish and diaspora media, but, as [...] said, it's actually different generations, the newcomers, those who have simply been living in Germany for 60 years, and there are also lines of conflict that arise from this, and differences, I think. And then you have to somehow consider class and all the different factors that come into play."*

Another participant also reports on their experiences in their own family: *"When I'm with my grandparents, A-Haber is on all the time, for example. When we're with the younger ones, it's almost exclusively social media, and then it also depends on the political background and openness [...] to look at other media or to get a general overview of the media."*

Some participants' media consumption also extends to Turkish pro-government media such as *A-Haber* or *Anadolu Ajansı*, but these are used only for the purpose of analyzing frames and political agendas rather than as sources of information. Other participants, however, deliberately avoid pro-government media. Some participants turn to Kurdish or Alevi (exile/diaspora) media, which address specific aspects and topics that are rarely covered in the mainstream German media and, above all, cover marginalized perspectives. What is striking about all participants is the central role of social media,



especially individual journalists or news influencers. Nevşin Mengü, Can Dünder, and Erk Acarer were mentioned in this context. According to the participants, these individual actors set topics, interpret them, and curate content for their own network, which in turn picks up on the topics and researches them further.

Within the focus group, consumption of German media is concentrated primarily on leading media outlets such as Tagesschau, Deutschlandfunk, Spiegel, Zeit, FAZ, Süddeutsche Zeitung, taz, and Tagesspiegel. Pure news is predominantly consumed via apps and social media such as Twitter/X, Instagram, Bluesky, and Facebook. Some participants use Bild newspaper to understand and observe agenda setting and populist perspectives, while others deliberately avoid it altogether.

### 7.2.2. Migration Reporting and other Narratives in the Diaspora Media

One participant describes how their parents socialized with “guest worker radio,” which at the time focused primarily on providing guidance for the so-called first generation: *“How can you send your children to high school? Even though the teacher wants you to go to secondary school, that was more or less the topic. Pensions were also a very intense topic afterwards, even for years to come.”* The media landscape has changed over time with the different generations. According to participants, projects such as taz Gazete offered many migrants trust and orientation and served as a central media contact point in Germany. One participant reported that today's narratives focus primarily on socially polarizing issues; recently, for example, the Gaza war has been the focus of attention. Some diaspora media outlets deliberately use such topics to strengthen their credibility and expand their reach.

One participant explains that migrant groups often feel unrepresented or unfairly portrayed in German media, which gives diaspora media a relative advantage. In this context, some media outlets or individual actors present themselves as “martyrs” and, at the same time, as the only trustworthy sources of information. *“There are some media outlets that are now developing a cross-community voice in order to further polarize society,”* adds another member of the focus group.

### 7.2.3. Migration reporting and other narratives in Turkish (pro-government) media

In the context of Turkish media, migration reporting is particularly focused on Syrian refugees, which is closely linked to the Turkish government's political agenda. Participants have observed a shift in reporting in recent years, from initially positive to more negative. The period between 2011 and 2015 is described as a time of predominantly positive portrayal, in which Syrian refugees were welcomed as potential future citizens whose integration was politically desirable. From 2016 onwards, and increasingly in the run-up to the 2023 elections – and thus in line with the shift in Turkey's political agenda – this portrayal changed radically. One participant reports that *“when many Syrians arrived around 2015, my impression was that people spoke very positively about Syrian refugees. People opening their shops. There are now Arabic characters in Istanbul, etc., but that changed very quickly.”* Meanwhile, hostile narratives dominate, portraying Syrians and other groups, such as Afghans or Pakistanis, as an economic burden, cultural threat, or security risk. This is accompanied by an increasingly harsh social climate.

### 7.2.4. Perception of migration reporting in the German media

All participants perceive migration coverage in the German media as rather undifferentiated, starting with the equation of flight and migration. In addition, the participants observe that the leading German media outlets focus heavily on government and security logic, which often leads to the adoption and reinforcement of unreflective narratives from the political right. Journalistic reporting reproduces



continuities that date back to the 1980s: for example, the recurring juxtaposition of “integrable” and “non-integrable” groups, as well as the seemingly only two options for solutions, “integration or deportation,” which largely ignore migrant perspectives.

Instead of following institutional developments—such as the concept of remigration as unconstitutional—or reflecting diverse migrant perspectives, German media often only react to provocative statements, such as Chancellor Friedrich Merz's “cityscape” remark. Some of the participants report that media coverage of migration hardly elicits any emotional reactions due to the recurring narratives: “[it] doesn't trigger anything in me anymore when I read it.” Others, however, report anger and frustration, especially against the backdrop of historical continuities. This participant is one of them: “To be honest, we're tired of it by now. I think we can sing a song about always being the positive examples of successful integration. Sorry, I've been living in Germany for over 56 years now. I'm no longer an example of integration. I've actually arrived here in this society.”

Participants perceive this structure and style of reporting as an expression of a dominant white, German majority position, which is also reflected in the editorial staffing structures. The main reason for this is that journalists with a migration background face greater obstacles.

## 8. Discussion

A comparison of the results of the two focus groups initially reveals a difference in the diasporic media landscape. In the Russian diaspora media landscape, the exile media is particularly prominent. Diaspora media were used only to a limited extent by our focus group and therefore played hardly any role in the discussions. Due to their oppositional stance, Russian exile media are often consumed by readers living in Russia, while Turkish diaspora media are mainly aimed at readers living in Germany or their countries of immigration. The media landscape of the Turkish diaspora in particular is very fragmented. This is mainly due to the several generations that have been using ethnic media in Germany since the 1960s. Over the generations, different needs have emerged that must be served by ethnic media. While earlier generations were mainly concerned with linguistic integration and political participation, diaspora media today tend to form a bridge to their own identity formation and represent their own group, which is often neglected in the German mass media. This development was also examined and highlighted in research at the beginning of the 2000s. Further studies should build on this, not least to continue investigating the research question of whether diaspora media lead to greater integration or segregation. It also reveals the specific needs of younger generations in the diaspora and the extent to which they feel represented in the media. Younger target groups in particular are strongly oriented toward social media, and it is precisely this gap that diaspora media are increasingly filling. At the same time, however, this can pose risks to social cohesion—especially when these media pick up on polarizing content and use identity-charged conflicts, such as the Gaza War, to increase their reach. In such cases, reporting can also contribute to an increase in anti-Semitic attitudes. The German mass media also play a central role here: many migrants continue to feel underrepresented or misrepresented in the media. Diaspora media attempt to compensate for these representation deficits and offer alternative spaces – with both integrative and potentially segregating effects.

Both groups perceive migration reporting in the German mass media as a consistent pattern, always primarily focused on the German perspective – more diverse perspectives, especially those of migrants, are consistently overlooked. Both groups desire an adjustment in the media and a more



diverse viewpoint. Above all, both focus groups criticize the consistently positive portrayal, which is measured solely by career success and/or income, whereas successful integration stories are far more complex. While the perception of migration reporting in Germany is similar for both groups, differences emerge in how these reports are received by the respective individuals. For example, the Russian focus group does not feel addressed by Merz's "cityscape" comment, whereas the Turkish focus group does. At the same time, they react with resignation to such statements, as these have been a recurring theme in migration reporting since the first waves of immigration in the 1960s. Furthermore, it is evident that migration-related reporting patterns follow comparable logics across countries. In both countries represented by the focus groups, there are marginalized groups on whom migration reporting predominantly focuses. In Turkey, these are, for example, Syrians or Afghans, while in Russian reporting, Tajiks are the primary focus. Regardless of the national context, marginalized groups are thus frequently at the center of problem-oriented media coverage.

### 9. Conclusion and Recommendations

In summary, the comparison of the two focus groups reveals significant differences in the structure and use of diasporic media, particularly between opposition-oriented Russian exile media and the highly fragmented, generationally differentiated Turkish diaspora media landscape. At the same time, both groups perceive migration reporting in German mass media as one-sided, lacking in diversity, and consistently problem-oriented – even among people living in multicultural cities like Berlin – with migrant perspectives often remaining marginalized.

This influences both public perception and expectations regarding migration and can weaken social cohesion. Events such as the debates surrounding statements by Friedrich Merz illustrate that people who "look different" are particularly affected and vulnerable. From the participants' perspective, this jeopardizes social cohesion in Germany and demonstrates that the dominant narratives in migration reporting need to fundamentally change.

At the same time, new spaces are emerging for alternative media outlets, particularly within the Turkish diaspora, which can both gain trust and increasingly polarize opinion. For sustainable and nuanced migration reporting to succeed, it is necessary not only to include diverse migration stories but also to ensure the visibility of journalists with a migration background in key positions of power within newsrooms—especially at middle management levels such as chief editors, department heads, or program directors. While there are already presenters like Dunya Hayali or Mitri Sirin, this is insufficient to guarantee genuine diversity. Otherwise, there is a risk of so-called pinkwashing, where individual visible figures only superficially represent diversity without bringing about structural changes.



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