

# Exploring ‘Old’ Media Among European Residents In A Cosmopolitan County Of Turkey : The Case Of Alanya

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## Abstract

This article discusses the case of ‘old’ media (conventional media) ownership and publishing policies among European residents in Alanya from the perspective of intercultural communication. In this respect, a qualitative field inquiry were conducted in Alanya several times during a year. The main questions were to explore European residents’ local media, their ownership and editorial policies. Alanya, as part of Antalya City alongside the Mediterranean sea of Turkey, is a touristic county which has a quite urbanized and cosmopolitan character with a number of European residents. The article has two main parts and a conclusion. First includes a brief theoretical backgrounds from the literature, research problem, its importance and researcher’s aim. Second part of the article includes the case of Alanya with the research method, findings and results.

Keywords : Intercultural communication, old media, Alanya, immigration, case study.

## Introduction

As a touristic destination and cosmopolitan county, Alanya attracted many foreign residents, mostly retired European especially German, from fourthly different country. Last ten years, noteworthy numbers of these European residents began to spent their time more in Alanya rather than their home countries. About thirteen thousand of them are freeholders and significant number of them have been working in Alanya. Depending on the massive settlement nowadays, several media publishers among European resident in Alanya was confirmed by field observations and getting information from municipality Press Office.

Theoretical foundations of the case study are based on three aspects :

- *Intercultural encounters* - immigration, tourism, marriage, media, international trade, war, study and *Becoming intercultural* (see Kim, 2001) - focused on communication competence and relationship building perspectives, but excluded the debates on adaptation, assimilationism, pluralism and integration perspectives.
- *The role of media in communication competence and relationship building* - understanding cultural barriers and theories of media: ‘How Communication Works’, ‘What Missing the Newspaper’s Means’, ‘Knowledge Gap’, ‘Uses and Gratifications’, ‘Functions of Media’.
- *‘Old’ Media and Potentials of Information Technologies* - such as conventional media, electronic news gathering and desktop publishing, media convergence.

First one is the aspect of intercultural encounters like immigration, tourism activities, marriage, media contents, international trade, education, war etc. Among the reasons of intercultural encounters; an arising phenomenon of immigration movement of last 20 years characterizes the situation of Alanya. In other words, here we focus on the ‘tourism related international immigration movement’ which is not properly involved in immigration literature. Yet another naming of these immigrants is known as Snow Birds, because mostly elderly-retired people move from cold Northern settlements to warm Southern settlements especially

during cold seasons. This can be seen both internal and internationally. There is another dimension of being settled here related to the fact of marriages to a Turkish man and rarely a Turkish woman. But it seems that most of the marriage stories begin with visiting Alanya as touristic purposes.

As part of first aspect, becoming intercultural excludes cultural perspectives of adaptation, assimilation, pluralism and integration in the related literature, but includes perspectives of intercultural communication competence and relationship building. This means 'competence of understanding host country's cultural attributes' (like language, traditions and customs, norms and attitudes, social and political organisations, socialization/education institutions and belief systems).

Second aspect is the role of media and its theories, especially applicable in circumstance of intercultural communication. This results from the research literature on the role of media which complements this study's fundamental perspective. The theories range from 1950's to 1990's and asks the questions to be applicable to intercultural communication competence and relationship building problems.

Third aspect of the study is about 'old' media and potentials of information Technologies involved. Today old media (conventional media) is based on electronic publishing technologies and internet. Although a new media phenomenon has been expanding for years, old media also is alive as being large corporations or local media.

### **Problem of the Study and A Brief Theoretical Background**

The characteristics of the problem can be depicted as i) a quite massive European settlement in Alanya, ii) mostly known as Snow Birds migration phenomenon, iii) spending their most of time in Alanya, iv) about thirteen thousand freeholders, v) significant number of workers among European residents and vi) several media publishers among these European residents (in German, English and Dutch)

#### *A Brief Theoretical Background*

Here we discuss briefly mass communication theories and intercultural communication debates which are proper to conceptional bases of field research aiming to explore media ownership, media profile and media policies among European residents in Alanya.

#### **Intercultural Encounters and Becoming Intercultural:**

Culture is composed by tangible assets, language, belief systems, attitudes-values-norms, social and political organisations, art-aesthetic-music-dance and education-socialization. Character of culture includes sharing of meaning, being learned, meeting needs, a symbolic system, being in change, being integrative, being general and specific at the same time (Susar, 2005:4-13).

People encounter members of another culture in these ways; immigration, tourism, marriage, media publications, international trade and business, study, war, international relations. Intercultural encounter in some cases lasts for a short time or for a long time and lifelong. In case of immigration or marriage a person becomes intercultural for a long time or

lifelong. Immigrants face to the reality of becoming intercultural to deal with the necessity of having intercultural communication competence, understanding the host culture's attributes. They need to do business and work, keep on studying, get married, have friends, solve problems with public institutions, do shopping, travel, entertain, read newspapers and magazines, watch TV, listen to radio etc.

Some communication theories discuss the integrative nature of communication and culture. This perspective includes an idea that culture has a unique role of becoming a code system and so culture determine constructing meaning and common ground (*communis* in Latin) among people. When we analyze communication phenomenon via Schramm's model we use the terms of 'frame of reference' and 'field of experience' as necessity to construct a common meaning between communication actors (see Oskay, 2000:99-100). Frame of reference and field of experience happens in a culture and a common culture brings more common meanings than intercultural environment. Apart from Schramm's model of communication a cultural perspective was added to communication studies and theories which is known as 'school of semiology' (see Fiske, 1996:16, 61-89).

In this perspective, communication can be seen as an interaction in a culture in which we construct meanings via some symbolic systems. Naturally, members of different cultures who encounter each others for a long time need to communicate meaningfully. Members of a certain culture can keep on communication more easily than intercultural members depending on competence of culture and symbolic system. Due to a symbolic system is created in a certain culture and usefull for its members, a member of different culture needs to enhance his or her competence to overcome obstacles of unknown culture. Becoming intercultural can take some time and awarness of intercultural communication barriers can help to enhance competence.

In a intercultural environment, communication barriers typically are i) unknown language; ii) misunderstanding of attitudes, norms and values; iii) social and political institutions' role and their structure; iv) distance from art and aesthetic delight; v) disagreement of education and socialization process; vi) difference in belief systems; vii) unknown tangible assets and difference in public domain. These barriers affect construction of common ground among different cultures.

#### The Role of Media in Communication Competence and Relationship Building:

Mass media is the most common way of getting information among society. It is because of the role and organisation of mass media is based on information dissemination among readers and audiences. The main source of information in mass communication is a publisher and broadcaster or an institutional person like column writers, editors. A publisher or broadcaster communicate like a person; encoding, sending messages, decoding, a frame of reference, field of experience (see Oskay, 2000:121). Those are composed collectively within an organisation and policies of media or cultural attributes of news persons affect producing messages and meanings.

A communication theory based on a question of 'how communication works' asked by W. Schramm in mid-1950's accepted meaning of communication coming from a Latin origin which refers to '*communis*', in other words in english 'common' or 'common ground'. Based on this meaning of communication, it can be understood as an interaction to construct same knowledge, thought, meanings, attitudes among people (Oskay, 2000:99-100).

Due to this definition, communication involves three main terms (source, message and audience-readers) and is analyzed within a model which works like a wheel. The model includes a concept of 'code' and action of encoding (done by sender) and decoding (done by audience). A common code system helps constructing meaning by exchanging messages of both sides and this can be defined as communication. Constructing meaning is more vivid in intercultural encounters. If someone does not speak Russian or German or Finnish before, he or she can not communicate properly with a member of these culture. Because languages and words are born in a certain culture with a code system.

Another theoretical foundation of intercultural communication and competence stems from Davis' 'model of cultural partiality' in media content productions (see Oktay, 1994:63). This model discusses that media content production happens in context of cultural settings. The model accepts media members in a micro-level cultural commitment. Consequently media members produce media content to compatible their specific micro-level cultural commitments

One of the basic media research was conducted by Berelson in 1945 about the question of 'What Missing the Newspaper Means'. In a strike of newspaper dealers in New York during two weeks in June, readers of leading eight newspapers of the city could not reach their everyday life newspapers unless they did not buy them at the printing houses (see Oskay, 2000:139-156). According to the results of the field research the reason of reading newspaper is related to : i) having information about public issues, ii) having news on the topics which facilitate everyday life routines, iii) meeting a need of relaxing and entertaining, iv) keeping in touch with different people, institutions and thoughts in a wider area, v) having just a need of reading something (Oskay, 2000:137). Berelson and his research team concluded that media use can be divided into two categories which can be called rational (such as having information and getting news) and irrational use (such as connected to society, gaining a social prestige).

In 1970 Tichenor, Donhue and Olein wrote about a theory called 'Knowledge Gap' which discusses the function of mass media, access to information and media, building knowledge among society and groups of different classes and structure of media system. The argument specifies a term of 'knowledge poor' and describes a gap of knowledge between high class and low class groups of society depending on the use of mass media and its structural partiality (Severin and Tankard, 1994:406-409). Basically the theory depicts the media mechanism that works against low socio-economic status members of society by resulting an unbalanced access and use of knowledge. Although the theory suggests a model among class of society in a certain culture, it is possible to convert the idea into intercultural environment because a member of host culture can more easily reach, use, understand and share a knowledge than a member of different culture. So it is possible to conclude that if knowledge gap works against members of different culture, there must be some results in every day life of intercultural environment such as immigrants' experiences.

Theories of 'Uses and Gratifications' and 'Functions of Media' discuss that people have active responses to use of media and relationship between media and its reader is based on media gratifications. The theories ask the question of 'what readers do with the media' against older questions of 'how media affects audiences'. Lasswell and Wright suggest that mass media have four basic roles and as part of its function mass media enable to learn and disseminate culture; arise social ties, expand common experience ground, decrease feelings of

becoming stranger (depression of uncertainty) and maintain socialization (Severin and Tankard, 1994:473-486, 517).

#### ‘Old’ Media and Potentials of Information Technologies:

For hundered years, media industry had expanded its vital role in society and benefited from improving technologies. Nearly untill twenty years ago, media corporations relied on previous ages’ news gathering ways and print technology. All those were big investments in print houses, editorial offices, news archives etc. Today computerized settings, internet and telecommunication based facilities are standard components of print media and broadcasters. As called in related literature ‘old media’, newspapers and magazin or conventional tv and radio broadcasts still keep on living beside first generation new media and its successors. But old media involved information and telecommunication technologies when gathering news and producing media.

The electronic publishing facilities save time and money; simplify material items for publishing, fasten news gathering, make easier to prepare layout and keep the archive records. It includes computer terminals and main server with running softwares, laser printers, layout design programmes, image and word processor programmes and hardwares, electronic print machines, satellite transmissions (Noranha, 1987:2; Aydın, 1993:57). Today internet connections are basic component of media business in both big corporations and local media companies.

#### *Aim and Importance of the Study*

Aim of the study is to explore inside stories of media profiles, publishers, media ownership or editorial management among these European residents, in other words to determine the factual situation. Another one is to explore how and why these media are being published by these European immigrants, in other words to understand their media policies in terms of intercultural communication competence and relationship building.

Importance of the study can be stated in a way that findings can be helpful to gain some reflections related to both competence and further issues of intercultural communication in perspective of media use. The second importance of the study is the possibility of depicting the picture of the first generation’s media publishing stories before prospective changes of their next generations. In search of this exploration, a basic criterion was determined to select the proper informants that will be included. The criterion is ‘being a European resident that has been running a printed media in Alanya’.

#### **The Case of Alanya : A Field Study**

Today’s population of Alanya is two hundred sixty five thousands and 1 million foreign tourists visit Alanya in a year. Most of the immigrants are retired Europeans and some of the residents are married to a Turkish man/woman. A significant number of them are business owners or have been working in different kind of companies. In 1980’s Germans began to settle down in Alanya as snow birds immigration movement and continued to buy flats/houses here. During 1990’s and 2000’s, foreigners from other European countries, Russia and other continentals visited Alanya and settled here. Today, immigrants comes from fourthy different country; mostly Germans, but we see a massive population of Danish, Irish, Dutch, Norwegian, British, Belgian, Finish, Swedish and Russian.

### *Method of the Field Study*

The study follows a qualitative research approach to collect data on the question mentioned before. Before field study, a preliminary research was carried out by a joint team of academic researchers in 2007 and 2009 as part of a multipurposive case study about Alanya.

The researcher team contacted a Turkish-German Friendship Association which is active, wider and experienced organisation in Alanya to explore the European settlements. After some contacts with this and other friendship association and field observations, existence of several local media in European languages were confirmed clearly. In addition to these source of information and observations, a list of media which are being published in European languages was confirmed by Alanya municipality's tourism and public relations office's press records. A proper list of media was composed depending on these sources of information; all were magazines and four of them were proper to be subject of the study.

The study has some limitations. First is geographical; it includes data from the case of Alanya and it can not be generalized to other regions of Turkey. Second is time limitation; data were obtained in January, 2010. Third limitation is problem and question of the study which is mentioned before, then the study did not question upwards of this problem. Fourth limitation is source of information. Informants are media publishers, editors, owners among European residents of Alanya during field research. Although there were not accepted as fundamental source of data, publications were used to compare informants' expressions and to have further information.

To collect data, a semi-structured questionnaire was used during face-to-face interviews lasting nearly one hour each. The interviews included essentially four magazin's editors and publishers who are matching the research problem's criteria properly. Another three interviews were conducted although they were not matching the criteria, to depict the bigger picture of the case and to see the past history which is actually interrelated to today's facts. All the interviews in German were conducted by an academic member of research team, speaking German fluently. Others were done by the researcher herself, when necessary in English or Turkish.

As qualitative research design all the data from interviews, field and material observations were analysed in a form of classified, descriptive narratives relating them to the theoretical frame.

### *Findings*

Findings are presented in five categories which are i) overview, ii) media profiles, iii) information technologies involvement, iv) publishers profiles, v) potentials of media use.

#### 1. An Overview:

Although several journal and magazines in German are being published neighbours counties of Alanya, we have confirmed that Alanya Bote and DutchTalk were the initials publications under management of European immigrants in Alanya. Today they are not present. In one of the interviews, a German senior immigrant who worked for Alanya Bote as writer and reporter confirmed that the problem of circulation and financial inadequacy of

publications caused closing them down. During the dates of field research, we confirmed that four magazines are published by European immigrants and they are managed by these publishers. We could not confirm if any journal is being published or managed by any European immigrant of Alanya. In respect of ethical consideration of research these four magazines' names were not revealed in the text and they were called as Magazin A, Magazin B, Magazin C and Magazin D. Their languages are German, English, Dutch and Turkish. Magazin A and Magazin B are only in German, Magazin C is trilingual – German, English, Turkish, Magazin D is bilingual – Dutch and English.

On the other hand, a Turkish local TV channel broadcasts news in German twice a week by a German immigrant speaker who is married to a Turkish man. Due to selection criterion of the informants, the TV channel was excluded from the analysis. Another journal in English, Dutch and German is being published by a Turkish woman who is married to an European immigrant, but it was also excluded because of its publisher and editor was not an immigrant.

## 2. Media Profiles :

These four publications are very young. Their ages range from about one to five years. They are highly dependent on advertisement income potentials from local Turkish and European residents and tourism season in Alanya, so the frequency of issues is about several times during winter season. But, from spring to late summer, the frequency of each publication is regular like monthly or fortnightly.

All four informants in the case study are in charge of general manager and/or editor position. The two German editors are the publishers and owners as well, other two magazines are being published by editors' Turkish spouses. Today, only magazin D is free of charge. But magazin B first started and continued to be published as free of charge until recently. All four are based on advertising revenues essentially. All the editors confirmed the difficulty of gaining sales and advertising revenues. It seems that this is one of the most challenging issue that they have to cope with. All four are local media and both sales and advertising revenues depend on the factors of tourism based economic activities of Alanya.

One of the magazines (magazin C) is a thematic publication which addresses the real estate industry in Mediterranean coast of Turkey. Its reader profile includes second home buyers of foreigners in Alanya, already immigrants looking for a new real estate, local and international building contractors or supplier industry in real estate.

Other three are actual magazines which address European immigrants/residents or speakers of publication language from other nationalities around Alanya. They include wide range of news stories according to their publishing policies. Especially magazin A is positioning itself as 'Turkish but not immigrant resident'. Editor stated that the magazin targets German speaking readers who are fun of Turkey and prospective new comers besides immigrants around Alanya.

When we examined editorial content and policies of these four magazines, we clearly confirmed that most exceptional one is magazin C which focuses on real estate industry. Its major editorial policy is to improve awareness of environmental issues related to local real estate developments depending on high demand for buying properties among both immigrants and foreign investors.

Another different editorial policy was stated by the expression of magazin B's publisher as 'colourful and mixed news' from social life of Alanya and mediteranean coast related to German speaking immigrants and visitors of the region.

The other two magazin's editors expressed their editorial policy significantly related to becoming intercultural and the role of media as an interpreter of host culture to immigrants. Here it is clear that the magazines had another role that immigrants share their intercultural communication and relationship building problems with the host culture's members.

### 3. Information Technologies Involvement:

Information technologies involvement of magazines was observed during interviews with the informants in their office and asked them to describe the print technology. Newspapers and magazines are called as 'old' or 'conventional' media comparing with the attributes of new media such as digital platform and interactiveness.

Although 'old' media was subjected to the study, each of four magazines benefit from information technologies both in news gatering and desktop publishing. These four magazines apply desktop publishing (layout design, word processors, photo/image editing, electronic data storage, etc.), internet based inquiry and online databases. Due to both information technologies involvement and becoming a local media, these magazines have fewer human resources for producing department but they have weakness for newsroom and none of them has a print house. All of them have two or three regular persons who work as a reporter or graphic designer and hire freelance writer as voluntary or low price payement. Publishers or editors of the magazines also work as reporter and one of them is good at graphic design. These four magazines are being published without massive print investment due to available and affordable information technologies. They all publish electronic version of their magazines in internet and only Magazin A communicates constantly in a social media (Facebook).

### 4. Publishers Profiles:

According to findings, three of publishers and/or editors are woman European immigrant. Magazin A, magazin C and magazin D's editors are women immigrants living in Alanya. Two of them (Magazines A and C) are German origin and third one (Magazin D) is Dutch. The two Germans are married to Turkish men and one of them has been living in Alanya for fifteen years, other for eight years. Both speaks Turkish, but more good at understanding than speaking. The Dutch immigrant editor is engaged to a Turkish man and she has been living in Alanya for five years, does not speak Turkish at all. A German and Dutch immigrant editors have BA degree in journalism from their home country. The other German immigrant editor (magazin A) does not a degree in journalism, but she has experiences on media relations and public affairs of ministry of economy in her home country. They all women publishers continue to keep in touch with her home countries. For two of them, first visit to Alanya was a holiday trip suggested by tourism agency in their home country. The third one (magazin C) was in touch with Turkey as her journalistic purposes for several times, but she visited Alanya first for her marriage story.

The fourth immigrant publisher (magazin B) have been living in Alanya more than ten years and stated that he broke off his relations with his home country for eight years. He does not a degree in journalism, but has significant job experience in print business in home



country. Although he does not speak Turkish, he understands it considerably. His first visit to Alanya as well was a touristic trip by suggestion of a tourism agency in his home country.

#### 5. Potentials of Media Use:

Behind the depicting editorial content and policies, we hoped to find out any clue in this case showing the potentials of media use in improvement of intercultural communication competence and relationship building. For example, magazin B stated that the magazin is quite asked to be a voice of German immigrants and expected to publish in the magazin the community's complaints that they encountered, mostly intercultural matters.

Another significant example which is evidence of the use of media to improve intercultural communication competence can be seen in magazin A. The magazin has regular pages teaching Turkish grammar rules, practical conversation in their daily lives – for example, it teaches Turkish words, sentences, expressions which are necessary when visiting a doctor and etc. The example clearly refers to one of the most important intercultural communication barriers – it's language incompetence.

Another example in magazin A is about teaching the postal address system of Turkey which is very unfamiliar to immigrants. This also helps them to understand host country's one of the unknown public institutions. It seems that Turkish customs and traditions, religious rituals are main concerns for both Magazin A and Magazin D to explain to the readers more than other subjects.

### **Results and Conclusion**

The case study focused on the European residents that are mostly snowbirds immigrants in Alanya, to explore media ownership, editorial management, media profiles, publishing policies among them. And in parallel with this exploration, awareness among magazin editors/publishers of potentials of media in intercultural communication competence.

Although we need to conduct further inquiry, we have identified some evidences referring to the two of the magazines included in the study. They expressed their intention and to issue more cultural themes of host country in their magazines in favour of their readers. These two has also a name related to word of 'Turkish' and 'Turkey'.

There were another significant results as well. This is women editors' or publishers' profiles: they have Turkish spouses; two of them have journalism degree and experiences; third one has also familiar job experience. On the other hand, the fourth editor/publisher has not a degree or job experience in journalism but has a job experience in print business. Contrast to past of media publishing history in Alanya, they all were in print and media business before in their home country.

These magazines as 'old' media benefit from information technologies both in news gathering and desktop publishing. Although cost effective information technologies are involved by the magazines and their organisational scale is very small, the financial matter of the magazines seems most challenging issue that determines publishing frequency.

Today the role of media in intercultural contacts and interactions is vital. Due to individual behavioural contacts and relations can be quite limited for European residents depending on cultural barriers like language, unknown norms, attitudes, social and political

systems etc., media can be used to overcome these barriers in some degree. Results of the case study can not explain full potential of media use in intercultural competence improvement perspective, but raises some questions on the issue. It may evoke awareness for the role of editors and their media policy. We need more follow up researches tending to explore potentials of media in this circumstances, especially from the perspectives of the media theories which was mentioned in the article as applicable to the intercultural communication context.

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