'Roots and Routes' Young people from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds constructing their identities using digital media

Cilia Willem

UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

'ROOTS AND ROUTES'

YOUNG PEOPLE FROM DIVERSE ETHNO-CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS CONSTRUCTING THEIR IDENTITIES USING DIGITAL MEDIA

Tesi doctoral de

CILIA WILLEM

Director de tesi

Antonio Bartolomé Pina

Co-directora de tesi

Iolanda Tortajada Giménez

Barcelona 2010. Departament de Didàctica de l'Educació Visual i Plàstica i Comunicació Audiovisual

La doctoranda

Cilia Willem

Programa de doctorat Comunicació, Art, Educació
Departament de Didàctica de l'Educació Visual i Plàstica i Comunicació Audiovisual
Universitat de Barcelona, bienni 2002-2004

Abstract

This thesis seeks to investigate young immigrants and ethnic minorities (IEM)'s perceptions of media portrayals of them, with specific focus on understandings held by IEM regarding the construction of cultural identity. Furthermore, it intends to examine the ways in which young IEM, both as consumers and as producers of media texts, use digital media and media literacy to contest stereotyped portrayals of cultural groups and to construct cultural identities in their own terms.

The relationship between media, representation and identity is explored through an examination of the theorical body of work on identity politics, and of previous empirical studies focussing specifically on the portrayal of IEM in the media, both on transnational and on Spanish level. Additionally, special attention is given to media discourses regarding multiculturalism and the multicultural society, with the aim of examining participants' positions towards cultural and identity politics. Approaches to audience studies, as to what audiences do with media rather than what media do to audiences, are examined and evaluated with regards to their relevance for this study.

A discussion of critical methodologies involving ethnographic and visual methods within social research introduces the research activities carried out as part of this study. A paradigm based on the assumption of universal capacity of language and communication informs this study's methodological choices and eliminates the hierarchy between the 'researcher' and the 'researched', as both subjects are seen as participants in a mutual learning process. In total sixteen emerging adults (18-33 years old) from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, living in Barcelona between 2006 and 2008, participated in this study. They were part of a natural group of media makers in an ongoing artistic and intercultural project called 'Roots and Routes', which was an inspiration for this thesis' title. In total seven audio-visual texts, produced by the participants, were analysed together with accompanying reflective commentaries, interviews and life narratives.

The analysis reveals that young IEM are fully aware of the negative media portrayal of cultural groups, and articulately identify its consequences for their daily lives. The study highlights the double trap for IEM of mainstream media constructions of cultural identity, as participants cannot escape the identities imposed on them and at the same time have to prove themselves constantly to locals. However, deeper analysis shows how IEM construct their own cultural and gendered identities in coming-to-terms with their 'routes' in an urban and intercultural context, rather than calling back to their 'roots', despite attempts of media discourses to focus the attention on cultural differences in terms of origin, ethnicity, nationality or religion.

Additionally, the study illustrates how IEM are able to break the 'circle of representation' by creating alternative imagery and distributing it by means of online social networks, pitfalls of the so-called 'social web' or web 2.0 notwithstanding.

*Resum**

Aquest estudi parteix del fet de que els mitjans construeixen la imatge de l'altre mitjançant discursos exlusors basats en les diferències culturals. Les imatges de 'nosaltres' i 'ells' dominen la representació mediàtica dels grups culturals, frequentment estudiada des del punt de vista de l'anàlisi del discurs. Aquest estudi busca investigar, però, la percepció que tenen els inmigrants i les minories ètniques (IME) de les seves representacions mediàtiques, amb un enfoc específic en les seves creences i opinions sobre la construcció de la identitat cultural. La tesi vol mostrar com els joves IME fan servir el mitjà digital, tant com a consumidors com com a productors de textos mediàtics, per tal de contestar representacions estereotipades dels grups culturals, i com construeixen una identitat cultural des de la seva pròpia realitat.

La relació entre mitjans, representació i identitat s'explora a través del cos teòric sobre polítiques d'identitats, relacions de poder i representació de grups culturals, i a través dels estudis empírics enfocats específicament en les representacions mediàtiques dels IME a nivell trans-nacional i local. Adicionalment, l'estudi donarà una especial atenció a com es posicionen els participants en els discursos mediàtics sobre la societat multicultural.

La tesi examina la rellevancia per a aquest estudi de les diferents aproximacions als estudis d'audiències en clau de l'agència de les audiències en juxtaposició amb els efectes mediàtics sobre les audiències. És a dir, vol enfocar l'atenció en com els persones fan servir els mitjans en comptes de mirar només quins efectes tenen els mitjans sobre les persones.

Una visió general sobre els paradigmes crítics en investigació en comunicació enmarca la metodologia de l'estudi i explica els mètodes etnogràfics i de producció audiovisual per part dels propis participants. La metodologia crítica comunicativa, basada en l'assumpció de la capacitat universal del llenguatge i la comunicació, forma el marc de les eleccions metodològiques d'aquest estudi i elimina la jerarquia entre 'investigador' i 'investigat' en considerar ambdós subjectes com a participants en un procés d'aprenentatge mutu.

En total, setze adults emergents d'entre 18 i 33 anys, de procedències ètniques i culturals diverses, van participar en aquest estudi. Tots vivien a Barcelona entre els anys 2006 i 2008, i formaven part d'un grup natural de joves interessats en el vídeo dins del projecte Roots and Routes ('arrels i camins'), el qual va donar nom a aquesta tesi. Es van analitzar set textos audiovisuals produïts pels participants, amb els seus

---

* En compliment de la *Normativa reguladora dels procediments relatius a l'elaboració, defensa i avaluació de les tesis doctorals de la Universitat de Barcelona*, les tesis elaborades en una llengua diferent que les oficials de la UB han d'anar acompanyats per un un resum de la tesi doctoral redactat en alguna de les llengües oficials a la UB.

respectius comentaris reflectius, i adicionalment es van analitzar narratives de vida i entrevistes amb els setze participants.

L'anàlisi de les dades mostra que els joves IME són plenament conscients de l'imatge negativa dels grups culturals als mitjans, i que identifiquen amb presició les conseqüències dels estereotips negatius per a la seva vida diària: la stigmatització, la discriminació i la exclusió principalment. L'estudi senyala el doble parany per a IME que suposen les construccions mediàtiques de l'identitat cultural, donat que els participants no podien 'escapar' les identitats imposades sobre ells, a la vegada d'haver de demostrar continúament a la població que ells 'no són així'.

Una anàlisi més profunda, però, mostra com els IME construeixen les seves identitats culturals i de gènere mirant cap endavant (els seus 'camins') més que mirant cap enrera (les seves 'arrels'), malgrat dels intents dels discursos mediàtics d'enfocar l'atenció sobre les diferències culturals relacionades amb les nocions d'origen, d'etnicitat, nacionalitat o religió. Finalment, l'estudi mostra com els IME són capaços de trencar el 'cercle de la representació' exclusor en crear imatges alternatives i distribuïr-les mitjançant xarxes socials online malgrat els paranys de la invisibilitat en la web 2.0 o la web 'social'.

---

* En compliment de la *Normativa reguladora dels procediments relatius a l'elaboració, defensa i avaluació de les tesis doctorals de la Universitat de Barcelona*, les tesis elaborades en una llengua diferent que les oficials de la UB han d'anar acompanyats per un un resum de la tesi doctoral redactat en alguna de les llengües oficials a la UB.

Agraïments - *Acknowledgements*

MOLTES GRÀCIES

Després de quasi cinc anys de recorregut, finalment tinc davant meu el fruit d'una aventura llarga i apassionant. Un recorregut que evidentment no he fet sola. He après i he conegut moltes coses gràcies a unes persones que m'han acompanyat durant tot aquest temps, i d'altres que m'han acompanyat en els moments més senyalats i crítics.

En primer lloc voldria mencionar les persones que han participat en el projecte Roots&Routes i en aquest estudi: tinc el compromís de no revelar els seus noms, però trobareu rastres de les seves vides entre les línies d'aquest treball. Són persones valentes, obertes al món, viatgeres per necessitat o per curiositat, són els qui m'han motivat per tirar endavant la tesi. Alguns s'han fet amics amb el temps.

Vull agraïr de tot cor i amb molt de carinyo al Prof. Dr. Antonio Bartolomé, el meu director de tesi, el seu suport constant, els consells sempre encertats i la seva capacitat de motivació que continuen inspirant-me després de més de deu anys des d'aquella primera trobada al seu despatx de Cap d'Estudis de Comunicació Audiovisual. L'Antonio té molt a veure amb la meva decisió de quedar-me a la universitat i lluitar perquè sigui un lloc on els coneixements poden circular lliure i obertament.

Aquesta tesi tampoc seria la que és sense la implicació, profunda i constant, de la Prof. Dra. Iolanda Tortajada de la Universitat Rovira i Virigili. La meva co-directora m'ha fet descobrir una nova forma de fer recerca: investigar 'amb' les persones, més que 'sobre' les persones. És un regal preciós, Iolanda.

En Raúl Martínez de Xenomedia - ell sap perquè - es mereix una línia de agraïments per a ell sol.

També vull donar les gràcies molt especialment a la Dra. Liesbeth de Block i el Prof. Dr. David Buckingham de l'*Institute of Education* de Londres, per les seves orientacions teòriques. Les seves lliçons i consells van fer que la tesi agafés forma definitiva.

Han estat, però, el recolzament, els coneixements i l'amistat de la Prof. Dra. Sofie van Bauwel de la Universiteit Gent que han contribuit, més que ella sap, a que aquest treball finalment hagi arribat a bon port. Em va fer un espai al Departament de Ciències de la Comunicació de la seva universitat i al seu cor. Sofie, encara que no entenguis aquestes paraules, estic molt feliç d'haver-te conegut.

Laboratori de Mitjans Interactius. Hi ha llocs de treball on entres i surts per fer la teva feina i res més. Jo tinc la sort de que el meu és un espai obert d'aprenentatge mutu, de converses

il·luminadores i entretingudes, de projectes excitants i reptes nous, de molt més que 'feina'. Al Laboratori de Mitjans Interactius tinc amigues i amics: la Mariona, que és una de les persones més brillants, generoses i treballadores que conec; la Inés que m'ha fet costat en moments crítics durant els últims quatre anys (només ella sap quan); el Merca, aquesta gran font d'informació i connexions insospitats entre esdeveniments; en Jan que amb les seves ganes de viure sempre aconsegueix animar-me; la Lucrezia que em va treure feina de les mans en els moments que necessitava concentrar-me en la tesi (ara et toca a tu Lu!); l'Elba amb la seva generositat natural; en Jordi que ha aportat moltíssim al meu coneixement sobre el món i amb qui comparto les meves inquietuds socials; en Rafa que és una gran promesa... I tots els membres del Grup de Recerca. Gràcies, LMI!

També voldria expressar el meu agraïment a les professores i els professors del Departament de Didàctica de l'Educació Visual i Plàstica, que no m'han vist el pèl aquests darrers mesos però de qui he sentit el suport institutional que necessitava per fer l'última empenta a la tesi.

Gràcies també als meus amics de Bèlgica i de Barcelona que han hagut de soportar les meves èpoques menys 'divertides' i segueixen essent amics. El mateix val per als col·legues de Roots&Routes International pels seus intents que bailés i cantés durant intercanvis internacionals (cosa que van aconseguir moltes vegades).

Finalment vull donar les gràcies a sis personatges que signifiquen el món per a mi: la Magda i en Wilfried, els meus pares que sempre m'han acollit i cuidat amb una generositat sense límits; la meva germana Marjan que és la dona més valenta de l'univers; els meus nebodets Wolf i Willem que sense saber-ho em van donar mil moments d'alegria mentres estava escrivint; i en Jesús que ha estat i continúa sent el meu millor amic. Gràcies, familia....

Barcelona, gener del 2010

MANY THANKS

There are a number of people who I would like to thank for being there during this almost five-year journey. Some of them were by my side unconditionally; others were there on crucial moments on this long adventure called writing a thesis. They have all contributed to this work in their own ways.

In the first place I would like to mention the young people who participated in the Roots&Routes project and in this study: I have a commitment not to reveal their names, but the reader will find traces of their lives between the lines. They are corageous young people, open to the world, on a journey out of necessity or out of curiosity; they are the ones who have motivated me to carry on with this work until the end. Some of them have become friends.

I would especially like to thank my supervisor Prof. Dr. Antonio Bartolomé for his constant support, his good advice and his capacity to motivate me, which has not changed since the day we met - eleven years ago - in his office of head of Audiovisual Communication Studies at the University Barcelona. Antonio has a lot to do with my decision to stay at the University and try to make it a place where knowledge can circulate freely and openly.

This thesis would not be what it is without the profound, passionate and constant commitment of my co-supervisor Prof. Dr. Iolanda Tortajada of the University Rovira i Virgili, who has showed me a different way of doing research: researching 'with' people rather than 'about' people. That is a precious gift.

Raúl Martínez of Xenomedia deserves a line of aknowledgements of his own. He knows why.

I would also like to thank Dr. Liesbeth de Block and Prof. Dr. David Buckingham at the Institute of Education for their recommendations and encouragements. Their directions and advice have shaped the structure and framework of this work.

But it is thanks to Prof. Dr. Sofie van Bauwel at Ghent University that I finally made it to the end: with her support, wisdom and friendship she contributed to this thesis more than she knows. Sofie made a space for me at her University's Communication Science Department as well as in her heart. I am very happy to have met her.

At the Interactive Media Lab, working is not like in most other places; LMI is an open space of mutual learning, conversation, exciting and challenging projects, and mutual support. A place where your collegues are your friends: Mariona who is one of the most brilliant, generous and hard-working people I know; Inés who stood by me at the most critical times during the last four years; Merca who is a never-ending source of information revealing unsuspected connections

between events; Jan who is always able to cheer me up with his joy for life; Lucrezia who took work out of my hands when I needed to concentrate on my thesis (now it's your turn, dear Lu!); Elba with her natural generosity; Jordi who I learnt a lot from and whom I share my social concerns with; Rafa who is a great promise... And everybody at the Research Group. Thank you very much, LMI!

I would also like to thank my collegues at the Visual Education Department, who have not seen much of me during the last few months, but whose institutional support I received to be able to finish my thesis on time.

A special thank-you goes to my friends (both in Belgium and Barcelona) who put up with me when I was being boring, and who kept me posted about the world 'out there'. This also goes for my collegues at Roots&Routes International and their attempts to make me dance and sing at international residencies over the last four years (and often succeeded).

Finally, my deepest gratefulness goes to six people who mean the world to me: Wilfried and Magda, my parents who have always taken care of me with unlimited generousness; my sister Marjan, the most corageous woman of the universe; my nephews Wolf and Willem who have given me - without even trying - moments of pure bliss while I was writing up; and finally Jesús who has been my best friend for a very long time... Thanks, family.

Barcelona, January 2010

Contents

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH CONTEXT

'Cultural identity is not so much about the so-called return to roots than about a coming-to-terms with our 'routes' .

Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*

INTRODUCTION

The night that Belgian Prime Minister Herman van Rompuy was elected as the first President of the European Union, he said to the journalists gathered for his first press conference that 'the diversity of the Union is its strength' (De Standaard, 20/11/2009: 3). Diversity seems to be the key to understanding Europe today, as the Union has expanded far beyond the former Soviet borders and has embraced dozens of nationalities, languages, ethnicities, religious and other-wise culturally identified groups. This is, with no doubt, the kind of diversity that Van Rompuy was referring to.

But the 'national' and 'cultural' diversity evoked in political leaders' discourses does not by far cover the meaning of cultural diversity the way it is understood here. Diversity is also about different worldviews, interests, sexual preference, age, gender, sense of belonging to a 'group', whatever that may imply. In Spain, diversity has only recently become an issue on the social and political agenda. Diversity seems to be only visible 'in the street' and is hardly present (or 're-presented') in public life. In institutions such as higher education, qualified labour, enterpreneurship and politics, the 'white middle class male' is the protagonist, despite efforts from many different organisations working in the anti-discrimination field. In media institutions, there is a similar lack of diverse agents and of nuanced discourses about diversity, enhancing the role and responsibility of media as a site of public dialogue.

This is why the construction of cultural identity in media representations is relevant in the context of an increasingly diverse society. This text is both about media and made with the help of media: finding out the relationship between media and social reality is both the aim of the study and the means to achieve that aim. In this kind of media research, it is a challenge to distinguish between these two overlapping aspects when working with participants who produce media texts about media texts. Both texts are important; interest lies precisely in examining the relationship between them. In this study, both kinds of texts were a means to explore an issue, and it was the issue at the same time, as participants defined themselves in images with regards to definitions given of them in images.

However, before going deeper into what the present study has tried to do, I would like to say what it has not tried to do. This study is not about finding out how migrants are represented or portrayed in Spanish and Catalan media, or about media discourses on immigration in Spain or Catalonia. Recent and previous studies have extensively looked at how Spanish media construct representations of immigration and immigrants, for example, by analysing how the Spanish press and audio-visual media reported on the 'El Ejido' incidents (de la Fuente 2006), and on the 2002 headscarves debate in Spain (Abella 2007), by analysing how journalists report on immigration in Spain (Lorite 2004), or by examining the general discourse on migrants in Spanish media from a 'Framing Theory' approach (Igartua, Muñiz & Otero 2006). Additionally, Teun van Dijk has focussed on racist media discourses in Spain, using the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (see van Dijk 1997), and much work has been done on stereotypical and negative portrayal of ethnic and cultural minorities in Spain (Ramírez Heredia 1997, 2002; Igartúa, Muñiz & Otero 2006; Retis 2004, 2006) and elsewhere (Entman 1990; Gilroy 1994; Campbell 1995; Hall 1997a; Ferguson 1998; Cottle 2000; Larson 2006; Mok 1998; Rivadeneyra, Ward & Gordon 2007). CHAPTER 2 addresses the available literature on these topics.

The study presented here wanted to go a step further and look at the 'negatively portrayed' themselves, i.e. immigrants and people from Roma or gitano[1] background in Barcelona, and find out how they relate to those media representations by constructing new languages, new images, and alternative (cultural) identities. However, this study is not about 'minority media' (television, radio and newspapers produced by and for minority groups in the host country), but about how individuals from different minority groups living in Barcelona use media to explore their identities, particularly in the field of cultural identity, and how this relates to their overall media use. This research was less concerned with psychological elements of identity formation of young adults ('self-identity') than with the social and cultural implications of their own identity construction. In other words: its main focus was on how identities are constructed in terms of 'us' and 'them' rather than of how individuals would describe themselves as a person.

[1] Throughout this study I will use the word Roma when referring to people from Roma background, both in the Spanish and the international context. Roma ('*rrom*' meaning 'man' in Romani language) use this term to refer to themselves as a community on an international level. I will use *gitana*/*gitano* when specifically referring to members of the Spanish Roma community (female and male respectively). Following the EUMAP terminology, for the Spanish case I will use the binomy Roma/*gitano* indistinctly (see: *The situation of Roma in Spain* (2002). Report of the Open Society Institute, EUMAP, Monitoring Minority Protection in EU Member States), as *gitano* in Spanish does not necessarily have a pejorative connotation (unlike the English *Gypsy* or the French *Zigane*). The Spanish Roma community also uses the word *Kalé* or *Romaní* on official occasions to refer to themselves or to their language, but *gitana/o* is the term they commonly use both in formal and informal contexts throughout the Spanish state. When quoting participants in this study I will transcribe the original terminology chosen by them in the conversation, be it *gitano*/*gitana*, *rrom*, *romaní* or *kalé*.

1. MEDIA STUDIES: A FIELD IN ITS EARLY ADULTHOOD

Although it can be argued that this study has many sociological features, it parts from the perspective of media. Denis McQuail calls this the 'socio-centric approach' within the field of Media Studies:

> 'In its most basic formulation, a socio-centric approach assumes that media are themselves a product of society and that their structures, activities, and effects can only be explained in terms of underlying social forces affecting the context of their operation and their individual users. A media-centric approach is prepared to view media as potentially independent influences on individuals and on societies. There is, of course, scope for the view that media and society are continually interacting, making this choice purely schematic.' (McQuail 2004: 15)

As will become obvious, the view underpinning the present study is McQuail's latter perspective on media and society as 'continually interacting'. Media play a very important role in how we perceive ourselves, the 'other', and the world: the cohesion or rupture of a social world literally depends on relations among groups who perceive themselves as being 'different' or disadvantaged as a group. That is why the relation of minorities to mass media is necessarily a political one and why it has been one of the major topics for media and reception studies (Staiger 2005: 139). As media play an important role in people's lives, both for 'majority' and 'minority' groups, reception studies should take account for it:

> 'Thus, reception studies is not just about the consumption of media messages but also about access to producing them. As I shall discuss in chapters about fans and minorities, the articulation of personal reactions to mass media is part of the field of research.' (Staiger 2005: 4).

These 'personal reactions to mass media' of IEM, a minority 'audience', are precisely what we are looking at here. However, this kind of topics have only recently been on the media research agenda. If we look at the history and evolution of media studies – either if we consider it as an 'emerging discipline' or an 'interdisciplinary field' (Jensen 2002) – we notice a pendular movement between 'text' and 'audience', between structure and agency. Andrew Burn and David Parker take Andrew Tudor's interpretation of this precarious balance as a starting point for their analysis of media texts:

> 'Andrew Tudor (1999) represents the current imbalance on Cultural and Media Studies in terms of a familiar opposition in sociology - the polar terms of structure and agency. Broadly speaking, he describes a move from an emphasis on the ability of structures (of language, ideology, text, the psyche) to determine the lives of people, to the reverse: an emphasis on the agency of people in determining their own meanings, pleasures, identities. He sees this opposition as sterile, arguing for the need to find a new balance between structure and agency (...).' (Burn and Parker 2003: 2-3)

This balance between structure and agency in media studies has been informed by an evolution from 'mass media messages' in the sixties to 'media text' in the seventies; from 'text' to 'audience' in the eighties, and from audiences as prosumers back to the text at the beginning of the 21st

Century (see McQuail 2004, Jensen 2002 and also Chapter 2, 1.2 'Power of the media: the text vs. the audience').

Many, though not all, of the notions and questions addressed in this study are central to British Cultural Studies. Drawing upon various disciplines and schools of thought, cultural studies stress culture (human agency, human values), but does not necessarily deny structural determinism (underlying structure). Cultural studies scholars emphasise human agency against what some consider to have been 'an overemphasis by Marxist historians on structural determinants' (Storey 2006a: 39). In other words, what cultural studies researchers have in common is their perspective on culture as 'actively produced': a view that 'stresses human agency as an active production of culture, rather than a passive consumption of it' (Storey 2006a, 2006b).

A crucial point here is the 'popularisation' of culture as an everyday practice. As Denis McQuail points out:

> 'The main transformation in the study of media cultural issues [was brought about] by the decomposition of the notion of 'popular' and its reassembly in terms of relevance to everyday life and closeness to cultural and social experience' (McQuail 2004: 9).

It is this 'closeness to cultural and social experience' that will be central to this study. These features from Cultural Studies provide a framework for media studies to focus on media as a 'signifying practice' (Hall 1997a); its emphasis on the mechanisms of power, ideology, discourse and representation; its special interest in 'subordinate' groups like women, ethnic minorities and youth; its application of semiology to languages other than 'textual' (i.e. visual); and its insights in the question of identity (see Turner 2003, Price 1998, Storey 2006a).

Apart from the 'structure/agency' and 'text/audience' dichotomies, another problem for scholars when researching minority groups' relationship to media and identity has been a double one: grouping people arbitrary by externally created categories of identity sometimes meant that individuals did not interpret texts through any sort of conscious recognition of 'that' identity as relevant; and grouping people on the basis of one single identity implied ignoring other identities that might have been relevant (Staiger 2005: 141). In this research no previous categories of cultural identity were established, but emerged from the data during the research process. CHAPTER 3 focusses on the implications of this methodological choice, whereas CHAPTER 4 describes its results.

2. MEDIA RESEARCH AND THE QUESTION OF (CULTURAL) IDENTITY

Questions about culture, politics and identity have been quite relevant in media research. As Jenny Kitzinger points out:

> 'The range of questions that arise among those interested in culture, politics, and identity points to the broad nature of this fourth category and the need for further unpacking. It is this category that informs most academic work within media studies and has generated the most fruitful and diverse empirical approaches, as well as being the site of intense conflict.' (Kitzinger 2004: 170).

But it has not always been like that. Questions of identity in western societies were located in the field of the 'individual', rather than in the cultural and political field, for a long time. In words of Chris Barker,

> 'Cultural theory has disturbed the idea of a stable, fixed and universal identity which a person possesses, an assumption contained in the cultural repertoire of the self with which most people in the modern western world are familiar' (Barker 1999: 8).

If identity is something we construct, shape and adapt continually (see Chapter 2), for some authors within the British Cultural Studies tradition like Stuart Hall and especially Paul Gilroy, the process of cultural identity relates not so much to the so-called return to *roots*, as to the coming-to-terms-with our *routes* (Gilroy 1994). In other words, cultural identity is contingent upon circumstances and more related to the present and future than to the past. This is not to say that social constructs like nation, religion, race, tradition or gender do not intervene in the process; it is precisely the way one relates to their 'given' circumstances and tries to modify them that makes up for their identity. As Laclau said, the constitution of a social identity is actually an 'act of power':

> 'if (...) an objectivity manages to partially affirm itself it is only by repressing that which threatens it. Derrida has shown how an identity's constitution is always based on excluding something and establishing a violent hierarchy between the two resultant poles - man/woman etc. (...) It is the same with the black-white relationship (...).' (Laclau 1990: 33).

In my view, immigrants and ethnic minorities (IEM) are always located in one of these two resultant poles: they are either 'black' or 'white', them or us, good or bad. The narratives constituting this violent hierarchy leave no space for mobility between the two poles: as subjects IEM lack agency to take up their own position, to let their voice heard.

This process of continuous tension IEM's their *roots* and the possible new *routes* in the host or dominant society is strongly determined by the image given of them in the dominant media landscape. As Barker points out, television is a proliferating resource for the construction of identities (Barker 1999). Concerning media production, CHAPTER 2 will extensively explore how dominant media discourses have constructed cultural identity by trying to *fix* meanings for audiences. Concerning media consumption by IEM, de Block and Buckingham (2007) distinguish between the following kinds of media used by ethnic minorities: *national media* (produced in host country for and by dominant culture majorities), *ethnic minority media* (produced in host country

for or by local ethnic minority communities), *'diasporic' media* (produced in country of origin and watched via satellite), and *transnational media* (media available through cable or satellite, regardless of country of origin or language). Each of these media have a different role in the lives and the articulation of migrants' identity formation, in their sense of 'belonging': diasporic media and some ethnic minority media, for example, refer to IEM's *roots* and offer a means of staying in touch with the homeland/country of origin (language, politics, social life). These kinds of media play an important role in the preservation and renovation of traditions among migrant groups, what Thompson refers to as the '*call to the roots*' (Thompson 1998: 266). National media, on the other hand, stand for IEM's *routes* in the host country and offer information, a means of 'exploring' or learning about the new country - language, humour, social conventions, cultural codes. Still other kinds of media offer a mixture of both: ethnic minority media and transnational media. The use that immigrants and newcomers make of these different kinds of media depends on the stage they are in (leaving, arriving, settling, participation) and on their intentions - whether or not they plan to permanently stay in the new host country (de Block and Buckingham 2007).

So how do cultural minorities – not only newcomers - put their 'act of power' (Laclau) into practice, when in negotiating their identities they are surrounded by persistent stereotypes of themselves in an unequal power relationship with the dominant society? If media plays an important role in the production and perpetuation of stereotypes and the formation of cultural identities, then how exactly do migrants construct a cultural identity using media? Following Thompson, for this study I considered 'media use' as made up by both media consumption and media creation (Thompson 1998). The issue of distribution is embedded in both consumption and creation of media texts, as questions of access and visibility are both relevant, especially for minorities. Existing small-scale case studies suggest that the creation of visual texts can offer a valuable space for young people to perform, explore and play with identity; but there is a significant lack of research in this field generally (de Block and Buckingham 2007). Additionally, most research looks at the actual production process and loses sight of problems related to distribution of the text, getting the message 'out there'.

Our aim in this study is therefore threefold:

Aim 1: Identify immigrants and ethnic minorities (IEM)'s perceptions with regards to their media portrayal in a specific setting (Barcelona, 2006-2008).

Aim 2: Describe the relationship between IEM's media practices (consumption+creation+distribution) and their construction of cultural identity.

Aim 3: Identify the opportunities that new (digital) media provide to IEM to contest stereotypes and negative portrayal in mainstream media.

When I started working on this research, at the beginning of 2005, I only had these three general aims. They were established after a pilot study in 2006, where the subject 'identity construction and media' was approached in a general way with nine young IEM. After spending a lot of time with the participants, working with them, hanging out with them, talking, observing and interviewing them in formal or informal settings, some new ideas emerged. They were the basis for 'recovering' some of my first interviews in 2006, and for new, longer and more focused interviews with the pilot study participants as well as new participants. In this way, the process became richer, as new ideas emerged from the initial data. The text that you are reading gives account of that process of reading and re-reading, of formulating questions, throwing them away, and try with new ones. The reader will have to 'read with me' in order to discover the relevant questions, 'grounded' in the data. Grounded Theory parts from the idea that all concepts and hypotheses - key elements of theory - should be *generated from* rather than *prior to* research. In other words, theory ought to result from an engagement in research, rather than being imposed on it (see Glaser and Strauss 1999, Strauss 1987, Strauss and Gorbin 1990). Using the Grounded Theory principles - a dialectic process between theory generation and theory verification, a circle of induction and deduction - I arrived at the following research questions:

How do young IEM in Barcelona perceive the construction of cultural identity by the media? How do they use media in order to explore and play with their identities in a way that allows them to be adopted or 'accepted' by the dominant society, or to reject mainstream cultural codes by contesting stereotyped imagery? What are the processes, conditions, and circumstances in which these young adults explore issues of cultural identity with regards to media?

3. INQUIRING INTO YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES

Due to the complexity of the subject, my choice on how to gather evidence was informed by a qualitative paradigm based on the principles of interpretative and critical communicative

methodology, with ethnographically styled methods including long-term participant observation, in-depth interviews and the analysis of audio-visual material created by the participants during the project. CHAPTER 3 will address all the methodological issues at stake in the present study. For now it will do to point out that this is a qualitative study that looks for answers to *how* and *why* questions, rather than to the *what* or *how many* kind of questions. This implies a radical stance in methodology, as the only way of obtaining reliable information is spending a lot of time with participants and engaging them in the production of texts, in a process of constant dialogue with each other.

Over three years, sixteen young people from different neighbourhoods in the Barcelona metropolitan area were followed (see Table 1 below). During the time they worked with digital video in a multicultural project, we had conversations about media and representation, interculturality and multiculturalism, and the youngsters – all at different times – represented themselves using digital media. They also talked about music, everyday life in Barcelona and the places they came from. As a researcher it was this 'depth' of qualitative data that gave me the most reliable information concerning identity construction of these young adults. Paul Willis, great writer in the field of youth culture, states in his *Common Culture*:

> 'The teenage and early adult years are important from a cultural perspective and in special need of a close 'qualitative' attention because it is here, at least in the first-world western cultures, where people are formed most self-consciously through their own symbolic and other activities. It is where they form symbolic moulds through which they understand themselves and their possibilities for the rest of their lives. It is also the stage where people begin to construct themselves through nuance and complexity, through difference as well as similarity.' (Willis 1990: 7)

Willis maintains that there is 'life out there in the streets' and that young people's lives 'are actually full of expressions, signs and symbols through which individuals and groups seek to creatively establish their presence, identity and meaning' (Willis 1990: 1). In this sense it has to be pointed out that 'creativity' in this project does not only refer to home-made videos made to entertain each other, but also to nearly professional products that were created by participants within the context of the research, and some of which were actually (and at the time of writing still are) broadcasted on public television or screened at festivals. I will argue that for this piece of research the separation between 'the study of media' and 'the study of how audiences read the media' was being challenged as participants were becoming *prosumers* of media texts.

CHAPTER 4 gives account of these young people's lives, their relationship to media and their sense-making practices. The results of the research in terms of the analysis of interviews, observation and media products will be presented here by means of thematic clusters. CHAPTER 5, then, will discuss the findings of three selected 'cases' of young IEM engaging with media: Manuela, Federico and Jonas. This Catalan Roma, Argentinian student and cosmopolitan

Barceloner exemplified each in their own way some of the complexities and contradictions in the way young IEM in Barcelona see the world, define and represent themselves and make sense of media representations. CHAPTER 5 is where theory and empirical evidence come together to eventually point into the direction of new pieces of theory to be explored.

4. RESEARCH CONTEXT: THE ROOTS & ROUTES PROJECT

The participants of this study were part of an ongoing project called 'Roots & Routes' (www.rootsnroutes.eu), originally co-ordinated by MiraMedia, a Dutch organisation concerned with the representation and participation of minorities in the media. This artistic, 'hands-on' project took place in 10 European major cities simultaneously over three years[2], and evolved around activities for talented youngsters from different ethno-cultural backgrounds in the field of music, dance and media. Participants' ages ran from fifteen to twenty-five, although in several countries the media participants were slightly older. This study's aims and objectives are independent from the Roots&Routes project aims. The project as such - funded by the European Commission - 'scouts, inspires and coaches young talented musicians, dancers and media makers with different cultural backgrounds who are living in deprived areas of big cities and do not naturally find their way into the established stages, media institutions and art schools.'[3] Under the guidance of experienced artists and media-professionals, Roots&Routes thus stimulates their skills and puts their talents to the test of the masters. After the performances, follow-up activities and summer schools are organised.

The strength of the project lies in the combination of music and dance on one hand, and media on the other. The media track runs simultaneously with the music and dance performances. The media group's characteristics and activities are somewhat different, since the media training and production process is more time-consuming and asks intensive and professional coaching. Therefore, the project leader MiraMedia recommended each participating country to involve a local partner organisation that was already experienced in executing media projects and which had media facilities.

[2] The project, supported by the European programme Culture 2000, started in 2005 and ended in 2008. In total 10 countries/cities were involved in the Roots&Routes project at the time of this study: Germany (Köln), France (Lille), Italy (Firenze), The Netherlands (Amsterdam/Rotterdam), Spain (Barcelona), Greece (Larissa), Hungary (Budapest), Finland (Helsinki), Sweden (Stockholm), UK (London).

[3] See Annex 1: Roots&Routes International Protocol

This is when the University Barcelona was asked to join the project, and I became in charge of the Roots&Routes media track. From this moment on (March-April 2006), my role in the project was twofold: at the same time I was responsible for the development of the media activities in Barcelona (scouting, training, coaching and following-up) within the frame of the project, and simultaneously I set up my research with the media participants. The media talents in Barcelona participated in two different ways: one the one hand they received basic training in the use of the camera, capturing and editing, and they were asked to make reports, documentaries and self-portraits related to the project; and on the other hand they were asked to participate in a research project.

The first year (2006), ten people participated in R&R of which nine agreed to participate in the study. The second edition (2007), six participated in R&R and all six were part of the study. The last year (2008), six youngsters participated in R&R, of which one participated in this study (see Fig. 1).

	Participants R&R Barcelona (music, dance, media)	Media Participants R&R Barcelona (all)	Participants for this study (from media participants)
2006	31	10	**9**
2007	28	6	**6**
2008	32	6	**1**
TOTALS	**91**	**22**	**16**

Fig. 1. Total participants in this study with regards to total participants Roots&Routes Barcelona and total media participants (2006-2008).

As seen from Fig. 1, out of twenty-two media participants in Barcelona, sixteen participated in the study. These sixteen young women and men were observed and interviewed repeatedly and participated in registered group sessions, but otherwise carried out the same activities as their project peers.

The full transcripts of the interviews and group sessions I recorded with participants are not publicly available due to privacy reasons. However their clips, documentaries and other audio-visual material is compiled in the attached CD-DVD in their complete version. Readers can view the whole film or browse through the clip according to the analysed fragments. Only the clips analysed specifically for this study are included on the CD-DVD, although all products and their

production processes were taken into account in the overall analysis. Most clips produced by the Roots&Routes media participants in Barcelona are available online.[4]

Finally I want to point out that in this study, apart from my attempt at doing a good job as a researcher in systematically registering, analysing and critically evaluating evidence, I have tried to listen to participants with an open mind, and let their voices hear through the text. They are the ones who should be heard, as all too often minorities' voices are distorted or get lost not only in media discourses but also in academic ones.

[4] See http://rootsbarcelona.blogspot.com [last accessed September 2009]

CHAPTER II
KEY THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

'Representation is conceived as entering into the very constitution of things; and thus culture is a 'constitutive' process, as important as the economic or material 'base' in shaping social subjects and historical events - not merely a reflection of the world after the event.'

Stuart Hall, *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*

1. MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS: EXCLUSION AND CONTESTATION

1.1. REPRESENTATIONS IN THE MEDIA: FIXED MEANINGS?

This study is concerned with the relationship between media representations of migrants and Roma people in Spain, and their construction of cultural identity. The concept of representation has commonly two dimensions to it: representation as in depicting - offering an image of an event or a person that was already there -, and representation as in 'standing in for', substituting or symbolising a person or a group of people. Cultural studies reject the idea of representation in the first sense: as an apparently straightforward re-presentation of a reality that was 'there'. Stuart Hall has talked about 'the circle of representation', challenging the old view that events can be represented in a 'correct' or 'incorrect' way, and that we are able, as it were, to 'measure' its degree of distortion against its 'one and only meaning'. This old view parted from the idea that any event indeed carries its intrinsic meaning, before being represented. Hall challenges this idea by saying that representation is constitutive of meaning. In other words, meaning only exists through representation:

> ' (...) representation is conceived as entering into the very constitution of things; and thus culture is a 'constitutive' process, as important as the economic or material 'base' in shaping social subjects and historical events - not merely a reflection of the world after the event.' (Hall 1997b: 6)

Representations, just like events, would not have any meaning if we did not share some common concepts about the world: conceptual maps. For example, if I did not know the concept 'elections' and its map of meanings, I would absolutely not understand why people would enter a private booth, come out with a piece of paper after a few minutes and deposit it into a sealed box. Let alone that I could grasp the meaning of representations of such an event. The category 'elections' is part of a learnt system of classification of the world, and the act of 'going to vote' is only meaningful if every individual within the system has got 'elections' on their conceptual map. These common concepts or shared maps of meaning is what Hall calls 'culture'. Culture is thus a particular 'system of representation' (Hall 1997b).

However, learning and sharing these conceptual maps is only possible through language: there is no way that I can know if you share a concept with me if we do not communicate. In cultural studies, the notion of communication and language is taken in a broad sense: language can be both verbal and non-verbal; visual texts are as valid as written texts. Language allows us not only to share common concepts, but also to try and 'fix' meaning. As Hall pointed out, events do not have any 'one and only fixed' meaning, since only through representation they become meaningful. So the fixing of meaning happens during the representation process, and it happens through

language. In other words, meaning does not exist outside of discourse. This is not to say that nothing exists outside of discourse (a mountain will be always a mountain in the physical world), but rather that nothing *meaningful* exists outside of discourse (a picture of a mountain will have a different meaning when we see it in a holiday brochure than when we see it in a newspaper article about the war in Afghanistan). Discourse, then, is operative when through language we try to *fix* the meaning of an event, a person or a group according to our views or in our interest. In other words, when we try to impose our meaning and hereby discard or deny other possible meanings. Discourses are therefore always ideological positions; they are predicated on beliefs and values. But, as Hall continues, discourses can only impose 'preferred' meanings through practices of representations: it is only in practice, in the 'real world', where the production of meaning can take place. A news report is the final result of a complex and often expensive process that involves people, material and equipment. Its emission and distribution to a high number of people depends on yet another complex and expensive process that involves even more human, material and technical resources. In other words, the 'production of meaning' is only possible through the materialisation, the *practice*, of representation.

Who, then, decides the 'preferred' meaning of an event, a person or a group? Hall suggests that the one who has the most *power* to materialise representations through discourse is the one who determines the preferred meaning of an event. At this point it becomes clear that media are one of the most powerful – although not by any means the only – sites where meaning is produced. Media are institutions that are specialised in the production of meaning through representations. In other words, constructing representations is what media do. Stereotyping, as we will see below (1.4 'Stereotyping as a signifying practice'), is a very specific form of representing by which power and ideology try to 'fix' meaning about social groups. This, however, does not mean that media representations always succeed in fixing a preferred reading for us. There is a possibility for resistance; audiences have certain margins to resist the preferred meaning with 'negotiated' and 'oppositional' readings (see Figure 2 below). The study presented here is precisely a close examination of such negotiated and oppositional readings (or 'writings' for that matter) of people who feel that the 'preferred reading' of representations of the group they belong to has negative consequences for them.

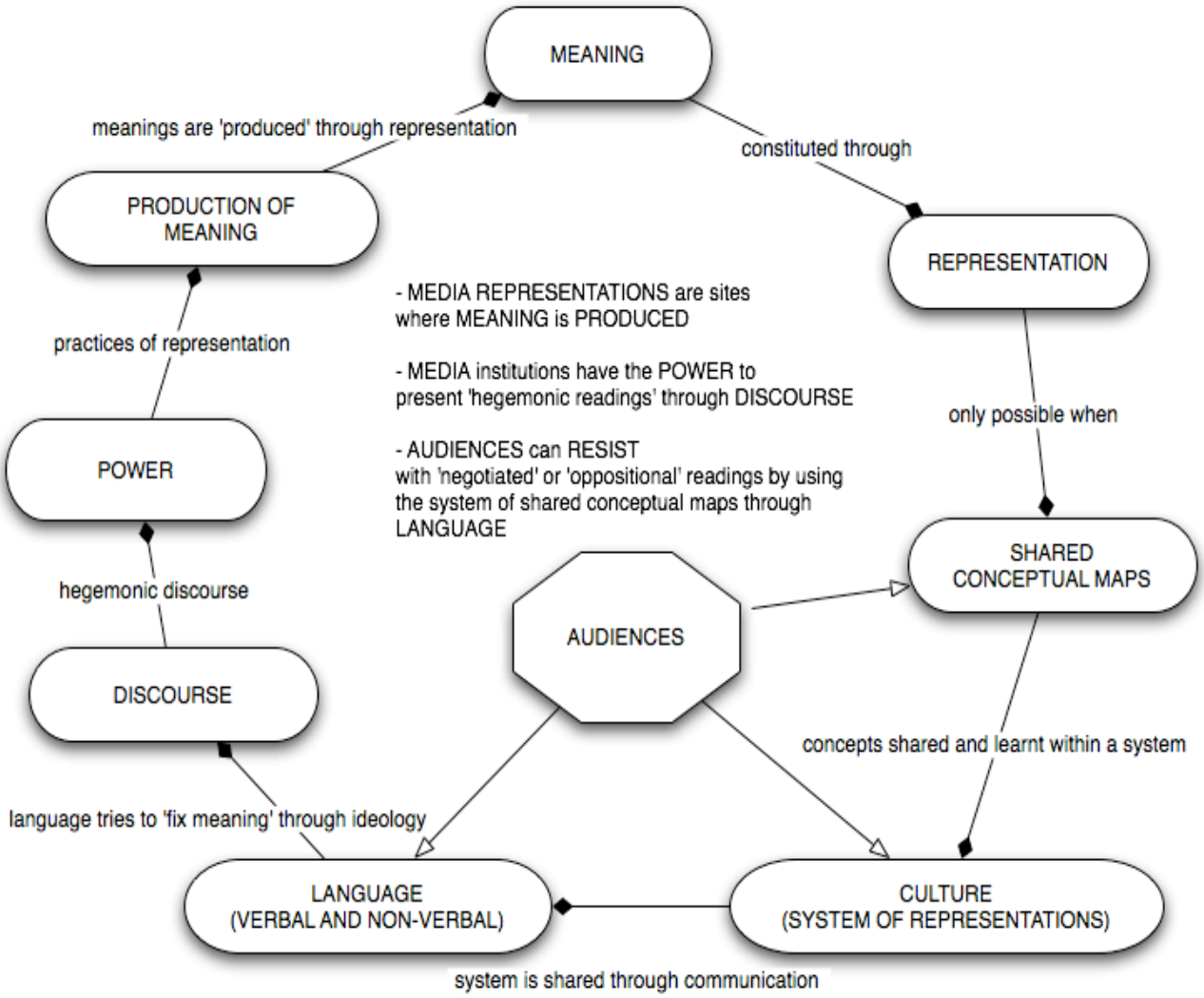


Fig. 2. 'The Circle of Representation', according to Stuart Hall

For media researchers, the notion of media as a site where meaning is 'produced' is self-evident; as a matter of fact, the premise that 'the camera always lies' is one of its main pillars (Price 1998; Winston 1998). As manufacturers of representations par excellence, the media always construct images of reality, and are never a mere 'reflection' of it (Berger 2006; Barker & Galasinski 2001; Tuchman 1983). Representation is a process through which the media manufacture versions of events, people and experiences. In this sense, representations are necessarily 'constructs'. This new idea of representations as 'constitutive of meaning' has lead many scholars within cultural studies and particularly media studies to initiate new kinds of research, shifting the focus from the 'gap between the represented and the representation', to the ways meanings are constituted within representation. As Graeme Burton points out:

> 'Representations - of different social groups, for example - are by definition untruthful, though not necessarily lacking any truth at all. Manufacturing representations is what media do. Critical interest is in *how* this happens, what is produced, how it may affect the conceptions of the audience.' (Burton 2005: 355; my emphasis)

Graeme Burton's argument that rather than looking at representations *an sich*, we should pay attention to the (ideological) interactions connected to them, inevitably brings us to the receivers of such representations: 'the audience'.

1.2. Power of the media: the text vs. the 'audience'

For 'reception' I rely on Hall's definition as 'a practice of people who are actively involved with the contents they receive from the media', and who interpret these representations in a process of signifying practices (see Hall 1997a). Reception research, then, looks into how spectators interpret representations, negotiate meanings and code texts (Hall [1973] 1980). Through this process of interpretation, individuals reflect about themselves and about the world (Hall 1997b, Thompson 1998). As such, reception research considers 'the audience' to be active rather than passive, although this has not always been the case (see Introduction, 2.2 'Audience and reception studies'). As David Morley reminds us:

> 'The history of studies of the media audience can be seen as a series of oscillations between perspectives which have stressed the power of the text (or message) over its audiences and perspectives which have stressed the barriers "protecting" the audience from the potential effects of the message.' (Morley, undated)

In the 1930s, when 'effects research' was originated in the Frankfurt School by thinkers like Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse, the audience was thought to have little or nothing to say about the messages that they received from the mass media (Kitzinger 2004, Price 1998, Jensen 2002). As Jenny Kitzinger points out,

> 'The origins of contemporary mass media studies are often located in the 1930s Germany, where academics within the Frankfurt school responded to Germany's descent into fascism by developing theories about mass public responses to propaganda. (Kitzinger 2004: 170-171).

This 'hypodermic needle' model was coined by Critical Theory thinkers of the Frankfurt School as 'the process in which media had the capacity of 'injecting' messages in the masses' heads and have a 'direct effect' there' (Kitzinger 2004: 170). Since the hypodermic model, reception research has gone through many changes. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s the notion gained ground that the audience was increasingly recognised to not be completely passive 'victims' of the culture industry. Among the most prominent work was Katz and Lazarsfeld's Personal Influence, in which they developed the concept of 'two-step flow' communication: in this view the influence of the media was crucially mediated by 'gatekeepers' and 'opinion leaders' within the audience

community (Kitzinger 2004: 170; Jensen 2002: 44). Additionally, Herta Herzog's pioneering work on the 'uses and gratifications' theory, which focuses on what the audience does with media rather than what media does to the audience, became widely influential at least into the 1980s, as it argued that individuals use media for their own purposes (Kitzinger 2004, Price 1998). When Stuart Hall presented his 'encoding/decoding' model of communication, a balance between the 'effect theory' and the 'uses and gratifications' model was approached (Hall [1973] 1980, Jensen 2002). David Morley summarises:

> '[This model] took, from the effects theorists, the notion that mass communication is a structured activity, in which the institutions which produce the messages do have the power to set agendas, and to define issues. (…) The model also attempted to incorporate, from the uses and gratifications perspective, the idea of the active viewer, making meaning from the signs and symbols which the media provide. However, it was also designed to take on board concerns with the ways in which responses and interpretations are socially structured and culturally patterned at a level beyond that of individual psychologies.' (Morley undated)

The 1980s and early 1990s saw a turn to exploring many different dimensions of audiences, opening up new ways of researching media reception and new ways of theorising power (Kitzinger 2004: 171). The question was also raised if the audience – these people who are 'actively involved with the contents they receive from the media' (Hall 1997a) - actually relate to the contents in exactly the same ways. In other words, the homogeneous character of the audience (including the individualist perspective of the uses and gratifications approach) was put into question. As opposed to the homogeneous audience notion in traditional effects research, the 'new audience studies' that emerged during the 1980s and early 1990s finally parted from the plurality and heterogeneity of 'audiences' from a social and cultural point of view (Biltereyst & Meers, in press). Today, media studies has seen a return to the text in terms of a concern with how media texts might influence public understanding despite audience activity (Kitzinger 2004: 171):

> 'Much of this work sought to examine media "effects" while also taking into account how interpretation, pleasure, and social networks mediates audience-text relations.' (Kitzinger 2004: 171)

For the study presented here, which took place in 21st Century Barcelona, I considered the relationship between text-audience-text as a constant interaction. It is hardly surprising that I did not think of the participants as 'the' audience, let alone a homogeneous audience. Participants of this study come from diverse ethnic, national and social backgrounds and have different media consumption patterns, perhaps one per participant. They look at media representations in very diverse ways through very diverse channels (local and national broadcasting, satellite TV, internet…), none of which necessarily overlap with each other. Globalisation, internet communications, migration and ethnic diversity in metropolises like Barcelona thus turn 'the audience' into an empty signifier, which is the main reason why throughout the study I consider participants to be 'spectators', rather than 'the audience'. Additionally, all participants were both

spectators and creators (prosumers), as they were producing their media texts within an existing system of representations. It is in this context that I will look at how they 'decode' structured media portrayals of cultural groups and to which degree they respond with a hegemonic, negotiated or oppositional reading (Hall [1973] 1980), or 'writing' for that matter, since they were asked to (re)present themselves. I will extensively come back to the notion of 'encoding/decoding' in section 1.9 on 'Strategies to contest stereotyping' below.

1.3. The poetics and politics of stereotyping

How then, have cultural or ethnic minorities been portrayed in the media? Portrayal and representation will be used as synonyms in this text, referring to the actual 'depicting' of cultural groups, mainly in television texts. Research into minority representation internationally has revealed two fundamental aspects: the under-representation of minority cultural groups on one hand, and their stereotypical representation on the other (see inter alia Cottle 2000; Hall 1997; Rodrigo & Martínez 1997; van Dijk 1997; Igartua, Muñiz & Otero 2006). It is suggested that as a consequence of such representations, ethnic and cultural minorities continue to be subordinated in accordance with 'white' ideological hegemony (see Van Dijk 1997, hooks 1992, Cottle 2000). Moreover, as traditional racism, based on biological criteria, is being replaced by new and more subtle forms of racism related to 'culture' rather than to 'race' (van Dijk 1997), the role of the media in the representation of cultural minorities has become increasingly important. Media shape political discourses and provide a stage for public debate. In this sense 'Culture' has become a term used by both left and right to justify positions towards minority groups and new forms of racism, exclusion and segregation in most European countries since the fall of the Berlin Wall (see Maly 2007). Before going into cultural politics (2.1 'What's culture got to do with it?'), we should make a distinction between stereotyping and distorted or negative portrayal of cultural groups in the media.

1.4. Stereotyping as a signifying practice

Stereotyping reduces people to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as 'fixed by Nature' (Hall 1997b: 257). These characteristics, and by extension the stereotypes, are not necessarily bad or good an sich. From a psychological point of view, everyone creates stereotypes. Following Hall's idea of 'unchangeable features', stereotypes buffer us against our most urgent fears by extending them and making it possible for us to act as though their source were 'beyond our control' (Gilman 1985). Gilman's view on stereotyping, although a quite

Freudian one, gives us some insight in the mechanisms of self-protection that we all use to cope with things in the world that are beyond our control. By seeing 'bad things' as fixed by Nature, and thus unchangeable, we can accept them. Stereotypes are thus a crude set of mental representations of reality: we divide the world with an imaginary line between 'us' and the 'Other', between 'good' and 'bad'. According to Jack Levin, we simply 'cannot function without them' (Levin 1975).

From a sociological point of view, the notion of stereotyping – both positive and negative stereotyping - is brought on by Richard Dyer. In his essay on 'Stereotyping' Dyer (1977) makes a distinction between typing and stereotyping. His vision of typing is similar to the psychoanalytic view of stereotyping: we all need to categorise the people we meet/know in classes or 'types'. The categories can be of different kinds and can be positive, negative or neutral: we can assign people to types according to the role they perform in society or in our own lives (parent, child, lover, boss, friend...), their membership of different groups according to categories such as gender, class, ethnicity, language, in terms of their personality type and so on... In other words, a type is any simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognised characterisation in which a few traits are fore grounded (Dyer 1977).

Stereotyping, however, occurs when we get hold of those 'easily grasped and widely recognised' features of a person or a group, reduce everything about that person or group to those traits, exaggerate and simplify them, and fix them without change or possible development in the future (Dyer 1977, Hall 1997b). And this may the point where stereotypes, including the 'positive' ones, become problematic.

1.5. Stereotypical portrayals in media representations

When we look at media, we easily observe that stereotypes are frequently used for representing people or groups in advertising, news, fiction and non-fiction programmes. In fact, stereotypes are the way in which power tries to 'fix' meaning (Hall 1996a, 1997a). Time pressure, audience figures, advertisement costs (price per second of air time), and audience demands for high-level entertainment, makes stereotypes suitable to quickly 'get the message across'. The Canadian Media Awareness Network has pointed out that 'media stereotypes are inevitable, especially in the advertising, entertainment and news industries, which need as wide an audience as possible to quickly understand information'[5]. Stereotypes act like codes that give audiences a

[5] See http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/stereotyping/index.cfm

quick, common understanding of a person or group of people—usually relating to their class, ethnicity or race, gender, sexual orientation, social role or occupation.

But stereotypes in media, just like in daily life, can be problematic. They can reduce a wide range of differences in people to simplistic categorisations, transform assumptions about particular groups of people into 'realities', be used to justify the position of those in power, and so perpetuate social prejudice and inequality (see Cottle 2000). Additionally, instead of inviting spectators to question stereotypes about minorities, media generally provide hegemonic messages about them. Most items related to ethnic minorities are still treated by journalists and editors in a way that masks racism and pushes forward a dominant ideology (see Entman 1990, Larson 2006, van Dijk 1997). Media makers are usually unaware of migrants and ethnic minorities' realities, and generally do not invest efforts in getting to know them, or indeed acknowledging the racism and discrimination they face in their daily lives (van Dijk 1997).

Finally, as opposed to stereotypes in daily life, the images manufactured by media institutions – especially television - are sophisticated, highly professional and thoroughly studied. TV texts are well-structured messages, and often the stereotypes enunciated in a professionally produced text is a lot more powerful than the ones expressed in daily conversation, magazines or jokes, as the synergy between image and sound evokes a unique and immediate emotional response. According to experts in the field of education and communication, the emotional factors in media texts, produced by the subtle combination of image and sound, are more powerful and effective when trying to get a message through than any 'rational' arguments, as the first operate on the unconscious level (Bartolomé 2008, Ferrés 2003).

1.6. THE 'VICTIMS' OF STEREOTYPING

So much for the relationship between stereotypical representations and the spectator, but what about the 'stereotyped' groups themselves, and about their self-perception when seeing themselves repeatedly presented in a stereotyped way? 'Stereotyped' groups generally have little or nothing to say about the way they are represented in the media. It has been suggested that the stereotyped groups eventually internalise the image given of them, and somehow start behaving in relation to the stereotype. In the sixties post-colonial critic and psychiatrist Franz Fanon (1968) noted that colonial subjects internalise the ways that the 'rulers' see them, evaluate and devaluate them. According to his findings and those of post-colonial critic Edward Said, the denigration of indigenous cultures and people, supported by military and institutional power, is often internalised by the colonised with devastating consequences (Fanon 1968: 52; Said 1979), and it is only by freeing themselves from the power of that 'gaze' that they can free themselves politically

(see also de Block & Buckingham 2007). If we translate this idea of the 'ruler's gaze' to current media representations as a site of institutional power, stereotyping may also have consequences for the groups who are stereotyped. Rick Shepherd, for example, showed how stereotyped groups are influenced by the dominant society's gaze in their perception of themselves, their self-esteem and their aspirations (Shepherd 2003).

Other recent studies have shown that stereotypical portrayals do have an influence on young Latinos' self-image (Rivedeneyra, Ward & Gordon 2007; see below 1.7 'The mechanisms of exclusion'). Central to this study will therefore be the question of how participants were affected by stereotyping in the media, if they feel 'trapped' by the stereotypes – both negative and positive - and how this affects their daily lives.

1.7. Mechanisms of exclusion: negative, insufficient and distorted portrayal of migrants and Roma people

Whereas stereotypes about cultural groups not always necessarily entail negative responses (e.g. how the world thinks about German efficiency or Italian food), negative portrayals do. The consequences of negative portrayal for mainstream 'white' society, often provoking overt or more subtle forms of racism, have been extensively documented, both quantitatively and qualitatively (see Campbell 1995; van Dijk 1997; Entman 1990; Fiske 2000; Ferguson 1998; Harindranath 2000). Christopher P. Campbell pointed out almost fifteen years ago that eventually the stereotypes on television news may contribute to racism and discrimination (Campbell 1995), which was recently illustrated in an empirical US study on the association between viewing stereotypes of Latinos and racist manifestations of the white majority ranging from 'mere' hostility to disparate judgements of guilt including prison sentencing (see Mastro, Behm-Morawitz & Kopacz 2008: 3).

Less research has looked into the consequences for the 'negatively portrayed' themselves. Some recent quantitative studies have focussed their attention on the impact of negative portrayal on the affected groups' self-esteem, especially among young people (see Rivadeneyra, Ward & Gordon 2007; Mok 1998). In their study on self-conceptions of Latino youth in the US in relation to their media use, Rocío Rivadeneyra, Monique Ward and Maya Gordon found some powerful evidence of a potential link between Latino portrayals (or rather, the lack of such portrayals) and a low social and appearance self-esteem, especially among Latinas. They suggest that minority youth may come to feel badly about themselves as a consequence of 'exposure to material that seldom includes them' (Rivadeneyra, Ward & Gordon 2007: 262). Not only lack of representation, but also (negative) stereotypes are assumed to diminish Latino youth self-esteem in the long run:

> '(…) repeated exposure to stereotypical portrayals of Latinos as lazy, violent, uneducated, and criminal could lead viewers of all races to believe that these attributes characterize Latinos in the real world (...). In this way, it is believed that Latino viewers may come to think of themselves and their own group in this negative ways, thereby diminishing the self-esteem of individual Latino viewers.' (Rivadeneyra, Ward & Gordon 2007: 263-4; my emphasis)

The same authors suggest that frequent exposure to media that feature mainly white models and actors with 'European' features may lead Latino viewers to feel dissatisfied with their own physical appearance as well (Rivadeneyra, Ward & Gordon 2007: 265). Similarly, Teresa Mok has noted the potentially detrimental effects of being a 'person of color' for Asian Americans in a society that emphasizes a mono-racial standard of beauty through media representations (Mok 1998). Although this kind of work partly draws on the somewhat outdated 'effects research' and Cultivation Theory[6] tradition, the potential link between stereotypes of 'lazy and violent Latinos' and the consequences for envisaged groups will be relevant to this study when working with Latino participants.

1.7.1. Portrayal of migrant communities in Spain

In Spain, Jéssica Retis has demonstrated that discourses on Latin American immigration in Spanish printed media offer a frame of reference that influences the self-perception of Colombian and Equatorian immigrants in Madrid, and partly determine the way they interact with the host society (Retis 2006). In her empirical study, combining discourse analysis and discussion groups with subjects, she has noted how Equatorian women felt humiliated and patronised by the Spanish attitude towards 'them poor Equatorians', whereas Colombian migrants had feelings of anger and powerlessness towards Spanish society, accusing Spanish media of portraying them as drug traffickers and criminals. This negative image is for Colombians an impediment to relating positively to Spanish locals, as they do not always succeed in showing that they are 'not like that':

> ' (…) when they share their personal experiences about the first intercultural contacts with locals [in Spain], Colombians admit that they must make an effort to demonstrate that they do not coincide with the public image given of them. They then assess these efforts in terms of success and failure.' (Retis 2006: 11; my translation from Spanish original).

However useful, these studies are still scarce, they focus on different media (television vs. printed press) and have yielded inconsistent results, as they face the challenge of establishing causal relationships between variables (Rivadeneyra, Ward & Gordon 2007: 262; Tortajada & Willem 2009). But in the context of this study it seemed at least sensible to assume that the consequences of

[6] The Cultivation Theory, coined by George Gerbner and Larry Gross in the 1960s, argues that frequent media exposure leads people to eventually cultivate beliefs about the real world that coincide with the media images presented (Staiger 2005; Jensen 2002). As argued in section 1.2 'Power of the media: the text vs. the audience', this theory as well as the 'effects research' tradition have been nuanced by more complex models that grant more power and a greater margin of action to audiences.

negative portrayal are real and that they function as mechanisms of exclusion for the negatively portrayed.

In Spain, just like what we see in the international context, the opinion of Spanish people about migration and immigrants has been analysed frequently and evaluated from different angles (see Díez 2001; Rizo 2001; Retis 2004, 2006). Marta Rizo, for example, has shown that the Spanish' affective responses to media discourses about immigration oscillate between 'fear' and 'compassion' (Rizo 2001), although the kind of attitude seems to depend on where migrants come from: according to Jessica Retis, opinion polls reveal that Latin Americans are generally perceived more positively by Spanish people than any other group from outside the European Union:

> Between 1996 and 2003 five surveys were carried out in order to evaluate Spanish 'sympathy' towards immigrants, according to where they came from. In all cases, Latin Americans enjoyed the same as or slightly less sympathy than 'Western Europeans', and always more than 'Portuguese', 'Eastern Europeans', 'North Americans', 'Africans' and 'North Africans'. (Retis 2004; my translation from Spanish original).

1.7.2. Portrayal of Roma communities in Spain

As to Roma, most of the research has focussed on discourses and portrayal of Roma communities in Eastern European countries. Worldwide, Roma people are subjected to an overtly racist discourse and their portrayals are generally related to crime and conflict (see Tortajada & Willem 2009). In Slovenia, for example, the mere presence of Roma communities is represented as a 'serious problem' (Erjavec, Hvratin & Kelbl 2000), or their members are portrayed as people with 'no education', involved in 'conflicts' and 'scandals'. They are only viewed 'positively' if they are musicians, as Veronika Munk notes in her study on representation of Roma in Hungarian media:

> 'The typical stereotypes of the Roma often refer to negative characteristics: they don't like to work, are uneducated, are immoral. The Roma are said to be the cause of their poverty, their problems would be solved if they started to work, the crime is in the nature of the Gypsies. And the only positive recognised group-characterisation refers to musical ability: the Roma are great musicians.' (Munk 2007: 84)

As suggested by this author, the only way to be successful or to achieve recognition as a Roma in Hungary is to become a 'star' (Munk 2007).

In Spain, Roma or *gitano* communities, which have been present in Spain for almost six hundred years[7], are by and large the most 'forgotten' citizens. An estimated five hundred to eight

[7] The arrival of Roma in Spain was first recorded in 1425, in Zaragoza. See: The situation of Roma in Spain (2002). Report of the Open Society Institute, EUMAP, Monitoring Minority Protection in EU Member States, p. 286.

hundred thousand Roma are settled throughout the Spanish state[8], with its largest communities in the provinces of Andalucía (more than 40%), Valencia and Murcia, and concentrations in major cities such as Barcelona, Madrid, Seville, Granada, Valencia and Zaragoza. In Catalonia, the Roma community currently ascends to more than fifty thousand members, most of who live in Barcelona in the areas of Gràcia, Hostafrancs, El Raval and La Mina[9]. Similarly to what happens in other countries with a major presence of Roma, Spanish media consistently report in a negative way about *gitanos* (see Ramírez Heredia 1997, 2002), although there has been a decrease in the negative portrayal of Roma in the news during the last decade: from all the analysed news items in 1995, 31% contained negative imagery, as opposed to 17,5% in 2001 (Ramírez Heredia 1997, 2002). However, Roma researchers point out to the fact that *gitano*'s appearance in the media is still sensationalistic, the information lacks profoundness and rigour, and in most cases stories are not checked with Roma sources (Ramírez Heredia 1997, 2002). In words of Sebastián Porras, Spanish Roma journalist, 'there are documentaries on every imaginable subject, but in the last ten years I never saw one about us. I am dreaming about a series of ten one-hour documentaries about how Roma really live in this country.'[10] Porras points out to the lack of information that lies at the basis of misunderstandings about Roma, and proposes more participation of media professionals from Roma background in the production of imagery about Roma.

1.8. Negative portrayal, power and resistance

As we have seen at the beginning of this chapter (see 1.1 and 1.2), negative representations of ethnic and cultural minorities are closely related to questions of power (Hall 1996a, 1997a; Gilroy 1987; hooks 1992). Power, in its Gramscian and Foucauldian sense, is found in all interactions and in all communicative relationships in society. The notion of power has two basic components: power is the capacity to do something, and power means the domination of one individual or group over any other(s). Max Weber described power in a social relationship as 'the probability of

[8] Number based on a Report submitted by Spain pursuant to Article 25 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, 19 December 2002, p. 3, as cited in The situation of Roma in Spain (2002). Report of the Open Society Institute, EUMAP, Monitoring Minority Protection in EU Member States, p. 286.

[9] Although no official figures exist (ethnic background is not considered in Catalan registers), according to data from 1999 by the General Roma Secretariat Association (included in the General Scheme for Roma in Catalonia, 2002-2006), it is estimated that in Catalonia counts 52.937 Roma members. See: Departament de Benestar i Família (2005) Pla Integral del poble gitano a Catalunya 2005-2008. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.

[10] Interview with Sebastian Porras in November 2001, as cited in 'The situation of Roma in Spain'. Report of the Open Society Institute, EUMAP, Monitoring Minority Protection in EU Member States (2002: 345).

being in a position to carry through the own will despite resistance' (Weber 1925)[11]. At the societal level, the Marxist author Nicos Poulantzas defines power as the 'capacity of a class to realise its specific objective interests' (Poulantzas 1986).

In the field of media and communication the negative portrayal of migrants and ethnic minorities are regarded as articulations of power: for example, by presenting the 'other' as a problem, the mainstream or 'white' society keeps outsiders or recently arrived at a safe distance by stressing their difference. In terms of Stuart Hall, this mechanism is part of a body of rules and conventions on the ground of which people or groups are categorised according to symbolically fixed boundaries, and everything that does not 'belong', is excluded (Hall 1997b). These symbolically fixed boundaries are articulated along the following 'binary oppositions':

Normal	Deviant / Pathologic
Acceptable	Unacceptable
What belongs	What is different; the Other
Insiders	Outsiders
Us	Them
Pure	Polluted
White	Black

Fig. 3. Binary oppositions along which fixed social boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are constructed, according to Hall (1997b).

Further building on Hall's analysis in Figure 3, Teun van Dijk has identified a similar binary system of 'positive self-representation and negative other-presentation' in media discourses whereby all *good* actions are associated with 'Us' and all *bad* actions with 'Them' (van Dijk 2000: 38).

As we have outlined above, immigrants and ethnic minorities - regardless the time they have resided in the dominant society - are almost always depicted in a way that makes them 'Them', the

[11] Translation based on the interpretation of the original definition 'Macht bedeutet jede Chance, innerhalb einer sozialen Beziehung den eigenen Willen auch gegen wiederstreben durchzusetzen, gleichviel worauf diese Chance beruht' by Walliman, I., Tatsis, N. C. and Zito, G. V. (1977). 'On Max Weber's Definition of Power'. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology. 13, 3:231-235.

other, the polluted, the black. Gayatri Spivak, in her essay 'Can the subaltern speak?' adds the dimension of gender in her concept of subaltern, inspired by post-colonialism and Gramsci's 'subaltern classes' (Spivak 1988). She argues that there is no margin at all for the subaltern to resist hegemonic discourses, especially not for women:

> The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with 'woman' as a pious item. Representation has not withered away.' (Spivak 1988: 303).

Nonetheless, the fact that minority groups - on the 'oppressed pole' - usually have little or nothing to say about the way they are portrayed in mainstream media does not mean that as spectators they are completely helpless. John Fiske has argued that audiences, also minority audiences, have certain margins to construct meanings of their own: in his 'Understanding popular culture' he celebrates what he sees as 'popular resistance' (Fiske 1989). Despite the criticism on Fiske's over-estimation of popular resistance to the 'dominant forces in our culture' (Price 1998), many authors within media and cultural studies have acknowledged that the notion of audience(s) is informed by oppositional readings of the hegemony sought by mainstream media discourse (see, for example, Ang 1990; Gillespie 1995; Hall 1996a, 1997a).

Additionally, we may mistakenly think that the dominant groups always try to convey a dominant or 'mainstream' message. According to Price, this misunderstanding often leads to the vision of domination and subordination as fixed rather than dynamic positions in an ongoing process of mediation (Price 1998). This polarised vision encourages either an overly pessimistic view of power (e.g. the Frankfurt School who claimed media to have a 'hypodermic' or 'magic bullet' effect; see 1.2), or an overly optimistic view of resistance (e.g. Fiske 1989, de Certeau 1980).

Price thus proposes a dialectical approach, which looks at both sides of the question (Price 1998). It is precisely this interaction between power and resistance that will be interesting for the present study, as we look at how young migrants and Roma resist the image given of them in Spanish media, not only by oppositional readings, but also by expressing their disagreement and by self-representation in documentaries and self-portraits.

1.9. Strategies to contest stereotyping

Stuart Hall has suggested that there are several 'positive' strategies to contest stereotyping. Both dominant and minority audiences do this by reversing the stereotype, offering positive versus negative imagery, and contesting from within (Hall 1997b). Hall points out that *reversing the stereotype* ('Men cannot drive') is not a strategy of subverting or overturning stereotypes, but rather offers a temporary escape for the stereotyped group in the sense that it loosens up the grip of one stereotypical extreme, but at the same time it can reinforce or create other stereotypes. In other

words, 'victims' of stereotypes can be trapped in the stereotype and unconsciously confirming it in the very terms in which they are trying to resist them: saying that men cannot drive implies that there is a margin of doubt. As a result, this strategy cannot overcome the binary oppositions inherent to racial stereotyping (see Figure 3, Hall 1997b). The present study will examine if and how young immigrants in Barcelona are trapped in the stereotypes about their cultural group.

The strategy of *positive versus negative imagery*, as we will see from this study, is the most relevant when talking about representation of ethnic minorities in the (audio-visual) media. In Spanish media today, it is the most used strategy in an attempt to substitute negative stereotypes, which continue to dominate popular representation. This strategy does invert the binary opposition, sometimes reading the 'negative' positively: 'Black is beautiful'. Despite Hall's argument that such strategy does not undermine the binary opposition, as positive images merely increase the diversity in which non-white cultures are being represented, but do not necessarily displace the negative ones (Hall 1997b), we will see that the young people who participated in this study are convinced that positive imagery continues to be a necessary condition for countering negative stereotypes. Indeed, challenging Hall's argument, some of the participants thought that 'displacing the negative images' of their own cultural group is not only not necessary but also not desirable, as this could put them in the position of 'the poor victims'.

Which brings us closer to Hall's third strategy: *contestation from within*. This kind of contestation is more concerned with the forms of racial representation than with introducing a new content. Instead of introducing positive imagery, it exposes negative imagery in a critical way; instead of avoiding the dangerous terrain of racial stereotypes, it attempts to make them work against themselves, from within the representational system. Contestation from within may be the most effective way of putting diversity and interculturality on the social and political agenda, as it challenges society to think about stereotypes without denying their existence. In this study we will examine this kind of strategy in detail.

1.10. Encoding/decoding model: different readings of the same text

To avoid saying that spectators are completely free to read texts however they wish, Stuart Hall offers three hypothetical positions from which audiences may decode texts: *dominant* or '*hegemonic*' reading, where the reader fully shares the text's code and reproduces the preferred reading of institutions; *negotiated* reading, where the reader partly shares the text's code but sometimes resists and modifies it in a way which reflects their own ideas or interests; and *oppositional* or '*counter-hegemonic*' reading in which the reader, whose social situation places them in a directly oppositional relation to the dominant code, understands the preferred reading but

does not share the text's code at all, putting into place an alternative frame of reference (Hall [1973] 1980).

In the present study we will explore how immigrants and ethnic minorities de-code media representations in a counter-hegemonic way as they feel offended by their negative portrayal in the media, but also sometimes share the text's preferred reading, when acknowledging a 'basis of truth' or confirming existing stereotypes (see Chapter 4). The study's aim is precisely to explore the tension between these different readings.

1.11. The production of alternative imagery in Spain and Catalonia

One form of contesting stereotypes is, thus, the production of alternative, 'positive' images. Positive imagery in the media is created both by agents from within the dominant system (journalists, editors, policy makers), and increasingly by the minority groups themselves, using alternative media channels ('ethnic minority media', local television or newspapers, the internet[12]).

As to the production of (positive) images of minorities on mainstream television in Spain, quite a few initiatives have been taken in the institutional sector, the professional sector and civil society. Although the Spanish state lacks an official independent public body that regulates the country's media policies like the British Ofcom, or the Belgian HRAS-CSA, some regions in Spain have instituted such organisms. In Catalonia, the CAC (Catalan Audio-visual Council[13]) was founded in 2000, and includes a special unit concerned with bringing more diversity into media portrayals[14]. Other institutional initiatives include specific funding schemes in province councils, town halls and ministries (see for example the ARAFI programme initiated by the Catalan government[15]). But also outside the public sectors initiatives have been taken: journalist associations start to become aware of their responsibilities in a multicultural society (see for example the 'Periodisme Solidari' unit within the Catalan Journalist Association), and many private initiatives (foundations, NGOs, associations) on both the 'majority' and 'minority' side are silently making their way into mainstream media and the public debate. Especially in the Basque

[12] See de Block and Buckingham (2007, Chapter 3) for an overview of the different kinds of 'ethnic minority media' and their uses in Europe.

[13] See www.cac.cat

[14] The 'Mesa per la Diversitat' http://www.mesadiversitat.cat/ carries out awareness raising activities, research, conferences and the creation of materials and toolkits for journalists.

[15] See www.gencat.cat/agaur

Country and Catalonia, where part of the population claim strong non-Spanish identities, much attention has been paid to including more positive portrayals of migrants and ethnic minorities.

As to minority media - programmes or channels produced by and for minority groups themselves -, the few existing initiatives in Spain have been isolated and reach a narrow range of action, as Spanish media are monopolised by the state televisions and major media corporations. As to *gitano* representation, for example, there are no private or public TV channels or regular Romaní programmes on public television whatsoever[16]. One example of a community net radio, produced for and by young Roma women, was *Voces Gitanas* ('Romaní voices'), but the project was closed down when funding ran out.[17]

[16] The situation of Roma in Spain (2002). Report of the Open Society Institute, EUMAP, Monitoring Minority Protection in EU Member States.

[17] See http://vocesgitanas.net/

2. CULTURAL IDENTITY: WHO NEEDS IT?

When exploring the main theoretical and empirical work on minority portrayal in media representations, it seems inevitable to look at the other side: how do minorities themselves relate to the images given of them, and by extension to the identities imposed on them? How do they construct (new) cultural identities using media in order to break the 'circle of representation'? When I asked participants what they had learned from the experience of participating in the Roots&Routes project, they generally referred to multiculturality, diversity or interculturality as the most important thing they had learned, or at least as one of the things they had learned.

> Q: In general, what have you learned in Roots&Routes, considering all aspects?
>
> A: Mmmh, I don't know if I learned anything new, but it confirms the idea of multiculturality. I don't know, people are the same and different everywhere; you can perfectly be with a boy from Senegal or with someone from Belgium or with someone from Mexico, you see. I mean there is no need to be separated from each other. That doesn't make sense. Nature is not like that. It's the confirmation of that idea, to me that is crucial. That's the most important thing about this project to me. (Male, Peruvian, 26)

For this participant, it is quite simple: there should be no separation between people on the basis of their background or culture, as 'nature is not like that'. Doesn't he, with this simple phrase, touch on an important question underlying this study: is 'culture' natural? The question of cultural identity, raised in cultural studies since the nineties, is more relevant than ever in the context of a globalised world and a recently expanded European Union with its hybrid and 'new' ethnicities, nationalities, and culturalities. Despite this participant's universalist statement ('people are the same everywhere'), there is no way we can get around cultural identity and pretend it does not exist. With this study I wanted to look at how young people from diverse ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds in the locality of Barcelona, but within the context of an international project, consume and create media texts and thereby negotiate their identities as young people, as women or men, as immigrants, as well-educated or self-made, as media makers or as members of their local communities.

2.1. WHAT'S CULTURE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

On the contrary to what our Peruvian participant suggested, cultural groups often feel like they are 'natural'. You can feel Spanish, Catalan, British, Muslim or Catholic. Sometimes we combine these labels; sometimes you find an identity in refusing any of them (Maly 2007). In any case, group identities seem like a given fact. But are they? Hall reminds us that the premise of

'fixed by Nature' is the basis of many stereotypes (Hall 1997b) and that we tend to categorise people into labels as a way of dealing with social reality (Dyer 1977). However, Maly and Zienkowski point out in their essay 'Between Nature and Imagination' that 'the only genuinely natural social entities are the individual and the whole of humanity' (Maly & Zienkowski 2007: 35)[18], any other entity being a social thus arbitrary construct. So what does people make define themselves as a *Gitano*, a Latin-American, a Belgian, Jew, African, or Colombian? And most of all, what does 'culture' have to do with it?

When starting this research I was aware of the plurality of meanings covered by the word 'culture'. Heeding Raymond Williams' warning that 'culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (Williams 1975), it seemed to me crucial to clearly identify my own vision on culture before starting the research, as participants would probably have their own very particular vision on culture, and by extension on cultural identity. Culture and cultura – in Spanish as well as in English – covers a whole range of possible meanings, both in popular and in academic discourses. Williams pointed out in the fifties that

> 'A culture has two aspects: the known meanings and directions, which its members are trained to; the new observations and meanings, which are offered and tested. (...) We use the word culture in these two senses: to mean a whole way of life - the common meanings; to mean the arts and learning - the special processes of discovery and creative effort.' (Williams [1958] 2001: 93).

Indeed, the polysemy of culture is certainly not exclusive to the academic world; the dichotomy between the 'common meanings' and the 'arts' is present at every level of society, be it in public or private communication, until today. For example – that is, if the reader allows me to anticipate the empirical part of this study – one of my Roma participants, a young *gitana* from the Gracia district in Barcelona, consequently used the word 'cultura' in reference to her community, almost as a synonym for being Roma:

> - Manuela: 'For my culture I am quite old already [to get married]. I mean, they thought I was going to be single for the rest of my life.'
>
> - Cilia: 'Sometimes you talk about 'us' and sometimes about 'them'...'
>
> - Manuela: 'Well I am... 'them', right? But I also have things that... are a bit different. (...) So it is like you are brought up with your culture, and you should be with your culture (…) .' (Roma, female, 27)

Whereas this young Roma used 'culture' as a synonym for 'community', another participant handled the word in a more narrow sense:

[18] Quote translated from Dutch original; emphasis by me

> Jonas: '(...) my dad was very keen on French culture, so Voltaire, and we saw all those classical theatre plays on television because in France they broadcast the whole play. Culture in France is very important to the French. I think it is a pity you don't have that in Belgium. That it is not very important to the Belgian state to promote Belgian culture.' (Belgian-Spanish, male, 32).

From this example it is clear that sometimes we attach a very broad meaning to culture ('Roma culture'), and other times we take it as a series of artefacts produced by a cultural or linguistic group ('French theatre'). For this research, then, I had a double task: on the one hand examining the most current positionings towards 'culture' in public discourses, and on the other hand interpreting and critically analysing where, how and why participants in this study use 'culture' and 'cultural group', and what 'culture' means to them. I will handle 'culture' on a triple level: on the level of how I think about culture from a theoretical point of view (theory), on the level of what participants do with the notion of culture with regards to media and identity (practice), and eventually on the level of what we learnt together by joining both perspectives (new theory?).

2.1.1. From 'selected' culture to a dynamic process

The theoretical notion of 'culture', although some argue it has become an 'empty signifier' (see, for example, Laclau 1994), is one of the most important concepts in contemporary social research. Today, any study in the field of humanities worthy of that name includes references to 'culture', one way or another. But it has not always been like that. 'Culture', with capital C, was the exclusive object of art history and literature studies for a long time. As John Storey reminds us in his reader on popular culture, the 'high' culture in music, fine arts and literature was the 'only' culture for a very long time (Storey 2006a). When Raymond Williams and other authors of Cultural Studies turned around the notion of culture, they gave it back to ordinary people: culture became 'a whole way of life' (Williams 2006). Williams ironically counter poses this notion to high Culture as '…this extraordinary decision to call certain things culture and then separate them, as with a park wall, from ordinary people and ordinary work' (Williams [1958] 2001: 94). In order to handle 'culture' in a meaningful way in this study, I therefore fall back on Raymond Williams' 'levels of culture' (Williams 2006): lived culture, recorded culture and selected culture.

In this view, the lived culture is the whole of day-to-day activities, habits and actions lived by someone. Only people who are living it have access to this lived culture. Recorded culture in Williams' view, are the artefacts produced by human activity, from art works to everyday life objects. This form of culture is accessible through space and time, as it is registered on (material) information carriers, although it is not necessarily selected as representative for a certain culture.

Recorded culture includes objects like mobile phones, letters written by ordinary people, diaries, cookery books, news programmes, folk songs, etc.… Selected culture, on the contrary, is a collection of carefully selected artefacts, deliberately chosen to represent general 'human culture', for example ancient Greek sculptures, classical music, literary works and famous paintings.

Williams' merit thus lies in facing, rather than avoiding, the fact that these three levels of culture co-exist, have equal value and indeed interact with each other. In his view, quite innovative at the time, culture is 'the finding of common meanings and directions' (Williams [1958] 2001: 93) that make up a society, implying that it concerns known meanings, which members of a culture are trained to, as well as new meanings and observations, offered by certain individuals through processes of discovery and creative effort (for example art and science). A culture, then, should be considered as a dynamic whole, in which the conjunction of tradition and change is significant (Williams [1958] 2001). Decades later, Zygmunt Bauman defined the 'dynamics of culture' in a similar way when showing the necessary relationship between conservation and innovation (Bauman 1999). It is in this sense that I will handle the notion of culture in the present study, all participants being individuals who, due to their condition of 'immigrants' and 'ethnic minorities', are potentially those members of a society who introduce change and offer 'new meanings and observations' as newcomers or outsiders. In other words, our aim will be to examine how members of another 'culture' explore the codes and meanings of the host society (the 'routes') and challenge them against their own 'known meanings' (the 'roots'). The emphasis will be on the participants' 'lived' culture – their habits, beliefs and actions – and to a lesser degree their 'registered' culture – the videos they will produce.

2.2. Visions of Culture and 'cultures': essentialism and constructionism

Once set my vision of culture as a whole of 'lived, recorded and selected activities that interact with each other to make up a society' (Williams [1958] 2001; 2006), I must briefly draw the attention to visions of 'culture' that on a macro level have been used in European and world politics for the last two decades. Since the beginning of the 90s, and especially after George W. Bush Jr.'s notorious post-9/11 speech announcing the 'Clash of Civilizations', based on a previous essay by Samuel Huntington (Huntington 1993), 'culture' is now the most popular scapegoat for everything that goes wrong in a country or in the world. Culture has implicitly become a synonym for 'civilisation' and is upgraded to the 'absolute and dominant way of classification of human kind' (Maly 2007: 93), namely in 'good' civilisations and 'bad' civilisations. In his essay Huntington states that in the 'new phase world politics is entering, the great divisions among humankind and

the dominating source of international conflict will be cultural, rather than ideological or economic' (Huntington 1993). In fact, he clash-discourse explicitly refers to 'the West and the Rest' and implies incompatibilities between Islam and democracy (Huntington 1993).

Although Bush's successor Barack Obama has recently made important progress toward improving his country's relations with the Islamic world by steering away from the clash of civilisations discourse[19], the 'cultural divide' has clearly left its marks in American and European politics over the last decade. Additionally, although the clash of civilisations discourse was implicitly pointing at the Islamic world, the underlying cultural argument has seeped through to popular discourse about all those who are from a different 'culture'. Inspired by writers like Huntington, culture has thus become a stand-alone notion, not made by humans but 'leading a life of its own' (Maly 2007: 96). This tendency towards attributing all differences and conflicts to the factor 'culture', is in line with what Teun Van Dijk has called 'new racism', which is based on cultural arguments rather than on biological ones (Van Dijk 1997; see also Hyland 2006).

This 'culturalistic' worldview, however, is not new. Anthropologists and ethnologists have based much of their fieldwork on culturalistic assumptions, coining the notion of 'a culture' – as opposed to just culture - as a synonym for 'a civilisation'. In the course of the 19th Century, together with the rise of the bourgeoisie, the Enlightenment and the second wave of colonisation (see Maly & Zienkowski 2007), ethnologists thus satisfied Western society's curiosity (obsession?) with 'other cultures'. Culturalistic views essentialise people in terms of the ethnic, religious or national group they belong to, and allow very little margin for individual agency, cultural dynamics, change or evolution. Not all contemporary anthropologists hold similar views, but during the 19th Century the very concept of anthropology and ethnology as scientific disciplines was based on the assumption of the existence of 'different cultures' (read: civilisations). In this study, 'culturalism' will be used when referring to essentialist stances taken by participants on culture in general, and on their own or the 'host country's' culture in particular.

Whereas culturalistic views consider culture to be the most important (at best) or the only (at worst) factor in explaining human behaviour, on the other extreme of the scope there is the constructionist vision that all phenomena are in fact *social constructs*. In a 'strong' constructionist view, which became prominent in the 1960s after the publication of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's book The Social Construction of Reality, even 'brute' or natural phenomena like mountains and trees are considered to be social constructs (Berger & Luckmann 1966). The authors argued that all knowledge, including the most basic, taken-for-granted common sense knowledge

[19] See The New York Times editorial section on April 11, 2009: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/12/opinion/12sun2.html

of everyday reality, is derived from and dynamically constructed through social interactions. This has lead many post-modern philosophers to view the whole reality as socially constructed. Jean-François Lyotard, for example, claims that our view of reality is in fact a 'narrative', a discourse based on convention (Lyotard 1979). In this radically constructionist view, 'culture' and 'cultural groups' are completely arbitrary social inventions, constructed by convention-rooted discourses, and completely independent from other 'natural' or 'universal' factors.

In a 'weak' constructivist view, however, all social constructs have 'brute' or natural facts as a basis. John Searle states in The Construction of Social Reality (note the difference with Berger and Luckmann's title) that 'social facts are temporally, ontologically, and logically dependent on 'brute' facts' (Searle 1995). Cultural groups could therefore to some degree be determined by factors other than social convention. Indeed, it could be argued that certain cultural groups have features that differentiate them from others because of natural or geographical circumstances (the classical example are the Inuit people whose cultural features evolve around the natural factors 'cold' and 'snow'), without necessarily attributing all of their cultural features to these circumstances.

Additionally, it is not because 'cultural groups' are social constructs, that they should be discarded as untruthful or unworthy of studying. In my view, thus, cultural groups are social constructs based on convention, but at the same time are 'true' (or 'relevant') in that members of a cultural group may consider or interpret their culture as given or natural. If I were not convinced of the fact that cultural groups exist by merit of self-identification by its members and the 'othering' of outsiders, I would not have started this research in the first place. In the light of the current political, social and religious debates in Europe and particularly in Spain as a consequence of increasing migration flows, a focus on the relationship between culture and ethnicity/nationality seems inevitable.

2.3. Cultural politics: from assimilation and integration to multiculturalism (and beyond)

Over time, different views on culture and cultural groups have influenced politics and the public opinion around the world. As culture and ethnicity have become increasingly associated with each other, 'cultural politics' now inspire both left and right discourses, either to include or to exclude 'the other'. After the decolonisation and the subsequent immigration waves in Western-European countries in the 60s and early 70s in countries like Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands, France and the United Kingdom, public debates were opened around the multicultural society in these host countries. Central to the debate was whether the state should either maintain or wipe out cultural differences (Watson 2000). Each country adopted their own strategies for peaceful co-

existence according to the kind of immigration, the political climate and the public opinion at the time: 'assimilation', 'integration' and 'multiculturalism' were the most important but not the only terms used to name those policies. France, for example, has never officially recognised any racial differences among its citizens. It does not keep racial data, implement racial quotas, or allow for any religious or cultural dress in schools (Calvès 2004; Abella 2007). France as a country has officially ignored cultural differences, thus forcing 'assimilation' of its immigrant population in practice:

> 'France as a country has stressed assimilation above all. One could argue that by officially ignoring cultural differences France forced assimilation of its immigrant population.' (Main 2006: 2).

In this respect, the Netherlands did quite the opposite: whereas France believed in assimilation of newcomers, the Netherlands encouraged 'multiculturalism', based on the idea that all cultures are equally valid and communities should be able and have the right to peacefully co-exist. The fact that both models have proved to fail in recent years – with French riots in the banlieus and a remarkable Dutch 'NO' to the European Constitution in 2005 mainly because of fear for Turkey's integration into the Union[20] – is out of this study's scope, although it is significant in terms of how ideological positions on 'cultural groups' have had a direct impact on immigration policies in Europe.

'Multiculturalism' as an official policy first emerged in Canada at the beginning of the 70s as a response to tensions between its English and French-speaking populations. Embedded in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1971[21], it was quickly adopted elsewhere, and initially acted as a powerful ideological corrective to the 'injustices of state nationalism' towards newcomers (Kunzru 2006). The official Canadian Heritage website states until today:

> 'Multiculturalism ensures that all citizens can be fully integrated Canadians without having to abandon their cultural heritage. The Canadian experience has shown that Canada's pluralist

[20] As an illustration of the anti-Turkish motivation of Dutch 'No'-voters, see for example these pre-campaign newspaper articles in the Dutch press: http://www.nd.nl/artikelen/2005/mei/19/euro-en-turkije-belasten-referendum (last visited July 2009) and http://www.grondweteuropa.nl/9326000/1f/j4nvgjok6iwsea9_j9vvghpme8dg6oj/vgwhfpqufdy0?nctx=vgvqpnqs5qbn&ntop=9 (last visited July 2009)

[21] See the Canadian Library of Parliament: http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/936-e.htm#2theformative (last visited July 2009)

> approach encourages racial and ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding, and discourages hatred, discrimination and violence.'[22]

Although the original (and still valid but exceptional) Canadian model explicitly refers to 'ethnic harmony' and 'cross-cultural understanding', for this study I will use the more European and less 'intercultural' interpretation of the term multiculturalism as the theory that all cultures or cultural groups are equally valid and should be able to co-exist peacefully together, but with no overarching thread binding them together (based on the current British understanding of multiculturalism as cited in Fatimah Awan's work on identity and the media, Awan 2006: 1). In practice this policy has proved to be problematic, as it has effectively lead to ghettoisation, discrimination and stereotyping in the name of 'tolerance', and has not resolved questions of poverty, discrimination or internal oppression. Additionally, right-wing critiques on multiculturalism have denounced the tolerance towards cultural traditions and habits, including practices that go against 'universal' human rights such as female ablation or child labour. Without going into a political discussion here, it is clear that multiculturalism is a problematic term, as it can essentialise people (at best) or indeed glorify certain practices like the ones mentioned above, for 'Culture's' sake. What for some is cultural relativism, is unacceptable for others.

However benevolent in its principles, the multiculturalist ideal is 'culturalistic' in its own terms, as it does not allow for hybridisation, cultural change or evolution. It could be argued that the success of the original ideal in countries like Canada is an exception due to particular circumstances, the explorations of which are beyond this study's scope. It must be clarified, however, that multiculturalism as a 'culturalistic' position (as described above), is not the same as 'multiculturality' or the 'multicultural society'. Today, multiculturality is *de facto* present in most European countries and cities, in public opinion and in media representations, and is as such undeniable. I will therefore use the term multiculturalism as a political/theoretical stance, and *multiculturality* or the *multicultural society* to refer to a social phenomenon.

Similarly, the term 'integration' underwent an evolution following the changing political climate. In a monograph in early 2006, *Mute Magazine*[23] meticulously analysed the circumstances in which this process took place. 'Integration' was once the demand for the white majority to

---

[22] Canadian Heritage Website: http://www.pch.gc.ca/special/gouv-gov/110-eng.cfm (last visited July 2009). Interestingly, at the time Hari Kunzru's article was published in Mute (May 2006), the Canadian website included a reference to how multiculturalism avoids ghettoisation, which was apparently removed by 2009: 'The Canadian experience has shown that multiculturalism encourages racial and ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding, and discourages ghettoisation, hatred, discrimination and violence'. (quote as in Kunzru 2006: 4; italics by me)

[23] Link Mute Magazine

integrate the 'racial other' into society by abolishing formal racism within the state and its institutions (Hyland 2006). Now, the culturally racialised other is required to integrate into the majority. Otherness is no longer defined in terms of race, but rather in terms of culture (see 2.2). In countries like Germany, the Netherlands, UK and Belgium, newcomers are currently required to undergo 'citizenship tests', at times of such ridiculous contents that they resemble the *shibboleths* used traditionally to exclude intruders by distinguishing 'native' from 'non-native' speakers (McNamara 2006). In other words, integration has become almost a synonym for the French idea of assimilation.

2.4. Immigration, multiculturality and multiculturalism in Spain

After 9/11 the British and Dutch consensuses around multiculturalism, until then the most outstanding examples of multiculturalist policies put into practice, began to shift (Awan 2006). As Fatimah Awan reminds us in her study of Muslim identity construction, the September 11 attacks on New York's World Trade Center with the following 'war on terrorism' was instrumental in centring world attention on Muslim culture and communities, and subsequent portrayals of Islam as an 'uncivilised threat' to global security (Awan 2006: 4). This situation has resulted, Awan continues, in the 'demonisation of Muslims worldwide – aggravated by earlier media representations of Islamic fundamentalism'. The 9/11 events seem to have been the last straw into throwing the validity of multiculturalism into question.

The crisis soon crossed over to the continent. But as European multiculturalism started its decline in countries where it had emerged in the 70s, the public debate had hardly started in other countries where immigration flows were only just growing. As opposed to the North-West European 'early starters', in Spain the increase in immigration flows happened late, in a very short period of time, and grew exponentially with an enormous diversity of origins (see Retis 2006; Igartúa, Muñiz & Otero 2006). In Spain, public debates on diversity and the multicultural society have therefore been quite different from other European countries'. People from all over the Spanish state were emigrants to other European countries until recently. Together with other Southern-European countries like Italy and Portugal, Spain provided the North with cheap labour in times of shortage of labour in certain sectors during the 60s and the 70s (Main 2006). This condition of an emigration country may have contributed to the Spain's relatively positive attitude towards 'foreigners' – mainly Europeans and Latin American intellectuals - until the mid-80s (Abella 2007). If we only look at Barcelona, where this study was carried out, we can see that immigration (both European and non-European) has been considerable in the last years: the

number of foreigners residing in the city has risen from ca. 74.000 in 2001 (or 4,9% of the population) to ca. 295.000 in 2009 (or 18,1% of the population)[24].

With a foreigners' rate of more than 18% and 179 different nationalities other than Spanish or Catalan, it can be argued that Barcelona is a truly multicultural city. As to Spain as a whole, the growth numbers are similarly spectacular (from 3.3% of foreigners in 2001 to 12% in 2009)[25], although the average number of foreigners living in Spain is similar to other European countries, and its net migration rate is 0,99%, after countries like the US, Switzerland, UK, Italy and Belgium, where immigration rates are higher.[26]

Despite this rapid growth during the first decade of the 21st Century, or rather due to its effect, Spain lacks a political model to face the phenomenon of massive immigration. In 2004, the Spanish anthropologist Albert Moncusí said:

> 'We haven't seen a clear political answer to the multicultural society [as a consequence of immigration], but then neither have we seen a clear political answer to the question of accommodating the newly arrived as citizens. So there is an ambiguous attitude towards the situation.'[27]

This lack of a clear model has lead to half-hearted solutions and black holes in Spain's migration policy, exemplified by the dual model of 'migration flow control' and 'integration policies', and often entailing precarious circumstances for recently arrived.[28]

2.5. INTERCULTURALITY AND TRANSCULTURALITY: HYBRIDISATIONS

Interculturality is what followed multiculturality. After the first generation of newly arrived, whose action area was often restricted to the own 'cultural group', came the generation of immigrants' children born in the 'host country'. Inevitably, this second generation started to reach out more to the dominant society, to speak the language and to adopt some of their habits and codes (see Tölölyan 2007 in 2.6 for a discussion on diasporic communities). 'New ethnicities' and

---

[24] Source: 'La Població estrangera a Barcelona' - Statistics Department of the City of Barcelona (Departament d'Estadístiques de la Ciutat de Barcelona. Available online at: http://www.bcn.cat/estadistica/catala/dades/tpob/index1.htm (last visited July 2009)

[25] Source: 'Encuesta de migraciones' – National Institute of Statistics (INE). Available online at: http://www.ine.es/inebmenu/mnu_migrac.htm (last visited July 2009)

[26] Source: Index Mundi http://www.indexmundi.com/g/r.aspx?t=0&v=27 (last visited October 2009) and CIA world factbook http://www.cia.gov (last visited October 2009).

[27] Interview with A. Moncusí for Teina magazine: 'Multiculturalism is not equal to multiculturality' http://www.revistateina.com/teina/web/Teina3/dossierMocusi.htm

[28] Ibidem

hybrid identities entailed from the co-existence of cultural groups sharing the same space, informed by mediatised images of the other as well as daily intercultural practices (Gillespie 1995, 2000; de Block & Buckingham 2007).

By interculturalism I understand the ideology and entailing practice of mutual learning between members of different cultural groups, in a process of giving-and-taking of people from different roots or traditions (temporarily) sharing the same space, with the strategic or intrinsic intention to peacefully live together. In this context, intercultural training has gained much relevance in the last years, as different sectors like education, diplomacy and business have realised the importance of dialogue between cultures.[29]

The 'International Network on Cultural Policy', an international forum where ministers of culture from more than fifty countries explore and exchange views on new and emerging cultural policy issues, stated in 2001 that the interculturalist approach is commonly marked by three steps[30]: in the decentralisation phase, one takes distance from one's own culture, realising what is relative about one's observations and making sense of one's 'readings' of reality. In the phase of penetration of the Other's system, one gets out to see things from the Other's perspective. This entails an attitude of opening up; a personal effort of inquiry. In the negotiation phase, finally, both sides find the necessary minimum compromise and understanding to avoid confrontation. In practice, intercultural learning means meeting the other in order to improve communication and encourage learning and understanding of the other's culture (Landis, Bennett & Bennett 2003).

As opposed to multiculturalism, the interculturalist position thus explicitly refers to *cross-cultural* fertilisation, hybridisation and common grounds. It promotes crossing the borders of one's own cultural references and exploring those of others, while others do the same. This simple idea of reciprocity in intercultural communication is, however, not so obvious in practice. Often the term 'interculturalism' is used to mask integration or even assimilation policies: the intercultural attitude is expected only from the other, not from me (*is it?*), and 'mutual respect' often means 'they should respect us but we don't have to respect them'. Additionally, media monopolise the public debate about multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue (Landis, Bennett & Bennett 2003; Abella 2007).

As to Spain, the impasse in the dual discourse on immigration and the multicultural society has recently been somewhat overcome toward interculturalism, as the labour government's

[29] For an exhaustive historical overview of Intercultural Training: see Landis, Bennett and Bennett's Handbook of Intercultural Training (2003).

[30] 'Interculturalism' as defined by the Annual Ministerial Meetings at the International Network on Cultural Policy: http://www.incp-ripc.org/meetings/2002/newissues_e.shtml (last visited July 2009).

attitude towards immigration considers it 'a positive phenomenon that nevertheless should be regulated'[31]. This 'regulation' is currently understood as a negotiation with the countries of origin to dissuade migrants from stepping into a boat and risk their life trying to cross the ocean. It remains to be seen if the policy shift will effectively entail interculturalism and inclusive migration policies in Spain during the next years, or if on the contrary Spain will commit the same mistakes made by other European countries.

In the meantime, intercultural and trans-cultural practices will feed the formation of new, hybrid identities. Divina Frau-Meigs has suggested trans-culturality – creating a common ground, different from the previously existing ones – as an alternative to overcome the conceptual problems related to interculturality, which in her view leads to a static concept of culture. Frau-Meigs argues that media can contribute to trans-cultural practices by mediating cross-cultural communication within transnational contexts but also within national contexts (Frau-Meigs 2008). This is very much in line with what Marie Gillespie identified as media 'being used to create new, shared spaces in which syncretic cultural forms, such as 'new ethnicities', can emerge' (Gillespie 1995: 208).

2.6. Diaspora, refugees and voluntary migration

2.6.1. Diasporas and diasporic communities

Up to this point I have avoided using 'diaspora' when talking about migration, multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue. However, as a researcher of issues related to ethnic minorities, I must briefly take a stance on the term. Until recently, the sociological concept 'diaspora' was understood in terms of non-voluntary migration as

> '(...) a social formation engendered by catastrophic violence or, at the very least, by coerced expulsion from a homeland, followed by settlement in other countries and among alien host societies' (Tölölyan 2007: 648).

Crucially, diasporas were identified by their efforts to keep in touch with both the homeland and kin communities elsewhere, traditionally exemplified by the Jewish, Armenian and Greek diaspora. In a clarifying discussion of the history and current use of the word and its implications for social research, Khachig Tölölyan laments the fact that diaspora has now become a synonym for 'dispersion', hereby overlooking very specific characteristics of a diaspora (Tölölyan 2007).

[31] See a declaration by Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba, Spain's current Minister of Domestic Affairs in El País in July 2009: http://www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/Rubalcaba/afirma/politica/inmigracion/espanola/ha/acabado/imponiendo/UE/elpepuesp/20080709elpepunac_1/Tes

Diasporic communities, in Tölölyan's view, are those communities that endure as a distinct diaspora thanks to the 'collective work of memory and commemoration, the performance of difference, the cultivation of ideologies of identity, and the institutionalization of practices of connection to the homeland' (Tölölyan 2007: 650). In this view, the diasporic community typically sees itself as linked to but different from those among whom it has settled, but also in some ways different from the people left behind, however powerful their link to the homeland. Although acknowledging the complex constellations of practices and relations that mark differences between 'diasporas' and the host society, the author criticises the conceptual fussiness in diaspora studies today:

> 'The current discourse of diaspora studies is characterized, then, by some disagreement and divergent uses of its key concepts, such as diaspora and dispersion, ethnic and diasporic, transnational and global, mobility and sedentariness, network and node, local and global.' (Tölölyan 2007: 654)

Tölölyan goes on to lament that:

> 'When ethnics, exiles, expatriates, refugees, asylum seekers, labor migrants, queer communities, domestic service workers, executives of transnational corporations, and transnational sex workers are all labeled diasporas, the struggle to maintain distinctions is lost (…).' (Tölölyan 2007: 648-49)

Even though the notion of diasporas has undoubtedly marked the study of migrations and ethnic communities during the last twenty years, its complexity and broadness of scope is one of the reasons I have decided not to use it in the present study. The most important reason, however, is not its conceptual fussiness – again, which notion in social research isn't? – but the fact that 'diaspora' suggests a connection to the 'homeland' (existing or putative) and that this connection determines many of the community's actions and behaviours. In this sense, my main argument not to use the term as such in this research is that the concept of 'homeland' is far from clear in the case of the immigrants and ethnic minorities who participated in the study. The participants were mainly from Latin America, followed by Spanish Roma and Africans, and in the last place people from other European countries. What they have in common is that they are all the 'Other' in Barcelona/Spain, rather than that they 'left their homeland'.

As to some of the Latin American participants (and this includes Mexico, Central America and South-America) it hardly took two generations to cross over the Atlantic Ocean and back. Both the Argentinian and the Colombian participants in the study were children of parents who were born in Latin America to parents who had migrated there directly from Spain. In fact, a major part of today's 'immigrants' from Latin America to Spain are the children and grandchildren of people who fled from poverty-struck and dictatorial Spain over the last century, and are now coming back to the continent to claim their share of Spanish identity (and prosperity for that matter). What, then, is their 'homeland' in diasporic terms?

In his book Fugados en velero ('Sailing boat fugitives'), Gonzalo Morales gives account of the 106 Spanish women, men and children who got arrested as 'illegal immigrants' upon arrival at the Venezuelan coast when fleeing Franquist Spain in 1949:

Image of the 106 Spanish refugees on 'La Elvira', coming from the Canary Islands Venezuela in June 1949. They were arrested upon arrival as 'illegal immigrants'.
Source: 'Fugados en velero'. Novel by Gonzalo Morales Hernández published in 1996.

If Spain was originally the homeland, what is Argentina or Colombia to a young woman or man who crosses the Atlantic in search of a better life? A 'temporary' homeland? Indeed, 'immigrants' from Latin America anno 2009 can be considered equally as 'emigrants' returning to the 'original' homeland. Which doesn't make the term very useful for our research.

As to the Spanish Roma community, which in fact most corresponds to the classical definition of a 'diaspora', the problem is similar: what is the *gitanos*' homeland? Spanish Roma or 'Kalé' have populated Spain since as early as the 15th Century[32]. As opposed to many 'native' Spanish and Catalans, they can be considered as the original population of certain regions or districts. So again, where is the homeland here? For most Roma people their home is Spain. In other words: if there is any community that would fit to the concept of diaspora, it is the Roma people, but ironically they are the ones who have 'always' lived there…

[32] See The situation of Roma in Spain. Report of the Open Society Institute, EUMAP, Monitoring Minority Protection in EU Member States. See also the Spanish site Unión Romaní: http://www.unionromani.org/pueblo_in.htm (last visited July 2009).

Finally, as to the African participants it is equally difficult to see them as part of a diaspora, as African immigration to Spain is too recent and too dispersed to consider it a diasporic community. Concerning the participants from European background, the unsuitability for this study of the term 'diaspora' as defined above is obvious.

2.6.2. Forced migration: refugees and displaced people

From a legal and humanitarian point of view, 'forced migration' has arisen as an analogue concept of the more sociological 'diaspora'. As defined by the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration, it is 'a general term that refers to the movements of refugees and internally displaced people (those displaced by conflicts) as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects.'[33] Within this field of study, three types of forced migration are distinguished: conflict-induced displacement, development-induced displacement and disaster-induced displacement. People who migrate because of conflicts, development policies and disasters are *refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced, development displaced, disaster displaced, smuggled people or trafficked people*[34]. In diplomatic and humanitarian terms, forced migrants are thus considered in their condition as more or less violently displaced by others (as 'victims'), and the most important issues involved are their legal status and their rights as individuals. Forced migration has only recently started to become the object of study of academics, as it originates in the practices of humanitarian organisations, observatories and legal entities concerned with human rights.

However interesting the concept, 'forced migration' has acquired a quite specific connotation and rather belongs to the field of international relations and diplomacy than to the field of sociology or media studies, as it has a strong humanitarian dimension to it, and the people involved are defined almost exclusively in their very condition as 'displaced' and the legal consequences this status entails. As opposed to the diaspora concept, it also lacks a concern for the 'community' of displaced (and eventually the efforts of the community to preserve its culture and traditions and keep in touch with the homeland), but rather focuses on individuals and eventually their families. Significantly, none of the definitions provided by organisations related to forced migration contains the word diaspora, even though in some papers or publications 'diaspora' is used to refer to communities outside the country of origin; almost like a geographical concept:

[33] International Association for the Study of Forced Migration: http://www.iasfm.org/ (last visited July 2009).

[34] See Forced Migration Online: http://www.forcedmigration.org/whatisfm.htm (last visited July 2009).

> 'In the long run, the contributions of Africans in the *diaspora* to those who remain in Africa raise a number of questions' (Shandy 2003; emphasis by me).[35]

This example of the use of the word 'diaspora' in an otherwise interesting article in the 'Forced Migration Online Journal'[36], contributes to the impression that diaspora is merely used as an indicator of *place*, emphasised by the preposition *in the* (diaspora). In my view, although the terms necessarily overlap in practice, the absence of 'diaspora' as a concept in this field denotes an important conceptual distinction between the sociological and the legal notion of migration processes.

For this study, I will not use the concept 'forced migration' as defined above, although the voluntary or non-voluntary character of participants' reasons to migrate to Spain/Barcelona will indeed be relevant when looking at issues of cultural identity, as the causes of migration will probably inform participants' balance between clinging to their roots and exploring new routes. The reader should keep all this in mind when coming across the following terms in the present study: by 'immigrants' or 'migrants' I will refer to the young, first-generation (im)migrants from Latin America, Africa and other European countries - without making a distinction between their motivations to migrate -, and by 'ethnic minorities' I will refer to the *gitanos* who participated in this study. In this transnational context of migrants and minorities, the notion of identity takes on fundamental relevance.

2.7. IDENTITY: EMPTY SIGNIFIER OR DYNAMIC PROCESS?

It has been argued that using 'identity' as a category of analysis is no longer relevant in the academic field, as the very notion of identity has become too vague (see, for example, Brubaker & Cooper 2000). In their controversial article 'Beyond "Identity"', these authors argue that for social scientists, the term has thus become an empty signifier, and researchers should therefore not use it as a category of analysis:

> 'Identity is a key term in the vernacular idiom of contemporary politics, and social analysis must take account if this fact. But this does not require us to use "identity" as a category of analysis or to conceptualize "identities" as something that all people have, seek, construct, and negotiate.' (Brubaker & Cooper 2000: 2)

However interesting their point, it seems that the authors fail to recognise that it is not (only) scholarly interest in identity that matters, but rather the *perceived* relevance of identity, especially in the case of migrants and ethic minorities. Indeed, these groups are almost inevitably faced with

[35] The title of the paper reveals a similar view: 'Transnational linkages between refugees in Africa and in the diaspora'

[36] See FMO (Forced Migration Online): http://www.forcedmigration.org/ last visited August 2009.

questions of cultural identity, as they are subject to a system of representations (see 1.1) and cultural politics (see 2.3). In my view, the analytical category of identity construction is valid, as long as the researcher is aware of the fact that what is under analysis is the perceived notion of identity. We could say that cultural identities are indeed always 'made up' but never completely 'fictitious'. In other words, independently from the question whether identities 'exist', the consequences of questions related to them surely do exist and have a real and specific impact on people's daily lives. For the present study this was an important element to keep in mind, as participants were continuously faced by images of 'them' and 'us' in the media.

After having said this, my own positioning toward 'cultural identity' in this study is to make a distinction between the analytical unit 'cultural identity' as handled in the study, and the subjective perceived notion of cultural identity by the people who participated in it. I will here clarify my own views on the notions of 'cultural identity', and then give a working definition of 'cultural identity' in the context of the present study.

2.7.1. Cultural identity construction as a dynamic process

Some of the authors or thinkers influenced by cultural studies have extensively elaborated on the concept of cultural identity as a 'becoming': Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy ('*roots and routes*'), David Morley, Kevin Robins and Homi Bhabha (*culture's 'in-between'*), amongst others. Stuart Hall is considered to be the most prominent author on identity as he approaches the notion from fields as diverse as philosophy, social science, linguistics, psychology, film studies and art history (see for example Hall 1996a and 1997a). Cultural identity in his view, therefore, is much broader than what is usually understood by it in terms of ethnicity, religion and/or nationality.

In the preface of his influential 'The Black Atlantic', Paul Gilroy gives a first approach to the dynamics of cultural identities swinging between tradition and change, between what is left behind and what is to come, when he points out to the 'instability and mutability of identities which are always unfinished, always being remade' (Gilroy 1994: xi). It is Gilroy's interest in the difference between finding your 'roots' and finding new 'routes' (Gilroy 1994; Hall 1996b), exemplified by the young artists exploring artistic routes in a common project, that inspired my research questions and the title of this doctoral thesis. One of the main objectives of the research, then, is to define the elements that make up the perceived notion of cultural identity for young immigrants and ethnic minorities with regards to media representations.

2.7.2. Who needs 'cultural identity'?

The question of who needs 'cultural identity' in Barcelona today was my starting point for this study. Central to this question was what role media consumption and production play in the construction of contemporary cultural identities. As David Morley and Kevin Robins have argued:

> 'Historically, broadcasting has assumed a dual role, serving as the political public sphere of the nation state, and as the focus for national cultural identification' (Morley & Robins 1995: 10).

Whereas media representations have long played a role in building national identities, Morley and Robins continue, we now see a the raise of a 'new media order' in which viewers are no longer addressed in political terms, but rather as parts of a consumer market (Morley & Robins 1995: 11). With the traditional nation-state as an entity in process of extinction, the European Community, in response to the perceived threat of cocacolanisation, has been concerned to 'promote and develop a sense of European identity in which unity is the goal and culture (perceived to have 'homogenising' effects) is the means to achieve it' (Morley & Robins 1995: 44). In this view, national identity (i.e. European identity) is aimed at with the help of homogenising markets, as common cultural referents will promote a common sense of belonging. Business, as well as the nation-state, needs consumers to feel culturally identified with certain products, and this cultural homogenisation is perpetuated by images of the Other in advertising and commercial communication.[37] This is why cultural identity matters to politics, and why it matters to business.

But who else needs cultural identity in Barcelona during the first decade of the 21st Century? The question is complex and looking for an answer from different perspectives would take another doctoral thesis. From a political point of view, identity politics in Spain have always been about tensions between the federal state striving for 'national' (i.e. 'Spanish') unity, and regions like the Bask Country and Catalonia striving for independence. In the case of Catalonia two kinds of cultural identities are 'available' to citizens: a predominantly 'Spanish' identity and a predominantly 'Catalan' identity. The rest of the inhabitants (be it foreigners, immigrants, Spanish citizens coming from other regions of the Spanish state, or ethnic minorities), basically have to choose between 'being Spanish' or 'being Catalan'.

But do young migrants and ethnic minorities living in Barcelona today really 'need' a cultural identity in terms of being Spanish or being Catalan? What does it mean to them if they are 'Spanish'; in what ways is being 'Catalan' an advantage? Does it have any advantages at all? What if they don't want to choose between being Spanish or being Catalan, or they do not want to be identified by either?

---

[37] See the notion of 'commodity racism' coined by Anne McClintock in 1995.

In order to answer these questions I needed a working definition of cultural identity. After a pilot study with ten participants during the first year (2006), the analysis of the fieldwork yielded the following notion of cultural identity for the purposes of this study:

Cultural identity is the whole of practices, beliefs and habits that constitute a (perceived) belonging to a group. These practices are located in the fields of worldviews, location, language, education and labour, and social relationships.

Although this study focuses on the cultural identity of individuals – their (perceived) belonging to a group – it is the collective that will be crucial in interpreting the process. The role of media in this process is twofold, as I will look at cultural identity construction from the perspective of media consumption (what do participants think about how their cultural group is portrayed in the media, and how do they relate to this imagery), and media production (how do participants, then, represent themselves and/or their cultural group). In the following section I will briefly outline the theoretical background of the notion of identity construction by emerging adults.

2.7.3. Emerging adulthood: exploring the routes

For this study I looked at identity construction in the social context, rather than at 'auto-biographical' identity in the individual context (see Giddens' notion of 'self-identity', Giddens 1991). The processes involved in identity construction in this study are therefore located in the social and cultural field, as extensively outlined above.

I worked with people between nineteen and thirty-three years old from different social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Jeffrey Arnett points out that the life phase in which identity construction takes place is between adolescence and adult age, when people start exploring the social world in terms of relationships, labour and worldviews (Arnett 2000). Although he writes from the point of view of development psychology, Arnett convincingly argues that this life phase is a distinct period between the end of adolescence (18-19 years) and the start of adult life (30-35 years) with a high degree of social relevance, and therefore needs specific attention. He proposes 'emerging adulthood' as opposed to the frequently used 'young adulthood' arguing that there are important distinctions from a demographic, psychological and identity exploration point of view (Arnett 2000). Arnett's definition however, as the author acknowledges, does not resolve the Western-oriented context in which he defines emerging adulthood. He obviates questions related

to location and migration that many young adults have to deal with when exploring routes to their adult lives.

Youth culture expert Paul Willis approaches the way young adults construct their identities from a more creative point of view, maintaining that there is 'life out there in the streets' and that young people's lives 'are actually full of expressions, signs and symbols through which individuals and groups seek to creatively establish their presence, identity and meaning' (Willis 1990: 1). Willis goes on to say that

> 'The teenage and early adult years are important from a cultural perspective and in special need of a close 'qualitative' attention because it is here, at least in the first-world western cultures, where people are formed most self-consciously through their own symbolic and other activities. It is where they form symbolic moulds through which they understand themselves and their possibilities for the rest of their lives. It is also the stage where people begin to construct themselves through nuance and complexity, through difference as well as similarity.' (Willis 1990: 7)

For the present study I included Arnett's relationships, worldviews and labour fields as categories of analysis when looking at cultural minorities' routes exploration, and added 'location' as a new category that came up during the fieldwork. Youth culture (music, film, dance and other cultural expressions) was not included as an analytical category but rather as an overarching element in young people's identity construction, as it was present throughout the Roots&Routes project.

2.7.4. Location and locality: the geography of identity construction

It has been argued by diaspora scholars and other authors that location, locality and sedentarism continue to be important in studying the identity of ethnic communities and diasporas, despite current fast communication, mobile transnationalism and globalisation (see Tölölyan 2007, Morley 2000, Morley & Robins 1995). In fact, within the pretext of globalisation many authors have underscored all too often the contrast between 'nowadays fast communication and transport' and the 'quiet and immobility' in former times, thus suggesting that much of the explanations behind current 'post-modern' phenomena like massive migration, transnational media and *rootedlessness* are to be reduced to new form of global mobility and communication (see Morley 2000, Chapter 6). In his brilliant 'Home Territories', David Morley argues that historically people(s) have always migrated and communicated with each other, so migration is hardly a 'new' or recent phenomenon. At the same time, Morley says, the 'authenticity' of face-to-face presence and communication has been heavily overrated (Morley 2000). He reminds us that communication is always 'mediated', even a live conversation, be it by (body) language, voice or external circumstances (Morley 2000).

This is where location, locality and sedentarism come back into the story. As travelling by airplane becomes available for more and more people, it has now been converted into a commodity: something you can sell and buy. The majority of people living in Western societies are nowadays able to buy this commodity, while those who cannot afford to travel become increasingly excluded. In the end, the cost of the mobility for some is paid by 'those who cannot afford it' (Morley 2000). These new forms of mobility – and exclusion – lead to the emergence of a kind of 'cosmopolitanism' characterised by transnational travel, communication and residence.

In his paper on cosmopolitanism and media, John Urry (optimistically) defines cosmopolitanism in words of John Tomlinson as a 'cultural disposition involving an intellectual and aesthetic stance of 'openness' towards peoples, places and experiences from different cultures, especially those from different 'nations'' (Tomlinson 1999, Urry 2000: 7). However, Urry warns us, there are several reasons to be wary about the 'openness' of cosmopolitans. In the first place, cosmopolitanism mainly refers to (white) masculinist opportunities and dispositions always to be able to remain 'on the move'. Secondly, there is a danger of implementing a distinction of social taste through deploying the concept of cosmopolitanism, as it is predominantly reserved for affluent travellers from the 'North' rather than for poorer migrants from the 'South' (Urry 2000: 7).

Doreen Massey has also handled cosmopolitanism in a critical way using the concept of 'geographies of media' (Massey 1994). Thirdly and most importantly for this study, the so-called cosmopolitanism is often constructed at the expense of the local and local peoples who are presumed to be 'narrow, insular and parochial in their patterns of mobility and in their ethics' (Tomlinson 1999). In this study we will look at how participants think about 'cosmopolitanism' as some are quite aware of the differences between the 'voluntary' travel of affluent whites and the 'forced' travel by migrants.

Cities like Barcelona are, then, 'sites of forced confrontation' between cosmopolitans and 'homeless' immigrants (Morley 2000), many of whom arrive as boats people, especially when they share the same neighbourhood. More than 40% of all foreigners (European and non-European citizens) living in Barcelona are concentrated in the relatively small Ciutat Vella district, a figure that is significantly higher than for other neighbourhoods (next is Sants-Montjuic with almost 20%).[38] Sometimes the borders between groups become permeable, as immigrants accumulate economic capital and start being able to travel back and forth to their home countries. Mobility becomes an asset for a successful life.

[38] Source: Statistics Department of the City of Barcelona (Departament d'Estadístiques de la Ciutat de Barcelona) – 'La Població estrangera a Barcelona', available online at: http://www.bcn.cat/estadistica/catala/dades/tpob/index1.htm (last visited July 2009).

A particular view on mobility and modernity comes from Zygmunt Bauman. Although the author has been criticised for his post-modern 'eclecticism' and 'pessimism', Bauman has contributed greatly to the field of contemporary sociology during the last decades (see Jacobsen & Poder 2008). Jacobsen and Poder defend Bauman by referring to his concern with the concrete and often merciless repercussions on those whose lives are most severely affected by social transformations, and praise the fact that 'in his descriptions he staunchly remains on the side of those marginalized, hurt or excluded' (Jacobsen & Poder 2008: 3). This attention for the excluded brings Bauman to introduce the 'new pilgrims' as a part of profound social transformations that have had profound repercussions on individual lives (Bauman 1996). In post-modernism, the pilgrim, who in former times used to have a set destination looking for the 'Kingdom of Eternity' (Bauman 1996: 20), has been replaced by four kinds of consumerist lifestyles that have actually become the majority's life style: the 'stroller', the man of leisure who strolls through the shopping malls in his free time and mocks the pilgrim, the 'player' who sees life as a game, the 'tourist' who plays safe by always having a home to return to, and finally the 'vagabond', who has no fixed destination, keeps his options open and considers everything until-further-notice, either by choice or by force. The 'excluded' one in this story is the vagabond. Wherever the vagabond goes, he is a stranger, as there is never enough time to settle, to become rooted, to be the 'native' (Bauman 1996: 28). The notion of the vagabond, although referred to in this study as 'migrants', proved to be crucial when examining participants' relationship with media and identity construction.

According to Bauman, 'the stroller, the vagabond, the tourist and the player offer jointly the metaphor for the post-modern strategy moved by the horror of being bound and fixed' (Bauman 1996: 26). However, the question remains whether all 'new pilgrims' are indeed afraid of being 'bound and fixed', or whether in certain circumstances young people search for belonging and security, although perhaps in different ways than one would expect. For example, a Roma participant in this study explicitly referred to 'travelling to come back home and find your real self in your neighbourhood', as she explained how the illusion of 'finding' herself abroad in Argentina turned out be void as she found she can only be herself among 'her people' in the Gracia district in Barcelona (see Chapter 4).

After examining the most important issues related to location, social geographies and mobility in the perspective of media and identity construction, it became clear that location would become one of the main categories of analysis in this study.

2.7.5. Young people and daily life in the metropolis

Young people in Barcelona, regardless of their background, share some common characteristics as young inhabitants of the metropolis. They study and/or work, they learn how to get round the city and look for places to start organising their lives on their own: managing their own money, cooking, deciding what they will do with their time, and who they will spend it with. As argued before, identity is not a fixed concept, something that you can 'acquire' or 'lose' (Hall 1996a, 1997a; Morley 2000; Barker & Galasinski 2001). For young people as well as for adults, identity is not only about the Big Issues, transcendental questions and visions of the world, but is constantly changing, constructed in daily reality, in practice. Especially for cultural and ethnic identity, as Barker and Galasinski's data suggest, 'the construction of ethnicity is clearly associated with the everyday practices of the people concerned' (Barker & Galasinski 2001: 135). This is when the historical and specific context of a process becomes apparent: everyday practices are inevitably connected to time and location, to the place where you live at that moment, buy your bread, take the underground, walk on the city's streets, meet your friends… For example, it is not the same to arrange a meeting with a friend in a village in Casamance (Senegal), where everybody knows each other and everything is close by, as in the city of London, where it usually takes a while to get anywhere. The results of this study show the way in which participants' daily lives are both shaped and influenced by images given of their 'cultural group' in the Spanish and European media, and how daily issues like work, housing and leisure take up a great deal in identity construction in the metropolis.

The fieldwork was carried out between 2006 and 2008 in Barcelona, a four million metropolis, branded as the city of design and urban culture; a modern, hip and Mediterranean city[39]. This urban culture as a 'subculture' (Hebdige 2002) manifests itself in, the aesthetics of skaters outside the MACBA museum, the electronic music festival Sonar or the hip-hop showcase Hipnotik, only to name a few[40]. Crucially, it is in the context of the Hipnotik Festival that Roots &Routes participants were involved in artistic activities and performances in the field of music, dance and media. This study is not about hip hop, but hip-hop as a 'subculture' today is the universal language of teenagers and young adults around the world (. As a researcher in the social and cultural field, one cannot avoid hip-hop as an artistic and cultural movement of young people living in the beginning of the 21st Century. One of the key notions in the process of identity construction is therefore creativity (Hebdige 2002; Willis 1990). In this study, I will pay some attention to the creativity displayed by participants in their video productions, however without

[39] See Nick Rider's article in Barcelona Metropolis online:
http://www.barcelonametropolis.cat/en/page.asp?id=21&ui=4 (last visited July 2009)

[40] See www.macba.es, www.sonar.es and www.hipnotikfestival.com respectively

overrating its importance or supremacy in the construction of identity, as pointed out by David Buckingham's critique on 'creative' methods (Buckingham 2009). Rather, I will focus on its relationship with existing imagery on mainstream Spanish and Catalan media.

3. THE PRODUCTION OF VISUAL TEXTS: METHOD AND OBJECT OF STUDY

In the next chapter (see Chapter 3, Methodology) I will talk about how the visual texts created by participants were analysed in this study. In this section, however, I want to the use of video in social research in general.

Gillian Rose, in her seminal work on visual methodologies, argues that 'all visual representations are made in one way or another, and the circumstances of their production may contribute towards the effect they have' (Rose 2001: 17). In other words, an image will not mean anything unless it is analysed/reflected upon within the context of how it was made, for what audiences it was intended and what interpretations/effects are derived from it. Following Rose, the analysis of all visual material can be located on three sites: production, the image itself, and the audience; and in three different modalities: technological, compositional and social (Rose 2001: 16). In terms of identity construction as a dynamic process, this means that moments of interaction like brainstorming sessions, collective and individual script-writing and group discussions are crucial, as well as technical restraints or external circumstances that have influenced the production process, which should be taken into account in the analysis. All of these aspects, from prep sessions and shooting on location, to discussions in the editing room and crisises over technical difficulties were meticulously followed and registered by means of participant observation over three years. The result or product is therefore only a small part of the 'object of study'.

3.1. VISUAL TEXTS AS AN 'OBJECT OF STUDY'

The videos created by participants in the context of this study have a double role: on the one hand they are a methodological tool, and on the other they are contemplated as creations, which have been prepared, produced and post-produced with a certain intention and for a certain audience (Rose 2001). As products, 'objects of study', they should be analysed in both its formal and non-formal aspects.

The disciplines that have informed image analysis are mainly art history, film studies and semiology or semiotics[41]. Traditionally, art history has been occupied with analysing artefacts of 'selected culture' or 'high culture' in Raymond Williams' terms (see 2.1.1), such as paintings, photography and cinema. Video, as a more recent manifestation of such expressions, has been included in art history scholar's analysis practice and is known as 'Video Art', officially coined when Nam June Paik displayed on video tapes footage of Pope Paul VI's procession through New York City in the autumn of 1965 (see Meigh-Andrews 2006). As a sub discipline of art history, film studies or cinema studies are mainly occupied with the study and the aesthetics of film.

Approaches within the discipline of art history, and by extension film studies, have traditionally looked at the image in terms of an entity with an enclosed and fixed meaning, an individual expression of the author. In Bordwell and Thompson's seminal work on film art, for example, a film is considered as a perfectly formed work of art that cannot be understood if it is not studied as a whole. By 'film form' they mean

> '(…) the overall system of relations that we can perceive among the elements in the whole film (…) we should strive to make our interpretations precise by seeing how each film's thematic meanings are suggested by the film's total system. In a film, both explicit and implicit meanings depend closely on the relations between narrative and style.' (Bordwell & Thompson 1997: 65-66)

When we look at the history of the discipline we see an impressive chronology of such 'stand-alone' pieces of art, usually elected by upper class men in western Europe and considered to be 'beautiful'. The criterion of beauty remains prominent today, as indicated by the selection of objects still present in art history textbooks.

So, visual material has traditionally been analysed in terms of the individual expression of an author, rather than in a wider social context. Nonetheless, since the mid-20th Century there has been an effort to re-define the discipline to be more inclusive of non-Western art, art made by women, and individual expressions of daily, 'lived' culture. Feminist theory has heavily influenced cinema studies since the 1970s with pioneers like Laura Mulvey who identified the 'male gaze' in psychoanalytical terms[42] and stated in a famous paper in Screen that 'the satisfaction and reinforcement of the ego that represent the high point of film history hitherto must be attacked' (Mulvey 1975: 8). Together with the application of semiology, originated in the field of

[41] For a discussion on the distinction between semiology and semiotics (by many authors used as synonyms), see Storey 2006b, Turner 2003, and Hall 1997a.

[42] Mulvey has been criticised by some for her 'excessively' psychoanalytical perspective. Nonetheless, for the author it is a strategy to resist from within the partriarchal system when she states that '… we can begin to make a break by examining patriarchy with the tools it provides, of which psychoanalysis is not the only but an important one' (Mulvey 1975:7).

linguistics, screen theory has thus contributed to the evolution towards the analysis of meanings in 'lived' and 'recorded' culture, rather than (only) in high culture. A semiotic approach allows us to examine the cultural specificity of representations and their meanings (Turner 2003), as semiology is 'the study or 'science' of signs and their general role as vehicles of meaning in culture' (Hall 1997a: 6). It is in this theoretical context that video productions by participants will be analysed, as they are artefacts of 'lived' culture rather than 'selected' culture and its meanings are constructed in a dynamic process of negotiation. In the next chapter I will explain how I applied semiotics when analysing participants-produced text (see Chapter 3, 5.1.3).

3.2. VIDEO PRODUCTION AS A METHOD

But visual texts do not only have an intrinsic value. It is also the role of video production as a *method* in social research that interests us. As such, video is a relatively new medium used in research, since the cost for its production was only available to the happy few until recently, but the use of visual material in social research is far from new. Summarising some relevant contemporary authors on visual research methods (Rose 2001, Wagner 2002, Prosser 1998, Buckingham 2009, Gauntlett 2004), we can classify its use into three kinds: *documentary photography* or *videography* of the subject, registered by the researcher as part of the observation (this includes pictures taken of participants during the research, registration of certain activities etc…); *documentary photos or videos as records of participants' lives*, produced previous to or outside the research by the participant or not (this includes pictures of participants' childhood, home videos, holiday pictures etc…); and finally *expressive photography or videography*, produced by participants themselves within the context of the research (this can include collages, video diaries, self-portraits etc…).

Photography has been used in social research since its origins in the late 19th Century. In 'Researching the Visual' Emisson and Smith argue that many sociologists, anthropologists and ethnographers have used photographs 'in a purely illustrative fashion that falls far short of the kind of analytical inquiry' (Wagner 2002: 166). Or worse: early anthropologists and ethnographers have been criticised to use photography on their explorations and safaris as illustrations for posterior publications as well as for public exhibitions portraying 'exotic peoples'. Edward Said's work 'Orientalism' has contributed greatly to the critique on such portrayals in arguing that these contributed to the 'scientific' support for fundamentally colonialist ideologies (Said 1979). Later, also video taping was used to record peoples and their traditions (like dances, ritual fighting and other ceremonies). Despite some of these 'pioneer' researchers' good intentions, anthropologists now commonly agree that 'ethnographies should not be seen as neutral accounts of reality but on the contrary as fictions or constructed narratives', notion that is self-evident for most media researchers (Buckingham 2009).

Today most anthropologists handle their photographic material with much greater care. In fact, visual anthropology has developed as a complete sub-discipline of anthropological studies and explicitly focuses on the visual, be it as a method or as an object of study. In words of Marcus Banks, 'visual anthropology is coming to be understood as the study of visible cultural forms, regardless of who produced them or why' (Wagner 2002: 163). Additionally, ethnographers often take pictures for 'internal use', i.e. as reminders of certain situations, configurations, or simply to remember people's faces. This kind of memo-photography, a part of a 'researcher's diary' (see Blommaert 2006 on the ethnographer's diary), could be considered instrumental rather than illustrative. In the same way, video has been used since the late 1970s to register focus groups and interviews in sociological research with the sole purpose of facilitating the analysis of data (Wagner 2002). Usually such registrations are not published.

The idea of asking people to provide the researcher with visual material for the research is not entirely new either. However, much of these methods still involve documentary photography or videography – pictures or video records of life, like childhood photographs or home videos – rather than using image-creation within the research itself (Gauntlett 2004). In this sense, a lot of methodological work is still to be done due to a lack appropriate analysis methods for visual 'text' produced by participants.

Obviously, visual methods are extra relevant for media researchers. In today's media society, methods based on audio-visual material produced by participants for the sake of the research will indeed gain relevance, as media production becomes more available and relevant to both participants and researchers. Indeed, over the past twenty years researchers have increasingly engaged participants in creating their own visual or media 'texts', in order to explore their perceptions of particular aspects of media (such as news), to look at their relations with media more broadly, or sometimes both (Buckingham 2009). As Horst Niesyto writes: if researchers want to find out something about how young people make sense of the world in today's media society, then they 'should give them a chance to express themselves also by means of their own *self-made* media products!" (Niesyto 2000: 137; emphasis in original). These 'creative' visual methods have become more and more frequent in social research over the last few years, and this study is an example of it.

However, David Buckingham warns us for the dangers of overlooking the role of the (skilful) researcher in the analysis: 'if participants are seen to 'speak for themselves', analysis would seem merely redundant' (Buckingham 2009: 11). In other words, acknowledging the particularities of a research situation, the material - both visual and verbal - has to be reflected upon in the frame of theory building (Buckingham 2009; Wagner 2002). New forms of 'participatory' methods such as video diaries have been equally criticised for the rather naïve

'empiricist' assumption that such methods necessarily offer a direct insight into participants' lives and experiences (Buckingham 2009).

3.3. Video production and the construction of cultural identity

This study uses the production of video in three overlapping ways. First of all it uses video as a method to explore participants' perceptions of media portrayals and stereotyping of cultural groups in Spain and Catalonia, by engaging participants in self-representations. Secondly, it considers video as a method to explore broader issues related to cultural identity, by engaging them in the production of documentaries on the general theme of cultural diversity. Finally, video is an object of study in its formal and non-formal aspects, focussing on the 'writing' rather than on the 'reading' of media by participants.

The first two approaches to media texts (i.e. self-representation and reflection on cultural diversity) can be situated in the 'audiencing' site, whereas the third approach (video production an sich) is located in the site of the 'image itself' (see Rose 2001). Until today few studies have involved video production by participants as a tool for the analysis of cultural identity construction. Some recent works include Habiba Noor's study of identity construction by teenage Muslim girls in London and New York through the production of news items (Noor 2007), Horst Niesyto's work on adolescent identity and media (Niesyto 2000) and audio-visual self-expression of migrant children (Niesyto 2008), and Fatma Awan's doctoral research on young people, identity and the media using collages (Awan 2008).

Habiba Noor's paper entitled 'Assertions of identities through news production' is based on what Jenny Kitzinger called 'the news game' (Buckingham 2009): participants are asked to use pre-selected video fragments from TV reports (i.e. on the war in Iraq and the 'War on Terror') and re-edit them in order to construct their own stories. The study analyses how the girls position themselves as representatives of a global Muslim community-in-suffering to imagined mainstream audiences in the US and UK, and concludes that despite the different historical and social contexts of both countries, all participants reconfigured the dominant narratives to reflect their perceptions of the conflict (see Noor 2007). It is an illustrative example of how the production of media texts can help researchers to examine identity exploration of ethnic minorities.

3.4. Media, cultural identity construction and digital video: the complete picture

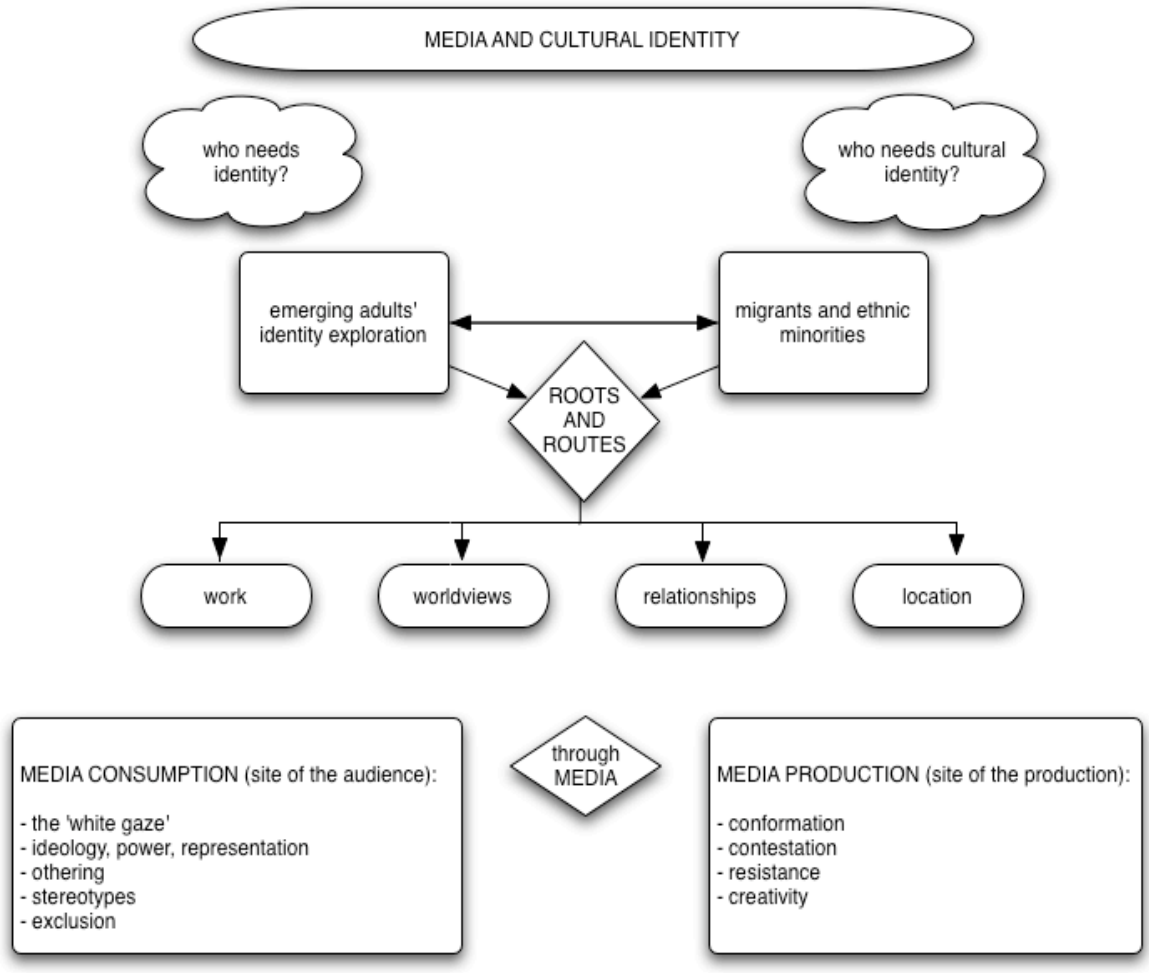


Fig. 4. Schematic overview of theoretical notions addressed in this study.

In this overview (Figure 4), the notion of the 'roots and routes' is central, as ethnic minorities and migrants in the emerging adulthood stage of their lives, explore their (cultural) identity in terms of education and work, worldviews and ideology, love and relationships, and finally mobility, travel and location. The question of cultural identity is addressed in relation to media in a twofold way: in the way cultural groups are represented (depicted, portrayed) in the media, and in the way individual members of cultural groups conform or resist to these portrayals by means of self-representation and creativity. The main (and indeed only) research question is *how* this process takes place: who 'needs' cultural identity; what do migrants and ethnic minorities think about how they are depicted in mainstream media; how do they feel their lives are affected by such portrayals; do they conform or rather resist to the image given of them in mainstream media; in what ways does this manifest itself through self-representation; what are the conflicts that arise when they are asked to (re-)present themselves; how does this relate to their roots and how does it relate to their routes in the mainstream society; what can we learn from such experiences in terms

of the multicultural society; what new languages and identities do participants invent to construct their present and their future?

Crucially, these issues are addressed by looking at people's daily lives through long-term participant observations, working with a 'natural group' (participants not selected specifically for the study) and in an overall process of mutual learning, knowledge construction and sharing between participants and the researcher, both conscious of their different roles but without the hierarchic complications that characterises much social research.

The following Chapter will address issues of methodology.

CHAPTER III
WAYS OF KNOWING:

METHODOLOGIES AND METHODS

'All cultures are lived and therefore always in flux. Culture, by its very nature, is changing in encounters with 'others', although it is also commonly reified as shared possession, as purportedly objective 'heritage'. None the less, ethnographic methods in particular enable us to track and identify the pace and nature of change in specific settings.'

Marie Gillespie, *'Television, ethnicity and cultural change'*

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to clarify the study's objectives, methodology and methods, to explain how data collection and analysis took place, to make the role of the researcher and her relationship with the other participants explicit, and to further explain the categories that were used for analysing the data. In this chapter I will outline the type of research that was intended in relation to its research questions, the reasons why this study needed an ethnographic and textual analysis approach, the details of its multi-method approach, the specific characteristics of this study and its hermeneutic circle, the categories of analysis that emerged during the research and how these were applied to the text.

If the theoretical backbone of this study is the assumption that media cannot and do not re-present 'reality', but that on the contrary all media representations are constructions that produce meaning (see Chapter 2), its epistemological basis is that research itself – and by extension this study – is a construct, a narration, a way of making sense of the world. Constructionists consider science as one way, although not the only one, to interpret phenomena in the natural and the social world (see, for example, Searle 1995; Berger & Luckmann 1966). In this view, art, humanities, philosophy and religion are other ways of making sense of the world and are no less valid than science to build up knowledge about the world that surrounds us.

As social constructs, 'science' and 'research' are informed by power relationships in a society where the hegemonic discourse is always trying to push for some 'meanings' over others; in other words these are sites where power is at work, just like media is a site for the 'production of meaning' (see Chapter 2). It is precisely in this process of meaning giving or interpretation that ideological positions are embedded. To ignore ideology and discourse in science and research would be naïve at best, and unethical at worst. In dialogical research processes, like the one presented here, it is only by making one's own position as a researcher explicit that we can avoid data analysis and interpretation to be informed by 'hidden agendas'. Apart from assuring rigour and meticulousness in the research process, making the researcher's position explicit at all times is thus a way of framing the research results in a broader cultural context, or in Stuart Hall's words, within its 'system of representation'.

The position underpinning this study, then, is the following:

A better understanding of the world, the representations its inhabitants make of it, and how power operates through discourse, can contribute to deconstructing dominant meanings and to creating new ones in order to transform reality.

Indeed, only by dis- and un-covering dominant meanings pushed forward by hegemonic institutions (such as patriarchy, the political class, corporate power, the media…) and by creating the possibility of subverting or altering its narratives, other and new meanings can emerge. Pragmatic philosopher Richard Rorty pointed out that

> '(…) injustices may not be perceived as injustices, even by those who suffer them, until somebody invents a previously unplayed role. Only if somebody has a dream, a voice, and a voice to describe the dream, does what looked like nature begin to look like culture, what looked like fate begin to look like a moral abomination. For until then only the language of the oppressor is available, and most oppressors have had the wit to teach the oppressed a language in which the oppressed will sound crazy - *even to themselves* - if they describe themselves as oppressed.' (Rorty 1995: 126; emphasis in original)

For Rorty, the only way to change instinctive reactions on representations of minority groups like women and ethnic minorities is 'to provide new language which will facilitate new reactions' (Rorty 1995: 126). The origin of this research lies, thus, in a preoccupation with *questioning* hegemonic representations of the world that exclude people on the basis of their 'other-ness' by revealing the mechanisms through which the 'production of meaning' takes place, and at the same time by looking at how alternative representations, i.e. through digital video, have a potential to make the world a better place: a world without oppressors and oppressed.

1. COMMUNICATIVE METHODOLOGY, ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

1.1. TRANSFORMATION OF THE SOCIAL REALITY: CRITICAL COMMUNICATIVE METHODOLOGY

As opposed to most interpretative methodologies in social science, where the aim is to interpret or understand constructed meanings without necessarily questioning them, critical methodologies intend to transform reality by criticising the *status quo* and eventually creating alternatives through what has been called 'communicative action' (see Gómez et al. 2006). The critical communicative approach aims at transforming social reality through dialogue and reflection together with the social agents living that reality (Gómez et al. 2006: 33-34). It implies engaging in real, face-to-face dialogue in a context of reciprocity, with the aim of changing the situation of social exclusion of individuals or groups.

This aproach, however, does not imply that a conversation in a pub or an informal interview at a family's home is sufficient to set off a process of transformation: parting from the idea that we first need to understand the world in order to make it better, scientific rigour is necessary. Methodology thus helps us to analyse and solve problems in the natural and social world, discover patterns in human behaviour, build new theory, predict possible futures and eventually prepare

humanity for making the right choices. Critical communicative methodology, based mainly on the work of Habermas, Giddens and the 'Critical Theory', is a participatory paradigm that tries to bridge the paradox between the determining potential of structures and the capacity of human agency:

> 'Critical communicative methodology (…) approaches the analysis of reality from a double perspective: the perspective of systems and structures, and the perspective of daily life and human agency. (…) Giddens [postulates that] human agency is capable of influencing structures, just like structures influence human agency. Social agents interpret reality, their own actions and their consequences through what Giddens called *practical consciousness*. (Gómez et al. 2006: 41; my translation from Spanish original; my emphasis).

This 'practical consciousness' is understood by Giddens as the knowledge and understanding that ordinary people have about their social conditions, despite the fact that they cannot always express this knowledge discursively. Giddens argues that this practical consciousness, as opposed to the unconscious, is not protected by barriers of repression, and therefore more suitable for social research (Giddens [1984] 2003: 394).

Critical methodology is the basis for research that focuses on contemporary sites where meaning is produced institutionally, and these sites' relationship with social processes such as exclusion, power, participation, equality and democracy. Several philosophical and epistemological principles lie at the centre of the critical communicative approach, of which I will briefly outline the ones that are relevant to this study.

'Objectivity as inter-subjectivity'

In a communicative approach, objectivity and the production of knowledge is understood not as a fixed notion but as a dialogical process of interpersonal and social negotiation of meanings. In other words, it abandons 'objectivity' in absolute terms and focuses on how subjects interact so as to come to a consensus, which is then referred to as 'inter-subjectivity' (Gómez et al. 2006: 44).

'Where interaction is, meaning emerges'

In order for events – and representations of events – to be meaningful and eventually lead to the production of knowledge, a certain degree of interaction must take place. Following Stuart Hall this interaction refers to the communication processes that people use to understand each other within systems of representation. Events that exist in the 'natural' world have no meaning at all if they are not framed in a system of representation ('culture') with the help of language. Language, in its verbal and non-verbal forms, enables the process of interaction and is a vehicle of

meaning. In other words, meaning can only emerge where interaction takes place through language.[43]

In a critical communicative approach, this interaction refers to a process of mutual learning in which knowledge is the result of an ongoing dialogue between science and society (Gómez et al. 2006: 45).

'Each individual is capable of language and interaction'

Capacity for language and communication is universal (see Habermas 1984; Rorty 1995; Gómez et al. 2006; Barker & Galasinski 2001). Jürgen Habermas called this 'communicative rationality': language, in whatever form, is inherent to all human beings and is not an exclusive attribute of scholars, writers or researchers (Habermas 1984). As such, all individuals who participate in society have the capacity to attribute meanings to events and to negotiate meanings with others using language.

'Each individual can interpret their own reality and contribute to knowledge creation'

Since 'language cannot represent the world, it cannot misrepresent it' (see Barker & Galasinski 2001: 48), knowledge lies in how language operates in relation to the natural world, rather than what it 'represents' of it. Each individual can interpret their own reality through interaction with others by using shared conceptual maps, and thus contribute to the creation of new knowledge. This process of creating new knowledge through interaction can be considered as a learning process, as individuals 'learn' about each other's conceptual maps and construct knowledge in dialogue (Habermas 1984, Gómez et al. 2006; see above).

'There is no hierarchy between 'researcher' and 'researched', as both are part of the learning process'

By regarding the research process as a learning process in dialogue, the communicative approach considers both the 'researcher' and the 'researched' being equal participants of it, and as such there is no hierarchy between them (Gómez et al. 2006: 43-44). Obviously, there are different roles to be taken on in research processes (these roles are usually made explicit as 'the researcher' and the 'researched'), but these are equally necessary for the research to be meaningful. The specific role of the researcher(s), then, is to bring in theoretical and methodological knowledge from the scientific community and gather, register, systematise and report the actions, whereas the role of the other participant(s) is to interact with the researcher(s) and with other participants about certain situations, topics or activities. By doing so, participants create (new) meanings that

[43] For theoretical outlines of representation as a signifying practice, see Hall's 'Cirle of Representation', Figure 2 in Chapter 2, 1.1 'Representations in the media: fixed meanings?'

then can be systematised and reported by the researcher. In this view, the only difference between researched and researcher is that the latter has been trained (and/or paid) to carry out the research activities, whereas as the former has not (necessarily).

'Equal epistemological level'

As a consequence of the previous idea, researcher and researched are on the same level in the research process and as to the interpretation of their actions. Critical communicative methodology postulates that, although it is difficult to reach true equality, researchers should participate in the communicative process on the same equalitarian level as the people whom they want to discuss something with, as only by dialogue a consensus can be reached: researching 'with' rather than 'on' (Gómez et al. 2006: 44).

1.2. The ethnographic turn in cultural and media studies

In the 1980s a development in media studies took place that turned its attention from the text to the audience.[44] Much of the early work in this new direction was done by researchers working at Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies. Authors like Stuart Hall and David Morley started to look at media audiences as opposed to (only) media texts, much in keeping with the general ethos of the Cultural Studies that emerged from the Birmingham School. This emphasis on the audience has been referred to by some authors as 'the ethnographic turn' in media research (Ang 1990, Machin 2002). Janice Radway for example, in her 1988 paper on reception study, pointed out to the problem of the 'decontextualised' study of audiences in both quantitative and qualitative research traditions at the time (Radway 1988). As an alternative she proposed a classic ethnographic fieldwork on the cultural as well as other social practices of the communities she studied, arguing that the object of study should be the 'range of practices engaged in by individuals within a single heterogeneous community as they elaborate their own form of popular culture' (Radway 1988: 368). This 'ethnographic turn' shifted the attention to the meanings of events within the context of *a single common system of representation*, be it a city's, a tribe's, a youth gang's or a rock band's. In the present study, for example, the system of representation is located at the level of a natural group in a single city (Barcelona) in a certain period of time (2006-2008).

But, what exactly does ethnography have to offer to media research? The question is whether ethnography as a methodology is a feasible option in media studies and media research in the first place, and if so, which aspects or methods of it can be applied to the topics addressed in the present study. David Machin has talked about the 'ethnographic gaze' in media studies, meaning that we 'approach cultural explanations, including those in our own culture, as never being

[44] For a detailed overview of this shift, see Introduction and Chapter 2, 1.2 Power of the media: the text vs. the 'audience'.

rational, natural or inevitable' (Machin 2002: 35). Ethnography parts from the assumption that all behaviour is to be framed in a broader cultural context, including our own behaviour as researchers. Ethnography is another methodological position that explicitly rejects the idea of the 'objective' scientist observing a reality and giving a transparent report on it.

Indeed, contemporary media researchers have all too often taken for granted certain behaviours or beliefs and the explanations thereof as 'normal', especially when researching in their own cultural setting. Machin encourages media researchers to learn to think 'ethnographically' about all behaviour as being accomplished through culturally accepted meanings (Machin 2002: 34). By this he means that we cannot fully understand why someone is doing or saying something if we don't have a broader view of the cultural, historical and localised context, even if it is our own. Thus, ethnography aims at giving the researcher access to how people's actions, beliefs and behaviours are meaningful to them *in their own terms*, rather than in the researcher's preconceived reference frame (Machin 2002: 1). Jan Blommaert goes further by suggesting that the ethnographic methodology implies a 'democratic procedure' in that it is based on an inductive paradigm, building theory from below (Blommaert, 2006).

Both authors agree, however, that 'the ethnographic gaze' is a valid methodological approach in non-ethnographical studies (Blommaert 2006), including media studies (Machin 2002). As a methodology, ethnography has certain characteristics that, together, distinguish it from other paradigms: it builds theory from below, it is essentially inductive, it parts from the idea that all human behaviour is accomplished through culturally accepted meanings, and that each person possesses a 'cultural toolkit' to give meaning to their life and to the world according to the circumstances (Machin 2002, Blommaert 2006). This is much in line with what Habermas identified as the universal capacity of language and Giddens' concept of 'practical consciousness' (see above).

It is however Marie Gillespie's seminal work on ethnographic methods in media studies that has most informed the methodological choices in this study (Gillespie 1995, 2000). In a chapter in Cottle's work on ethnic minorities and the media, she encourages both fields to look to each other:

> '(...) anthropology and media studies have much to learn from each other. Ethnography enables us to track, with rich empirical detail, how global media are used and interpreted by particular people in specific local contexts. (...) Ethnographic studies contribute to a rich understanding of what people actually do with the media, rather than predictable 'findings' about what the media do to people.' (Gillespie, 2000: 170)

Gillespie thus emphasises the importance of new methodologies in the light of the complexity and diversity of ethnic communities and diaspora communities within the globalisation of media and culture. What is 'the' audience anyway? Can we still talk about homogeneous groups of spectators? The time when a whole village watched the same show on TV to discuss it the next day

in the local pub, is long lost. Today, in the era of global media access and web 2.0, we must talk about 'audiences', since disperse communities are not restricted any longer by language, origin or geographical situation.

1.3. Dangers and criticisms

There has been a tendency in cultural studies and media studies to invoke different qualitative methodologies, including in-depth interviewing, as the equivalent of 'ethnography', without actually carrying out the real ethnographic work: long-term observation and immersion in participants' daily activities (see inter alia Gillespie 1995). This has provoked a fair amount of criticism, both from the anthropologist side and the media studies side (see overview in Jensen 2002). The most important objections refer to the scientific quality criteria that are generally used to assess how well a methodology works: validity, representativeness, reliability and transparency. David Machin argues that ethnography is by no means, nor claims to be, a 'transparent' way of representing the social world. In fact, he continues, there is no pre-existing 'neutral' social world out there to discover. Ethnographical methods defy the 'validity' of other methods stating that these imply pre-set theories or assumptions made by the researcher, for example, the assumption that people tend to tell the truth in questionnaires. In other words, ethnography – just like other qualitative methodologies – may be considered as a way of writing, a narrative of the world: it creates 'texts that say something about the culture of the observer' (Machin 2002: 89).

However, more importantly, Klaus Bruhn Jensen has pointed out that there may be an epistemological problem when applying ethnography to media studies: 'Media ethnography' appears to be a contradiction in terms in that 'it assumes that an inclusive and holistic study of a social group or context could, nevertheless, legitimately predefine media use as its empirical focus' (Jensen 2002: 165). According to Jensen it would be more appropriate to describe ethnographic methodology as complementary to other methods to research the use of media, and suggests multi-method, as well as multidisciplinary approaches. As Jensen proposes,

> '(…) 'ethnography' might imply a focus, not on media, but on the social practices and identities that media help to constitute across contexts (Jensen 2002:165; my emphasis).

This looking at 'identities that media help to constitute across contexts', is precisely what the present study intends to do. In my opinion, however, the ethnographic emphasis on social practices rather than on media does not prevent media researchers from using ethnographic methods in a meaningful way, especially when one of those social practices constitutes media production.

1.4. ETHNOGRAPHY IN THIS STUDY

After establishing that the 'ethnographic gaze' has a lot to offer to media studies in general, the question remains whether it is a useful approach for the present study. In their seminal work on research types in media studies, Wester, Renckstorf and Scheepers (from now on referred to as Wester et al.) point out that the main characteristics of the ethnographical approach is its focus on cultural elements, its long-term observation of activities of the group, and the active role of the researcher:

> 'The ethnographic fieldwork is a form of qualitative research in which the researcher participates in the situations that need to be researched. The research is considered as a learning process through which the researcher gets familiar with the attitudes, actions and behaviour of the group that is being researched (…). It is participatory research, meaning that the researcher participates in the environment of the researched for a more or less long period of time, in order to get familiar with the situations that need to be researched.' (Wester et al. 2006: 427; my translation from Dutch original)

In the following sections I will argue that this study strongly draws on ethnographic epistemological assumptions and ethnographic methods of data gathering and data analysis.

1.4.1. Shared cultural codes?

Ethnography typically studies the meanings of events within groups with a single system of representation, such as a church community, a youth gang, a secret society, a tribe or an Internet community. In our case, the group consists of participants in an ongoing project in Barcelona. The role of the researcher, then, is to immerse themselves in the activities of the group, with the aim to 'learn' its system of representation, get an insight in its 'shared cultural codes'. However, in the present study the group consists of members with different systems of representation: if we take participants' background, nationality or ethnicity as a criterion, the Roots&Routes group consists of at least nine 'cultures': Senegalese (2 participants), Roma (4), Peruvian (2), Mexican (2), Mexican-Eritrean (1), Colombian (2), Argentinian (1), Italian (1), and Belgian-Spanish-Indian (1). In this sense, the epistemological assumptions underpinning ethnography as a methodology – that a single system of representations binds the group together and as such can be used as a frame to give meaning to events or actions that occur within the group – would be not fulfilled, as members of the group do not share the same cultural codes but on the contrary have very different ones. The fact that the group consists of multiple systems of representation makes the research quite challenging for an ethnographer: if it is already difficult to 'learn' about the conceptual maps of a culturally homogeneous group, it is even more the case for a heterogeneous group.

However, there is a different way to look at this heterogeneity. If we define 'culture' in a broader way, as opposed to considering it in terms of 'nationality' or 'ethnicity', it can easily be

argued that this group shares the cultural codes related to living in Barcelona and being 'the other', the outsider (immigrant and Roma). It is precisely the aim of this study to explore what elements constitute these shared codes, in other words, in which ways the members of this group are a homogeneous group of 'others'.

On the other hand, as a researcher I was more or less in the same situation as the researched: as a migrant from Belgium to Barcelona from a non-Spanish, non-Catalan background, I was also 'the other' and as such recognised by participants. In this sense, I shared the same cultural code of 'the other' with them, just like contemporary ethnographists who often practice participatory research within their own society, especially in media studies (Machin 2002, Wester et al. 2006). The fact that I was an 'other' for the dominant Spanish/Catalan society was – in line with the principles of the critical communicative methodology – not necessarily a disadvantage. Quite on the contrary: by considering the production of knowledge as a collective learning process, and the researcher as one amongst other participants interacting in this process, I feel that my own background as a foreigner has actually contributed to the richness of the process.

1.4.2. 'Natural' versus 'artificial' settings?

This study is the result of systematic work with a natural group of people, in the sense that the group was established previous to the research and its goals were different from the research goals. Natural groups in social research are those groups formed voluntarily (both in formal and informal contexts) by members who have a common goal that is however not imposed on them (Wester et al. 2006). In other words natural groups, as opposed to 'artificial' groups, are not brought together by an external agent (i.c. a researcher) for a specific purpose, but rather emerge from a psychological need or a common goal: street gangs, committees in enterprises, parents' associations, rock bands, political parties etc... Natural groups in social research, just like in ethnographic research, are therefore necessarily pre-established and constituted outside of the research, and its members are not selected specifically for the study objectives (Gómez et. al 2006: 83). Voluntary natural groups are not the same as involuntary groups in 'natural' settings like families, tribes or local communities, in which members are linked to each other on an involuntary basis (either by kinship or by social conventions). However, for both kinds of groups (voluntary or involuntary) ethnographical research can be appropriate, as long as the group is not established for the purpose of the research.

The Roots&Routes group was pre-established and voluntary, in the sense that participants came together on the basis of common interests and a common goal (learn how to make media), other than the research interests. However, the number of participants was limited artificially by

an external agent (in this case the project organisation), as opposed to other voluntary natural groups such as political organisations, sects or youth gangs, where the selection of members is usually determined by internal agents. All these aspects were important for the research context and were taken into account when interpreting the data. I parted from the idea that the more conscious I was of the configuration of the group, my status and role within the group and the natural group's potential reactivity to the researcher as an outsider, the more reliable the outcomes would be (Wester et al. 2006: 471).

Indeed, the importance of whether a group is 'natural' or 'artificial' is not to be overrated in ethnographic research, as long as its implications are acknowledged. As Machin points out, 'there is no such thing as 'natural' and 'artificial' settings; all settings are both natural and artificial, they are just settings' (Machin 2002: 47). In Machin's view, ethnography precisely gives a broader view on a person in different settings. He uses Goffman's notion of *performativity* (presentation of Self) to make his argument. In this study I had the opportunity to work with participants in different settings: as a coach I worked with them on the technical and organisational aspects of video production, as a researcher I worked on the research topics, and as a friend of some of the participants' I could have a broader view of their daily life settings. In 2.1 'The participants' and 2.2 'The R&R project: activities and products' I will go further into detail about the observation process in these different settings.

1.4.3. In search of 'the right interpretation': the hermeneutic circle

Hermeneutics or the 'art of explaining', a circular process in which the meaning of a textual part can only be understood in relation to the whole of the text, suggests that reading and analysing a text is incremental and creative in that only by reading and re-reading the text in increasing wholes of meanings and contexts, we can arrive at valid conclusions about it. In a hermeneutic approach, the researcher gradually works out their categories of understanding – while 'reading' – in order to arrive at a coherent interpretation (Jensen 2002: 21). Hermeneutics lie at the basis of both ethnography and other approaches like Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Glaser and Strauss 1999), in which the central methodological feature is that at the start of the research there is no certainty about the categories that will be used for the gathering of the data:

> 'In both approaches, at the beginning of the research the data are 'unstructured', meaning that at the time of data gathering they cannot be coded yet by means of a closed set of analytical categories' (Wester et al. 2006: 427; my translation from Dutch original).

In this study, the categories of analysis were established during and after the fieldwork, by reading and re-reading the texts in a hermeneutic circle of 're-visiting' the research questions:

> 'Due to this continuous feedback and return to the research questions, the ethnographic research process is cyclic. One question leads to the gathering of relevant data that are recorded, organised and immediately analysed. (…) The circle 'question – data – analysis – (new) question' goes on continuously, until the research has lead to a satisfactory result.' (Wester et al. 2006: 427; my translation from Dutch original)

Marie Gillespie found that when starting her study on the way black youth in Southall (UK) used media to construct ethnic identity, she did not have a very clear idea of what she was looking for until she actually started her fieldwork:

> '(...) ethnography does no lend itself to neatly systematic research designs, but rather to post hoc reconstructions of what is in practice a messy process of piecemeal inductive analysis based upon continually incoming data.' (Gillespie 1995: 61)

As Adrianne Kezar suggests, one way to ground researchers' theoretical derived understanding is to conduct a pilot study. The 'hermeneutic circle' provides a framework for understanding the importance of pilot studies, suggesting that a person must have a practical sense of the domain within which a phenomenon is situated in order to develop understanding (Kezar 2000: 388). The importance of pilot studies in ethnography lies in the possibility to explore the field, feel comfortable in the environment, test methods and tools (such as recording devices) and gain informants' trust (Blommaert 2006).

The pilot study I carried out with 9 Roots&Routes participants in July-September 2006 entailed many advantages in that sense. For a start, it helped me finding a new focus, as from the first analysis of the interviews it appeared that the participants did not see themselves in the first place as media producers, but as people engaged in an 'intercultural' activity within the Roots&Routes project. This, together with theoretical insights from cultural studies, put me on the route of the construction of (cultural) identity. In function of this new focus I was then able to select different data and generate different categories from the interviews I had analysed earlier. In other words, I had the chance to 'revisit' my first data in the light of the new focus. Furthermore, the pilot study enabled me to refine data gathering methods in the sense that what I initially used were semi-structured interviews with a prepared script, whereas in the later phases I used a more ethnographical approach with life narratives, open interviews and participant observation.

The pilot study also allowed me to detect flaws in my data gathering techniques, ranging from practical problems with recording devices to fundamental shortcomings for example in the amount of time spent with the participants: whereas in the pilot study I observed participants during project activities like shooting and editing, in subsequent editions I spent a lot more time with them also during brainstorming sessions, script discussions, shooting, editing and evaluation. Moreover, I started spending an increasing amount of informal time with the participants 'outside' the research context, in activities that were or were not related to the project. In line with ethnography's preoccupation of 'reactivity' to the researcher's presence during group activities

(see Wester et. al 2006), I also took the first edition of the project as a test case for the spatial and temporal configuration of the research and for positioning myself within the relationship with participants as a coordinator of the media section of the project on the one hand and as a researcher on the other, and with the other coordinators of the project from the music and dance sections. Finally, the pilot study allowed me to detect patterns and regularities: although my observation data were initially not very extensive, I could see that almost all participants, regardless of their nationality or ethnic group, were more interested in the 'intercultural' aspects of the project in terms of their roots and the curiosity for new routes in Barcelona, than the technical aspects of the use of digital media as such.

1.4.4. Triangulation of sources

In ethnography, just like in other interpretative methodologies, the data gathering ideally is a triangulated process, in order to guarantee a diversified and multi-dimensional view. When the researcher spends a lot of time with the informants, 'talk' must be corroborated with participant observation; attitudes or actions must be contrasted with life narratives; observation enhanced with available (official) documents; questionnaires enriched with in-depth interviews etc. ...

> 'One of the strong sides of ethnographic research is relating data that have been gathered in a variety of ways – through observation, interviewing and/or document analysis – in other words the *triangulation* of sources. Thanks to this procedure the quality of the data can be tested in multiple ways.' (Wester et al. 2006: 427; my translation from Dutch original, emphasis in original)

The inductive nature of the underlying epistemological principles in ethnographic approaches entails that data emerge from long-term observation, in-depth interviewing and 'hanging out' with participants (Machin 2002, Blommaert 2006). These three methods, adopted from ethnography, were used in this study, together with the creation and analysis of audio-visual documents.

In section 3 ('Data gathering') I will explain the different methods I have used in order to obtain triangulated data, but first I want to lay out the rigour criteria in interpretative research in general, and ethnographic research in particular.

As Ruiz Olabuénaga has argued, methodological rigour in more interpretative inquiries cannot be evaluated in terms of the notion of 'objectivity' (validity, reliability and representativeness), since these criteria have evolved from a positivistic view on objectivity to a more critical notion based on 'solidarity' (Ruiz Olabuénaga 1996). By this 'solidarity' Ruiz Olabuénaga refers to the above-mentioned 'inter-subjectivity' as a notion in the production of knowledge. Y. S. Lincoln (1995) also formulated these emerging quality criteria in terms of solidarity, overriding certain established standards that legimitise exclusion, letting hear distant

voices that have often been ignored or repressed, and sharing with participants the privileges inherent to the research (see also 1.1 'Transformation of the social reality: critical communicative methodology).

The fact that validity criteria differ does not mean, however, that ethnographic or other qualitative approaches lack methodological rigour at all. Although the researcher does not arrive at the field with pre-set ideas, hypotheses or theories (see 1.4.3 'The hermeneutic circle'), this does not mean that insights are not valid or interpretations not coherent. In the next section I will explicit the details of this process of 'reading and re-reading' the data, generating categories and revisiting the data with new categories, discovering patterns and group concepts, systematically coding the material, and drawing conclusions.

2. The Case

2.1. Participants

Sixteen young people took part in this research project over a total period of three years. Participants from the first, second and third year were acquainted with each other, although not all of them participated in the project during more than one edition. Three participants from the first edition were involved as peer coaches during the second year, and two participants from the second edition were involved in the third edition as well. This is to say that most participants of all three editions kept in touch with each other throughout the research period.

It is important to remind readers that all participants were selected by the Roots&Routes organisers on the basis of their age, their background, their experience with (audio-)visual media, their motivation and their availability for the project. Roots&Routes is a project addressed mainly (though not exclusively) at young people from minority backgrounds (either cultural or ethnic) who create music, dance and media together in a process that takes a few months, in which they participate in workshops with coaches and experts, and which culminates in a public performance on a renown festival or stage. The project's ultimate aim is to generate positive imagery of minority youth, who are usually depicted in negative ways, both in their condition of 'youth' and 'minority'. Participants in the music, dance and media teams were aware of the fact that one of the criteria – though not the only one – for their selection was their ethnic background, as the project aims were explained to them from the beginning.

The Roots&Routes media team consisted of two kinds of 'minority groups'[45]: migrants and Roma. *Migrants* were those people who were born and raised outside the Spanish state and who moved to Barcelona as adults, either voluntarily or forced, either from inside or from outside the European Union, who resided in Spain either legally or illegally, and from any social economic class or background. This category included people ranging between well-off Latin American students, Sub-Saharan Africans, and European ex-pats. *Roma* were adult members of the Roma community established in Barcelona for centuries, who nevertheless can be considered as minorities suffering from the same prejudices and stereotypical representation as other cultural groups or migrants (see Chapter 1). In other words, what participants had in common was that they were emerging adults, they were negatively depicted as the 'other' by the dominant group, and they were interested in media.

As mentioned above, each of the Roots&Routes media participants were invited to participate in an additional research study. The study was introduced to them as a piece of research on media and the portrayal of minorities, and that they would be recorded and interviewed during and after their participation in the project. As seen from Figure 1 (Chapter 1), not all participants involved in the project took part in the research study. Since the only eligibility criterion for participation in the study was participants' consent to the minimum requirements of a systematical registering process (individual and group interviewing, visual and auditive recording, follow-ups, participant observation), the people who were not included in the study are those who were either unwilling or unable to fulfill that criterion.

As seen from Figure 5 below, in total sixteen people were included in the study over a period of three years (2006-2009). The first edition of Roots&Routes provided nine young adults for a pilot study in 2006 (2 female, 7 male); the second edition involved six participants in 2007 (4 female, 2 male); and the third and last edition in 2008 yielded only one participant for the study (male). Observation activities and interviews with participants were extended to 2009, beyond the official Roots&Routes project dates. All participants of the research, including the ones who were involved in the pilot study, were followed-up after their official participation in the project in both formal and informal settings (see 3. 'Data gathering'). Some of the participants from the first (2006) and second (2007) edition became peer tutors for their successors in the second and last edition respectively, meaning that they joined the participants in following editions of the Roots&Routes project as mediators or as technical coaches.

[45] By 'minority groups' I understand cultural and ethnic minorities as opposed to the Spanish/Catalan 'dominant group'.

Year of first participation in Roots&Routes	Name*	Origin/background**	Age***	Sex
2006				
	Abdou	Senegalese	30	M
	Antonio[*]	Roma	25	M
	Caicat	Peruvian	28	M
	Charo[*]	Mexican-Eritrean	25	F
	Diego	Roma	19	M
	Jardanay	Roma	18	M
	José	Mexican	29	M
	Lorenzo[*]	Peruvian	26	M
	Mikaela	Colombian	25	F
2007				
	Emiliana	Mexican	29	F
	Jonas[*]	Belgian-Spanish-Indian	33	M
	Manuela	Roma	27	F
	María	Colombian	28	F
	Sara	Italian	28	F
	Sihalebe	Senegalese Diola	29	M
2008				
	Federico	Argentinian	24	M

** Names are made fictitious for privacy reasons. Participants marked with [*] were involved in the project activities more than one edition, but did so in different roles: the first time they participated in the media team as participants; the second time as 'peer coaches' for the new participants. ** Origin (country or nationality) in the case of immigrants; background (ethnic group) in case of ethnic minorities *** Age at the time of first participation*

Fig. 5. List of participants from the Roots&Routes media team who participated in the study (2006-2007-2008).

2.2. THE ROOTS&ROUTES PROJECT: ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS

According to the official protocol, project organisers were encouraged to select young people from a migrant or otherwise minority background between approximately 15 and 25 years old.[46] The project in Barcelona selected new talents every year over a period of three years (2006-2007-2008) and in total 22 people participated in the media team (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1). All media participants went through the same cycle every year: theoretical and hands-on sessions on video production (1-2 weeks), reports on the project (1 week), free project (up to 1 month).

In the following Figure the structure of the project in terms of its activities becomes clear:

Activity	**Duration**	**People involved**	**Aims/outputs**
Introductory session	4 hours	- Project coordinators - Project coaches - Participants media team (all)	- Introduction to the project: mission, aims and programme - Introduction of all participants - Overview of the planned activities - Q&A
Guided training sessions (theory and practice)	5 sessions of 4 hours each (20 hours total)	- Project instructors and coaches: audio-visual language, camera, audio, editing… - Participants of the media team (as reporters) - Participants of the dance and music teams (as subjects of reports and profiles)	- Give participants a basic hands-on training in digital video, enable them to plan, register and edit small reports on the auditions and master classes, video clips and artist profiles of the dancers and musicians

[46] For a detailed description of the Roots&Routes project, see the original international project protocol in Annex 1. Ages were flexible, and in the case of Barcelona media participants' ages were slightly higher than music and dance talents, just like in other countries.

Online sessions (self-regulated learning): 'How to make an Interview: www.xenoclipse-net.eu/course	(depends on each individual)	- Participants of the media team	- Participants continue their audio-visual training individually: module 'The Interview'
Autonomous creation	2 to 4 weeks	- Participants of the media team - Coaches supervise the process and assist participants when necessary	- Participants are provided with cameras and tripods - Participants register live performances, make reports on the project, profiles of the artists, short documentaries, self-portraits and video clips
Total activities	**4 to 6 weeks**	**-**	**-**

Fig. 6. List of activities carried out during the Roots&Routes project, their average duration, people involved, and aims and outputs.

During the guided sessions (theoretical and hands-on) several people were involved in three different roles: *instructors*, *coaches/tutors* and *participants*. The instructors came in according to the session topic (an expert in audio registration, a teacher of audio-visual language, specialists in editing and optimisation software…) while I was present at all sessions, as a coach/tutor at the brainstorming sessions and discussions, organising the teams, assisting participants with their hands-on practice, and occasionally also as an instructor (audio-visual language and optimisation of digital video). In all of my 'roles' (instructor, coach and eventually researcher) I participated actively in all stages of the process: training, practice, creation.

2.2.1. Training activities

During the training activities, participants were provided with basic knowledge and skills to plan, register, edit and compress an audio-visual product (an interview, a news report, a documentary, a video clip…). Topics were types of shots, camera angles, lighting, shooting on location, how to make an interview, sound, editing with Final Cut Pro, subtitling, optimising and compressing. For the practical sessions participants worked in small groups (two or three people) to learn how to handle the camera, use microphones and register short scenes, which they afterwards captured into the editing programme, edited and exported.

Training activities: footage from theoretical and hands-on sessions in digital video (2006)

2.2.2. Practice activities

By the end of the training sessions participants were generally able to handle a mid-range digital camera[47], to plan, record and edit a simple audio-visual product (an interview, a news report…) and compress and/or upload it to a video sharing site or blog (blip.tv, vimeo and blogger). They were sent off in groups to shoot their stories and reports where the music and dance teams were having workshops or rehearsals. Many media participants went a step further and met music and dance talents in their homes and neighbourhoods so as to film them in their daily setting. This way, a whole dynamic existed between dance/music talents and media participants, which was fruitful for the project itself.

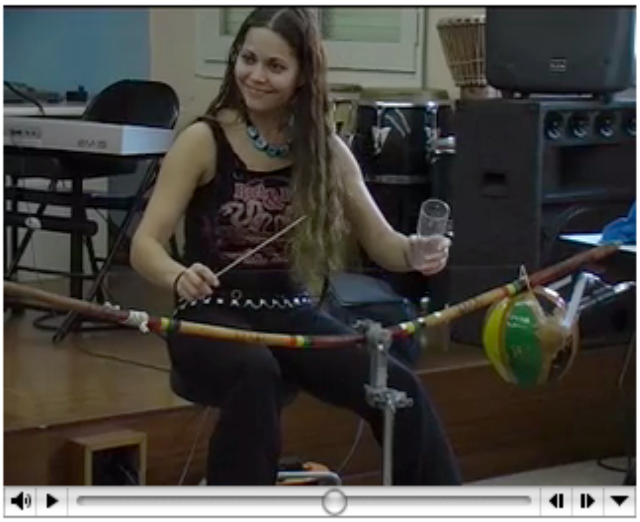
Practice sessions: footage from a documentary on Roots&Routes participants in their daily settings (2006)

[47] Cameras used throughout the project were Canon XM1 and Canon XL1 (both 3 CCD)

Every day during the music and dance workshops media participants edited small reports on the project progress in a 'media lounge' at the university, after recording their footage at the rehearsal space in a different area of Barcelona. Starting from the second year (2007 and 2008 editions), these daily reports were put on the project blog.[48] Participants compressed, optimised and uploaded their videos by themselves using video sharing sites and vlogging tools. Some of the participants, who had previous experience using digital media, produced more sophisticated reports or music videos about the project.

13 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 2007

BeRImbAU RoCKer



Vlog post: 'Berimbau rocker', a news report on the R&R music workshop with a percussionist (2007) ***(link to blog post)***

[48] See http://rootsbarcelona.blogspot.com

Vlog post 'Elvis', an interview/music video about one of the R&R musicians (2007)
(link to blog post)

2.2.3. Creation

Before finishing the project media participants were asked, unlike their counterparts in the music and dance teams, to prepare a product that would go beyond the project activities as such, and which continued after the last live performance. This idea came up after participants complained that 'all they would do was making reports on the project', while they expressed a wish to be more creative in their videos. These productions are where media talents can really show their skills and creativity, as they are not restricted to news reports or interviews. In the last edition (2009), media participants even prepared visuals for live projections on stage, thus making the media production into an integral part of the performance as opposed to 'just' reporting on it.

Frame from live visuals produced by media talents during a R&R performance in 2008 ***(URL)***

The kind of products that participants made during this last phase (autonomous creation) varied according to the edition. The first year, participants were asked to report on the Roots&Routes project activities, including the music and dance participants, throughout the whole project (product *Type A1*): short reports on the auditions, master classes, rehearsals, performance on Hipnotik Festival and backstage scenes. One team was in charge of the musicians, another team followed the dancers, and yet another group made a report on the media team itself. One participant made a short documentary on migration related to the project. The second year, participants were asked to produce three documentaries (one per team) about the specific topic of 'roots and routes' (product *Type A2*), apart from the usual reports on the project (Type A1). During the last edition, each participant made a self-portrait (product *Type A3*) besides the standard project reports (Type A1). In total, forty-seven pieces of (audio-)visual material were produced over the three years, of which twenty-nine were A1 (reports about the Roots&Routes project itself), four were A2 (documentaries on the topic of diversity and migration) and six were A3 (self-portrait). The rest (*Type B*) were products like interactive DVD menu design, animation or miscellaneous exercises.

PRODUCTS	**Type 1 (A1)**	**Type 2 (A2)**	**Type 3 (A3)**	**Other (B)**	**Total**
2006	5	1	-	2	8
2007	17	3	-	-	20
2008	7	-	6	6	19
TOTALS	**29**	**4**	**6**	**8**	**47**

Fig. 7. Number of products (clips, reports, exercises, documentaries, self-portraits, animation, interactive design) produced by all participants of the Roots&Routes media team in the frame of the project activities (2006-2007-2008).

The following Figure shows the different types of products that participants made during project activities:

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE

Type A1	- Short reports on the Roots&Routes project activities like the auditions, master classes, rehearsals, performance on the Hipnotik Festival and backstage scenes - Interviews with participants, masters and organisers of the project - Video clips of songs created during the master classes or workshops *Characteristics:* *Topic and format are free but the product must be related to the Roots&Routes project*	 Type A1 (2006) – R&R auditions at FNAC Barcelona  Type A1 (2007) – Backstage interview with musicians after their performance at Hipnotik  Type A1 (2007) - 'News item' on the R&R project  Type A1 (2008) – Interview with Gregory Isaacs whose pre-show on May 11th at the Apolo theatre in Barcelona featured R&R talents

Type A2	- Documentaries on diversity, migration and multiculturalism in general - Documentaries about one person in particular with regard to diversity or migration *Characteristics:* *Product doesn't have to be directly related to the Roots&Routes project, but the topic and format are agreed on*	 Type A2 (2007) – 'Todos somos extraños' – documentary on multicultural Barcelona  Type A2 (2007) – 'Rromià' – documentary on a Roma community in Barcelona
Type A3	Self-portrait on video: life narrative, short documentary, fiction *Characteristics:* *Topic and format are free but it is agreed that it has to be about themselves*	 Type A3 (2008) – self-portrait
Other (B)	- Interactive DVD menus - Animation or stop motion films - Photography	 Type B (2008) – interactive DVD menu

Fig. 8. Classification, description and examples of the kinds of products created by participants during project activities.

Not all of the participants' products were included, only the ones produced by the people who actually took part in the study. However, the whole picture of what the young adults created during the project partly informed the interpretation of results. Three major products (two A2 and one A3) were analysed in detail regarding identity construction (see Chapter 4, 3. 'Action! Media production and cultural identity').

3. DATA GATHERING

During the three Roots&Routes editions (2006-2007-2008) I carried out my research activities while participants were involved in the project activities as described above. Sometimes both types of activities overlapped due to my role as a coach or instructor (see 2.2) and a researcher at the same time. The research activities in the field were threefold: participant observation and in-depth interviewing. Research activities during and after observation were the analysis of interviews and observations, and analysis of the products. The combination of these three sources of information (observation-interviews-documents) enabled me to triangulate the data (see 1.4.4).

3.1. LONG-TERM PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

In ethnographic research four kinds or 'degrees' of observation are distinguished (see inter alia Wester, Renckstorf and Scheepers 2006): *complete observation*, in which the researcher observes the group activities without taking part in them and without revealing her or his status as a researcher; *participant observation*, in which the researcher reveals their status but does not necessarily participate in the group's activities; *observing participation*, in which the researcher actively takes part in the activities while making their status as a researcher explicit; and *participation only*, in which the researcher participates fully in the group's activities without revealing their status as a researcher. All four forms have their advantages and disadvantages in relation to their effectiveness for the research, although participant observation and observing participation are considered to be the most appropriate for most ethnographical studies (see Wester et al. 2006: 507).

The problem with the first and the last modality (*complete observation* and *participation only*), in which the research activities are carried out without participants' knowledge[49], is not their functional disadvantages, but rather the deontological objections. In line with the principles of communicative methodology as described above, in this study a combination of *participant observation* and *observing participation* was employed. I made my status as a researcher explicit at an early stage – at the end of the first project briefing - to the Roots&Routes media team, and the group members were considered at all times as participants, rather than as 'informants' - people who provide the researcher with information on the study object - or 'respondents' - people who provide the researcher information about themselves, their lives and their attitudes (see Wester et al. 2006).

The particular circumstance in this project was my double role as a researcher on the one hand, and as a group coach on the other. I tried to be as much aware as possible of the effect I and my actions could have on participants when spending time with them, working with them on topics and themes for their videos, etc…: the so-called 'reactivity' to the researcher (Wester et al. 2006). Although my status as a researcher was explicit from the beginning, participants were not always aware when exactly I was 'researching' and when I was 'coaching' them, and in indeed when both overlapped. Since I was actively involved in the project activities as a media coach, and most of the project activities actually took place at the university, my role in the project was apparently (i.e. for the participants) that of an instructor or coach. This was an advantage in the sense that I could be a true observing participant at times, making myself 'invisible' as a researcher.

The observations included not only individual actions or talk, but also of the group as a whole, of the relationships established between the participants of the media team, and between the media group and the rest of the R&R participants (musicians and dancers). This also included close and detailed observations of the project activities and video making processes (see 2.2 'The Roots&Routes project: activities and products'): initial ideas, brainstorming, discussions about the topic, scriptwriting, shooting, editing, and public screenings of the results. It also implied detailed observations of certain participants in terms of their particular individual process.

As mentioned before, during the pilot study the observation process was less systematic and more attention was paid to interviewing participants. In a later stage participant observation became the core of my research activities. During observation I mainly focused on how participants talked to each other during group sessions; what kind of topics were raised in general; how these were discussed; if and what kind of identity claims emerged; in what ways participants

[49] In this respect these forms of inquiry could be defined as 'spy mode' and 'infiltration mode' respectively.

related to their 'roots' - in terms of what language they spoke, how they related to their nationality or their country, and how they related to their new homeland – temporary or definite; how themes and topics for documentaries were decided, meanings explored and opinions exchanged. I looked at how participants related to each other and to me when organising the production of their audio-visual material: their attitude during the work (punctuality, reliability, professionalism, respect for the equipment…), the negotiation with peers (choosing a role, taking other people into account, negotiating storylines…), their decisions about styles and genres, and their relationship with digital video technology, including the Internet. The observations were registered by means of an audio and video recorder, a photo camera, a notebook and a laptop.

3.2. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWING

Interviews used in qualitative research such as ethnographic approaches, are typically referred to as 'depth' or 'in-depth' interviews (Lincoln and Guba 1985). The most interesting advantage that in-depth interviews offer us for this kind of studies is their open and un-structured character. It is precisely the depth of the conversation that allows the researcher to move beyond surface talk to a rich discussion of thoughts and feelings. During the analysis of the pilot study interviews, I realised that they had been too short, too few and too 'structured' or focused. First, for a real in-depth interview to be effective, they must average one-and-a-half to two hours in length, allowing for prolonged engagement with the interviewee. This time frame allows 'the competent interviewer to establish rapport with the interviewee and to foster a climate of trust' (Maykut and Morehouse 1994: 80). Secondly, if the subject is interviewed more than once, the researcher can pursue in subsequent interviews topics that emerge as important from preliminary data analysis:

> 'This kind of persistent involvement with interviewees makes it more likely that the researcher will come to understand at a deeper level their perceptions related to the phenomenon under study' (Maykut and Morehouse 1994: 80)

Thirdly, although in-depth interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured (Ruiz Olabuénaga 1996), in the case of a pilot study – when the researcher is not supposed to have any specific ideas or hypothesis just yet – they should be rather unstructured, so as to pick up as wide a range possible of data (Blommaert 2006). At this stage the interviews should be 'holistic' with no pre-established topics, rather than 'focused' (Ruiz Olabuénaga 1996). However, in my pilot study (2006) the questions I asked were focused on several, very specific topics, like the representation of (im)migrants and ethnic minorities on TV, participants' media consumption, and what they had learned of the experience of having participated in Roots&Routes. It was only in later editions (2007 and 2008) that I started out with life narratives, and then sometimes focused on more specific topics in subsequent interviews with the same person.

In total, eighteen interviews and two group sessions were transcribed and analysed. The interviews were semi-structured in the pilot study (nine semi-structured interviews) with a focus on media representations of minorities, which during successive months became more open interviews with a strong life narrative orientation (nine open interviews) focused on cultural identity exploration and construction. The first type were labelled as E1 interviews (semi-structured) while the second type were labelled as E2 (open). The group discussions (DG1 and DG2) were not directed 'communicative discussion groups' (as described, for example, by Gómez et al. 2006), but recorded group sessions during which the researcher was not necessarily present: preparation of the documentaries in groups, brainstorming sessions, discussion on topics, decision-taking. This means that the recorder was just registering participants' discussions (with their knowledge) while I went from group to group as an observer. Two group discussions were partially transcribed and analysed.

Nickname	Sex	Country / origin	Period	Type interview
Jardanay	M	Roma	2006	E1
Diego	M	Roma	2006	E1
Abdou	M	Senegal (Wolof)	2006	E1
Charo	F	Mexico	2006-2007	E1
Lorenzo	M	Peru	2006-2007	E1
Caicat	M	Peru	2006	E1
José	M	Mexico	2006	E1
Antonio	M	Roma	2006-2007	E1 – DG1
Mikaela	F	Colombia	2006	E1
Emiliana	F	Mexico	2007	E2 – DG2
Manuela	F	Roma	2007	E2 – DG1
Sihalebe	M	Senegal (Diola)	2007	E2 (2)
Jonas	M	Belgium/Spain	2007-2008	E2 – DG2
María	F	Colombia	2007-2008	E2 (2)
Sara	F	Italia	2007-2008	E2 – DG1
Federico	M	Argentina	2008	E2

Fig. 9. Participants and types of interviews that were transcribed and analysed. E1: semi-structured interviews; E2: open interviews and/or life narratives; DG: recorded group sessions.

The semi-structured interviews (E1), which had an average duration of about twenty minutes, were addressed at finding out participants' opinions, visions and feelings about media

portrayals of ethnic minorities, how this affected their lives and whether they had suggestions for change. My initial questions were: what kind of audio-visual media do participants use? What opinion do participants have about the (re)presentation of their ethno-cultural group in mainstream Spanish and Catalan audio-visual media? Do they feel 'represented' by the media? Do they think they could make a change or participate in media practices? If so, how? What do they think should change? Do they think the media have an important role in a multicultural and diverse society?

1. **WHAT KIND OF MEDIA DO PARTICIPANTS USE**

Questions:

1.1 ¿Tienes tele? *Do you have a TV at home?*

1.2 ¿Tienes antena normal, cable o satélite? *Do you have a normal antenna, cable or satellite?*

1.3 ¿Qué tipo de programas son los que ves habitualmente (noticias, documentales, deportes, películas...)? *What kind of programmes do you usually watch? news, documentaries, sports, films....*

1.4 ¿Con qué frecuencia ves estos programas (cada día, cada semana...)? *How often do you watch these programmes?*

1.5 ¿Cuáles son los temas que más te interesan? (música, política, moda, educación, salud, trabajo, deportes, noticias de tu país de origen, ...) *Which subjects are most interesting to you?*

1.6 ¿Escuchas la radio? *Do you listen to the radio?*

1.7 ¿Qué tipo de programas son los que escuchas habitualmente? *What kind of programmes do you listen to?*

1.8 ¿Usas internet? *Do you use the internet?*

1.9 ¿Para qué usas internet? (para email, enviar mensajes, telefonía, buscar algo, bajar música, vídeos y programas, comprar entradas, leer noticias....) *What do you use it for?*

2. **WHAT OPINION DO PARTICIPANTS HAVE ABOUT THE (RE)PRESENTATION OF THEIR ETHNO-CULTURAL GROUP IN THE MEDIA?**

Questions:

2.1 En tu opinión, ¿qué imagen dan los programas de televisión de las personas inmigradas en general? *In your opinion, what kind of image do television programmes give of immigrants in general?*

2.2 En tu opinión, ¿qué imagen dan los programas de televisión de las personas de origen (nacionalidad/grupo étnico del entrevistado)? *In your opinion, what kind of image do television programmes give of people from (origin or home country of the interviewee)?*

2.3 ¿Crees que el porcentaje/la proporción de personas pertenecientes a minorías presentadas en los medios corresponde a la realidad? *Do you think that the percentage/the proportion of people from minorities presented in the media corresponds to reality?*

2.4 ¿Crees que la manera de la que son representadas es adecuada? ¿Por qué (no)? *Do you think that the way they are presented is appropriate? Why (not)?*

2.5 ¿Tú personalmente te sientes representad@ por los medios de comunicación? *Do you personally feel represented by the media?*

2.6 ¿Crees que los medios de comunicación tienen un papel importante en la convivencia entre catalanes, españoles y extranjeros? *Do you think the media have an important role in the co-existence of Catalan/Spanish and foreigners?*

3. **WHAT SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGE DO THEY HAVE?**

Questions:

3.1 ¿Crees que es justa la situación? *Do you think this situation is a fair deal for everyone?*

Fig. 10. Script for the semi-structured interview (E1)

Apart from these questions, other issues came up according to the situation or the topics that were raised, or I asked additional questions about the Roots&Routes project: what they think they learned, if their expectations were fulfilled, what they would change, how they related to the other participants etc…

The open interviews, which had a strong life narrative character, were generally longer (with an average of seventy minutes) and started with just one question: 'Who are you?'.[50] This question, simple and direct, almost always oriented the conversation to identity-related issues. During the interview, which was more like a dialogue, participants talked about their home country, their reasons to leave, about what they liked about Barcelona, about the Catalan people and the Spanish people, about how they felt represented by dominant media discourses, about the Roots&Routes project, why they were interested in participating and what they learned from it, etc… They also often talked about how they worked with their peers in the project when creating videos together, and what they learnt from that.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES

As explained above, this study started out with no previously established categories of analysis (see 1.4.3 'In search of the 'right interpretation': the hermeneutic circle'). The categories and dimensions emerged during the process of analysing the material during and after observation, in function of the theoretical frame and the broad research question: 'in what ways do migrants and ethnic minorities claim (new) cultural identities in response to media portrayals', in the case: Roots&Routes project Barcelona 2006-2007-2008. After the pilot study, two main focuses emerged:

1. The views and opinions of participants on media representations in general, and on the portrayal of minorities in particular

2. Cultural identity claims and construction of identity

[50] 'Quién eres, preséntate.'

Following Christiane Schmidt, in a first stage material-oriented analytical categories were established (Schmidt 2004: 254). All interviews were transcribed completely[51], and after an intensive and repeated reading of the material recurring topics or terms were lifted out, on the basis of what these meant to interviewees, which aspects they omitted in their accounts, and what new topics actually turned up (Schmidt 2004: 254). Then the analytical categories for the interviews type E1 ('media stereotypes and negative portrayal') were determined with the theoretical frame and the general research questions in mind: (1) *awareness about stereotyping in the media*, (2) *opinion about its causes or underlying reasons*, (3) *consequences of stereotyping for their daily lives*, (4) *suggestions for change or transformation*. The analytical categories for the interviews type E2 ('identity construction') were established: (1) *identity construction in terms of work*, (2) *location*, (3) *worldviews*, (4) *social relationships*.

Still following Schmidt, these 'draft' analytical categories were then assembled into a guide of analysis and coding, with detailed descriptions of the individual categories, and for each category different versions or 'dimensions' were formulated (Schmidt 2004: 255). The result was a coding guide with main categories, subcategories and dimensions, of which a simplified version looked like this:

[51] For the transcription of interviews I used the same criterium consequently: a complete ordinary transcription with a basic degree of detail. This means that a) the whole interview was transcribed in all cases, b) all enunciations were transcribed literally, and c) silences, laughter/smile and interruptions were indicated with '(…)', '(laughs)' and '/' respectively. No intonation or pronunciation signs were included in the transcriptions.

CATEGORY A Subcategories:	**Awareness about stereotypes (general)** **A.1 Power and influence of media** Interviewee's ideas about the role of media in society: media creates reality (social construction) / media reflects reality ? **A.2 Thinks stereotypes can be dangerous (in general)** **A.3 Existence of stereotypes** Interviewee is aware about stereotypes - about their own 'group', in general **A.4 Interviewee names specific examples of stereotyping (which?)**
CATEGORY B. Subcategories:	**Opinion about causes or underlying reasons for stereotyping (general)** **B.1 External causes 1: blames media** Interviewee attributes stereotyping to the lack of professionalism of journalists and media institutions **B.2 External causes 2: blames society** Interviewee attributes stereotyping to broader political/ideological/commercial issues (which?) **B.3 Internal causes** Interviewee attributes stereotyping to their own behaviour **B.4 Doesn't know / doesn't answer** Interviewee does not express any ideas on the possible reasons or causes of stereotyping in the media
CATEGORY C. Subcategories:	**Consequences of negative portrayals (own experience)** **C.1 Invisibility** Interviewee feels invisible as a consequence of insufficient portrayal (non representative) **C.2 Exclusion, stigmatisation, discrimination** Interviewee feels excluded as a consequence of negative portrayal **C.3 Self-image** Interviewee feels that negative portrayals affect self-image **C.4 Daily life consequences** Interviewee feels that negative portrayals affect daily life (how?) **C.5 Own behaviour** Interviewee feels that negative portrayals affect their own behaviour (how?) **C.6 Doesn't know / doesn't answer**

CATEGORY D.	Suggestions for change / transformation
Subcategories:	**D.1 Better journalist / media practices** Interviewee thinks that change should come from journalists and other media agents **D.2 Legal regulations for media institutions** Interviewee thinks that media institutions should be subjected to official regulations concerning representation (laws, juries, councils,…) **D.3 Minority professionals in media institutions** Interviewee thinks that media makers from minority background should be part of media institutions' staff **D.4 Intercultural practices** Interviewee thinks that mutual understanding and interculturality can change media representations **D.5 Own responsibility** Interviewee thinks that by changing their own behaviour they will change media representations. **D.6 Doesn't know / doesn't answer**

Fig. 11. Simplified coding guide for interviews E1 on stereotyping and negative portrayal in the media.

For the open interviews and life narratives (E2), which were mainly addressed to identity construction (although topics related to media arose), a different set of categories emerged, all of which were considered in their dimension of the 'roots' and the 'routes':

	A. WORK / EDUCATION	B. LOCATION	C. WORLDVIEWS	D. SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS
1. **Roots**: connection to the past, the homeland, own cultural references	Work and education-related issues: *training, vocation, education, occupation, jobs, work experience, other interests*	Location and locality-related issues: *residence, travel, migration (moving, staying, leaving), language*	Worldview-related issues: *values, beliefs, religion, upbringing, ideology, life style*	Relationships-related issues: *love, friendship, family, community*
2. **Routes**: connection to the future, the host society and interculturality				

Fig. 12. simplified coding guide for interviews E2 on identity construction.

4.2. Coding and selection of cases

In a third stage, the analytical categories that were established from the material in the previous stage were then used to analyse the same material (Schmidt 2004: 256): the coding guide (see Figure 12) was applied to each interview once again, allotting each passage of the interviews to an analytical category. The results of this coding process were quantified in tables. This overview consisted of indications of frequencies in individual analytical categories, which pointed to possible relationships between categories, for example between participants' views on the influence of media on society and their suggestions for change, between participants' worldviews and their ideas on the multicultural society, between participants' perceptions of negative portrayals in the media and their cultural identity claims, which were then pursued in further analysis. The results of this process are described in detail in Chapter 4.

After coding, analysing and reporting the results of the interview analysis, some cases were selected for in-depth analysis in order to examine the concrete ways in which members of minority groups invent new language, read media representations in an oppositional way and construct new identities (see Chapter 2). In other words, these cases are illustrations of how participants resisted mainstream media portrayals of them or perceived media portrayals of them and invent new identities to explore. The selection and analysis of cases was the last stage in the analysis, as their 'holistic' and detailed interpretation gives insights in how a theory may work in practice (Schmidt 2004: 257). The cases were selected on the following basis:

a) the participant represented a clear and/or an interesting position within the theoretical framework of Hall's *coding/encoding*,

b) the researcher engaged in long-term observation and had more than one (formal or informal) interview with the participant, and

c) the visual material created by the participant had a relevant relationship with the research questions.

These joint conditions yielded three relevant cases: *Manuela*, *Jonas* and *Federico*. The three represented different and sometimes quite opposite positions, but they had one thing in common: they were searching for (and often found) a new language to replace the old (or in Rorty's words 'the oppressor's) one; they constructed, each in their own way, new identities to subvert the ones imposed on them by media representations.

4.3. How to make sense of images, how images make sense

As seen from above (see 2.2 'The Roots&Routes project: activities and projects'), participants were asked to produce different kinds of material according to the edition and the stage of the project: in the training and practice phase – one to two weeks –, when participants were made familiar with the project, their video and audio equipment and the editing software, the clips they produced were aimed at putting their newly acquired skills into practice by means of short daily news items, interviews and artist profiles. In the autonomous creation phase – two to four weeks – the products were more personal expressions in the shape of documentaries on a certain topic, self-portraits or video clips. Parting from the research questions, it was therefore more relevant to look at what participants produced in the last phase, rather than in the initial ones, as this is where they had most freedom to choose the topic and/or the format of the products (see Figure 8 for an overview of product types).

As pointed out in Chapter 2, video in this study has three overlapping roles: it offers us a method to explore participants' perceptions of media portrayals; it is a way of exploring broader issues related to cultural identity; and it can be considered as a study object *an sich*, focusing on the 'writing' rather than on the 'reading' of media (see Chapter 2, 3.3 'Video production and the construction of cultural identity'). In all three functions, which are complementary, the products have to be analysed in some way, whether if we use them as a method or as an object of study. In Chapter 2 we pointed out to the main conceptions of analysis of visual material in a broader theoretical context (Chapter 2, 3.). In the following section I will describe how I subjected the audio-visual material produced by participants to analysis from different points of view.

4.3.1. Sites and modalities of visual analysis

Gillian Rose has proposed a frame for visual analysis by looking at different 'sites' and 'modalities' of meanings (Rose 2001: 16). Sites are where meaning is produced: this can be studied at the production stage, in the image itself or from the audience's point of view; modalities are dimensions of analysis, depending on the research focus: technological, compositional or social. It is the researcher's task to select the sites and modalities that should be analysed for the study's purposes:

Sites / Modalities	Technological	Compositional	Social

Production	- Access to and use of digital video (recording and editing) - Use of the internet for display and distribution of products		- Resistance or conformation with cultural patterns? - Empowerment?
Image		- Style - Genre - Narrative	
Audiencing			- Representation and stereotyping on television - Construction of cultural identity

Fig. 13. The aspects of analysis for this study, according to Gillian Rose's classification of sites and modalities of visual analysis (Rose 2001).

As illustrated in Figure 13, the visual texts were analysed from four perspectives: a) *production/technological*; b) *production/social*; c) *image/compositional*; d) *audiencing/social*. When looking at (a) the technological dimension of production I focused on how participants' access to the technology related to the way they produced the texts. For example, in what ways did the fact that the news items were put on the project blog influence their productions? Did the texts also reach a wider 'mainstream' audience, apart from their project peers?

As to (b) the social dimension of production I focused on the interaction between participants while producing their texts: how did they negotiate meanings and construct identities? How did the production process allow for 'resistance' (Spivak 1988; Hall 1996a, 1997a)? Or, on the contrary, did the texts imply 'conformation' with the image given of migrants and ethnic minorities? (How) did working with video empower them, as people, as media makers?

As to (c) the compositional dimension of the image itself I looked at the genres of the texts, and how participants played with the codes of the genre they were working with.

As to (d) the social dimension of audiencing I examined how participants' texts related to representations of ethnic minorities in audio-visual media, and how they eventually constructed alternative images.

4.3.2. Looking for recurring themes: coding

Just like the interview transcripts, the visual material produced by participants was analysed according to the thematic categories that emerged during the time I was working with them: I looked at recurring themes related to location, education, worldviews and relationships by putting different audio-visual material produced by different participants next to each other and relating them to the roots and routes dimensions. This process yielded qualitative data rather than quantitative data, as I was particularly interested in how participants focussed on certain elements of identity construction (like appearance, dress or taste) and less on more obvious ones (like country of origin or religion). I then lifted out three cases for a contextualised 'textual analysis': Manuela, Federico and Jonas.

4.3.3. Looking for the meaning of signs: semiotics

One of the disciplines that a lot of visual analysis has drawn upon is semiotics, or the 'science of signs'. Ferdinand de Saussure, the founding father of semiotics as a social science, distinguished between two inseparable dimensions of signs: the *signifier* and the *signified* (de Saussure [1916] 1974). In cultural studies, semiology is a method that allows us to 'examine the cultural specificity of representations and their meanings' (Turner 2003). This includes not only 'textual' texts, but also sound, image, dance, fashion, television etc...

When analysing the visual texts that Roots&Routes participants produced, I looked for such signs and their meanings in order to find out how participants represented themselves. Sometimes such a sign (for example 'baggy trousers') revealed unexpected and significant meanings (for example if the one wearing baggy trousers is a young Spanish Roma), and represented a starting point for a network of other signs and meanings related to the construction of cultural identity (for example if this person claimed his identity as a Roma and a hip-hop singer at the same time, by wearing baggy trousers, unlike his peers in the Roma community). In this example, the sign 'baggy trousers' contains the signifier 'a wide piece of clothing' and the signified 'worn by a person who likes hip-hop'. In the context of this study, this sign means that if worn by a member of the Roma community in Spain, who are known for their cultivation of flamenco music, the baggy trousers denote a particular identity claim by this person as a Roma and a hip-hop fan at the same time (see Chapter 4; 3.3.4 'Self-representation').

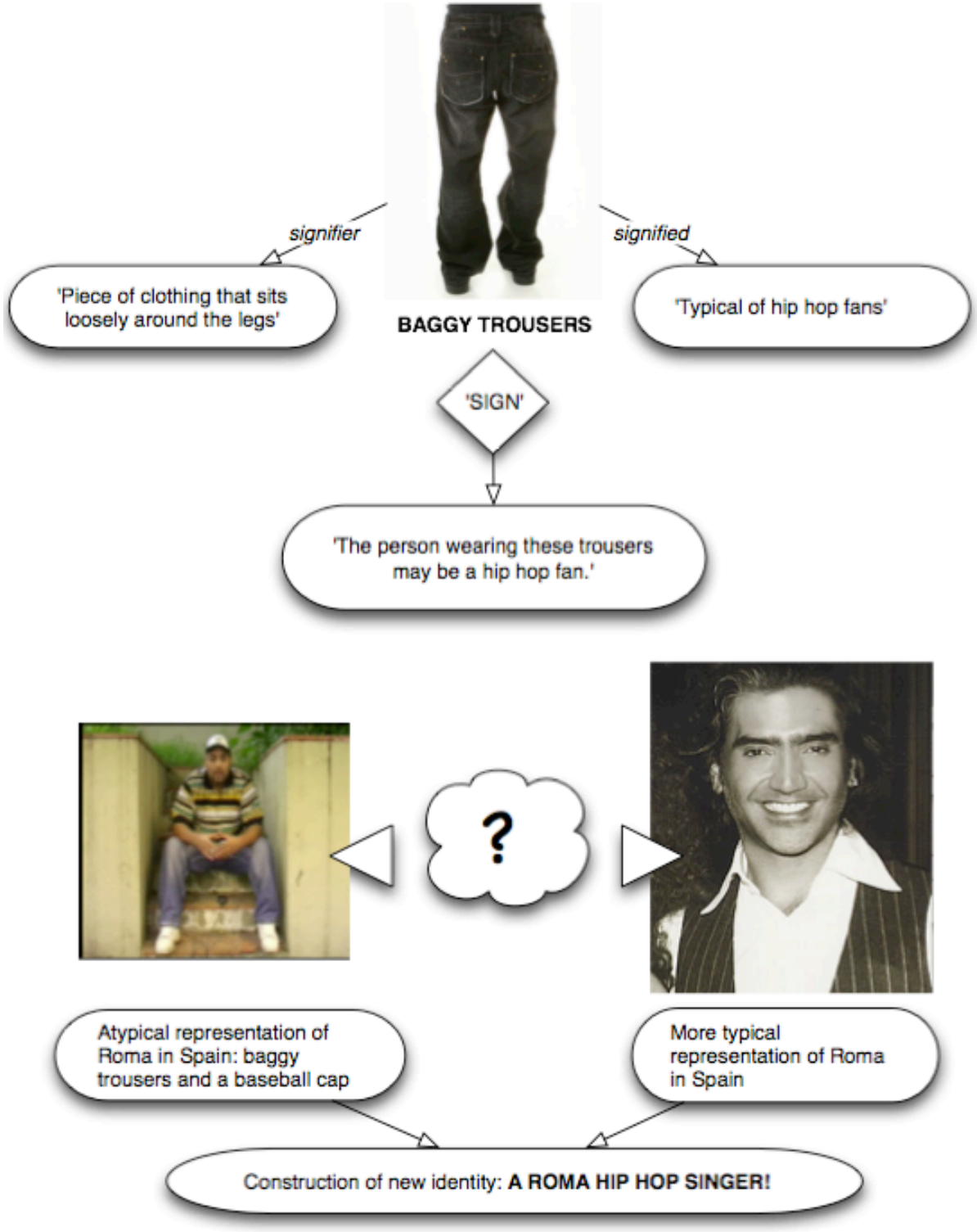


Fig. 14. An interpretation of the sign 'baggy trousers' in the context of this research.

4.3.4. Looking for sense-making practices: textual analysis

Visual material produced by the young people in this study are 'texts', in the same way that the transcription of observations or interviews with them are texts. As Alan McKee points out 'texts are the material traces that are left of the practice of sense-making – the only empirical evidence that we have of how other people make sense of the world' (McKee 2003: 15). In other words, the different kinds of texts that were produced by participants are an expression of the way they make sense of the world in general, and of media portrayals of minorities in particular. As such, they should be considered as a 'whole', as texts that complement each other without considering one to be more important than the other. Both 'textual' texts and 'visual' texts are part of the triangulation used in social research to help the researcher (and the participants) to put their data and findings in perspective.

Textual analysis, then, tries to lift out the sense-making from the texts and relate it to other people's sense-making, including the researcher's. McKee's 'post-structuralist textual analysis' is a good approach to audience research, in the sense that it looks at how different audiences 'read' different media texts, but it can also be applied to audience-made texts like in this study. In this approach, the documentary, news item or self-portrait made by Roots&Routes media participants are additional texts to look at in relation to the other texts available (interview transcripts, observation notes, media representations of minority groups). It is here that visual texts made by participants become both the subject and the method, both media and a message about media.

According to Alan McKee, the only way for the researcher to interpret texts in a way that is meaningful is by 'educated guesses', as no 'scientific' method is available for visual analysis in humanities (McKee 2003). However, in this study we have more than just texts produced by 'the media'; we actually have the people who created them as well. This way, the educated guesses become a lot more credible, as the researcher's findings and reflections are constantly checked with the creators of the texts and the other participants. My textual analysis is therefore based on constant feed-back between the text and the creator, between the text and other texts in the same context, between the text and the other members of the group. For example, when looking at Federico's self-portrait (Chapter 4; 3.5), I talked to Federico about this text, I looked at how other participants in the group reacted to the text, and registered the group discussions about the topics raised and the messages that appear in it. Why did Federico use a fictional format to talk about himself? How does this give him more space to play with identity? What elements in that fiction are part of his 'imposed' identity and which are the elements that he uses to construct his cultural identity?

In the next Chapter the outcomes of all the research activities are presented.

CHAPTER IV
PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

'People will believe what the media say. So if the media always talk about immigrants in a negative way, everyone will think immigration is a bad thing. Because most people don't have daily contact with immigrants, so they will rely on what they hear and see in the media.'

Mikaela, *Colombian, 24.*

How to read this chapter

The chapter's structure follows the categories and sub-categories of analysis described in the previous one (Chapter 3, 3. 'Data analysis'). New categories that emerged from the data during analysis will be explored at the end of this chapter, as well as in the discussion about the most important results. In the Chapter 5, then, the discussion will be extended and recapitulated in the form of conclusions.

i. Notes on the analysis

As mentioned in the previous Chapter, I used three main perspectives for the analysis: 1) *portrayal of immigrants and ethnic minorities in the media*, 2) *exploration of (cultural) identity*, and 3) *production of visual texts*.

The categories in the first perspective focus mainly on how immigrants and ethnic minorities (don't) see themselves represented in the media, and what opinion they have as 'victims' of stereotypes. Subcategories are: their awareness about stereotypes, what causes and consequences they attribute to stereotypes, the way this affects their daily lives, and what suggestions they have for change (see Chapter 3; 4.1 'Analytical Categories').

The categories that make up the second perspective of analysis are identity exploration in the fields of *work*, *social relationships*, and *worldviews*. The category of *location* was added specifically for the context of this study (see Chapter 3; 4.1 'Analytical categories'). Subcategories for 'work' are: *training, vocation, education, occupation, job seeking, work experience, other interests*; for 'location': *residence, travel, migration (moving, staying, leaving), language*; for worldviews: *values, beliefs, religion, upbringing, ideology, life style*; and for 'social relationships': *love, friendship, , family, peers, community*. Additionally, special attention was given to the way participants referred to themselves while speaking.

As to the participant-made visual texts, three different types of texts were analysed:

Type 1 (A1): Report about the project 'Roots & Routes'. For this type of text participants were asked to individually make small reports (maximum three minutes) on the project participants (musicians, dancers and media makers) or on the project itself (its aims and objectives, the organisation, the workshops and rehearsals etc…). All the reports of this type were uploaded on the project vlog at http://rootsbarcelona.blogspot.com and are still available there.

Type 2 (A2): Report or documentary with a common theme 'roots' and 'routes'. For this type of text participants were asked to make an in-depth report or documentary about a person or a situation related to the topic of 'roots' and 'routes'. Participants worked in pairs. Some of the documentaries were uploaded on the project vlog, some of them were screened at the official launch of the Roots&Routes DVD held each year at a public venue in Barcelona, two of them were broadcasted on public television.

Type 3 (A3): Self-portrait. For this type of text participants were asked to make an audio-visual portrait of themselves with no format or time restrictions.

Other products (B) include DVD menus, photo galleries and vlogs, designed and created by participants.

For the analysis, I made a distinction between four stages or moments in the production process:

STAGE IN PROCESS	DATA GATHERING METHOD
1. **preparing and discussing** the product	Formal discussion groups, informal conversations, observation
2. **creating** the product (technical aspects, the story, the shooting…)	Informal conversations, observation
3. the **product** itself	Observation, thematic analysis, formal analysis
4. **reflection** on the product and the process	Informal conversations Formal individual interview

Fig. 16. Data gathering with regards to media production

'Talk' about the videos was recorded mainly in informal group discussions and formal individual interviews, before and after the video production phase respectively, whereas actions and behaviour were registered through participant observation. The methods used in the interpretation of the videos with regards to the research questions, is particular to each case. This study does not intend to let the visual data 'speak for itself', assuming that just because participants have created the texts this means that these contain the one and only reflection of their 'reality'. As David Buckingham points out, the 'truths' that are elicited in autobiographical material need to be 'interrogated in relation to the medium and method, and not accepted independently from them' (Buckingham 2009: 640, quoting Piper and Frankham). The medium (genre) and the method (specific circumstances in which the product was made) are important methodological elements in the interpretation of the material produced by participants, as only by

making these explicit can the researcher avoid falling into the trap of 'naïve empiricist interpretations' (Buckingham 2009).

ii. Notes on quoting participants

I have chosen to 'give the floor' to the participants themselves as much as possible, by quoting them frequently and extensively[52]. After all, as a social researcher I am firmly convinced that we can only grasp the sense of what young people from diverse cultural backgrounds have to say about media, stereotypes and identity not only by 'listening' directly to them, but also by translating that to the academic world. This is the only way that my role as a researcher makes sense within a common process of knowledge creation (see Chapter 3, 1.1 'Transformation of the social reality: critical communicative methodology').

All quotes (direct or indirect) are translated into English from the original interviews, which were conducted in Spanish, Catalan or Dutch[53], and from the video transcripts (Catalan and Spanish). By default only the English versions are displayed, unless the exact expression in the original quotation is relevant.

All *indirect* quoting or paraphrasing is integrated in the text using simple inverted commas and a reference number of the interview from which the quote is extracted. For example:

> This participant felt like people 'were afraid of sitting next to him on the underground' just because he was black (E1.3).

All *literal* quotes are clearly indicated as such with an indented paragraph in "double inverted commas", and with the complete reference of the interview, the participant's background and sex. For example:

> "The problem is when stereotypes become generalisations."
> (E2.4, Argentinian, male).

[52] Names of participants are ficticious, and the complete interview transcriptions are not included as an integral part of this thesis so as to protect participants' anonimity and fulfill my commitment of confidentiality with them.

[53] The language in which the interviews took place was chosen according to participants' preferences.

All interviews have a unique reference number: 'E2.3' stands for interview (*Entrevista*) type 2 (open interview) with participant number 3. 'DG2' stands for group discussion (*Discusión de Grupo*) number 2. See Chapter 3, 3.2 'In-depth interviewing' for a detailed classification of interviews and group discussions.

Different interviews with the same participant are indicated with letters: for example E2.6 and E2.6b stand for two different interviews with the same person. This means that interviews carrying different numbers refer to different individuals, despite the fact that their short description could mistakenly suggest they are the same person: for example E1.5 and E1.6 are both 'Peruvian' and 'male'.

All video excerpts are indicated with a number, and specific passages with a time slot: for example 'A2.2; 01:09-01:58' stands for audio-visual text type 2 number 2, and time slot 01'09" to 01'58".

1. PORTRAYAL OF IMMIGRANTS AND ETHNIC MINORITIES IN THE MEDIA

As I have pointed out earlier, much of the research on television stereotypes has looked at the *text* and its 'impact' on the *audience*, but little attention has been paid to the stereotyped groups themselves (see Chapter 2, 1: 'Media representations: exclusion and contestation'). They are at the same time 'objects' of stereotyping practices and 'subjects' as audiences. Thus, one of my first questions when I started working with the Roots&Routes participants, was how they see and experience stereotypes in the representation of their own cultural group in the media, and how these affect their daily lives.

1.1. YOUNG PEOPLE'S AWARENESS OF STEREOTYPES IN THE MEDIA

In the interviews and conversations I had with the participants about the topic of portrayal in the media I came across two main ideas concerning awareness: (1) some participants, although no all, think that media does not (only) reflect reality, but also *create reality*, and (2) all participants, regardless of their sex, social or cultural background, are *aware of the existence of stereotypes and negative portrayal in the media*, are *able to identify certain stereotypes* and are *aware of the potentially dangerous consequences* of media stereotypes.

1.1.1. The power of the media

The idea of media shaping reality rather than merely 'reflecting' it was expressed by most participants in the study, although not by all and not always in that wording. Participants acknowledged that media discourses 'create images, feelings and thoughts' (E1.4), 'have a lot of power in people's head' (E1.3), and 'generate visions' (E1.8). Some of the participants go as far as to granting the media an ever-present power and influence: 'media are very powerful in our society' (E1.7), 'media are the fourth power' (E1.7), 'television is the second power' (E1.3), and finally 'media are everything' (E1.9). As one participant put it:

> "The media should be aware of the role they are playing. Because they are practically educating a people. Or a city, a country." (E1.4, Mexican-Eritrean, female).

1.1.2. 'Media show negative stereotypes of (certain) cultural groups'

Participants were very aware of and sometimes offended by the negative portrayal of their own or other cultural groups in the media, especially in the news. Significantly, they spoke in radical terms of 'always' and 'never' when reporting negative portrayals. Most participants clearly identified and named negative stereotypes, both about their country/culture (external) and about individuals of their cultural group or nationality living in Spain (internal). They located stereotypes in the areas of *crime, drug trafficking* and *poverty.*

The kinds of stereotypes they mentioned were (in order of frequency): 'robbing', 'laziness', 'poverty', 'drug crime', 'uncivilised behaviour', 'fighting', 'folklore' and 'alcoholism'. It is not surprising that the kinds of stereotypes participants mentioned largely depended on the cultural group they belonged to. The Roma, for example, pointed out to rip-offs, stealing, poverty and laziness as the main stereotypes, whereas the Latin American participants put the emphasis on images of drug trafficking, alcoholism, uncivilised behaviour and, also, laziness. For the African participants it was mainly the image of the poor, underfed Sub-Saharans who arrive in small launches over sea, and illegal DVD-selling activities as their only occupation, that most shocked them as stereotypes in the media.

1.1.3. 'Stereotypes about cultural groups can be dangerous'

Apart from identifying them, participants are aware of the dangers of stereotypes, both concerning themselves and concerning other cultural groups. In 1.3 it will be shown how stereotypes can affect participants' daily lives, but here I just want to point out to their opinion on the alleged dangers of stereotypes in general. Some participants warned about the dangers of perpetuated stereotypes:

> 'In the end it is impossible to break the stereotypes' (E1.1, Roma, male)

… and the dangers of generalisation:

> "Stereotypes are dangerous because they make people think all of them are the same."(E1.4, Mexican-Eritrean, female)

> "An image of a few could affect the image of all of them." (E1.9, Colombian, female)

It is interesting to see how some participants showed solidarity (or identification) with generalisations of other cultural groups different than their own. For example, an Argentinian young man pointed out to discrimination against Roma when applying for a job:

> "The problem is when stereotypes become generalisations (…). It is a problem when for example they don't want to give a *gitano* a job just because they are *gitano*. That is crazy." (E2.4, Argentinian, male).

1.2. THE REASONS FOR STEREOTYPING AND NEGATIVE PORTRAYAL ACCORDING TO PARTICIPANTS

Whereas the majority of interviewees clearly identified stereotypes as such, not many of them are clear about where they come from. Most participants vaguely attributed psychological reasons ('people are afraid of the unknown' or 'fear of the Other'), while a few of them claimed to

see political, ideological or commercial schemes ('financial deals with sponsors', 'audience figures', 'political conspiracies'…). A small number of interviewees did not have any opinion about its underlying reasons. The ones who did have an opinion did not hesitate to point their finger at journalists and media corporations, even though some acknowledged that stereotypes are sometimes based on 'reality'. This supposed 'factual basis' revealed a complex relationship between stereotypes and stereotyped, as we will see below (see 1.2.2).

1.2.1. Lack of professionalism in media practices

According to many participants, it is often the journalists themselves who are 'biased' (E1.6), and look for the bad news to report:

> "So, if a journalist wants to film something related to a minority, he will always go with the prejudice in his head, so he will film the prejudice. I mean the idea that they have a priori is the idea that they will film. And so that is what always appears." (E1.8, Roma, male).

Also, it is generally not appreciated that by default news items do not mention people's background, unless a crime is committed by a migrant or a Roma:

> "When a payo [non-Roma] kills his wife, they don't say 'a payo killed his wife'. Or news about the ETA: they don't say, he is an ETA terrorist and he is payo." (E1.1, Roma, male)

Another cause of perpetuated stereotyping, according to participants, is that journalists seldom or never go to see what is actually going on in the minority communities on-site:

> "... when it is shown it is always shown from the outside. We never... in the news they never worry about looking for a Colombian, a Peruvian, an Ecuadorian, asking them what their needs are, what they want, for what reason they are here..." (E1.7, Mexican, male)

A Roman participant put it this way:

> "With Roma communities this happens a lot: the typical story comes in, and journalists who do not actually know the Roma community go to film them, and they will film exactly what they knew on beforehand, well, actually what they were told about the subject…" (E1.8, Roma, male)

Not only the journalists themselves, but also 'programme directors' and chief editors are considered to have responsibilities, since they 'always pick out the bad news' (E1.1). A Roma participant notes ironically:

> "Perhaps the journalists bring a lot of good news about Roma people into the editing room, but the directors only pick out the bad news.

> Since it is about Roma… they don't want to change the style!" (E1.1, Roma, male)

1.2.2. 'Factual basis'

Last but not least, some participants found there was a 'factual basis' in some stereotypes. Throughout the study I encountered, especially among the Latin American participants, the idea that stereotypes – apart from being dangerous - 'always have some truth in them' (E1.9; E2.4). When talking about the cocaine industry and drugs trafficking, this participant referred to the image of Colombians in television news:

> "In a way I can understand why. Because in many aspects it is true. What arrives here is what arrives, right?" (E1.9, Colombian, female)

Another participant pointed out to gender stereotypes in Latino culture:

> "There is the media, and there is the truth. A Latino guy walks in the street and talks dirty to girls. It is true. It's true. Most of the time. Not always, but it is true." (E2.4, Argentinian, male)

The same participant however immediately acknowledged that the problem starts when all individuals belonging to a particular group get the same label, as this leads to generalisations and prejudice:

> " [In Latin America] people work less. So that is a prejudice difficult to eliminate. The problem is when people think that nobody works. That is very serious. That everybody is like this or like that." (E2.4, Argentinian, male)

It was interesting to see how nuanced some participants' visions on stereotyping were, acknowledging agency without ignoring the 'reality-shaping' power of the media.

1.3. How stereotypes and negative portrayal affect participants' daily lives

It has to be noted that the question of how participants thought stereotypes affected their daily lives was not asked explicitly during the interviews. All results exposed here were extracted from formal and informal conversations, and long-term observation of participants' life style, activities and behaviour. Some participants did talk about consequences of negative portrayal for themselves and their daily lives; for others it was clear from what they said or did during the time they were part of the project.

1.3.1. Invisibility

As such, invisibility has two different dimensions to it in the context of our research: on the one hand it refers to 'under'-representation (i.e. low percentage of appearances of individuals of a certain cultural group in the media with regards to their proportional share in population), and on the other to the structural invisibility of a cultural group as a consequence of their negative or distorted portrayal. Occasionally, participants thought their particular cultural group was completely absent in media portrayal:

> "Mexicans are not represented at all in the media" (E1.7, Mexican, male)

This does not mean, however, that this non-representation is experienced as negative an sich by the members of that group. On the contrary, this participant seems to interpret it as a 'positive' sign, claiming that Mexicans do not appear in the media because they are 'good' immigrants, who are in Spain 'legally' and 'only come to study':

> "This is because Mexican immigration to Spain is not economic; it is for education." (E1.7, Mexican, male)

It is especially in the second sense of invisibility that participants felt frustrated: the distorted image, the incomplete story. According to a Senegalese interviewee for example, his cultural group (i.e. 'Africans') was indeed 'over'-represented in numbers, which in no case meant that he felt represented at all. When reporting small boats or pateras 'packed with immigrants' coming ashore on the Spanish coasts, Spanish media do not hesitate to show the images on the evening news night after night:

> "I think that the percentage does not correspond to the people who are here. There is a much higher number [of Africans] on TV than in reality. When you watch TV you think that all Africans live here. You think that there are no young people left in Africa, when you watch TV." (Senegalese, male)

Participants seemed to be able to put their fingers on the paradox of being over-represented in some cases, and under-represented in others. Additionally, the feeling of 'being invisible' also referred to their lack of participation in civil society:

> "As a person I don't feel invisible, but as a culture I feel invisible, as a collective group we are invisible." (E2.2, Roma, female)

This invisibility is also noted when members of a cultural group who do not 'fit in' with the stereotype are not represented at all:

"I know people who have papers, who are working and contributing a lot to society. But you don't see those on TV." (E1.7, Mexican, male).

1.3.2. Stigmatisation

Stigmatisation is what the participants mention most frequently as a consequence of negative stereotypes in their daily lives. Fear towards them is perceived by many to be the direct effect of recurrent negative portrayals about certain cultural groups. One participant described his feeling of powerlessness when people are literally 'scared of you':

"If you have just seen on TV that some boats [with African immigrants] arrived and you see how hungry they are, in a bad state, then the next day when you see an African or a black guy on the train or the underground, the first thing you will do is look at him from top to bottom to see if he is one of those who arrived by boat yesterday (…). That is a problem that we sometimes have in the underground, people don't come close to you; we experience this very, very strongly." (E1.3, Senegalese, male)

Stigmatisation is identified as a concrete, daily-life consequence of generalisations:

"It's absurd that just because some Colombians do certain things, that this represents the majority of Colombians. Because this affects all of us; also those of us who have always wanted to do things right, with papers, visas etcetera…" (E1.9, Colombian, female)

'Innocent' migrants are stigmatised when referring to drugs or other crimes committed by compatriots:

"They [the media] stigmatise (…) like for example, they shouldn't make believe that a drug trafficker who is Peruvian, Ecuadorian or Colombian, has anything to do with the unfortunate Peruvian, Ecuadorian or Colombian immigrant." (E1.5, Peruvian, male).

This participant expressed her fear of stigmatisation in more general terms:

"If you are watching TV and you get the same message every day like 'a Moroccan has done this or that, an African this and that…', well of course when you see them in the street, you will associate that to what you just heard half an hour before on the news. That's normal." (E1.4, Mexican-Eritrean, female)

1.3.3. Discrimination

The Roma participants were probably the ones who felt most discriminated in a systematic way as a consequence of negative portrayal. Roma communities have been living with and within Spanish and Catalan society for centuries, and are still depicted and treated as 'the Others', the intruders and outsiders. According to one Roma participant, Spanish media plays an important role in perpetuating discriminatory practices:

> "They [in the news] always say 'from *gitano* background. I think they should say 'a normal person', because only by saying '*gitano*' they are already discriminating him, excluding him." (E1.2, Roma, male)

From the conversations and informal meetings I had with Roma participants, it became clear that Roma feel subjected to systematic discriminatory practices regarding access to education and jobs. This confirms the findings of the EUMAP report.[54]

Discrimination also occurs in a less systematic, though no less humiliating way for many North African and Latin American immigrants, for example when travelling. During the countless informal conversations I had with Mikaela, María, and some of their Colombian friends, I listened to their stories of the random passport controls and body searches that Colombians are subjected to at airports, and the continuous insinuation about Colombian women carrying drugs on and inside their bodies (the so-called *mulas*). As one of the Colombian girls puts it sharply:

> "A Colombian passport is possibly one of the worst passports you can have" (E1.9, Colombian, female)

Discrimination, together with stigmatisation, seems to be one of the most acute consequences of negative portrayal in people's daily lives.

1.3.4. Self-image

During an interview with Antonio, one of the Roma participants, he very eloquently pointed out to the fact that young *gitano* kids often end up identifying with their image and portrayal in media, even acting on it so as to fulfil the stereotype:

> "For example, *gitano* children think that being *gitano* is what they see on television. You end up believing it, and then afterwards you have to struggle against that image when you realise that it is not you. Of course, this also means that you want to be like that image on television, to prove that you are a *gitano*. Afterwards you realise that it has nothing to do with us. I don't identify with that image at all now. But when you are a kid, you do." (E1.8, Roma, male)

[54] See *The situation of Roma in Spain* (2002), Report of the Open Society Institute, EUMAP, pp. 283-284.

Antonio's affirmation is the only *explicit* reference to self-image I found throughout the research, but as we will see below, it was not the only one by far. When further elaborating on this idea of self-image, I realised that on a higher, more implicit level, most participants' actions or behaviour in their daily lives were actually driven by stereotypes. It was as if they carried within their minds the image which is supposed to define them as individuals belonging to a cultural group, and had no way of escaping it, either way or the other:

> "There is the typical image of Latin American women, with big breasts and tight clothes… I don't give a shit about that kind of stuff! Because half of the country is not like that… people ask me, this is really funny, people tell me 'oh, you are a bit weird', and then I say 'no, we are like this, this is what many people in our country are like, it's not all that Latin image." (E2.6, Colombian, female).

Somehow participants seemed to always have the stereotype in their heads, and act correspondingly, either one or the other way, but always in relation to that image. In 1.4.2 I will show in what specific ways participants adapted their behaviour with regards to negative portrayal.

1.4. Young people's suggestions for change

Participants' ideas about change can be roughly considered on three different levels: *external responsibility, internal responsibility* and *social responsibility*. In the first category I looked at how participants thought that 'the media must change' as media were regarded by many to have a great responsibility due to their power in society (see 1.1.1 'The power of the media'), and should therefore give a more balanced representation of minorities. I called this category the 'blame the media'-position. In the second category, I looked at how participants emphasised their 'own responsibility' in that they had an influence on media portrayal through their own behaviour. This category can be considered as the 'blame yourself'-position. In the third category, I examined participants' positions regarding the interactions between individuals, media and society, for example pointing out to broader issues like education and intercultural practices. I called this the 'mutual responsibilities within a broader social context'-position.

1.4.1. 'Blame the media'

Most of the participants who I asked the question: 'How do you think this situation [of negative portrayal and stereotypes in the media] can change?', clearly pointed at the responsibility of the media. Some, for example, saw a solution in better journalist and media practices. As we have seen above, participants thought that it is often the journalists themselves who are 'biased', only show 'the bad news', and 'never go to see what is actually going on in the minority

communities on-site' (see 1.2.1). As an alternative, journalists should come closer to minority group communities in order to 'get to know them'. As Jardanay, a 19-year-old Roma from La Mina, exclaimed:

> "I suppose things could change talking to the journalists, directors, I don't know… Tell them to come here to La Mina!" (E1.1, Roma, male)

Jardanay's friend, Diego, suggested that media makers should come to La Mina to make a documentary about them:

> "To make a kind of documentary or something, or spend a couple of days with them, recording them, what their daily life is like… and then show it to the public. That is one of the ways I would do it." (E1.2, Roma, male)

This 'showing' seemed to be quite important for participants, as it promotes their visibility:

> "I think the media should be making visible everything that is usually not made visible about immigrants." (E1.5, Peruvian, male)

In other terms, journalists should be less biased when reporting minorities:

> "I would try to be a little more objective, that is the main issue. Like trying not to create stereotypes or satanise anybody, or treat those people as if they were criminals." (E1.6, Peruvian, male)

… and try to better understand the reasons and dynamics of immigrants' presence in the host country:

> "Let's not call [immigration] a problem, but a phenomenon. And how are we going to treat this subject and what exactly is going on: why are these people here, why are they doing this, why do they stick together in closed circuits, why are there neighbourhoods with only immigrants…" (E1.7, Mexican, male)

But not only the journalists get suggestions for change: also editors-in-chief and the media corporations are advised to take measures within their organisations. A young Mexican-Eritrean women suggests to include minority journalists in their staff:

> "Definitely introduce them to… well, open up the doors for them to work there." (E1.4, Mexican-Eritrean, female)

Minority journalists were regarded by most participants as being better able to represent 'their' cultural group in the media.

Positive vs. negative imagery, a classical strategy in the struggle against negative portrayal (see Chapter 2; 1.9), was strongly suggested by some participants: 'select more positive news

items' (E1.1), and 'show more positive images of migration' (E1.7). Abdou, a young Senegalese who had described earlier how people would stay away from him when on trains or undergrounds, said:

> "I think that they should also show the positive sides, the Spanish people would not be so afraid of us, afraid of coming closer to us." (E1.3, Senegalese, male)

Abdou is quite categorical about how media could and should change society's attitude towards migrants:

> "The image of immigrants can only be improved if TV starts abandoning the idea that immigrants are inferior." (E1.3, Senegalese, male)

Abdou's sense of being regarded as 'inferior' as an immigrant was nuanced by Caicat, one of the Peruvian participants, who stressed the importance of 'naturalisation' – by which he meant to accept and show diversity as a natural fact, in a society where different cultures live together. In Caicat's opinion, the only way to get rid of stereotypes, is to treat everybody as citizens, without making any distinctions:

> "There shouldn't be any distinctions (…). They talk about 'immigrants', but no! Immigrants are just people who live here and that's it." (E1.6, Peruvian, male)

This idea was also expressed by José, who reminded the media that all humans – be it immigrants or not - have their basic needs:

> "It is important to look for a balance saying: ok, these are ordinary people, and just like you they need a house, water, electricity… they need certain services, just like any other citizen." (E1.7, Mexican, male)

Another argument for 'naturalisation' was given by those participants who believed that showing positive images in an explicit way might also lead to society seeing them as victims. This victimisation, by the way, was not exclusively attributed to the public opinion, but sometimes also to the minority groups themselves. As Charo exclaimed:

> "That is something I cannot stand with regards to immigrants: when they play the victim. And when they are being victimised, like saying 'oh poor people, because this or that…' I absolutely disagree with that." (E1.4, Mexican-Eritrean, female)

In other words, some participants thought that showing immigrants and minorities in 'naturalised' contexts would be more effective in the struggle against stereotypes than presenting them as victims thereof.

Only one participant pointed directly at legal regulations for media and journalists: Antonio suggested quotas for the appearance of minorities on TV, and audio-visual councils or 'juries' within media corporations whose advice is legally binding:

> "Make a regulation or something, a measure by which each minority should be represented, and every time that a subject is going to be treated, it would have to be approved, like some kind of jury that assesses everything that is being said to see if it is correct, if the subject is treated in a fair way." (E1.8, Roma, male)

Antonio, who expressed his indignation about the way Roma are treated in media representations, also suggested that there be laws about representation of ethnic and cultural minorities in the media:

> "There could be a law for all TV channels, all media corporations, for the fair representation of minorities. Compulsory. A representation of every sub-group in a way, of every community, well maybe not all of them, but that there is a kind of commission for those topics." (E1.8, Roma, male).

But the opinions were quite divided about legal measures: Caicat, for example, was explicitly against quota for representations, as he argued this would precisely underline the difference between minorities and the majority (E1.6):

> "I think that in the USA there is this kind of law that forces you to have a certain percentage of Blacks in a sitcom, or a percentage of gay people… I am absolutely not in favour of such a thing. (…) I don't think they should have the obligation to invent or look for the good news (…), in the news or in TV series. Because it's what I said before: I don't think there is a difference…" (E1.6, Peruvian, male)

1.4.2. 'Blame yourself'

When asked about how they think they could personally change this situation of negative stereotyping, often with the explicit question 'you, as a media maker', most participant did not hesitate to take their own responsibility. But surprisingly, very few people thought about how they could change this reality as *media makers*: despite the fact that they believed media has a huge influence on the public opinion (see 1.1.1), they felt quite powerless as creators of media messages:

> "How can I enter the media? (…) I don't see myself working in a media corporation… I don't know. But as a person I can do a lot of things." (E1.5, Peruvian, male)

Indeed, for most participants the best way to change negative media portrayals was in the first place 'to be a good person'. In other words, they considered their role in the whole picture as coming down to being responsible as individual representatives of their 'cultural group'. This feeling of personal responsibility was present in almost all interviews, although not to the same degree, and was expressed in different ideas.

According to most Latin American participants, for example, they have their own responsibility in countering negative portrayal about Latinos, by changing the 'factual basis' (see 1.2.2). It goes that if they want positive images to appear on TV, they should also behave in a 'good manner', by 'not robbing' or engaging in any other criminal behaviour. When asked how she thought she could personally change the negative portrayal of migrants in the media, Charo answered:

> "By showing the good side, or at least demonstrating that we are not fighting or robbing in the streets" (E1.4, Mexican-Eritrean, female).

Similarly, Lorenzo – a hard-working Peruvian who came to Barcelona to study and work – pointed out:

> "Personally I always make it very clear that I am Peruvian, and look at what I am like: I'm not robbing anyone… [laughs] or selling coke to anyone." (E1.5, Peruvian, male)

Apart from not robbing or trafficking drugs, being reliable was also quite high on the 'good behaviour' scale. Mikaela said:

> "I think that by simply showing my friends in Roots&Routes, or you, or my colleagues or at the bakery's or wherever, who I am and what I'm worth. That is where I think we should start." (E1.9, Colombian, female)

Or just working hard 'in whatever you do':

> "Simply by working, right? So that they see you work. In whatever you do. Making a report about this, or about any other subject. Or sweeping the floor…" (E1.6, Peruvian, male)

> "By showing it through the little or much work I can contribute with (…), so that people can see: they can make a documentary, they can dance, they can play well, and they can do things right. That is the challenge, after all, isn't it?" (E1.7, Mexican, male)

The person who expressed the idea of the 'good migrant' in the clearest way was Federico, an Argentinian young man:

> "I must be a good Latino. That is my conflict, because I want Europe to be perfect, but I am not perfect myself yet. So, one cannot ask from someone else what one cannot give." (E2.4, Argentinian, male)

Although expressed in a slightly exaggerated way – the quote is quite typical of Federico's style – the idea is clear: only by giving, you can also reclaim. In the discussion in Chapter 5 I will elaborate on the 'culturalistic' view of this particular participant when talking about issues of representation, stereotypes and the 'reality' of his context and location, and how I interpreted his longing to be 'the good Latino'.

Ambition as a virtue was also mentioned in a broader professional sense, as expressed by 20-year-old Diego from La Mina:

> "What a *gitano* could do to change the image? Well, they could do something, right? A *gitano* who would do something important here… like a doctor, a lawyer, something… A *gitano* politician, that would be awesome!" (E1.2, Roma, male)

Apart from 'being a good person', the idea of adaptation and 'integration' is also expressed by some participants:

> "But I think that one has to make the effort to be integrated as well. This is precisely where I think there is a lack of communication. On our part, and on their part." (E1.4, Mexican-Eritrean, female).

Or, as Abdou puts it:

> "I think that Black people form Africa, once we are here in Europe, we should also adapt. We must adapt, we must go inside as deeply as possible, so to come closer to the citizens, because it is better." (E1.3, Senegalese, male)

Most participants I worked with realised that mutual understanding is within reach, and is partly their personal responsibility. It can be argued, of course, that they would not have participated in a project like this if they had thought otherwise. It can also be argued that they advocated intercultural practices as they knew this was 'expected' from them in a project like this and in the interviews' context. However, further analysis of the observational data revealed that most participants had a predominantly intercultural attitude.

1.4.3. Mutual responsibilities within a broader social context

As seen from the quotes, almost all participants were - one way or another - critical towards media regarding representation and stereotyping. However, in addition to their 'blame-yourself'-positions (see 1.4.2), some participants suggested mutual responsibilities, referring to a wider social context than just 'behaving well' as an individual. Their expressions ranged from

'integration' and 'adaptation', over the need for education, to access to the labour market. The need for education - as in knowledge and training - was stressed by some of the migrant participants, although it was especially the Roma who noted that the *gitano* community should make more efforts to put their own education high on the priority list:

> "Nowadays diplomas and degrees are very important in society, and we are not on that road. I think education is crucial." (E2.2, Roma, female)

Not only education in general seemed to be important to them, but also specific media training for minorities who want to become journalists or media makers:

> "Professionals, we should stimulate training for professionals in the media." (E1.8, Roma, male)

But most importantly, almost all of the participants refer to interculturality and mutual understanding as an important weapon against perpetuated stereotypes. In practice, according to participants, mutual understanding happens by getting to know each other better through physical contact and daily practices:

> "Well, by doing something together, right? Take a group of payos, people from different countries, and a group of *gitanos*, and have them do something together." (E1.2, Roma, male).

Also more general intercultural strategies were suggested:

> "Roots and Routes means the same route for different roots. It also means a strong communication between different cultures." (E1.3, Senegalese, male)

As seen from above, when asked how they thought they could change negative portrayal in the media, most participants interpreted this question in a very personal way (see 1.4.2). Only a few participants mentioned the fact that they could now also start making videos, or they could carry out lobby activities through grass-root groups and associations:

> "There is a movement starting now… Associations and so on. Little by little the media are starting to become aware of this movement and are giving a voice to immigrants and *gitanos*. Step by step they are coming closer." (E1.8, Roma, male)

This young Roma man, one of the still few *gitano* members with university degrees in Barcelona, has been struggling for the recognition of his people for many years.

2. ARTICULATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITIES: ESSENTIALISM, COSMOPOLITANISM AND INTERCULTURAL PRACTICES

The young people who participated in this project see portrayals of themselves in the media and stand back to say: is this me? Is this the way 'they' see 'us'? What part of me is in here? What part of my 'culture' or 'cultures'?

While working with participants, I looked at identity construction in four different fields. Three of these are inspired by Arnett's work on 'emerging adulthood' (Arnett 2000). Unsurprisingly, the interviews, observation and thematic analysis of video productions also pointed to the relevance of location, mobility and locality from the beginning, as I was working with migrants and ethnic minorities. Based on what participants did and said with regards to the categories of analysis, especially in the field of worldviews, I then lifted out three 'cases' of participants who I considered to embody different positions within the spectrum of views on culture and cultural groups: essentialism or 'culturalism', universalism or 'cosmopolitanism' and interculturalism. See Chapter 3 for the detailed methodological procedures.

2.1. ARTICULATION OF IDENTITY AND WORK

Studying, training and *exploring the labour market* is one of the most important fields that make up for identity construction of emerging adults (Arnett 2000). It is especially those phases that lead up to a more stable professional choice in adulthood, that are important in this period: education and training, internships, work experience(s) and interactions with colleagues. If exploring the professional field is important for any young adult, it is even more so for migrants and ethnic minorities, as they may be (although not necessarily are) more disadvantaged because of linguistic, social, economical or other reasons. In any case, access to education and labour has specific characteristics for newcomers and minorities, as trying to get a good education or job takes up a fair amount of their energy and time. Additionally, as shown above, recurrent negative media portrayal about certain cultural groups media texts may affect these groups' chances on the labour market (See 1.3.3 'Discrimination'). When looking at participants' talk and daily life activities during this study, and their explorations in the work field, I identified a number of elements related to their homeland or ethnic/cultural group ('roots') and others that referred to their 'routes'.

2.1.1. Employment and the roots

Employment - or the lack of it – has always been an important reason for people to migrate. Vocation and location are therefore closely intertwined in migrants' lives. When talking to

participants about their home countries, their travelling and moving, work related issues often emerged. For most participants location was related to work in the economical sense (as in literally 'going where the work is'), but sometimes also in the vocational sense: not only finding a job, but finding a job you like or best fits with your personality is crucial when choosing a location:

> "I was suffering a lot because there was no work [in Mexico City]… I could not establish my life, find my way (…). Here I am trying to look for a job that is more appropriate for me, or for what I hope to be." (E2.1, Mexican, female)

In this study, this was not only the case for migrants from non-European backgrounds, but also for those who migrated within Europe, like Jonas who was born in Belgium to a Spanish mother:

> "I have no secondary school degree, so in Belgium I would be doing shitty jobs. Here in Spain, every language you speak is like an extra diploma you have." (E2.5, Belgian-Spanish, male).

In Belgium most people Jonas' age speaks at least two languages (one of which English), whereas in Spain English is not very widespread. When Jonas realised that what his assets were worth in one place (Belgium), as opposed to what they were worth in another (Spain), suddenly location became crucial to him… Participants were aware of the fact that in order to find a good job and an occupation of your preference, you need adequate education and training. Their motivation to move geographically for a quality education was generally very high, and interviewees emphasise their 'quest' for the most appropriate education, within their own country…:

> "I moved to Milan to study economy because there is a good university there for economy." (E2.7, Italian, female)

… and beyond their country's borders:

> "I came here [to Spain] to study, to get the right education and experience, to be able to do something in Senegal." (E2.3, Senegalese, male)

For this African participant, Spain was especially attractive because education is public and free for everyone:

> "What I like here most of all is education. Because almost…, well, everybody has a right to be educated, to go to school." (E2.3, Senegalese, male)

With this reflection Sihalebe was going beyond his own personal need for education, as he acknowledged the importance of education as a means of 'empowerment' for a people:

> "If the majority of people [in Senegal] had a certain level of education, they would understand a lot, and development can start from there, from within." (E2.3, Senegalese, male)

Roma participant Manuela was very much on the same thread as her African peer when talking about the need for education in her community:

> "I think [education] is crucial. It is crucial in many ways because (…) if you go to a job interview and you are not prepared, and there are sixty thousand people who have had a better training, then it's not that they are racists… it's just that you don't have the degree!" (E2.2, Roma, female)

2.1.2. The routes to employment

A large number of participants, who were all part of the media-team in the Roots&Routes project, talked about their relationship with video, (audio-)visual arts and media. Some of them knew they wanted to do 'something with video' even before participating in the project in Barcelona, and actively looked for an education, training and experience in this field:

> "I did a general course on directing and producing. And this year I did an internship in BTV [local TV channel in Barcelona]. Now I am doing a course on FinalCutPro." (E2.3, Senegalese, male)

María, a Colombian young woman, told me about her informal learning in the visual arts through work with friends and peers when she was living in Bogotá:

> "During that time I used to get together with friends of mine, who were graphic designers, film directors or photographers (…) and I have been in love with visual arts ever since." (E2.6, Colombian, female).

For other participants, their first contact with video was the Roots&Routes project, which motivated them to go on exploring new professional routes in this field after the project had finished:

> "Before participating in this project I had been doing some animation. In Brussels I signed up for an animation workshop (…) and I did some Flash, but that is only for the internet. So this was the first time I had ever held a camera. I never thought I would want to make movies." (E2.5, Belgian-Spanish, male).

At the time of writing, Jonas has given up his job in a call centre to try and make a living with video and animation.

As we will see below, making video professionally was seen by some participants as a tool to show images from their 'culture' or their home country to the world. María expressed it this way:

> "For example, I have an obsession with the climate in Bogotá, and I have always wanted to make a story based on the climate. (…) There are so many beautiful things there [in Colombia] and I feel like now I have the tool to do what I want to do." (E2.6, Colombian, female)

Later on in the same conversation, María made it very clear that by 'what I want to do' she was referring to showing alternatives to recurring portrayals of Colombia:

> "What aspects of Colombia sell most? Either drugs or Shakira. So for me, it is good to know that now I have a tool to start an underground movement in YouTube to talk about the climate, about flowers, about anything I like." (E2.6, Colombian, female)

The 'mission factor' in Sihalebe's audio-visual ambition is no less explicit:

> "For me there is… I have a mission. I have a lot to say, and the world of audio-visuals allows me to tell those stories. (…) One day I would like to make documentaries and video reports, to show the world what is going on in Africa." (E2.3, Senegalese, male)

Participants' relationship to video making and media in general seemed to be an important factor in releasing some of the frustrations related to negative portrayal.

2.2. Articulation of identity and Location

Apart from education, work and vocation, location is the most obvious field where migrants explore their (cultural) identity. Location lies, as it were, at the very basis of being a migrant, as the concept of migration does simply not exist outside the concept of location. However, for non-migrants like Roma communities, who have been living in Barcelona for centuries, location may also become important as it involves issues of linguistic and social demarcation. For the Roma participants in this study it turned out that it did even more than expected.

2.2.1. Location and the roots

Participants identified with their country, ethnic group or region of origin in different ways and degrees. For example, Sihalebe and Manuela, who are from a 'mono-cultural' background in the sense that both parents belong to the same strongly identified cultural group (Diola and Catalan Roma respectively), very strongly relate to their 'roots', which they define frequently and in detail. However, participants from a more mixed background (for example Mexican-Eritrean or Belgian-Spanish) identified less with where they came from than Sihalebe or Manuela. On the

other hand, sense of belonging to a cultural group did not necessarily coincide with nationality. On the contrary, it seemed that 'country' or 'nation' was sometimes not as important as a region, a city, a continent or an ethnic group. Sihalebe, from Senegal, was more aware of his cultural belonging to 'Africa' than to his country. At no point he referred to himself as Senegalese, as seen from this excerpt:

> Q: 'Could you introduce yourself?'
>
> A: "My name is [Sihalebe]. I am African. I come from Senegal."
>
> Q: "What is African culture according to you?"
>
> A: "African culture is very broad. But I am Diola, an ethnic minority in Senegal. (…) We find each other in this culture in a lot of different African countries. (…) More than in Senegal, because my culture has nothing to do with Wolof or Fula culture."
> (E2.3, Senegalese, male)

Sometimes an ethnic group was linked up to a linguistic group, or to a cultural group, rather than to a country:

> Q: "Could you introduce yourself?"
> A: "I am a Catalan *gitana*." (E2.2, Roma, female)
>
> Q: "I see… what exactly does that mean to you, to be a Catalan *gitana*?"
>
> A: "Well, we speak Catalan, right? Many people think that *gitanos* only speak Spanish.
>
> (…)
>
> Q: "So for you being Catalan is about the language, right? Or is there anything else that makes you say that you're Catalan?"
>
> A: "No, I think it's only the language."

Manuela introduced herself as being Catalan, whereas the 'country' would be Spain. As we will see later on from interviews and observations, this Roma participant identified a lot more with Catalonia and Catalan culture, or at least with its capital Barcelona, than with Spain.

On the other extreme there is Jonas, who does not particularly identify with any country, ethnic group, city or region, except for reasons of descent:

> "I was born in Belgium, in Knokke-Heist, from a Spanish mother and a… well, my father is a bit more complicated, because my biological father came from India. But my mum married a Belgian man before I was born, so for me my dad is the Belgian." (E2.5, Belgian-Spanish, male)

Unsurprisingly, according to participants, identification with a certain location occurred 'naturally' after spending a lot of time in a place. María, who had recently arrived to Spain from Colombia at the time of the study, proudly expressed her identification with the city of Bogotá, although she expressed strong emotional ties to her birth region Medellín:

> "I was born in Medellín, but since I have been living for such a long time in Bogotá, I'm more Bogotan than paisa. It's here [in Bogotá] that I developed my uni-nationa/… , no, well in fact my pluri-nationality: Bogotá-paisa." (E2.6, Colombian, female)

María, who considered the existence of 'pluri-nationality' and seemed to be at ease with that, concluded by saying:

> "A paisa Bogotan, that's what I am. It's good." (E2.6, Colombian, female)

In other terms, this assumption of 'natural' identification based on time spent somewhere was not always obvious for participants. Federico, a 24-year-old Argentinian who had moved to Barcelona a few years before, explained me how sick and tired he was of 'being from Argentina'. The following excerpt is an example of Federico constructing his national and cultural identity along the lines of specific needs or circumstances, rather than according to a 'sense of belonging':

> Q: "Could you introduce yourself… who are you?"
>
> A: "Ehm… I'm [Federico]. I come from Argentina."
>
> Q: "You come from Argentina."
>
> A: "Well, it depends on where I am going. Usually people don't ask me 'who are you', but 'where are you from'…"
>
> Q: "And what do you say."
>
> A: "From Argentina. But it depends on… well, I introduce myself in many different ways. If I go to a party or so I am not going to say: 'Hello my name is [Federico], I come from Argentina, I am 24…'. No, I just say: 'Hi I'm [Federico]'."
>
> Q: "I see".
>
> A: "But if I am in a job interview I will mention my age, where I come from, what I have done, what I am doing now… All that."
>
> Q: "When you say you're from Argentina… you could also say you're Italian. Legally you wouldn't be lying…"
>
> A: "I know, but when I did people said: 'You're not Italian! You're Argentinian!'"
>
> Q: "Because of your accent."

A: "Yes, I don't know… for most people you are not from where your passport says you are, but where you are really from…"

Q: "So, where are you really from?"

A: "Well, it's a bit complicated… But, well, since I lived in Argentina for 21 years, the first years of my life, I guess that after such a long time, one is from that place. Usually people will not accept that you're from a different place. It's like: you're from there!" (E2.4, Argentinian, male)

It seemed that it was quite difficult for Federico to define himself as 'Argentinian'. From what I knew about him after a full year of observations and hanging-out, was that he actually felt like he was European, somehow denying his 'Latin American' part. His parents are indeed from European descent (a mixture of Italian and Spanish, like most of the Argentinian population), even though they were both born in Argentina, so it is perhaps for this reason that Federico consequently said to be 'from Argentina', rather than 'Argentinian' as this would sound too much like 'Latino'. Later in this chapter I will examine Federico's case more in detail (see 3.5), but this example shows how important location and 'place' was in the life story of Federico and for the ways in which he continually shaped his (cultural) identity in Barcelona.

For other participants, identification with their roots seemed to be strongly related to their intentions to stay in Barcelona. Here again, the people who most identified with their roots were the ones who – explicitly and implicitly - expressed their wish to go back to their homeland one day. This may seem obvious, but it isn't so much when emerging adults are faced with the contradiction of wanting to go back to a place 'where things don't work':

"My idea is to go back to Senegal to… do something (…) Things don't work and I want to go back to show people that we can do some things from there. Yes." (E2.3, Senegalese, male)

Language was also an important aspect in the positionings towards location, both for migrants and ethnic minorities. In some cases language seemed to justify the belonging to a 'trans-national' cultural community:

"We as Diola of Casamance, also recognise ourselves in other parts of Africa. For example if you go to Mali, there are things that we recognise, yes. Because we speak a similar language." (E2.3, Senegalese, male)

Surprisingly, Jonas' multicultural background does not prevent him from identifying with French culture. Although Jonas went to primary school in Knokke-Heist, a town in the Flemish part of Belgium, he somehow feels connected to France through language and media used at home:

"We grew up with French television (…), we watched the news from France because my dad found that Belgian news was rubbish (laughs). I also saw a lot of Manga films, because the French had introduced Manga on television a lot earlier than the Flemish."

Q: "So you partly identify with French culture?"

"Oh, yes, for sure. A lot more than with Flemish culture." (E2.5, Belgian-Spanish, male)

Sometimes language goes beyond the 'linguistic': when I asked him what he considered to be 'typical Argentinian', Federico answered that it is about 'a language beyond words':

"There are many things that are typical Argentinian, but they can only be understood by someone who understands the same language: certain words, expressions, characters, which nobody from the outside could understand. Because it's a different language, it's like a big theatre." (E2.4, Argentinian, male)

Location and locality is not only important for migrants, but also for ethnic minorities who have been living in the same place forever (i.c. Roma). However, for Roma in Barcelona location acquires a totally different meaning than for migrants: it is not so much about arriving or leaving, but rather about differences between communities according to the area, about invisibility, social demarcation and coexistence with non-Roma in the same neighbourhood. Manuela felt like her culture was 'invisible', although her family had been living in the same neighbourhood for centuries:

"As a community we are invisible. Nobody stops to think about the fact that we have been living here for over five hundred years. (…) Like in the local archives there is nothing about us, although everybody knows that we are here, we are present and there are no problems in the neighbourhood. Then you go to the historical archives and there is nothing there: no pictures, nothing. That is when you think: 'something is wrong here." (E2.2, Roma, female).

If locality played an important role in migrants' and minorities' lives, different attitudes towards travelling were even more relevant. I identified three different views on travelling among the people who participated in this study. The first view implied that travelling is necessary and opens up one's mind, even if it is to 'find yourself' in the end. Manuela described her one-month stay abroad as a student in these terms:

"It was hard for me to be far away from my friends and family [while being abroad], and I said to myself: 'No, this is not for you'. I mean I felt my identity a lot more. When I came back I said: 'No, no, I am Manuela who is *gitana* and who needs to stay here in her neighbourhood with her people, whatever happens." (E2.2, Roma, female)

The second view with regards to travelling is that it gives you the opportunity for new experiences, for adventure, and for exploring other countries and people. This was the case in the lives of at least five participants: Jonas, María, Lorenzo, Sara and Emiliana. Finally, travelling was also regarded to be dangerous as it can make you 'lose your culture' or feel like a stranger in your own country afterwards. Sihalebe told me how lost he felt when he went back to Senegal after his first trip to Spain:

> "I came here the first time in 2004. And after that, in Senegal, I didn't feel good because I felt like a foreigner." (E2.3, Senegalese, male)

2.2.2. Location, places and routes

When the phase of 'looking around' comes to an end and newcomers are no longer new, a route is chosen and its implications are negotiated. For migrants, this is when 'location' becomes 'home'. I noticed that none of the participants, while in this phase of transition between roots and routes, could avoid thinking about how much they were willing to 'adapt' to their new home. Some, for example, engaged in a strategic adaptation based on the principle of when in Rome, do as the Romans do:

> " (…) and I have to adapt too, because I am not in my village, I am not in Casamance, I am on the move. When I am moving I cannot say: 'I am Diola and this is how we do things in my village'." (E2.3b, Senegalese, male)

The strategic aspect of Sihalebe's adaptation to Spain peeped through elsewhere:

> "I can be here for a hundred years but I can never be… European." (E2.3b, Senegalese, male).

In Federico's case - he had no plans of going back to Argentina - the adaptation seems more 'intrinsic', as he thought that only by being like a European, looking like a European and acting like a European (preferably a 'Northern' one), immigrants will be accepted:

> "People don't want immigrants to create problems. First of all: they cannot steal or smell bad. Or change the local habits. Secondly, immigrants should look like them. So, when you physically look like them, and you behave like them, everybody is happy." (E2.4, Argentinian, male).

It was not very clear from Federico's word choice if he considered himself as an immigrant, or he was already on the 'us'-side at this point…

In the relationship between the roots and the new home, imagery seemed to play an important role for migrants. Not only broadcasted images emitted massively by satellite TV and transnational media on the Internet, used by many participants to keep in touch with the homeland, but also personal images were important, especially pictures and videos. Participants brought images from their old home to Spain, and vice versa: they took images of their new home back to the roots. I will extensively go into detail about this point in the next Chapter, but images seemed to be the link between or even the unification of participants' homes, between the 'old' one and the 'new' one:

> "I want to register everything they are doing there in my village [in Senegal], (…) because the old men know we are already losing things from our culture. There are things we should preserve. (…) And I also want to register things from here [Spain], I could organise a festival, about things from here. So they know how things work here." (E2.3b, Senegalese, male).

2.3. Articulation of identity and Worldviews

When participants talk about their lives, the issues that concern them, the way they were brought up as a child and see the world now, they often take positions that reveal their view on culture in general, and additionally tell us something about the degree to which they identify with their own cultural group or their background. The young people I worked with, most of whom had decided to go and live in a country far away from their own, were strikingly able to stand back and look at where they were coming from: they could say 'hey, these are my roots, and this is me'. Identification with their roots in smaller or larger degree seemed therefore a choice, a constructive step in their explorations of the new routes…

Unsurprisingly, participants' worldviews were quite diverse. The migrants and Roma who participated in this study were not a homogeneous group, unlike what some media representations suggest about immigration in general. Some participants stuck strongly to the values brought from the homeland or their upbringing or religion; others were looking for ways to reconcile new attitudes and beliefs with the ones they used to have. But can these differences be explained (exclusively) in terms of their 'culture'? The fact that they had so diverse worldviews may not in the last place be due to the life phase these young people were going through: the exploring phase of emerging adulthood.

It is with this non-essentialist idea in mind that I started to look at the material. As I was analysing participants' talk and behaviour with regards to values, upbringing, life style, religion and traditions, I came across several oppositions or even contradictions in the way they

experienced 'culture' and ultimately viewed the 'world'. I grouped these worldviews in four couples of complementary concepts, that are at the same time somehow oppositional: culturalism versus universalism; multiculturalism versus interculturalism; strategic versus intrinsic adaptation; and finally work ethos versus leisure and pleasure.

2.3.1. The roots: 'culturalism' versus 'universalism'

A culturalistic view on society reduces individuals to their 'cultural' group in ways that are inevitable. 'Culture as nature', although a paradox, would be an appropriate way to describe this view, in which cultures are considered to be organic, natural and fixed wholes, as if they had always existed and always would, and as if their members were unable to escape from their 'cultural' reality (for conceptualisations of culture, see Chapter 3, 2. 'Cultural identity: who needs it?').

Although participants were fully aware of the dangers of cultural essentialisation (see 1.1) they sometimes also tended to 'culturalise' when it came to describing themselves within their culture:

> "It is really that way, it's my culture, right? I don't know… it's as if you assimilate it, I think you assimilate it from childhood. You don't really think about it that much, there are things that you don't question…" (E2.2, Roma, female)

Another example of essentialism was that 'traditional' values like respect for the elderly, solidarity, honour and good behaviour were often attributed to one's own cultural group, as opposed to others'. Sihalebe stated:

> "They [young Africans who have just arrived to Spain] behave in a way that makes me feel ashamed. Sometimes I don't feel African when I am with them. I think: 'Where am I?' How these boys talk, how they behave, how they offend their caretakers (…) Respect for the elderly. That is very important. And solidarity, we are losing that."

Whereas Sihalebe here showed an 'essentialist' discourse of African culture, including himself as a member of the Diola community, Federico referred to the fixed nature of Latin American cultural features, without necessarily including himself in Latin American culture. According to him, Latin Americans only want to 'dance and sing', but he himself is definitely the exception. The contradiction of essentialism is that we sometimes tend to reduce others to a putative 'culture', especially if it concerns the negative features of that culture, while excluding ourselves from such essentialism.

That culturalistic views among participants were almost never pure or coherent, was illustrated by the fact that even those who showed the strongest belief in 'culture' still recognised

possibilities for individual agency and social change. Sihalebe, who considers circumcision as one of the most important elements in Diola culture, plead for a social consensus on change and 'modernisation' of its procedures:

> "There are some things that will not take us far. We must modernise things. (…) It [circumcision] was done with traditional instruments, which could make people sick. Now we can modernise the process. Do it in a hospital. That is what I mean by 'modernisation'." (E2.3b, Senegalese, male)

According to Manuela the key for social change within the *gitano* communities is in the hands of women:

> "It is clearly the women who take most interest in changing. They are the driving force behind the changes in our community... Women are starting to realise that education is important to be able to change." (E2.2, Roma, female).

Culturalistic views did not imply that those who embodied them were people who did not believe in change. They were just more concerned about preserving their traditions, and appreciated this value in other cultures as well. When I asked Sihalebe what he liked about Catalonia and its people, he answered:

> "Here [Catalonia] there are things that I like, because people here also try to keep their culture. Because there are many festivities in towns and villages. In 2005 I lived in the Basque Country (…), I didn't understand the language, but I was so happy, because these are people who are trying to preserve their culture. It is very important to preserve one's culture, (…) because everyone should be proud of their culture." (E2.3b, Senegalese, male).

On the other end, universalism seeks 'universal values' common to all cultures and explicitly rejects all forms of nationalistic, regionalist or culturalistic claims. Richard Rorty has pointed out to the moral inconsistencies of universalism, which accepts no cultural groups smaller than 'persons' or 'human beings', thus denying the specific needs and rights of oppressed groups like women, linguistic or other minorities (Rorty 1995: 125). For this study, universalism and cosmopolitanism are thus used in the sense of an ideological stance, rather than the more pragmatic concept of cosmopolitanism or 'urbanism' in the context of a multicultural urban space like Barcelona. This 'universalism' as a rejection of the culturalistic view was expressed best by Jonas when talking about migration:

> "First of all, I think there is no such thing as the 'typical migration'. What people call 'immigrants' are just people who go and live somewhere else (…); they also want to get married, build a life and hope for a better future etcetera. That they are just people like

> everybody else, even though they are different." (E2.5, Belgian-Spanish, male).

Although this excerpt shows that Jonas was wary of generalisations ('not all immigrants are the same') - which is consistent with the view that rejects homogeneity of migration - he sometimes tended to over-emphasise individual agency in a universalistic view of minorities 'as a matter of rights which are already recognizable and describable, although not yet granted' (Rorty 1995: 125). I looked into Jonas' ambiguous view on cultural minorities more in detail in his case study (see 3.4).

2.3.2. The routes: multiculturalism and intercultural practices

Migration flows have existed throughout the history of humanity. For a discussion of the debate around multiculturalism and interculturalism I refer to Chapter 2 (2. 'Cultural identity: who needs it?'), but for this section the following reminders will do. In the context of this study, I will talk about multiculturalism as a way of looking at culture(s), as opposed to the term used to refer to the 'multicultural society'. It is, so to say, the ideas about multiculturality in the minds and actions of participants that interested me, rather than the social reality behind it. Multiculturalism, then, can be defined as the idea that different cultures, despite their difference, can share the same space without necessarily having contact with each other. In other words, a 'multiculturalist' worldview would consider that peaceful coexistence is possible without a need for mutual adaptation.

I found very few references to such a view among the young people I worked with, as most participants recognised the need for mutual understanding, 'adaptation' or even 'integration' (see further below). Manuela insisted on Roma culture as part of Catalan culture without necessarily 'mixing in' with non-Roma. From everything she said and did during the project, she made it clear that she felt part of her culture and would never 'betray' her community, and that in her view it was possible to live peacefully together with 'the rest of the neighbours' in Gracia, where almost all her family lives. Gracia is a traditional and upgraded area in Northern Barcelona with small bars, theatres and restaurants. The Roma live in a few streets around the market and a square called Plaça del Raspall. They usually speak Catalan to each other, although with a Roma-specific accent, and interact with the local Catalan community, while coming together at Plaça del Raspall every night at 9 o'clock sharp. Manuela, despite (or thanks to) being one of the few educated women in her community, feels very committed to 'her' people:

> "I am Manuela, the *gitana*, who must be here in the neighbourhood with her people." (E2.2, Roma, female).

As we will see in her case study, Manuela was at the same time interested in reaching out to the 'mainstream' Catalan culture in many ways. In daily life, she worked (and still works) constantly for links between both societies through her job as a cultural mediator. But the tone underpinning her discourse was a 'multiculturalist' one.

Among young migrants, the issues and priorities were a bit different. As opposed to the well-established Roma community in Barcelona, immigrants arrive in the new environment as 'intruders'. They know that they are the 'others', the newcomers, and will have to make an effort upon arrival. Most of the participants I interviewed were concerned with acquiring as much knowledge as possible (or as much as necessary) about the host culture, and with mutual understanding, communication and exchange between cultures: the idea of interculturality. In the interculturalist view, the other is seen as a valid partner for negotiation and exchange of ideas, in order to comprehend each other better and avoid misunderstanding and conflict. Migrants and ethnic minorities, as well as 'natives', are almost forced to take a stand with regards to communication: how much effort will they make to get to know the other, their language, beliefs, values, traditions and common heritage? As we will see, most participants in this study showed signs of interculturalism, even the ones who expressed the most 'culturalistic' views:

> "I can accept some things that are valid, or seem valid to me, in order to combine them with my culture. There are people who adapt well to both modernism and traditionalism." (E2.3b, Senegalese, male)

It is not always clear, though, if interculturality is just viewed as a valid option while in the host country, or can be extrapolated to the context 'back home'. In the next section it will become clearer in which cases this interculturality is to be seen as an ideological choice (interculturality as a value an sich) and when it is rather a strategic one.

2.3.3. 'Strategic' vs. 'intrinsic' adaptation

Although the idea of adaptation does not cover the meaning of 'interculturality' (as interculturality implies a mutual adaptation), I have used the term here in order to make a distinction between interculturalism as a worldview and its practical consequences in migrants' daily practices: will I behave like 'them' or rather like 'us'? In order to explore these issues within the material, I used the concepts of 'strategic' versus 'intrinsic' adaptation.

When a migrant who has recently arrived to a country adapts to its culture, it is often (initially) for strategic reasons. Taking on certain habits, attitudes, or behaviours from the local culture is a strategy to survive. Media representations play an important role in such strategies, as they inform migrants' choices or ideas about the host culture. But whereas this 'strategic' adaptation is almost automatically performed as a way to survive in a new environment at early

stages, it sometimes gives way to a more 'intrinsic' adaptation, when newcomers start exploring their routes in the host society and adopt its habits and cultural codes. As Sihalebe expresses it:

> "Here [in Europe, in Barcelona] we should not live according to our tradition; in a world with different habits (…), because we are in a world of giving and taking." (E2.3b, Senegalese, male)

This 'giving and taking' is part of the intercultural process. Nevertheless, it is not because you adapt to some aspects of the host culture, that you will make its values your own. Sihalebe, who felt quite comfortable in Barcelona, still talks about Casamance as 'home':

> "When there is a tradition or a ritual back in your home town, then you participate. As a child of that town, I am not going to say: 'No, I have travelled, I have been to Barcelona, I am not going to participate.' No, that would be a shame!" (E2.3b, Senegalese, male)

Sihalebe would probably finish the sentence 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do…' by saying: '…but don't take them home with you!'. And right so.

Interculturality is okay, but it seems that for Sihalebe it is a temporary strategy, a way of surviving in the host country. On the other hand, he was one of the very few migrants in this study who spoke Catalan, seen by many Catalans as a sign of willingness to fully participate in Catalan society. As a matter of fact, Sihalebe appeared on Catalan public television in a report about migrants who were learning and speaking Catalan. But since the Catalan language is not strictly necessary to survive in bi-lingual Barcelona, most other migrants in this study were sticking to Spanish, especially those whose mother language was Spanish.

As migrants stick around, find jobs and get involved in society, the intercultural dimension becomes more and more intrinsic.

> "What I most appreciate about this place [Barcelona] is that I meet people from different countries; you always bump into someone who speaks another language or is going to tell you something new…" (E2.1, Mexican, female)

But not only 'recently arrived' migrants go with intercultural values. As time goes by and new ethnicities and hybrid identities emerge among second-generation migrants and from 'mixed' couples, interculturalism becomes a value in itself, rather than a strategy. It is especially in big cities, where a lot of people from diverse backgrounds mix together, that interculturality and interculturalism seems to come naturally. Jonas put it this way in an email conversation I had with him:

> "A city like this is crawled with different cultures, and even with mixtures of different cultures. These mixes can be so mixed, that it

> is impossible to know where they are coming from. In that sense (…) I feel like I am a cosmopolitan." (email conversation, Belgian-Spanish, male)

For these young people interculturality in Barcelona is a fact - an established value, characteristic of the city - rather than a 'choice'. And this idea was also reflected in their media productions, as we will see later on.

2.3.4. 'Work ethos' vs. 'leisure and pleasure'

While working with participants on the Roots&Routes project, there seemed to be a constant tension between their ambition to do a good job and their wanting to go out and have fun. Work ethos, seen as a 'traditional' value, seemed to be at odds with contemporary notions of leisure. As I came across diverse articulations of this tension, I realised that participants did not necessarily want to make a choice as in 'either/or', but rather that they were looking for a balance between the 'rat-race' and a life of leisure and pleasure. Ambition in the professional field was considered by some as part of a value system inherited from previous generations or from the 'homeland':

> "I see life in Belgium so gray. All my friends are so seriously busy with their careers, that other things are not really interesting to them…" (E2.5, Belgian-Spanish, male).

… or is seen as a passport for acceptance in the host country. In Federico's view there is no place for him in Europe if he doesn't work hard, as 'working hard is what Europeans do':

> "… if I want to stay here I need to 'germanise' myself, I need to work like a robot." (E2.4, Argentinian, male).

But ambition was not only located in the professional field. The participants, who – it must be reminded – were signed up for the Roots&Routes project on a voluntary basis, generally showed a high level of social commitment, as opposed to more 'mundane' activities:

> "These girls who straighten their hair to go out at night. Or like, they put on a mini-skirt and a top with a low-cut neck, high heels and so on… They get picked up by guys in sports cars, dress fashionable and spend a lot of money on drinks and get drunk (…). That doesn't seem interesting at all to me. I think I am more critical, more social. I don't like to… disguise." (E2.1, Mexican, female)

Although participants were professionally and socially ambitious, hedonism was also present in their talk and behaviour throughout the study period. Federico, who wanted to become 'like a robot', also recognises that having fun is crucial in life:

> "It has to be funny. That is the most important thing in the whole world: having fun." (E2.4, Argentinian, male).

Having an exciting social life seemed to be an important value of young people living in a metropolis like Barcelona:

> "I came here for the good life (…) I have a good social life here, good weather, and at the same time I was stimulated to start drawing again." (E2.5, Belgian-Spanish, male)

A Mexican participant is quite conscious of the (social) benefits of Barcelona's vibrant nightlife:

> "I can learn so much… For example at the parties I go to I always meet people from everywhere who talk different languages. I don't know; this is what I like about Barcelona." (E2.1, Mexican, female)

2.4. Articulation of identity and Social Relationships

Family and friends are obviously one of the most important ties with the homeland for people who have migrated. But surprisingly, the participants in this study did not talk very much about their family and friends 'back home', not even in the life narratives (E2 interviews). When parents did come up, they had a very individual, psychological role, rather than a 'cultural' one. An exception is Jonas, when talking about how his dad introduced him to French culture through language and television:

> "My dad was raised bi-lingual [Flemish-Dutch], but at one point he decided to start speaking only French, in opposition to the Flemish nationalistic movement (…). We also watched the news from France, because my father thought that Belgian news wasn't very interesting (laughs). So we grew up with French television." (E2.5, Belgian-Spanish, male).

What was interesting to me about this quote is that it illustrated how Jonas' dad had a role in how Jonas viewed 'culture' in later life stages: it is probably no coincidence that Jonas did not identify with any culture in particular, and in the least with Flemish culture, despite the fact that he had lived in a Flemish-speaking part of Belgium until his teenage years.

In other terms, love and romantic relationships did not seem to stop people from moving. Especially among the female participants, there was an explicit rejection of the gendered roles of women marrying and getting children, in favour of pursuing their personal development:

> "There [in Mexico] you get people who start looking for a spouse when they are only fifteen! How can you live your life if you marry and have children so early? They don't think about any other options in life than marriage and children." (E2.1, Mexican, female)

María from Colombia put it this way:

> "I wanted to go and study abroad (…). I felt it was a way for me to do what I wanted to do. I know what kind of future I want, beyond children and dogs (laughs), I want to have a cultural centre." (E2.6, Colombian, female).

Even when already engaged in a relationship, Sara decided to come to Barcelona on her own because she wanted to do a master course:

> Q: "And what did you tell your boyfriend?"
>
> A: "That I wanted to leave. (…) and I did." (E2.7, Italian, female)

At this stage of leaving the homeland, new relationships become more important than old ties, although friends and family are considered to be the most 'missed' in the new country:

> "What I most miss is my family of course, I don't need to say this because I suppose that everyone… And my friends (…), the people from there, the local habits." (E2.3, Senegalese, male).

New friends, peers and colleagues start to displace family and old friends as part of individual identity construction in the host country. While this is indeed true for all emerging adults, it is especially for migrants, as their social network is to be constructed from 'scratch'. This can be both a challenge and an opportunity:

> "Here I have no parents, they don't know me from school, or… basically nobody knows me, right? So when I came here it was as if I had an opportunity to be someone else, like 'I want to be a nice person', or 'the introvert one', or 'I am going to dress fashionably'…" (E2.1, Mexican, female).

It remains the question however if, given the chance to 'take on a new identity', Emiliana actually changed that much when she came to Spain, or on the contrary her identity construction was and is an ongoing process in a changing context.

Although love may be not a reason enough to stay in the home country, it can be an important pull factor when deciding on a final destiny. Sometimes location becomes 'home' when romantic relationships are established, and it becomes increasingly difficult to leave elsewhere or go back. Emiliana, a Mexican young woman, described how meeting her boyfriend in Barcelona made her decide to stay:

> "So, then I came to Barcelona. Here I met a friend of a friend of mine, and it was love at first sight. So we are together now, and I moved in with him (…). At first it was for a month, then another one. Then three. And then, well, it is now kind of indefinite." (E2.1, Mexican, female).

2.5. 'ME', 'US', AND 'THEM'

As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, all of the people I worked with in this study were able to take some kind of distance, in minor or major degrees, from their own cultural label, be it 'African', 'Colombian' or 'Roma'. However, this distance is not always a conscious or coherent one, as came through in the formal and informal conversations with participants, materialised in their struggle with enunciations of 'we' and 'them'.

An illustration of this struggle was José's coming-to-terms with his routes as a young Mexican in a new country/city, and the articulation of his cultural identity as an emerging adult, as a journalist, as a man/male and as a Mexican. At the time interviewing José about the image of Mexicans in the Spanish media (E1.7), I paid more attention to what he was saying, than to *which words* he was using in terms of 'us' and 'them'. Only after a more in-depth analysis of the interview, José's at times confusing process of articulating identity became apparent. This second reading of the interview at a deeper level suggested that José indeed had difficulties in choosing between the 'we' or 'they' position in his verbs, and between the active and the passive voice. These at first sight unimportant slips revealed his positions with regards to the construction of cultural identity:

> "...I think that a lot is said about immigration in the media, but we still..., it is still treated from a Eurocentric point of view."
>
> (*'...creo que se habla mucho de la inmigración pero la seguimo/..., se sigue tratando desde este eurocentrismo.'*)

In this sentence José - who occasionally works as a free-lance journalist in Barcelona - starts off by using the neutral impersonal form ('*a lot is said*') to refer to the media, then for a moment identifies with being a journalist himself ('*but we still*') and finally interrupts himself to go back to the 'safe' impersonal form ('*it is still treated from a Eurocentric point of view*'). As a journalist he is 'us', but as a Mexican it is 'them' who are being Eurocentric. The switching between identity positions ('*I am a journalist*' versus '*I am non-European*') happens within one and the same phrase.

At another stage of the same interview, this 'articulation in process' becomes even clearer as José hesitates when talking about the portrayal of immigrants in the news:

> "... when it is shown it is always shown from the outside. We never... in the news they never worry about looking for a Colombian, a Peruvian, an Ecuadorian, asking them what their needs are, what they want, for what reason they are here... They kind of present Latin American immigration as a block, and they present it as if they have financial problems over there, and they come here..."

("... cuando se muestra siempre se muestra desde fuera. Nunca le vamos a... nunca el noticiero se preocupan por ir a buscar un colombiano, un peruano, un ecuatoriano, a preguntarle cuáles son sus necesidades, qué es lo que quieren, por qué motivo está aquí... eh... como que la inmigración latinoamericana la muestran como un bloque, y la muestran como que ellos tienen allá unos problemas económicos, y se vienen para acá...")

In this sentence, José uses 'they' for the media ('*the news*'), but he now also uses 'they' to describe the immigrants, especially the ones having financial problems. But, isn't he an immigrant himself?

José occasionally uses the 'you'-form as a general 'I'-form when talking about immigrants as in 'you become a problem when you are presented as a problem', but converts this in an affirmatively personal 'we' when mentioning that immigrants are 'necessary for the local real estate business':

"I think that those rules they make so that it is impossible for you to legalise yourself, makes you a... makes that you become a problem, yes? And it doesn't make you contribute in any way, because I know people who have their papers, who can get a job, so they are contributing very, very much to this society, but they don't show anything about these people. Today, let's show five people who have papers and who have been here for three or four years. Let's see how they work and how they live, what they do. And it is even so that they have realised that not only are we necessary, but we are contributing so much, that the real estate business has said: if it wasn't for the immigrants, we would be out of business..."

('Yo creo que estos reglamentos que hacen para que te sea imposible poderte legalizar, hace que te hagas un..., te conviertas en un problema. sí? Y no hace que tú aportes algo, no, porque yo conozco gente que tiene sus papeles, que logran trabajar, pues están aportando a esta sociedad muchísimo muchísimo, pero de esos no sacan nada, no. Hoy saquemos a cinco personas que tienen papeles que llevan tres cuatro años aquí. Y veamos cómo trabajan y cómo viven, lo que hacen, no? Y tan es así, y tan se han dado cuenta que no es que seamos necesarios, también es así que aportamos, que el sector inmobiliario ha dicho: si no fuera por los inmigrantes estaríamos en la calle.')

These excerpts show how José, like many other young migrants, was continually negotiating his own position, struggling between what he obviously saw as his role as a 'migrant' within the context of this project – more specifically a Mexican immigrant - but also as a journalist/media maker. He articulated an identity in both directions: as an immigrant, in that he has come here to study and contribute to society, and as a journalist in that he is trying to become a good media professional. However, he distanced himself from both roles in several occasions, as he did not seem to consider himself as an immigrant when it comes to 'leaving your country for economic

reasons' or when they are 'presented as a problem', or as a journalist when it comes to the negative, 'Eurocentric' way of representing immigration...

3. ACTION! MEDIA PRODUCTION AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

3.1. THREE CONFLICTS, THREE CASES

When repeatedly going over the material (talk, observations and production) I started to distinguish certain positions among participants with regards to their concepts of 'cultural identity', 'cultural groups' and the interactions between culture and society. What follows is not a classification of different ideological positions of migrants and ethnic minorities towards 'culture', but it is a detailed description of three conflicts or contradictions that emerged during the process of analysing the data, exemplified in participants' lives, the way they view themselves, their roots and their routes, and their relationship with media.

The three cases illustrate two 'extreme' positions and the contradictions and conflicts these imply. The two extreme positions are 'culturalistic' (cultures are fixed by nature) on the one hand, and 'constructionist' (cultures are just social constructions) on the other. All three conflicts can be located within the frame of these extremes and are somehow reduced to them: 1) *the 'multiculturalist' position versus the 'interculturalist' position*; 2) *'nationalism' versus 'cosmopolitanism'*; and 3) *'structure' versus 'agency'*.

Before going into detail about people's lives, I need to stress that these cases are meant as illustrations of certain tendencies among participants of thinking about cultural identity. These tendencies are not labels that I want to stick onto the individuals who I chose as an illustration. In other words, their cases are looked at as *articulations of cultural identities at a certain moment in time*, certainly not as essentialisations. As pointed out above, one person can have several positions at the time: participants were sometimes putting the emphasis on structure, and sometimes on agency; they believed in tradition and modernisation at the same time; they were trying to come to terms with their roots, as well as with their routes, just like any of us.

3.2. TRIANGULATION IN PRACTICE

When working with audio-visual products as sources of information, the social researcher has to be conscious of the different approaches and methodologies regarding its analysis. I have already elaborated on these aspects in Chapter 3, but of course one of the greatest challenges for researchers when analysing audio-visual products created by the participants themselves, is to interpret its meanings within a broader context. This is when all sources must be taken into

account and reflected upon, in order to guarantee credibility. The way I did this was to look for the links between cases, conflicts and categories of analysis:

CASE	CONFLICT	CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS
Manuela	'multicultural' versus 'intercultural'	work location worldviews relationships
JONAS	'nationalism' versus 'cosmopolitanism'	
FEDERICO	'structure' versus 'agency'	

Fig. 17. Triangulation in practice: cases, conflicts, categories.

As seen in Figure 17, 'Cases' (individuals) were taken in order to explore certain 'Conflicts' (paradoxes within the process of constructing cultural identity), which arose while analysing the data, using the 'Categories of analysis' that had come up at earlier stages of the study. As sources for this detailed exploration, I therefore considered all data available: participants' talk, actions and the visual texts they created.

3.3. First conflict: 'multicultural' or 'intercultural'?

One of the main contradictions that arise when looking at media representations and cultural identity, is the way media portrayals affect minority groups in their own positionings towards a multicultural society: should I stick to 'my people in my neighbourhood' (multiculturalist position) or should I open up to mainstream society in order to learn from each other (interculturalist position)? This conflict is not only present in current discourses in mainstream media and culture, but also at the heart of the represented cultural groups and communities themselves. As argued above, the multiculturalist position is here considered to be located in the 'culturalistic' tradition, as it parts from the idea that cultural groups have a more or less fixed identity, and should not necessarily mix together (although they can peacefully share the same space), whereas the interculturalist position would emphasise the negative implications of a social construct like 'cultural groups' and part from the idea that different groups should enter in dialogue, learn from each other and be open to each others' culture, thus avoiding misunderstandings and conflict.

3.3.1. Manuela

In order to explore the conflict multicultural/intercultural I chose Manuela, the young Roma woman, as a case. Choosing Manuela was obvious in the way that she made a documentary, together with Sara, about her life and her neighbourhood in Gracia, Barcelona, which explicitly explored issues related to cultural identity, more particularly Roma culture. I must remind the reader once more that the following analysis is an example of how I explored certain issues related to Manuela's cultural identity construction without the intention of essentialising her in any way.

Manuela continuously struggled with the tension between her culture as such and her culture embedded in Catalan society; she articulates this struggle throughout her daily life and work, her past, present and future. She is an ordinary *gitana* in many ways, but she is also different from her peers in many other ways, and according to her, her '*gitana*-ness' is constantly challenged by Roma community members. She went to university, wears piercings, drives a car, has a 'non-*gitano*' job, and spent three months in Argentina while studying, which was not appreciated by everybody in her community.

However, instead of adapting to what some community members expect from her, rejecting or even leaving it, Manuela claims to be a *gitana* 'like all others' and fights for the recognition of her *gitana*-ness and that of others who challenge the established order within the community. While doing so, Manuela always bumps into the same questions over and over again: what makes me a *gitana*? What does our culture stand for? What is it that I don't like about non-Roma? To which traditions do I want to stick, and which others do I want to challenge? Her conflict is that she absolutely identifies with the Roma community (wants to be a *gitana*) but by challenging some of its values, habits and beliefs, and taking on some of the mainstream culture's features, she is putting cross-fertilisation into practice ('intercultural' practice).

3.3.2. The video material

The products Manuela created were a on the one hand a short report on a *gitano* musician in the Roots&Routes project (A1.3 'Rrom hip-hop') and a documentary about her neighbourhood and community on the other (A2.2 'Rromià').

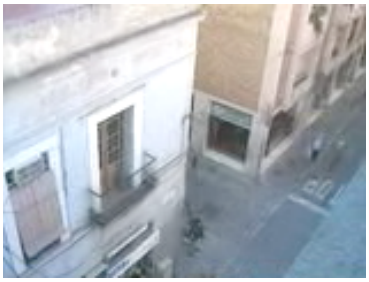
In the following section, I will look at Manuela and Sara's documentary entitled 'Rromià' (A2.2) in order to explore and examine the way Manuela addresses issues of cultural identity in portraying herself. After the project period, this documentary -together with the productions of the other participants - was screened at a public venue and key people from mainstream media institutions were invited. A few months after the screening event, 'Rromià' was bought by the Spanish national broadcaster TVE, whose representative had come to hear about the

Roots&Routes project and the screening, and the girls were paid for emission rights. At the time of writing, the film was still available on the official TVE website.

The initial assignment for A2 type productions, as proposed by me and agreed upon by the whole group (see Chapter 3, 2.2.3 'Creation') was to make, in pairs, a report or documentary that explored issues of 'roots' and 'routes'. As we will see, during the first discussions when the pairs were asked to brainstorm about the topics, approach, narrative and style of their products, the group composed by Manuela and Sara almost immediately decided to make their documentary about the Roma community. They argued that Manuela's participation was a 'unique opportunity' to look into the specificities of a particular cultural group. At the beginning Manuela was not keen on protagonising the documentary, as she claimed to 'prefer to be behind the camera than in front of it' (E2.2). But as the brainstorming and group discussion evolved, it became clear that anchoring the story around Manuela would be indeed a fruitful approach. Both myself and Antonio, a young Roma who had participated in the project the previous year, were involved in the preparation group sessions where these topics were discussed and decisions were taken. Whereas my role was limited to listening and posing questions from time to time, Antonio's position was made clear from the beginning as a senior participant and a 'mediator', being a Roma himself. The group session between Manuela, Sara and Antonio, which was registered completely (DG1) and in the course of which I left the room for almost 45 minutes, yielded an enormous amount of rich data, as crucial points about the topics addressed later in their documentary emerged here.

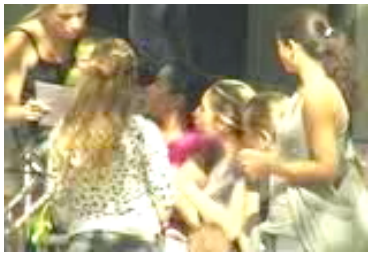
3.3.3. Key themes

In Manuela's documentary *location* appears to be very important in that the demarcation of her neighbourhood constitutes her world, daily life and social relationships. She constantly refers locality when describing herself:

Voiceover:	Image:
'This is my neighbourhood. I have been living here all my life and in this house since I was two years old. And my whole family live here. One block down is the market and my uncle and my cousins live two blocks down. Over there live my grandparents on mother's side and two blocks down my grandparents on father's side, and over there more aunts of mine. We all live very close to each other. (…)	Manuela is standing on her rooftop terrace; while she is speaking we see footage from the surrounding streets and the main square.  

Excerpt A2.2; 01:09-01:58

Locality is a crucial concept for the essence of being a Roma from Gracia – physical nearness seems to be one of the first conditions to be considered as a member of this community, or at least this is how Manuela experiences it:

Voiceover:	Image:
Manuela: 'I studied in one of the schools in this area, very near, five minutes away from the market. Then I had to go to a high school in the neighbourhood but I had a registration problem so finally I had to go to another school, not very far away, but outside the neighbourhood. (…) The university was right here, one street down from my grandmother's house, so I could stay in the neighbourhood, which made it easier for my family to accept it.'	Manuela is standing on her terrace, we see footage from the surrounding streets, showing people on the main square.  

Excerpt A2.2; 04:15 to 04:40 (…) 05:38 to 05:51.

For Manuela, the conflict is between the 'multiculturalist' position of sticking together with her people in one little neighbourhood without the need to relate to 'outsiders', and opening up to the mainstream culture by having an education, choosing a job she likes, driving a car and wearing piercings. Her way of resolving this conflict, specifically with regards to location, is to do all this in her neighbourhood, not outside it. By choosing to carry out her professional activities as a mediator within her community and not outside it, she takes away the argument of 'having left her community' from other community members who consider her to be an outsider or who put her '*gitano*-ness' into question. At the same time she undermines the image that mainstream society has of Roma women as being 'oppressed', as a consequence of media stereotypes portraying Roma women in negative ways. The following fragment from the film shows how Manuela (M) is trying to convince her cousin (C) of the benefits of education, not without being criticised herself:

Dialogue:

"C- Well, if she wants to I will let her have a job!

M- As a shop assistant or something like that?

C- Sure, if she wants. What she will *not* do is go studying far away…

M- Like me, right?

C- To study to be a forensic doctor like you …

M- I'm not a forensic doctor!

C-… and then to become nothing and work here with us.

M- You mean that to work with you is like doing nothing?!

C- More or less… (*laughs*)

M- You think it would be better if I did this job, but with *payos*?

C- No! But I think that what you studied was useless for you.

M- Why?

C- Because you are sitting here with me!

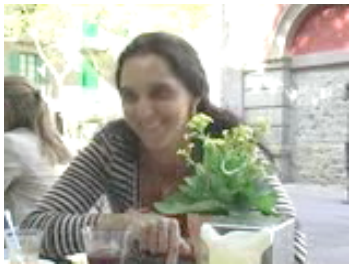
(laughter)

M- But I'm here with you, working with you. Isn't that better? I studied, right, so isn't it better that a Roma who studies can work with their own people instead of with people outside our community?

C- Yes, of course that's true. But did you have to go so far away to do that? Couldn't you just study near home?"

Image:

Manuela (M) is having coffee with one of her cousins (C) on a terrace in their neighbourhood in Barcelona. This square is located in the 'Roma area', but is not exclusively used by Roma. Manuela and her cousin are discussing the education of the latter's youngest daughter.



Excerpt A2.2; 10.30 to 11.30

For Manuela's cousin, locality is crucial in her appreciation of being a Roma: if you are *gitano* you don't leave your community, even if it is for a few months. For Roma people, just like for migrants, it seems that the multicultural-intercultural debate is translated to quite specific sites like space, and for Manuela the space constituted by her neighbourhood is one of the main stages where this debate takes place in her daily life.

From this excerpt it is clear that education and work-related issues are also very high on Manuela's 'cultural identity' agenda. Part of her job is to raise awareness among her community about the need for girls to finish school and receive higher education. For Manuela, education is the key to emancipation, not only for men but also and especially for women. According to Manuela, one of the most persistent prejudices amongst certain members of her community against the need for education is that it 'doesn't lead you anywhere':

> "There are neighbourhoods where they see the need for education (…) and education is starting to be considered as important. But there are other neighbourhoods where there is not much need, so people say 'what for?'. I mean the argument is always 'what is he going to study so hard for if he will never be a lawyer?'" (E2.2)

This explains her cousin's sentence about studying to be a 'forensic doctor' and then 'become nothing' (see excerpt above). If they are not going to be a doctor or lawyer, what's the point of studying? Fortunately, Manuela affirms, increasingly parents are keeping their kids at school after the age of 16.

3.3.4. Self-representation

From a semiotic point of view, rather than a thematic point of view, Manuela's cultural identity construction can be pinned down to a simple sign: Manuela is wearing piercings in the documentary. What seems to be a daily and ordinary accessory or object in non-Roma communities, a piercing becomes a sign full of meaning within Manuela's process of be(com)ing *gitana*. The meaning of the sign 'wearing a piercing', for her is claiming an identity and belonging to the *gitano* community despite the fact that some other members may deny her *gitano*-ness because she is wearing them: the piercings (amongst other signs) become an asset in Manuela's identity claim. That the piercing is only a little part in the struggle becomes clear when listening to her during a group session:

> Manuela: 'During the process, when you start studying, you are studying, you are completely on your own. No one understands, they say you are weird… At least in my case it was like that. I was the only one in my neighbourhood who was studying and so on… They said: that girl is going to become a *paya*, and this and that…'
>
> Cilia: 'Going to become *paya*?'

Manuela: 'Yes, and on top I am wearing piercings and that kind of stuff! The worst for *gitanos*! (laughs) But now everybody is like: 'we are so proud of you'. And I say to them: hey, what about three years ago, what happened then? Because I was doing the same things you see: I never let my mum and dad down, I didn't go out to parties, nothing of what they considered to be 'bad' I actually did…' (DG1)

It seems that her piercing stands for her 'being different': she went to university, works as a social worker in her neighbourhood, she convinces people about the importance of education. And still she is *gitana*. But in one of the group sessions with her peer Sara and facilitator Antonio, Manuela gives account of the fact that it is the community who decides if she is:

Antonio: 'There is a saying that goes: you are a *gitano* only if they recognise you as a *gitano*.'

Sara: 'If the others recognise you as such.'

Cilia: 'Or if you recognise yourself.'

Manuela: 'If the other recognise you as a *gitano*!'

Sara: 'So you are who you are, right, no one is going to take that away from you. But if someone comes to you and says: you are not *gitano*…'

Antonio: 'That is what would hurt me most.'

Sara: 'It would hurt you, so you want to… the belonging is important.'

Manuela: 'You just know if they recognise you as *gitano*… You see, they're not going to tell you, but they show you somehow.'

According to Manuela, piercings are not considered to be part of *gitano* culture, and by wearing them and showing herself the way she is in a documentary, Manuela is challenging the concept of Roma cultural identity and belonging. However, for her the point is not so much about rejecting her community than about struggling to be accepted despite being different:

Manuela: "Once I had my hair cut short and dyed it just to be able to say: 'hey, why would I not be *gitana* if I cut my hair short? Now I'm going to have it cut short.' Of course I must say I was fifteen at the time; I wouldn't do it now … (laughs)" (DG1)

Picture of Manuela taken by one of the other participants at the Roots&Routes project, September 2007.

i. Clothing, appearance and gestures

The main question for Manuela and Sara while preparing their documentary was: 'how can you see that someone is Roma?' Sara, as the only non-*gitano* and non-Spanish participant in this group session, was fascinated by the fact that apparently Spanish people could see when someone was 'Spanish' or 'Roma', while she as an Italian could absolutely not tell the difference. The following extract from the group discussion between Sara, Manuela and Antonio illustrates this:

> Sara [to Antonio]: 'Hey, but I have a question: you said that it would be different if I went [into the Roma neighbourhood] on my own than if I went with you… But when you get off the underground and you stand there, how do they know that you are *gitano* and I'm not?'
>
> (silence)
>
> Antonio: 'I'm not very recognisable. But yes, a little (laughs).'
>
> Sara: 'But how? You see, if you said you were Italian I would say, yes, I know a lot of Italians like you…'
>
> Manuela: 'I look more *gitano* than he does.'
>
> Sara: 'But you both could perfectly be Italians, from Milan for example…'
>
> Antonio: 'Well… the colour of our skin, our eyes, colour of our hair.'
>
> Sara: 'Ok, so it is mainly physical.'
>
> Antonio: 'Physical.'
>
> Manuela: 'Well… also the way you talk and your gestures give you away.' (DG1)

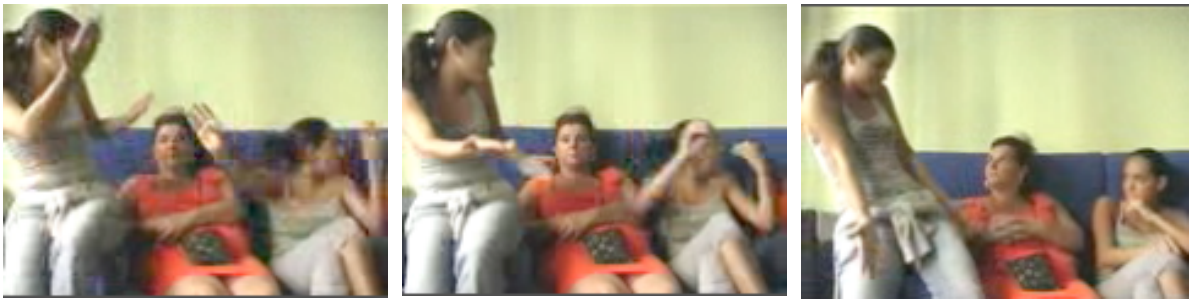
When looking at how Manuela and Sara later on tried to transmit the idea of 'appearance' and 'gestures' as important elements in Roma cultural identity, I noticed that in their documentary

they were constantly referring to them. The three fragments that best illustrate this were the following.

a) *the introductory scene*: women and children appear standing on the square – the elder women are wearing a kind of long dark skirt with slippers, whereas the younger women are wearing jeans or dark trousers. Manuela and Sara have decided to focus exclusively on the legs and feet, partly due to discretion, partly in order to show the typical Roma shoeing in Barcelona at that time of year (September):

Excerpt A2.2; 00:05-01:07

b) the scene where the *women of the family are planning Manuela's cousin's wedding*: gesticulation and ways of expressing themselves with their bodies are thoroughly observed and shown in the scene. Instead of talking, Manuela seems to be dancing whle talking:



Excerpt A2.2; 03:18-04:00

c) the scene at *Manuela's aunt's shop*: the woman's hand movements are edited in a way that they express efficiency, determination and a strong personality. Additionally, the jewellery that she is wearing tips spectators off on her *gitano* background:

Excerpt A2.2; 18:35-18:53

It is important to point out that it is not only the content of the image itself that contributes to the meaning, but also the editing and the sound. In other words, the image of the hand movement also acquires meaning through montage.

ii. Language and expression

The Catalan Roma community in Barcelona that Manuela belongs to – the '*Gitanos de Gràcia*' - speak Catalan with a specific accent, similar to a Catalan pagès (or rural) accent, which is not very different from the 'standard' Barcelona accent. But it is quite distinct and consistently spoken by practically all the members of the community when they are together. This linguistic feature is illustrated in the scene where Manuela is talking to her cousin about sending her little daughter to school. Surprisingly, here it becomes clear that Manuela is actually 'different', as she speaks with a standard 'Barcelona' accent, as opposed to her cousin who clearly has a Roma accent.

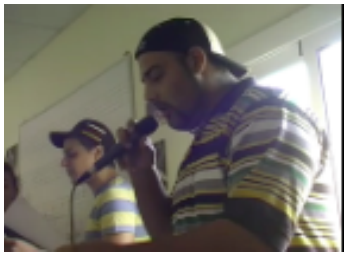
Excerpt A2.2; 08:42-11:30

Here, again, particular gestures while speaking are presented by Manuela and Sara as specific features of Roma culture in a conscious way:

> Manuela: "For example, I'm working at this school outside my neighbourhood, and when I arrived the first day, no one knew [about my background]. So there was a little girl, obviously Roma, who came to me during the break (…), and said to me: I have listened to you talk, and you are Roma, aren't you? So they recognise you, I don't know how, but they do…"
>
> Sara: "You see, that is what I mean. Bringing out these invisible things; things that you do recognise if you look well. That could be interesting [for the documentary]." (DG1)

Previously, Manuela had also produced a short clip about the project as a kind of exercise in which she interviewed a young Roma participant, at the music section of Roots&Routes. This clip was part of the assignment: 'go on and find a story' (Type A1: Report about the project). It is literally

the first video Manuela ever made. In this clip she goes for the same issues of Roma cultural identity with no hesitation:

Voiceover:	Image:
My name is Antonio Cortés. My artist name is Zigane MC, which means Roma in the Eastern countries, especially Russia and Czechoslovakia. I'm part of a band called GM (...) And here I am, doing hip-hop... you must be wondering how a Roma like me ended up in a world of hip-hop, because not many of them do. There are very few of us here in Spain doing hip-hop (...) For the people of my culture - I am from a Roma ethnic background - for the people surrounding me, my family, the people I meet, it was a bit strange to see me singing rap. That I was wearing baggy trousers, listening to Black music... The Flamenco music was always there, of course, but it was in the background. My life is basically hip-hop (...)	A young Roma rap singer; he is wearing hip-hop outfit and is smoking while speaking. The insert shots show him during a rehearsal with the Roots&Routes band.  

Excerpt A1.3; 00:03–01:39

With this clip, Manuela is showing her social awareness from the beginning and puts the attention to cultural identity, especially Roma cultural identity. She is literally 'negotiating' her own position on the go. Whereas her peers for the same exercise chose more universal or general subjects like 'inspiration', 'a day at the rehearsal', or 'an introduction to the project', Manuela went up to the only Roma participant in the music group and asked him the question: 'What is a Roma like you

doing in a project like this?'. Perhaps by choosing this question she was seeking to confirm and further construct her own cultural identity as a Roma.

Summarising, Manuela is an ordinary *gitana* in many ways and wants to be part of and accepted by her community. In the documentary she made together with Sara, her *gitano*-ness is expressed by gestures, clothing, and ways of speaking, and in key themes like locality and education. But she is also different from her community members and criticised for her being different. Her non-conformism is expressed by external signs like wearing piercings and through the issues that are important to her: education and self-development, especially as a woman.

As a Roma woman living in the centre of Barcelona mainly within her neighbourhood and community, Manuela thus embodies the situation of a multi-ethnic and multicultural city, without therefore 'essentialising' culture. In other words, she knows that different peoples and cultural groups can share the same space although they are not the same, but in her behaviour shows that cultures are dynamic in that they can change to transform (their own) reality and the society they live in.

3.4 SECOND CONFLICT: 'NATIONALISM' VERSUS 'COSMOPOLITANISM'

3.4.1 Jonas

As a Belgian-born son of a Spanish mother and a biological father from India, Jonas is almost naturally a symbol of cosmopolitanism. His adoptive father, a French-speaking Fleming from Heist (Belgium), raised his three sons in French, the common language spoken at home. Jonas first moved to Brussels as a teenager, and then to Spain in his early twenties. These hybrid linguistic, biological and cultural roots probably made Jonas into the 'cosmopolitan' he is today. He defines cosmopolitanism as 'living in a big city where different cultures come together':

> Q: "What does being a cosmopolitan mean to you? Do you consider yourself to be a cosmopolitan? Why (not)?"
>
> A: "In my view, a cosmopolitan is someone who is living in a big city. But that city should not be related to a particular culture and/or ethnicity. It is a metropolis, crawled with different cultures, and mixes of different cultures, and these mixes can be so far mixed that you cannot tell what their origin is anymore. In that sense I feel, as an inhabitant of Barcelona and a strange mix myself, a cosmopolitan. I think there is another notion of cosmopolitanism that refers to people travelling all the time, and who maybe don't have a fixed home. In that sense, I do not feel like a cosmopolitan at all. Besides, moving from Belgium to Spain is like moving from Houston to New York or from San Sebastián to Tarifa, and it is certainly a lot closer than from

> São Paolo to Manaus." (e-mail conversation between me and Jonas a posteriori, July 2009).

Indeed, Jonas explicitly rejects the notion of 'nationalism' or 'cultural identity', as he does not identify with any of the cultures he could (claim to) have affinity with: Belgian (or Flemish), Spanish, Indian or French. Instead he feels like a citizen of a 'metropolis' where different cultures are living together. If he identifies with anything, it is with the very notion of cosmopolitanism. Being from a mixed background himself, he feels at home in Barcelona, or at least in the multicultural area of the city. He lives in the Ciutat Vella district, a neighbourhood with a lot of noise and movement, coming-and-going, a vibrant nightlife and narrow streets. He occasionally rents out or shares his flat with friends, or friends' friends, or with 'couch surfers'. For Jonas, having international travellers staying at his place is a way of getting to know new people, cultures, and experiences. He travelled to Brazil in 2008 and stayed at couch surfing host addresses there himself.

Jonas is quite consequent in his anti-culturalistic views, and it appears from his life style, friends, and the conversations we had, that he generally emphasises the individual over the collective. For Jonas, cultures are clearly social 'constructions' with a political agenda behind them, and he does not believe in the values of traditionalism and age-old habits. His values are 'universalism' and individual choice. He speaks four languages fluently, but he is also the kind of person who will always look for a common language to speak when in multi-lingual company, even if the majority speaks one particular language. When I was having conversations with him, speaking Flemish as we usually do, and someone else would come and sit with us, he would almost always switch languages. For Jonas languages exist in order to understand each other, so we should all speak the language that is understood by everyone at any time. That is also the reason why, according to him, he has never learnt Catalan despite the fact that he has been living in Catalonia for almost seven years. He thinks Catalan independence claims are petty and ridiculous. He also strongly rejects the Flemish independence movement and claims to feel a lot more identified with French culture than with Belgian culture. This can be partly explained by the fact that he grew up in a family where Flemish was associated to right-wing nationalism, and French was chosen as a language of resistance to Flemish radicals:

> 'My dad was raised bi-lingual [Flemish-French] because he came from a bourgeoisie family in Bruges. But at a certain point he decided to be French-speaking and not Flemish-speaking in opposition to the Flamingants [members of the radical Flemish independence movement], which already existed in the fifties. That is nothing new, it existed then already, and my dad constantly suffered from it, and one day he just decided to be French-speaking, to oppose that.' (E2.5)

But Jonas' 'cosmopolitanism' is not without contradictions. Despite the fact that he lives in a world city like Barcelona and doesn't speak Catalan, he does recognise the particularities of Spanish culture:

> Look, I live in Spain, and the Spanish are more straightforward than for example the Belgians. (E2.5)

His mother was from Granada, so he has always associated Spain to Andalusian culture, where he had a rich social life and 'not much else':

> Then I went to Granada, which was great, but I had a lot of money saved up. That was nice, because the jobs were… there is nothing. And if you find anything, it's paid crap. But OK, life is very cheap there too. After that I came to Barcelona, in Barcelona I had more stuff that stimulated me than in Granada (…). I am from Granada, so I didn't do any drawing or anything, because there I only had a social life. It was amazing, but only social life.' (E2.5)

The question remains whether Jonas' 'cosmopolitanism' is an ideological stance or rather a natural consequence of his own lack of 'cultural identity'.

3.4.2 Representation of cultures

Jonas produced several types of audio-visual documents during the project, as he was involved for two years: the first year (2007) as a participant, the second year (2008) as a tutor. In the first year he made some short reports on the project (Type A1) that have not been included in the study, although they are available on the project vlog, and a report on 'roots' and 'routes' (A2.1 'Todos somos extraños'). In his year as a tutor, he did the authoring of the official project DVD and included an interactive menu (B1).

For the documentary '*Todos somos extraños* - We are all strange(rs)' (A2.1) he worked together with Emiliana, a Mexican woman who was selected together with him in the Roots&Routes media team for 2007. The initial idea for their documentary was to show how people migrate for very different reasons, which was the common starting point for both Jonas and Emiliana:

> Emiliana: "The subject is the different types of…, well all the aspects related to immigration: what, why and how, and what will happen next. So, what is immigration? And then why, how, etcetera… For me immigration is when people leave the place where they grew up and go somewhere else for this or that reason. Obviously, 'this or that reason' is to be better off, be it because there is a war in your country, be it because there is nothing to eat, or just because you are not happy there, or perhaps because there is too much smog where you come from, or you have an illness that can only be cured in that

> country, or someone is chasing you because of your political ideas. Anything. There are many reasons why people migrate." (DG2)

This idea of the heterogeneity of migrant profiles was initially shared by Jonas, as he put it a posteriori:

> Jonas: "My message [in the documentary] was that there is no 'typical' immigration. That what we call 'immigrants' are just normal people who move somewhere else… That's it basically. That they are just people like anyone else (…) and that if you talk to them for a while, you realise that they also want to get married, or love someone, and maybe they want children, or not… and that they think of or hope for a better life…" (E2.5)

But whereas the 'search for a better life' was initially a common point in both participants' discourse, during the process of producing the video it proved to be a deal breaker, as Emiliana and Jonas clashed over a fundamental point: do people migrate because they have to or because they want to? What Emiliana saw as a necessity was considered by Jonas as a way of 'improving one's situation'. At one point Emiliana became very personal in her arguments against Jonas' point of view, and entrusted me with her complaint in a one-to-one interview:

> "I think I am more critical. And more socially aware (…). For example, at the start I realised that [Jonas] and me would be working on the subject 'immigration'. But he sees it from a kind of 'fun' point of view, like it is something funny. Perhaps I'm too dramatic. But I wanted to draw the attention to those people who have to leave their country because of extreme circumstances, which leads you to – it is not my case – but which can even lead you to die trying to cross over. Perhaps in Jonas' case I think I see him like someone who said, 'oh OK, let's move country…' Of course, if you have a European passport it is easier to move between countries, right? At least from a legal point of view, you leave your family the same, you leave your homeland and all that, but you are not taking a boat, risking your life to try and go. Because you have nothing to eat. And this is where the documentary really started to go wrong." (E2.1)

Unsurprisingly Jonas confirmed that their collaboration was not very fruitful:

> "Well, there was a clear message at the beginning, when I started with the script. But then I started working with Emiliana. And the message was lost. Because in the end we just edited what we felt like, and that was not the way I wanted it." (E2.5)

Jonas is convinced of the fact that very few people migrate because of 'extreme circumstances', in other words, that they almost always move to improve their lives. His argument is that 'really poor people' wouldn't even have the money to pay for a ticket:

Jonas: "So I think that all the immigrants we have here are people who wanted to come. Except for the refugees of course, and the criminals. That's my personal opinion."

Cilia: "I'm thinking – if you don't have a job in your country, then is moving a choice, or a necessity? In my view it is more like a necessity…"

Jonas: "Well for me it is a… but who says that you will have a better job here than there?"

Cilia: "Well, that was your case wasn't it, but if you have a family and children, you don't 'feel like' leaving, do you?"

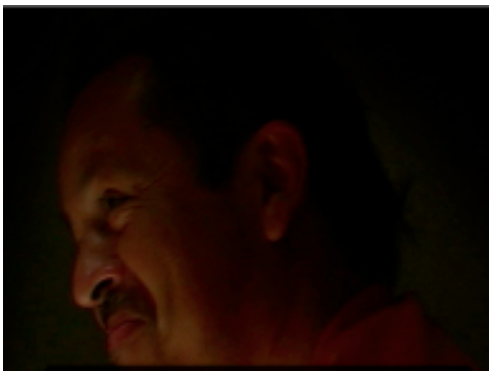
Jonas: "No, you don't feel like leaving, that's true. But I remember… how should I say this… Ok wait. They left because they thought that they would be able to give a better life to their family here. But it is always in order to have more. If their family was really starving, would they really leave their country?"

(…)

Cilia: "What if the whole village gathers the money for you and your family to leave? Maybe you don't have any money but the whole village contributes, all their capital, to buy you a ticket. So it is not one person who says 'I need that amount of money for a ticket'; the whole community helps."

Jonas: "Yes, in that case I can understand that the pressure to leave from the community can be very high." (E2.5)

Despite understanding my argument of community pressure, Jonas' opinion was still that people migrate out of ambition rather than out of necessity. However, whereas he was not very satisfied with the documentary he had made, when looking at the final result it is clear that his idea was more present than Emiliana's. Immigration, or indeed 'migration' is presented in the documentary in a playful way, not necessarily superficially, but certainly not 'tragically' in the sense Emiliana referred to those people who move because of extreme circumstances:

Dialogue:	Image:
"Jonas: 'What were you doing in China?' Chi: 'Accountancy. I also had a shop, because I didn't want to work in a factory anymore. I wanted to work independently. I sold books, but that was difficult. After that I opened another shop, a gym, for fat people like Jonas (*laughter*). With machines to get slimmer, to get rid of the fat…' (*laughter*)"	Jonas has invited three people over to his house for a dinner party: a Peruvian Chinese man, a Belgian man and a Chinese woman. They sit around the table and each of them talks about where they come from and why they came to Barcelona.   

Excerpt A2.1; 05:10-05:40

When producing audio-visual documents, you almost always come across other people you have to work with. Participants experienced that media making is very much teamwork. As they worked in pairs around the subject of roots and routes, many had to make compromises. In most

case this compromising entailed an added value for the story, but in some cases (like in Jonas and Emiliana's) the clash was so extreme that the story lost its strength, and instead of a compromise the documentary became something that neither of them could really identify with. Although from this perspective the documentary can be seen as a failure, I consider the process one of the most interesting in this study, as by making this film Jonas and Emiliana did not hesitate to thoroughly explore and debate some quite relevant issues about migration. The tension between the vision of migration as a necessity (embodied by Emiliana) and of migration as a free choice (as seen by Jonas) did not find its resolution within the final result, but it did within the process.

3.4.3 Interactive animation as a new audio-visual format

The next year, I asked Jonas to be a tutor for the Roots&Routes edition in 2008, which he enthusiastically accepted. At the time of writing Jonas was still actively involved in Roots&Routes activities, and has become a colleague and friend. During the time he was a tutor for new media talents in the project, he designed the interactive menu for the Roots&Routes DVD. This was his own initiative and he made the concept, design and development by himself. I consider this as an audio-visual text, which can be analysed in the context of this study, as it is an animated menu based on the idea of the 'different roots' that gradually grow together by 'common routes' into a strong tree:

Excerpt B1: Three screen shots from the interactive and animated DVD menu 'Roots&Routes official project DVD - 2008'.

I noticed that as opposed to the 'linear' structure of a documentary, report or short film, this animated and non-linear text gave Jonas the opportunity to create a visual concept of what he sees as the 'roots' and the 'routes'. His design refers to the richness (a full tree) and at the same time the necessity of diversity (different branches), and the strength of roots (represented by different colours) that come together in the shape of a beautiful tree with several branches:

Excerpt B1: Completed picture DVD menu

Each branch of the tree represents the products of a participant, and all their videos can be watched by clicking on the leaves. We hear the participants' voices when clicking on any of their products, as they explain how and why they got interested in video and what it means to them in the context of this project:

Text:	Image:
Participant #1: 'I love this project Roots and Routes because we are learning many important things that they don't do in my country.'	
Participant #2: 'I would like to learn more about how to make videos and edit them, in order to have more ideas for other things, and I love registering images with the camera.'	
Participant #3: 'Well, I got interested in video because it is a way to express my ideas through a massive medium, video.'	
Participant #4: 'I'm interested in video because when I was a little boy I watched loads and loads and loads of TV.'	
Participant #5: 'I love this cultural diversity and thanks to this project I saw an opportunity to get to know people from all over the world.	
Participant #6: 'I started with audio-visual productions because after watching so many videos, it was about time to make some…'	

Excerpt B1: Participants' voices when clicking on their image.

For Jonas this DVD menu may represent the cosmopolitan idea of 'anti-culturalism', as he focuses on participants' relationship with video, as opposed to centring the attention on their

backgrounds. This focus on a common interest might be one of the key answers to the contradiction between cultural identity and cosmopolitan identity that Jonas embodies. Indeed, the 'naturalisation' of diversity in a city like Barcelona, instead of insisting on cultural difference, may be crucial for co-existence and mutual understanding. At least it is for Jonas.

Summarising, Jonas is one of those people that make you think: 'who needs cultural identity anyway?' He is multi-lingual, moves swiftly through the city, had a night shift job at a major call centre at the time of the study, and enjoyed life when he wasn't working. Jonas gives us some hints about his 'cosmopolitan' stance by being from a mixed cultural, ethnic and linguistic background, and living in Barcelona anno 2009. Despite his rejection of identifying with any cultural group in particular, he respects people who do identify themselves as belonging to such groups, and is committed to being an active citizen in a multicultural city like Barcelona. However, he does have difficulties at recognising Catalan culture as such, and in a way misses out on the richness of its language and people. In his personality and through his life style, cosmopolitanism is juxtaposed to identification with a particular cultural group, language or country, and at the same time raises the possibility of a trans-cultural or hybrid identity, with all eventual assets and losses associated to hybridisation (see Chapter 3, 2.5 'Interculturality and transculturality: hybridisations').

3.5 THIRD CONFLICT: 'STRUCTURE' VS. 'AGENCY'

3.5.1 Federico

I have taken Federico's case to illustrate the conflict 'structure' versus 'agency', as his position is extremely deterministic (structure) on the one hand, and quite individualistic (agency) on the other hand. Federico is probably the person I spent most time with during his participation in the project and beyond. He is an expressive young man, although clearly troubled by questions about his own future in a world in crisis. In Federico's view, the world is organised terms of 'Latin' ('*lo latino*') and 'Germanic' ('*lo germánico*'), terms that he is using all the time, not only in the context of the project and this study, but in everyday conversation. For him, these are two opposite poles in the origin and progress of human kind, and his own personal aim is to become 'as Germanic as possible'. This binary vision is present in almost every aspect of his life. While writing this, for example, I was having a brief email conversation with him about the nickname he wanted me to use in this text. As he hadn't answered me within the requested time, I let him know that I had chosen the name Federico for him. He instantly wrote me back:

> 'Sorry, you are right, I forgot. I am not Germanic enough yet, boooh, it's so sad…' (Federico in an email conversation, July 2009)

This extremely 'culturalistic' view probably needs some explanation. Federico is quite exaggerated in the way he speaks and acts, but also very clear and direct. He is the kind of young people who are not afraid to ask questions, question established truths, put their finger on 'dodgy' issues, explore taboos, are self-critical and share their doubts and fears with no reservations.

Federico is 'as Argentinian as can be': his mother is from an Italian background and his father from a Spanish background, he doesn't stop talking and gesticulating, and as the youngest (and only) son of a middle-class family he had a non-religious education with strong Freudian influences. He is happy about his family and background, but for him being Argentinian is conflictive as in being 'Latino'. He literally detests everything that has to do with the typical image of Latin America, in his own words:

> 'Latinos only want to go dance salsa. These are my categories: at the bottom of it all the Caribbeans, I hate them. After that: the reggaeton people. I don't like them at all. I love the rest of Latin America. As long as there is no Caribbean or reggeaton, it is fantastic. But also quite chaotic.' (E2.4).

Consequently, Federico adores 'Germanic' culture, which is in his mind 'hard work', being 'a robot' (see above), 'good houses' and an 'efficient social security system', although this does not necessarily entail happiness:

> "The Germanics are unhappy but they have… money. And good pensions. And unemployment fees. And they can work in jobs they like. (…) Germanics don't have any problems." (E2.4).

From the multiple conversations I had with him I concluded that by the term 'Germanics' he generally meant people from Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries, although he clearly referred to the concept of 'being Germanic' rather than to a group of people. The contradiction is that although Federico seemed to very clearly classify the world in 'Latinos' and 'Germanics' (which he knows is very simplistic), he at no point positioned himself within this classification. In other words, he essentialises everybody in function of their 'culture', except himself. He doesn't identify with Latino culture at all, even rejects it, but he recognises that he is 'not Germanic enough yet' (see also above):

> "There is a way of being, thinking, working… that isn't any better or worse, but it means that countries like Germany are more effective when trying to achieve their goals and acquire economical goods. They may be legitimate or illegitimate, but it is just true that it is more effective. Yes. So, we all have to germanise ourselves. That's the mission of human kind: get away from Latinity." (E2.4)

Significantly, in his talk he consequently uses the 'them'-form in his verbs, both when mentioning 'Latinos' and mentioning 'Germanics', thus avoiding identification with any of these groups. The only occasion in which he does identify with Latin culture is when mentioning humour and joy:

> "I don't know if they enjoy life more, but at least people sing. And they dance, they are happy in a way. Lots of Germanic people cannot enjoy life, they go: 'no, I have to go to sleep early…', and for us it's like: 'I'm having a good time, I'm staying." (E2.4)

3.5.2 The 'false documentary' as a way of playing with identity

So if Federico does not identify with 'Latinity', and he certainly is not 'Germanic' according to his own definition of being Germanic, then what is he? How does Federico solve this conflict in his mind between cultural determination (the 'structure' view) and someone's individual development (the 'agency' view)? Between roots and routes, between coming from and becoming?

Federico made two videos: one as Type A1 (Report about the project) and one as Type A3 (Self-portrait). Not surprisingly, it was especially the self-portrait that would prove to be interesting for the issues at stake. For Type A3 products, participants were asked to make a video self-portrait. No more, no less. The format, narration and style were free; the only assignment was that it had to be about themselves. In this case participants worked individually. Whereas almost everybody worked on a 'documentary' kind of self-portrait (accounts of their roots, their backgrounds, their hopes and dreams, the way they see the world and their future…), Federico chose to shoot a story, a fiction movie. In fact his self-portrait was a 'false documentary' about himself killing his three flatmates one by one.

As noted earlier, the visual texts produced by participants did not make any sense for this study without taking into account the production circumstances, the discussions prior to and the reflections after the production in one-to-one conversations and in the group discussions we had. When I asked Federico why he had chosen this 'false documentary' format as opposed to a more classical self-portrait or documentary, he answered, quite convincingly:

> Federico: "I wanted to make a documentary about my flat and suddenly I said oh well, that could be a bit boring, I mean you have to be very good to be able to make an interesting and at the same time catchy documentary about a flat! So I said OK let's add a little fiction. This is when I came up with the idea of 'killing' my flatmates."
>
> Cilia: "That's the fiction part, but are there also autobiographical elements in your film?"

> Federico: "Yes, of course. I do snore! I might want to kill my flatmates actually (laughs)… No really, sometimes I would, because the house is too small… it's not like in Belgium where everybody lives in big houses. Here we have to bear the consequences of Latin irresponsibility… So sometimes it really gets crowdy in the flat." (E2.4)

Apart from the fact that Federico never misses an opportunity to point out to the differences between 'Latin' and 'Germanic' culture, this excerpt shows that humour is important in his life, and it seems to give him a tool for standing back and see himself in perspective. In all his videos and products, as well as in the interviews and informal conversations I had with him, humour and self-reflection was always present somehow.

3.5.3 Key themes

The way key themes appear in his false documentary film, as analysed according to our previously established categories of identity, also illustrates Federico's constant 'obsession' with cultural differences. With regards to location for example, Federico makes it clear that he left Argentina 'because he felt unsafe there', and he came to Barcelona 'because that stuff doesn't happen here'. From many informal conversations with him I understood that he was quite distressed by the constant menace of crime and robbery in Buenos Aires, and that he felt he was 'too sensitive' to be able to stand that kind of situations. In his documentary, he lets his character speak:

Text:	Image:
"I left Argentina because actually the situation there was pretty bad at the time. I saw a lot of violence in Buenos Aires, a lot of violence, the city became very dangerous. They can rob you or kill you for nothing, they kill you for two *peso* or because the guy had a bad day or he was doped... It isn't healthy for anyone's mind to live in a society, in a context where you think you could be killed any second, any place. That is why I came here, because that kind of things don't happen in Barcelona."	The main character (Federico in the role of a serial killer) is sitting with a bloodstained towel around his neck, which he used after having killed his first flatmate. The setting and tone of the talk is interview-like, like in a documentary. 

Excerpt A3; 04:37-05:05

In this scene Federico plays with location on a double level: he proclaims his reasons for migrating into Barcelona on the real life level as Federico, and on the ironic level as a 'character', in his role as a serial killer. The ironic aspect is that precisely his character, a violent psychopath living in Barcelona, complains about 'the dangers of Buenos Aires'. For Federico, stepping into the role of a serial killer gives him a chance to ironically talk about the violence in his country and his reasons to leave.

As for most participants in the present study education is also an important factor in Federico's identity exploration. Unlike Manuela in her documentary, Federico touches upon this issue in a humorous way: the 'serial killer' is talking about his studies, class mates and teachers while getting rid of his first victim's body:

Text:	Image:
"I arrived to Barcelona almost three years ago and I really love the city. I feel comfortable, I like the way it is, I love the people, they have treated my really well. That is why I have decided to stay here for a while, or even for a life time. I'm studying Humanities at the University (*throws bag over terrace fence*); there are some cool people there, the teachers really treat me nicely and I don't know... I think there is a long way to go for me here in Barcelona."	The serial killer is standing on his terrace in order to get rid of the body after killing his flat mate.    

Excerpt A3; 05:27-06:13.

As to relationships, Federico brings in his mother into the self-portrait from the other side of the ocean. His character, the serial killer, talks to his mother on the phone while wiping off his bloodstained kitchen knife after killing his second victim:

Text:	Image:
"Hi mom, how are you? Good, I'm good, and you? Well I'm OK, I'm just calling you for Mother's Day, how was it? Oh you went for dinner with Ele... that's great! And what did you get? ... Oh, look at you..."	The character is sitting on the bed talking to his mum on the phone, next to his dead flat mate, while wiping the blood off the knife he was killed with…  

Excerpt A3; 06:44-07:03.

It is interesting to see how Federico denies any 'biographical' connection with phoning his mother, as emerges from an interview taken a few months after the documentary was finished:

> Cilia: 'So, let's talk about your documentary again. You also talk about yourself in it.'
>
> Federico: 'Yes.'
>
> Cilia: 'For example, you talk to your mom on the phone…'
>
> Federico: 'Well that is fake. I mean that is not real, because I actually never call my mom, and certainly not on mother's day. I always forget, and then my mom calls me, sends me a message, an email saying today is mother's day! And I go 'oooooh, that's right!'. So

> just that part is not real, but all the rest is: when I talk about when I arrived, what I do, what I am studying…' (E2.4)

As a young man (age 24) studying and living abroad, one would say that a parent is an important reference to Federico. But from what he says, in reality his mother isn't very present to him in his daily routine. The reason why he brings her up in one of the scenes in the documentary might be the strength of the contrast between the image of a dead body and a 'casual phone call with your mom'. Federico, who had never made a storyboard or documentary before, here shows his 'comic-dramatic' sensitivity by juxtaposing killing someone and then calling your mum for Mother's Day.

Federico is convinced that he can become what he wants, despite being from a 'Latin American' country. At the same time, this solves and emphasises the conflict 'structure' – 'agency', as for Federico coming to Europe is precisely his chance to become what he wants: a high school history teacher with a decent wage ('not like in Argentina where teachers have to do three jobs to make ends meet'). In other words, location is crucial for him, and by migrating he is taking his life in his own hands ('agency'), looking for opportunities to escape from a country where there is no future for him, because 'it just doesn't work' (structure).

4. THE ADDED VALUE OF PRODUCING VISUAL TEXTS

What, in the end, is the added value of the productions made by participants for this study? As one of my questions at the start was what role (digital) media play in young adults' lives, I would like to briefly point out to some results, which will be elaborated on in the discussion and conclusions.

4.1. THE CONTEXT IS THE MESSAGE

First of all, it is important to point out that the formats and procedures (the way an audio-visual project is carried out) are crucial when looking at the actual 'text'. For example, the small reports about the projects (Type A1) constituted an excellent way for participants to get their hands around the camera and editing tools, as these were little exercises to upload on the project vlog daily. The fact that they were conceived as 'news items' forced the participants to finish them by the end of the day, as other participants from the music and dance teams were looking out for them. Another advantage of this format was that they could work individually or in pairs, and that they had something concrete to talk about, as opposed to those exercises where participants register landscapes or dull scenes by lack of inspiration during their first hands-on explorations with the equipment.

As to the documentaries in pairs with the fixed subject 'roots and routes' (Type A2), this format stimulated - and indeed forced - debate, compromise and consensus, as the subject was not

straightforward and required a lot of communication skills from participants. This way of producing was both the most time-consuming and yielded the richest data, as it was accompanied by brainstorming sessions, group discussions, evaluation sheets and individual interviews a posteriori.

The self-portrait (Type A3), as an individual exercise, provided participants with the possibility to express themselves and show who they were, as opposed to passively watching 'representations' of themselves on TV. By producing an audio-visual self-portrait, they had the opportunity to offer alternative images to the world. Even though the critique that these kind of documents never reach the 'mainstream' media anyway may be true in many cases, in this case it did happen: Manuela and Sara's 23-minutes documentary was spotted and bought by the Spanish national channel TVE. As mentioned before, their film was emitted on TV and on the internet, and circulated on festivals. Both authors were paid and have received prizes for their work.

4.2. PROFESSIONALISATION VS. 'EMPOWERMENT'

Besides the question of empowerment, criticised by many for the abuse of the term in different contexts, the people who have participated in the Roots&Routes media team over the last three years were clearly motivated and encouraged to keep working with video. I would rather call this the onset for a professional career in media making than 'empowerment', although I do feel that this professionalisation or at least employability in media is a part of a process of empowerment.

When participants of the 2007 edition (six participants) were asked to fill in a questionnaire after the Roots&Routes project about their experiences and opinions, I included the following question: 'How do you think you will use the audio-visual tools and skills that you have acquired during the project in the future?'. The answers to this question can be categorised in three ideas: the idea of employability, the idea of 'doing my own projects', and the idea of creating alternatives to the messages emitted on mainstream media.

As to employability, half of the respondents were quite explicit:

"I want to make a living out of this."(Emiliana)

"I would like to use it to enrich my CV." (Sara)

"I will use them as a professional media maker." (Sihalebe)

As to the idea of 'doing their own stuff', they responded:

"I want to start making my own personal projects and start experimenting these new technological possibilities." (Emiliana)

"I would like to start my own video blog." (Jonas)

"I hope to be able to use these tools for my personal projects." (Sara)

Most importantly, the participants fully realised the potential of digital media, especially the internet, as an alternative to mainstream discourse on TV and press:

"On a small scale, I hope to keep on working with video on the internet. I would like to experiment and make my own productions, because I come from a country where the audio-visual sector is badly focussed: instead of the best-selling folklore and poverty, or the notorious drugs trafficking and kidnapping, I would like to show a different aspect of my country." (María)

"Through my vlog I want to spread my point of view on multiculturality, diversity and migration." (Jonas)

"I'd love to keep doing social and cultural documentaries. And also be able to apply what I have learnt to my work with the children of my community, in order to give them an extra tool to express their opinions." (Manuela)

As seen in the last point, the issue of 'making alternatives to mainstream media' is explicitly present in participants' minds. But that was right after the project in 2007. What about a few years later? Have participants actually been active in the audio-visual field at all? In which ways? Before participating in the project, only one or two of the participants were making video or audio-visual products more or less professionally.

At the time of writing (anno 2009), participants were active as media makers in the following ways, as extracted from a survey:

<table>
<tr><th>Participants 2006: 10</th><th>Participants 2007: 6</th><th>Participants 2008: 6</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">1) Participants active in the field of (audio-)visual arts, digital video or media but does not earn money with it, anno 2009:</td></tr>
<tr><td>3 are involved in media workshops in community centres as part of their professional activities (Jardanay, Diego, Antonio)

1 still makes video reports regularly (Abdou)</td><td>1 (Sihalebe)</td><td>1 (Juan)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">TOTAL : 6</td></tr>
</table>

2) Participant earns money with the creation of products in the field of (audio-)visual arts, digital video or media, *anno* 2009:		
2006 2 are professional documentary makers (Lorenzo, Charo) 1 is a professional journalist (José)	2007 3 are making media products professionally and are still involved in Roots&Routes activities as tutors or video coaches (María, Sara, Jonas)	2008 2 (Louis, Fabiane)
TOTAL : 8		
3) Participant is not involved in media making at all *anno* 2009:		
2006 1 (Caicat)	2007 1 (Manuela)	2008 1 (Federico)
TOTAL : 3		
4) Unknown/not clear/didn't answer		
2006 2 (Mikaela, Juani)	2007 1 (Emiliana)	2008 2 (Abdel, Ian)
TOTAL : 5		

Fig. 18. Overview of (professional) activities related to media making of participants at the time of writing in 2009. Participants from the three project years: 2006, 2007, 2008.

As seen from Figure 18, 30% of the 2006 participants, 50% of the 2007 participants and 33% of the 2008 participants - an average of 37,6% of all participants who were involved in Roots&Routes as media makers - are currently involved in remunerated activities in the field of media and audio-visual production. This includes the production of documentaries, video reports, websites, and interactive animations. If we consider the fact that only a few of the participants were already involved in video before entering the project, we can say that this ratio is quite a significant figure. It shows that (digital) media production is increasingly important in the lives of the young people I worked with as cameras and editing software are getting more and more accessible, and that the participants engage in the field both as non-professional and as professional media making. As this moment, for example, María and Jonas each have their own websites where they display their photographs, animations and videos.

To assess the real impact of a project like Roots&Routes on the participants' employability would constitute a different kind of study, but this research has shown how processes of audio-visual text production can enhance the construction of (cultural) identity, and can provide a method for inquiry. In other words, not only the text itself, but also the fact that participants have to produce it, and how exactly they do this, can be used in looking at how migrants and ethnic minorities engage with media.

CHAPTER V

CULTURAL IDENTITY AND NEW MEDIA

CONCLUSIONS

'Injustices may not be perceived as injustices, even by those who suffer them, until somebody invents a previously unplayed role. For until then the only the language of the oppressor is available, and most oppressors have had the wit to teach the oppressed a language in which the oppressed will sound crazy - even to themselves - *if they describe themselves as oppressed.'*

Richard Rorty, *'Feminism and Pragmatism' (emphasis in original)*

INTRODUCING THE DISCUSSION

Our main questions at the beginning of this study were the following:

1. How do IEM perceive their media portrayal?

2. What is the relationship between IEM's media practices (consumption, creation and distribution of media texts) and their construction of cultural identity?

3. What opportunities do new media provide to IEM to contest stereotypes in mainstream media?

In Chapter 4 we have looked at how IEM read media representations of them (the hegemonic construction of cultural identity), the ways in which they construct their own identities, and the role of digital video in self-representations. This Chapter intends to examine these three aspects together, as it is precisely this conjunction of *media portrayal*, the *construction of cultural identity*, and *self-representation through digital media* that constitutes this study's interest.

The discussion will therefore evolve around the following issues:

- The kind of reference models participants use to frame the representation of cultural groups. How young people's views on culture and media in general inform the way they perceive the media portrayal of their own group. For example, are these constructionist or essentialist views?

- The ways in which participants not only read but also *write* constructions of cultural identity: hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional. For example, to which degree are negotiated or oppositional 'writings' a form of resistence and how can these be sustained in time and space?

- How digital video and new media really constitute new opportunities for IEM to re-present themselves. And, on the contrary, how are they are sometimes used to reproduce the same models and representations of exclusion that appear in conventional mainstream media.

1. PARTICIPANTS' VIEW ON MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS: TENSION BETWEEN WHAT 'MEDIA DO TO US' AND WHAT 'WE DO WITH MEDIA'

It is not because this piece of research - an academic study after all - is based on a series of underlying theoretical notions of media, culture, and representation as being social constructs, that participants share those notions or agree with them. Quite on the contrary, in most participants'

heads, the view on representation as a reflection of 'reality' – either a 'true' or a 'distorted' one – is quite current. As we have seen in Chapter 4, expressions like '*the image of Africans in Spain does not correspond to reality*' or '*there should be a jury to supervise if news stories are true*', as if there was an objective reality to be reflected, were frequently used in the interviews[55]. Participants generally departed from a reality with a fixed meaning, somehow attributing to the media the capacity to either transmit that meaning 'truthfully' or on the contrary 'manipulate' it. At the same time, some participants granted media the power to 'inject' messages into people's heads[56], while others even went a step further and framed media practices in a broader political context of manipulation, power and influence. These explicit claims of media literacy - critical analysis of media messages - from participants were partly due to the context in which they were involved in the Roots&Routes project: they were somehow already aware of media representations of minority groups. As these topics were on the project agenda from the beginning, it is not surprising that they were aware of the fact that *a)* media have an important role in society, *b)* media use stereotyped representations, and *c)* these can be dangerous. Which are all valid perceptions.

However, at the same time participants were convinced that by 'changing reality' with their behaviour they could also change media representations about them, thus assuming that the media would actually 'reflect' that reality. As such, these two notions ('power of the media' on the one hand and 'media as a reflection of reality on the other') are not contradictory, but they do touch upon one of the conflicts that have been around in theorist's minds since Media Studies are around: the tension between what 'media do to us' and what 'we (can) do with media', between power and resistance, between structure and agency. If participants thought that media were manipulative, why would they bother being aware of their own behaviour? Why would they think that by 'showing their best side' they would be depicted any differently in the media? In the following paragraphs there is no intention of pointing out to participants' theoretical 'inconsistencies' for the sake of doing so; rather it is to look at specific instances in which such inconsistencies emerge and try to resolve them, in the frame of what Stuart Hall called 'the circle of representation' (see Chapter 2).

As pointed out in Chapter 2, the 'hypodermic needle' model was seen in Critical Theory as the process in which media had the capacity of injecting messages - propaganda - in the masses' heads. As we have seen from the data, participants' views on media were very much in line with this 'hypodermic' theory, as they granted a lot of power to the media when expressing their opinion on representations of cultural groups (ranging from '*I think media have a great responsibility*'

[55] See Chapter 4, 1.1 'Young people's awareness of steretypes in the media'.

[56] The so-called 'hypodermic needle model', see Chapter 4, 1.1.1 'The power of the media'.

to '*media are the fourth power in a society*'). Most participants were strongly convinced of the 'impact' of such negative portrayal, as they felt that Spanish people had a negative impression of them as a direct consequence of stereotypes and distorted representation in the media. Additionally, by underscoring the 'untruthfulness' of these representations, some participants implied that these media messages were in fact constructs, and that as such they do not reflect 'reality' but rather manipulated people into believing the media's version of 'reality'.

As an example I will look at a Colombian participant, Mikaela, who participated in the Roots&Routes project in 2006 (first edition). Mikaela departs from the assumption that media deliberately manipulate reality, for example she complains that '*media depict all Colombians as drug criminals, while not all Colombians are related to drugs*'. According to Mikaela's perception, media will have the power to 'inject' both negative and positive images of cultural groups: the hypodermic model indeed focuses on the manipulative process rather than on the contents of the message that is transmitted. In other words, it is concerned with *why* and *how* propaganda works. In theory, the message can be 'positive' or 'negative', 'truthful' or 'untruthful'; the point in the hypodermic model is that media are able to directly manipulate the masses[57]. Participants expressed this point of view, as many recognised that media 'generates visions in people's heads' and 'media are very powerful in our society' (see Chapter 4).

However, Mikaela also thought that by 'showing her reality' in daily life (*look at me, I am a Colombian and I have nothing to do with drugs*), she would be able to change media representations about Colombians. The contradiction implies that she thought that either she was going to change media by 'changing reality' (thus embracing the possibility that previous negative representations of i.c. Colombians may have been truthful), or that media would suddenly start showing positive representations of Colombians (thus implying that media would stop 'manipulating reality'). If, in the first case, Mikaela had thought that by her 'good behaviour' she would change reality and therefore also media representations about Colombians, she would also have to recognise that media in fact do reflect 'reality': negative portrayals of Colombians in fact correspond to negative behaviour in 'reality', just as positive behaviour would entail positive portrayal. As she did not recognise this link between positive and negative portrayals – Mikaela said that *some* Colombians behave badly as opposed to media portrayals of *all* Colombians behaving badly – was she actually implying that not the media but the Colombians are responsible for their negative portrayal? If, in the second case, she was convinced that media would suddenly stop manipulating images of them, she would be saying that media representations are sometimes constructs (i.c. not a 'true

[57] See Chapter 2 for a critique of this model, as it largely neglects the possibility of negotiation, agency or resistance, etc.… (1.2 'Power of the media: the text vs. the 'audience'')

reflection of reality'), and sometimes they are not (i.c. a 'true reflection of 'reality'). The question then would remain when and why media would suddenly stop 'manipulating' and 'start telling the truth'. And this was a question that was not so easily answered. In other words, Mikaela wanted to believe that media can give fair representations of 'reality', but at the same time she knew very well that media representations in fact 'constitute reality' by consciously constructing images of it (what Stuart Hall calls 'the production of meaning'). This contradiction was present in almost all interviews, and some participants were aware of it while others weren't.

The missing link in this paradox, in my view, is Hall's notion that meanings are actually never fixed, nor in 'reality', nor in representations. Participants were somehow confused by the notion that an event is not meaningful until it is narrated, represented, framed in a discourse. This is not to say that events do not actually occur, but rather that they have no fixed meaning, since meaning is precisely constituted through representation (see Chapter 2). The notion that 'the camera always lies'; an assumption of intrinsic 'untruthfulness' of media representations, is crucial to understanding how stereotypes work and what can be done to fight against them.

Despite these contradictions, as we have seen from the results, all participants were somehow aware of 'unfair' representations of cultural groups, had ideas and suggestions for change – some more valid than others – and put these into practice in their productions. This is a very positive result, as it demonstrates participants' high level of media literacy regardless of sex, origin or social class.

2. THE CONSTRUCTION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

2.1. HEGEMONIC, NEGOTIATED AND OPPOSITIONAL READINGS

As suggested by Stuart Hall, individuals will read media texts in different ways according to their interests or ideological positions. The possibilities range from *hegemonic* to *negotiated* to *oppositional* readings of the same text.[58] In this study I came accross all three modalities, although negotiated and oppositional readings with regards to media representations of cultural groups were the most frequent among participants. Most participants partly shared the dominant discourse in that they shared a common reference frame, but they resisted or modified the text

[58] Stuart Hall offers three hypothetical positions from which audiences may decode texts: dominant or 'hegemonic' reading, where the reader fully shares the text's code and reproduces the preferred reading of institutions; negotiated reading, where the reader partly shares the text's code but sometimes resists and modifies it in a way which reflects their own ideas or interests; and oppositional or 'counter-hegemonic' reading in which the reader understands the preferred reading but does not share the text's code at all, putting into place an alternative frame of reference. See Chapter 1, 1.10 'Encoding/decoding model: different readings of the same text.'

according to their position (negotiated reading). Some participants went further by not sharing the dominant code at all and offering completely different frames of reference, both in their talk and in their productions (oppositional reading). In order to explore this tension between readings and to illustrate 'resistance at work', I will further elaborate on the three cases that were selected for close analysis: Manuela, Jonas and Federico.

2.1.1. Manuela: oppositional writing and transformation

In Manuela's case, the documentary 'Rromià' she created together with Sara fulfilled three 'oppositional' or resisting roles: *a)* the product provided alternative imagery about her cultural group, as she did not appear as an ignorant, unreliable and lazy person, but as a strong, honourable and emancipated woman, *b)* the product made it through to mainstream media, thus contributing to bringing minorities' voices into mainstream representations of cultural groups, and *c)* it enabled Manuela as a media maker to get familiar with the creation of audio-visual products, which was one of her aims at the beginning of the project. In this sense, Manuela's oppositional reading was at the same a time an oppositional writing, enhancing her capacity of resistance.

Despite this example of 'resistance from within' (Hall), as a researcher I was interested in looking at which aspects of her documentary were 'oppositional' in a particular context and which were not. As meaning is given through representation, this documentary in itself created meanings that can only be interpreted within the time and context in which they were made. Did Rromià embody a complete counter-hegemonic reading at the time it was made? Manuela's character certainly did, as well as her aunt's, an independent single parent running a shop in the neighbourhood. But it can be argued that the documentary also confirms stereotypes about Roma, as it features characters who explicitly refer to traditionalism and cultural clichés: Manuela's cousin, for example, embodies female oppression, resistance to change and belief in traditional values suppressing her and her daughter's aspirations for a better life ('*a man always does what he wants; a woman can't*')[59]. In the scene with Manuela, who is regarded by her community as trustworthy and integer, her cousin admits that she doesn't like the idea of her daughter studying, and would never let her go abroad. What she would rather want for her daughter is to get married and have children as soon as possible, sit at home and do 'nothing' (by which she means not going out to work). Manuela's cousin does acknowledge, though, that her daughter should finish secondary school and that she shouldn't have her first child before her eighteenth birthday, like she did (Manuela's cousin was a mom at sixteen). This character somehow represents the 'constructed' mainstream image of a Roma woman: traditionalist, religious and submissive. This is not to say that Manuela's cousin is traditionalist and submissive, but as a character in this

59 Manuela's cousin in 'Rromià' (Excerpt A2.2)

documentary she represents this position. Manuela's character, on the contrary, embodies emancipation, change and dynamism within her community, just like her aunt's:

> 'My aunt works at the shop; she has her own life, right. My cousin is married and she is, well – I don't know if you know we are evangélicos[60] -, so we all go to church. But for example I have my life, and even though I wear piercings and stuff like that I still believe in God and I go to church you see, it's like a space to meet. I have my life, my aunt has hers, and my cousin who is very religious – she sings in the church choir and stuff – has her life too. You know, like we have coffee together in the morning, we all to go to work, and for example on Sundays we meet at the church. I don't know, that's like part of our identity.' (Manuela speaking to Sara during the preparations of their script for the documentary – DG1)

Surprisingly, it is religious practice - considered as traditional and old-fashioned in the mainstream code - that bind the three women together. Going to church is like a meeting point for them, a place where everybody can be their selves despite different lifestyles and worldviews. Although in the end the church does not appear in the documentary, it is obviously a place where the three women come together and celebrate 'being *gitanas*', despite the differences between them. Church and religion, often depicted as a site of oppression (especially for women), is represented here as a place of union, of conciliation, of articulating common 'shared meanings', as a meeting point between women who embody the divergent positions within the dynamics of the Roma community in Gracia.

Manuela and Sara consciously chose to show these different positions as equally part of that culture: the conversation between the two cousins symbolises its dynamics from within, the 'conjunction of tradition and change' (as Raymond Williams defines the dynamics of culture), or the 'tension between conservation and innovation' (as Zygmunt Bauman indicates as the two necessary components of a culture)[61]. The decision to show both sides, to face the contradictions, to put their finger on the site where meanings are negotiated and change takes place, is a courageous one. There is no intention of trying to mask differences, giving a false image of 'unity', but rather of showing these contradictions as part of a culture in becoming. In this sense, even though introducing Manuela's cousin in the documentary can be seen as a 'dominant reading' of media representations about Roma women, and as such as a way of perpetuating the stereotype of a particular gendered identity, it is a choice of two women who both have proved to be aware of such stereotypes and are mostly struggling against them in daily life. On the basis of their conversations and discussions before, during and after the production, it can be argued that both

[60] The Roma of the Gracia district in Barcelona are predominantly protestant or 'evangélicos'.

[61] See Chapter 2, 2.1.1 'From 'selected' culture to a dynamic process'

Manuela and Sara were very aware of what they were doing when they introduced the character of Manuela's cousin. It is precisely by taking the risk to show both sides (tradition and change; innovation and conservation) that the makers were able to draw the attention to the dynamics within the Roma community, as opposed to the stereotypical 'immobility' of such cultural groups.

However, the question remains whether the broadcasting of a 23-minute documentary on public television, with no introduction, debate or discussion about the creation process, can give the spectator immediate insight into this kind of complexities. It can be (and it has been) argued that productions made by minorities to show 'their reality' may confirm the stereotypes in the very terms they are trying to resist them ('*See that Roma don't want their women to study? They are saying it themselves, so it must be true*!'). Manuela and Sara introduce their film as follows on a video hosting site where they uploaded 'Rromià':

> "In the Romany [sic] culture, the role of the man and the role of the woman are well delimited. So there is no need for a girl to study, and she can drop out of school early with the consent of the community.
>
> We are in Gracia, in Barcelona. This story, is that of Manuela; the first and only woman in the neighbourhood to achieve higher education and walk the solitary path of student life. She takes us through an entertaining trip into her community, from women's gatherings at her grandma's to the shop of her aunt, one of the very few to value education." (Manuela and Sara about their documentary, original text in English)

From the introductory text it seems that Manuela and Sara take on quite a stereotypical stance, by stressing the fact that *a)* Roma women are oppressed by men, and *b)* they are not encouraged to study. The makers have assumed a certain level of irony about Roma culture ('*there is no need for a girl to study*') and seem to be pessimistic about transformation ('*one of the very few to value education*'). As such, this is not a very positive image of Roma culture, even though the teaser sentence referring to 'the first and only woman with a higher education degree' holds some kind of promise. In effect, the announced pessimism vanishes when you watch the film and it becomes clear that Manuela and her aunt are not the only ones who know that education for girls is important, and that change is possible:

> 'I think that young women start to realise how important it is for their daughters to receive an education, and that it is a question of only a short time for things to get better.' (Manuela's aunt in Rromià)

For this study it is crucial to acknowledge that, by making this documentary, Manuela is articulating her cultural identity as an individual member of that group: she wants to change her community from within, but without renouncing her Roma-ness, and she wants to stress her

Roma-ness towards the out-group without being stereotyped. In other words, the very documentary is a meaningful tool in shaping this identity. In her own community, the films allows her to act as a role model, calling on other Roma women to think about education and emancipation:

> 'A lot of people [in my community] saw the documentary and generally they liked it, although some commented on the fact that certain scenes, especially the ones with my cousin, made us look bad. According to them, it seemed as if we were 'cafres', a typical *gitano* expression meaning that we are backward with regards to the rest of society.' (email conversation with Manuela, July 2009)

Despite this sharp critique of the controversial scene, for Manuela the in-group's comments on the documentary was already an act of transformation, as it raised an important debate within the community about the meaning of the character of Manuela's cousin.

A feed-back conversation with Manuela and her aunt not only confirmed their own personal role in the cultural change that the Catalan Roma community is going through, but also made me realise how conscious they are of this role - as Roma, and as women. In my view, the controversial scene is a good example of Stuart Hall's 'contestation from within' strategy when contesting stereotypes: Manuela and Sara did not avoid the 'dangerous terrain of cultural stereotypes' (Hall 1997b), but rather attempted to make them 'work against themselves' in the course of the documentary (see Chapter 2; 1.9 'Strategies to contest stereotypes').

A last example of Manuela's transformative actions was her two-minute report on Antonio. When everyone was asked to make a short report about one of the Roots&Routes music participants of their choice, Manuela did not hesitate to pick out the only *gitano* who was participating as a singer in the project. By doing so, she was 'resisting' the hegemonic media representations about Roma in two different ways: first, by making her culture visible, and second by showing an alternative image of one of its members: a hip-hop singer (see Chapter 4, 3.3.4). Although this short clip was intended to be a simple technical exercise for Manuela, she turned it into another 'breaking the circle of representation': showing a *gitano* rapper is not precisely a stereotypical image, it is marking the difference with what is expected from a *gitano*.

2.1.2. Jonas: offering alternative reference frames

Whereas Manuela decided to stand in front of the camera as the protagonist of a story about 'her culture', Jonas appears in his documentary as the 'facilitator', the interviewer, the one who asks questions from the shadow. He is not the protagonist; his guests are. With his documentary *We are all strange(rs)* ('Todos somos extraños') he wants to show on the one hand that all immigrants are 'normal' people with the same basic needs, hopes and dreams, and on the other

hand that they are all different, as opposed to the idea that there is such a thing as the 'typical migrant': heterogeneous versus homogeneous view on migration.

By re-presenting the foreigners living in Barcelona as a heterogeneous rather than a homogeneous group, Jonas indeed expresses an oppositional reading of the generalised mainstream image in Spain with regards to the 'avalanche of migration', and groups of people 'invading the country'.[62] It is his way of showing diversity within diversity, as migrants in his documentary are represented as individuals more than as a group. At the same time, Jonas bashes the 'multiculturalist' idea of keeping different cultural groups apart, and instead embraces interculturality and transculturality as values in a city like Barcelona. In his ideal world, nobody would really 'need' cultural identity…

Nonetheless, Jonas may be overlooking more socio-economic push and pull factors in migration processes: what makes someone leave their country (*push*) and what makes them come to Spain/Barcelona (*pull*)[63]. In his view the only immigrants who come here by force are political refugees and criminals (see interview E2.5). For Jonas all other migrants come here because they want a better life, since '*the ones who are really starving are not even able to come*' (see Chapter 4, 3.4.2). As we have seen from the results, this was the start of an insuperable conflict between him and Emiliana, who co-directed the documentary. Emiliana's points of view on migration as 'an act of despair' were in flat contradiction with Jonas's, and they had long and painful discussions on this as they were trying to negotiate a common ground. At the end of the story it was Jonas who imposed his ideas in the documentary, despite having tried to understand Emiliana's more 'socio-economic' view angle on migration. Their positions were apparently too far apart for them to find a way to make sense of the story, and they ended up having a quite personal conflict and a half-hearted documentary as a result.

Apart from the internal conflict, it may seem that their documentary is an expression of conformation with, or a 'hegemonic' reading of the message: '*Immigrants come here because they want to, not because they have to*'. But is this really the hegemonic message about immigration in Spain? If we look at the Spanish media discourses about immigrants in the last ten years, we see that the 'taking advantage'-argument is not the most important one, although it is present:

---

[62] Discourse analysis on the topic of 'migration' in Spanish media is not the object of this study, but research shows that the word 'avalanche' ('avalancha' in Spanish and 'allau' in Catalan) all too often accompanies the word 'immigrants' in the headlines of mainstream media (see inter alia van Dijk 1997 and the extensive study by de La Fuente García 2006)

[63] In the push-pull model migration is seen as a combination of push factors that drive people away from their place of origin (forceful or voluntary), and pull factors that attract people to a particular place. See: Push and pull factors of international migration: a comparative report. Eurostat, Collection studies and research, Working Paper 3/2000/E/no. 14.

> '[Especially] the press offered a higher number of items related to migration policies and the positive contribution of immigrants to the country's economy.' (Igartúa, Muñiz and Otero 2006; my translation from Spanish original)[64]

If Spanish media generally do not use the argument of 'negative economical impact' in their discourses on migration, why does Jonas represent migrants as 'voluntary' migrants who 'just' want a better life? In my view, there were two possible explanations for this attitude: first, the fact that Jonas almost doesn't watch Spanish television, or reads Spanish newspapers may imply a lesser exposure to mainstream media discourses in Spain. Second, the fact that he talks from his own perspective and migrating experience may influence his idea of other people's reasons to migrate.

With regards to the first argument, Jonas's preferred channel of information is the Internet and, according to him, he sometimes watches online news emissions, but only Belgian (RTBF) or French news (Arte). At some point he stated that 'Internet is the new media' (see interview E2.5). Spanish and Catalan news programmes are obviously not interesting to him (he finds them 'crappy'), and finally, he says, he has stopped watching any news or read newspapers at all (see interview E2.5). Observing his media uses corroborated this: Jonas watched very little television indeed. He owns a small size television set, but during the time I spent with him at his Raval flat (regardless of the time of day), it was never turned on or referred to. In turn, his 17-inch laptop computer was always on and connected to his wi-fi Internet connection, in line with what he called 'the new medium' (see above). For Jonas, the Internet is his panacea. When talking about his media uses in his younger years, Jonas described his father buying different newspapers every day back in Belgium, so Jonas read a lot of papers when he was a teenager (see interview E2.5). In the 1980s the debate around the multicultural society, multiculturalism and migration policies in Belgium and France was ongoing, and all arguments exposed (see overview of the 'multiculturalism' debate above), and Jonas was often stigmatised because of his Northern African looks in his early teenage years. It would probably be premature to attribute Jonas's ideas about migration to the media discourses that were around when he was a kid, but it may point to an interesting hypothesis, as his reference frame on migration may have been informed more by Belgian and French media discourses at the time he was living in Belgium than by current Spanish or Catalan media discourses.

Additionally, Jonas' radical refusal to patronise or 'victimise' migrants stroke me: by saying that most migrants come here because they can/want to, rather than because they are forced to, he takes away the stigma of the *pobrecito* from them. Although this position puts all the responsibility on the migrants (by granting them more 'agency' than they probably would like to have and partly

64 Excerpt from Igartúa et al.'s content analysis of Spanish television and press reporting on immigration in 2004

denying broader social or economical structures underlying migration processes), his portrayal of migration is a positive one in that it emphasises people's capacity to decide to move. In this sense, his documentary can be seen as an oppositional reading, since it refuses to portray migrants as 'poor victims'. As we see from previous research, this patronising vision - usually quite current among the left wing camp - is the one that, together with the association of migration with criminality - usually quite current in the right wing camp -, most offends migrants in Spain.[65]

It should be stressed that Jonas's refusal to treat migrants as *pobrecitos* was not something he only displayed when 'performing' for an interview with me[66], but is a part of his lifestyle in a consequent way. This attitude is also quite consistent with his individualist and universalist worldviews, and as such constitutes a 'counter-hegemonic' reading of media messages that victimise immigrants. Consequently, Jonas does not construct his own identity in terms of cultural features, but rather by marking the absence of such features. He claims his identity as an individual who is self-made, creative, likes to draw and enjoys good food and a rich social life in Barcelona, the 'cosmopolitan' city he has chosen to live in. By doing so, he eventually claims a trans-cultural, urban 'Barceloner' identity.

2.1.3. The 'good Latino': conformation or contestation?

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Federico's views on the world entail the antagonic concepts of 'Latinity' (*lo latino, los latinos*) and 'Germanity' (*lo germánico, los germánicos*). Initially, it seemed to me that by 'Germanity' Federico understood everything related to what Germany, the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands and probably also Scandinavia stood for, and 'Latinity' to all the rest. In his mind, both concepts seemed to be in direct opposition with each other in many ways:

'LATINO'	'GERMÁNICO'
Love to have fun	Love to work
Enjoy life and will put this attitude high on the priority list	Can enjoy life, but on well-designated moments and places. Work will always be more important.

65 See Chapter 2, 1.7.1 'Portrayal of migrant communities in Spain'

[66] For a discussion on how interactions between individuals work as 'performances' according to different situations, i.c. between the researcher and the 'researched', see Ervin Goffman's 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life' (1956), and see Chapter 3, 1.4.2 'Natural' versus 'artificial' settings?.

Melancholy/passion	Pragmatism/rationalism
People of words	People of deeds
Not reliable	Very reliable
Catholic	Protestant
Family is important	Individual is important
Not ecologically aware	Very ecologically aware
Things don't work	Things always work
Have bad jobs and little money	Have good jobs, a lot of money and great houses
Deficient social services	Magnificent social services
Dramatic	Inhibited
Extrovert, loud, love to talk about themselves	Introvert, silent, do not like to talk about themselves
Hedonism	Sacrifice
'Popular' culture	'High' culture

Fig. 18. Overview of features attributed to 'Latinity' and 'Germanity' according to Federico (extracted from long-term participant observation and in-depth interviews)

As seen from Figure 18, Federico's particular 'conceptual map' about the world is a binary one: his view on 'Latinity' is exaggeratedly negative, whereas his view on 'Germanity' is overly positive. In fact, everything that he considers as negative is classified under 'Latin' and everything he considers as positive is 'Germanic'. Only on very few occasions did he point out to positive

aspects of 'Latinity', like the fact that Latin people always sing and dance and seem to enjoy life more.

If we look at how Federico thinks and feels about media representations of Latinos in Spanish media, it is not surprising to find that, of all Latin American participants, Federico is the most critical with 'Latinity', attributing much of the negative portrayal to what he calls 'a reality' (see Chapter 4, 1.2.2 'Factual basis'). In other words, by distancing himself from the cultural identity he is supposed to have as an Argentinian, Federico can more easily stand back and admit that there 'may be some truth in the stereotype'. In fact, he continuously confirms stereotypes about Latinos rather than trying to resist or denounce them: that they are 'lazy', that they are 'macho', that they are 'unreliable'. It even seemed that by not identifying with a cultural group, Federico feels less offended by negative imagery. Instead, he felt that he has to 'become more Germanic', moving away from 'Latinity'.

As seen in Chapter 4, most other participants expressed their unease, their feelings of helplessness and their indignation about negative portrayal of Latin Americans. However, deeper analysis showed how many had actually also incorporated the image given of them more than they (were willing to) admit. Additionally, some of the Latino participants articulated this position by expressing feelings of responsibility as the 'official face' of their particular culture or nationality, locating (one of) the causes of negative portrayal in their own behaviour. In this kind of articulations categories of nation and culture seemed to transcend categories of class or sex, as in such instances national identity was more important than being a student, a woman, or a worker. As José expressed it:

> "… I realised that I am part of that, that I am Mexico. And therefore I have a responsibility. The Spanish people, the locals who know me and who don't know any other Mexicans, will only have me as the image of Mexico. So I have that responsibility, and I am Mexico." (E1.7, Mexican, male)

Whereas identifying with a country in such absolute terms may be an exception, most of the Latino participants still carried the 'burden of representation' to some degree by feeling responsible for the image in the host society of their country – good or bad. In Mikaela's words:

> "In anything I do, I want people to see a good image of a Colombian, and of what a Colombian is capable of…" (E1.9, Colombian, female).

The data suggest that participants who felt that their cultural group was portrayed negatively in the media, tended to try and compensate this negative portrayal by behaving in the opposite way: the '*good Latino*'.

During the project, Latin American participants were observed to be the most punctual, reliable and responsible, both in group sessions and individual work. Most of them rarely arrived late to team meetings (unlike non-Latino participants), had a very professional attitude throughout the project and showed great interest and respect towards the people and technical equipment involved in the production. In interviews, Latin American participants indeed expressed that in their relationships with Spanish and Catalan people they had to constantly 'prove' themselves in order not to be associated with negative media representations of Latinos. These findings are consistent with the outcomes of a recent qualitative study by Jéssica Retis on self-perceptions of Colombian immigrants in Spain:

> 'In the discussion groups, the Colombian participants recognised having to engage in persuasive strategies towards Spanish people. The main aim in their intercultural relationships with the Spanish is to convince the other of the fact that the prejudices and stereotypes about Colombians do not correspond to reality. In other words, by sharing their personal experiences about the first intercultural contacts with locals, Colombians recognise that they have to do an effort to demonstrate that they have nothing to do with the public image given of them.' (Retis 2006; my translation from Spanish original)

Indeed, this 'constantly having to prove yourself' seems to be one of the heaviest burdens of being 'the other' for Latin American participants. This is crucial for our research objectives, as it links negative portrayal to identity construction from the point of view of the 'stereotyped' their selves, with regard to what is expected from them (see below: 'marking the difference').

Generally, participants felt that they were constantly reminded of the fact that the host society was 'watching' them through stereotypical representations and negative portrayal. I recalled a media text that was analysed by media students at the University of Barcelona earlier in 2004[67] as an excellent example of systematic negative portrayals of Latin American immigrants in the private and conservative channel Antena3.[68] In the excerpt, a 'young Colombian, encouraged by alcohol and euphoria' was said to have caused an accident, and a '22-year old unemployed Ecuadorian was robbed in a drunken state'. The footage shows them lying on the ground, the first one unconscious after the accident, the second one after the robbery… From the analysis of the excerpt, the extreme 'meaning-fixing' attempts of the channel's representations of Latino's are in sharp contrast with representations of 'Spanish citizens'.

When linking this particular news item to what has been said so far regarding participants' perceptions and ideas about how they are portrayed in Spanish media, it could be argued that

[67] Cases of media texts were analysed in the frame of the 'eCLIPSe' project and later presented on an international conference to peer students from Germany, Belgium and Norway in the frame of a European Media Literacy project. Students were asked to register 11 days of news emissions chosen randomly (i.e. March 3rd to 13th, 2004) on the main public broadcasters in Spain and Catalonia: TVE, Tele5, Antena3 (Spanish) and TV3 (Catalan).

[68] Excerpt and analysis available at: http://161.116.23.180/repositori/objectes/cw0002/index.html

stereotypes are perpetuated by media practices through representations that permanently 'warn' minorities about how *not* to behave? Do media actually construct the 'negative' of what minority group members are supposed to be like in their host country? In other words, do media deliberately display minorities as protagonists of 'not-done' behaviour (cause accidents by being drunk) in order to encourage 'good behaviour' (no drink and drive)? Do they use minorities as a scapegoat for 'everything that goes wrong in the country' by displaying them in non-desirable behaviour? This, at least, is the perception of the participants of this study. In Foucauldian terms they would say that media - a site where power is performed - constantly remind us, minorities, the 'other', that the dominant society is watching us (surveillance), by displaying us in the 'negative' role. In order to be accepted by the majority, minorities must then 'behave' in the opposite way of the stereotype.

However, the question remains whether participants' positioning (being conscious about and adapting their behaviour in order to counter stereotypical imagery) actually constitute acts of contestation/resistance, or are rather attempts to be accepted by the host culture. The fact that most Latinos in this study were aware of their own behaviour was certainly a form of 'agency' in itself: the 'good' behaviour was a conscious reaction to the dominantly negative images about their particular cultural group, which they believed could be transformed into positive imagery. By acting as 'good Latinos', participants from Latin America try to counter the negative portrayal by showing theirselves at their best side. This is a form of contestation, as in this case 'behaving well' in daily interactions with locals is breaking the stereotype ('hard working' vs. 'lazy'; 'honourable' vs. 'criminal'). However, by doing so the participants may fall in a double trap: first, it may imply that they recognise that there is such a thing as the 'lazy' and 'unreliable' Latino, which they obviously do not (want to) identify with. Secondly, they act exactly the way the host country wants them to: hard working, reliable and efficient. Considered this way, resistance may become conformation.

Significantly, what was valid for the Latin American participants was not so much for the Roma. Throughout the three years four Roma participated in this study, and all of them felt that the mainstream society had more responsibility than their community for negative portrayal. In other words, few of them had a 'blame yourself' attitude. The Roma participants generally seemed to be far more fed up with the stereotypes than any other group, and this can be corroborated by the fact that Roma - as a community - have a longer tradition of fighting against them. Obviously,

the idea of negative portrayal and its 'negative impact on the public opinion' has seeped through in the Roma communities, as even the youngest *gitano* participants were fully aware of them[69].

2.2. ROOTS AND ROUTES

2.2.1. Aspirations for the future as a marker of identity

As pointed out in Chapter 2, hegemonic constructions of cultural identity heavily rely on sustained culturalistic arguments about IEM's 'roots': Latinos are lazy because where they come from people just don't work, Africans do not respect their women because this is part of their culture, Roma spend their days robbing and cheating because that is just what they do. Characteristics attributed to them by the mainstream media as inevitably 'Latino', 'Roma' or 'African' stick to audiences' collective imagery and have an impact on minorities' daily life. But despite repeated media representations of immigration as 'a problem', 'an avalanche' or 'a threat', IEM in Barcelona feel part of the society they are living in, and try to build a life just like everybody else. As young people, they are more preoccupied with their future than with their past; as IEM they come to terms with their routes rather than going back to their roots (Paul Gilroy, see Chapter 2).

In my three-year journey together with the Roots&Routes participants I realised that their aspirations and plans for the present and future predominantly informed their self-image and their construction of cultural identity: not so much the features related to their past, but the ones pointing to the future were important to them. Unlike what media representations suggest, IEM's lives were generally not dominated by images of their homeland or past experiences more than any local inhabitant's. In this context I pointed out to the importance of education and labour for young IEM, to their exploration of (social) relationships, to the importance of ideological positions and views on cultures and culture in general, and to the crucial role of places, location and mobility. Food, getting around in Barcelona, friendship, social networks, education, money and housing are the elements that make up participants' daily concerns, just like any other young person's in Barcelona.

These aspirations and plans for the future are often located on a broader, transnational level. The people I worked with, including the Roma participants, were concerned with mobility and travelling, getting to know people from other parts of the world, looking for more and better opportunities, searching for the best living conditions. Not all of them were planning to stay in

[69] Jardanay and Diego, 18 and 19 respectively at the time of their participation in the project, were quite critical with media portrayal of Roma.

Barcelona, or even in Spain. As shown in Chapter 4, most recently arrived young adults had come to Barcelona because of issues related to education and labour, but for some Spain was a stepping stone for other European countries with a better reputation as to social benefits: Germany, Sweden, Belgium, the UK. In fact, three out of the sixteen people participating in this study were not living in Barcelona at the time of writing. They went back to their home countries or moved on to a different European country respectively. This high degree of mobility amongst young IEM juxtaposes the construction of cultural identity by mainstream media as a 'fixed by Nature' identity, with their own perception of cultural identity as changeable and in continuous movement.

2.2.2. Making the invisible visible: the role of imagery

This is not to say, however, that participants forgot where they were coming from. In fact, media - especially satellite television and the internet - have a very important role in connecting recently arrived and first generation immigrants to their roots. From the interviews taken during the pilot study with nine participants, it became clear that immigrants from Latin America and Africa were very critical of Spanish television, and indeed preferred watching programmes from their countries of origin. As one participant expressed it:

> I don't like what I see here. I get bored very quickly... I have tried to watch television just to see what the Spanish media are like. And I haven't found anything interesting, I am quite disappointed because I had the reference of Mexican media in my head. Spanish media are really disappointing, especially if you think we are in the 'first world', you know? I think they are polluting (smiles)... That's why I don't like to watch television. (E1.4, Mexican, female)

Most participants who came to Spain as adults tried to keep in touch with their country of origin through mass media: with satellite atennas they captured images from home, on the internet they watched live news channels, they followed radio programmes, and read online news papers from their country:

> I use the Internet for information. I need to know what is going on in other parts of the world, and also in my country. I can look at many websites to know what is going on in Senegal, every day, minute per minute. I want to have live information from Senegal, that is why I am always connected to see what is going on. (E1.3, Senegales, male)

But not only mass media are important as sources of imagery about migrants' homelands. Also their own images (pictures, videos, documentaries...) from or about their roots play a crucial role in their construction of cultural identity. Sihalebe, a 29-year old Diola from Casamance in

Senegal, who arrived to Spain in 2004 and participated in the last Roots&Routes edition (2007), was and is currently working as a cultural mediator in the 'Association of Senegalese residents in Catalonia'. He speaks Catalan and Spanish, and what he likes most about the Catalans is that they conserve their culture and heritage, 'just like the Diola'. His mediating role in Catalan society at the time of the project was accentuated by the fact that he worked for several intercultural associations and organisations. Just like Manuela, he felt quite frustrated about the image of Africa and Africans in Spain, and thought that by learning how to use the camera he could show a different Africa:

> "Well, I am African. And there are a lot of things in Africa that work well, and other things that don't work so well. One day I would like to make documentaries, reports, to show the world what is going on in Africa. To show the African culture to many people, things that work, and things that don't... That is my mission." (E2.3, Senegalese, Male).

This 'showing' Africa, or even the prospect of it, seemed to be for Sihalebe a way of releasing the tension caused by the discrepancy between negative portrayals of Africa and his own perception of it as a culture where solidarity, respect for the elderly and integrity are important values (see Chapter 4). The thought of being able to register his country's landscapes, the rituals and habits of the Diola community, constituted and aspiration to transform this image. Sihalebe hereby claims a strong African and Diola identity.

Similarly, when we look at how Manuela feels about media portrayals of Roma in the Spanish media ('I feel invisible'; 'when they show us, they always show us in a negative way'; 'I don't feel identified with that image at all') and the articulation of her cultural identity ('I am a Catalan *gitana*'; 'I need to be here with my people'), it may be no coincidence that, just like Sihalebe, she claimed a strong cultural identity despite her non-conformation with certain aspects of her culture. By making a film about her life in her community, she is deciding what it means to her to be a *gitana* in 21st Century Barcelona, and she is literally showing both in-group and out-group members that this is a valid, coherent and possible option. In other words, the making of this documentary enhanced her cultural identity construction and placed her in the position of a role model for other women and men of her community.

2.2.3. The construction of non-cultural identity

Unlike Manuela, Jonas did not identify with any cultural group in terms of ethnicity or nationality. Throughout our conversations he explicitly rejected the notion of cultural identity, as he considered cultural identity claims as fundamental elements in nationalist and patriotist discourses. Although in interviews he introduced himself as being Belgian and having partial

affinities with 'French culture', he generally called himself a *cosmopolitan* (see Chapter 4). For example, in his view most Catalans are 'a bunch of patriots' who would like to separate from Spain, which in his eyes is a sign of arrogance and lack of solidarity. Jonas makes little efforts to learn Catalan as he thinks it is quite useless when 'you can perfectly survive on Spanish' in bi-lingual Barcelona. His anti-culturalistic views entail universalist ideas - 'everyone is the same in the end' -, constructionist views on culture - 'culture is just a construct people use in order to justify segregating others or segregating themselves' -, and emphasis on the individual and on agency - 'individuals can surpass structures imposed on them if they really want to'. Although it must be said that his own life is a good example of how someone can transcend their circumstances (Jonas did not have a particularly easy youth and has never graduated from secondary school), we had several conversations discussing the delicate balance between socio-economic factors and individual factors when people (have to) take the decision to move.

As a son of a Spanish mother, an Indian biological and a Belgian adoption father, Jonas never really needed to claim a strong cultural identity: why should he? He decided to leave Brussels and move to Barcelona in his early twenties mainly because of 'the good life', the sunny weather and the Spanish lifestyle, although he recognises that his knowledge of several languages helped him to find a decent job when he arrived. It's not that he earns a lot of money, but he fluently speaks Flemish, French, Spanish and English, and his multicultural/multilingual background is precisely his most important asset in Spain. Jonas is at the same time the most trans-cultural and the most 'urban' participant in this project. He is, so to say, a real Barceloner, and his construction of cultural identity is an explicitly 'non-cultural' identity. For Jonas, his 'roots' are virtually irrelevant, which is his own 'deconstruction' of cultural identity.

2.3. Identity construction as an analytical category: marking the difference

2.3.1. The 'present' and the 'absent'

Identity, although considered to be an extremely complex concept at best (see Hall 1996b, Morley 2000) or an invalid concept as an analytical category at worst (Brubaker and Cooper 2000)[70], has proven to be an important and daily issue in the lives of immigrants and ethnic minorities who participated in this study. The construction of cultural identity, through 'identity talk' and 'identity politics', is more relevant than ever in the context of current discourses

[70] In Chapter 2 (2.7 Identity: empty signifier or dynamic process?) I pointed out the questions regarding the validity of identity as an analytical category.

proclaiming a *clash of civilisations*, in which media and (negative) portrayal of cultural groups have a very important role[71]. The concepts of 'ethnic identity', 'national identity' and 'cultural identity' were inevitable for participants, even if it was only because of their daily life implications.

In Chapter 2 (2.7 'Identity: empty signifier or dynamic process?') we have already argued that identities have not lost their interest for social research, as long as 'identity' is considered not as an 'object of study' - like theologians consider the concept of 'god' as their object of study -, but rather the construction of identity is seen as part of a process of making meaning through representations - like 'religions' would be the object of study for sociologists rather than the concept of 'god'. In other words, identity (especially racial, ethnic and national identity) is interesting to those whose discourse is based on identity (politics, nationalism, fundamentalism, neo-liberalism…), whereas the analysis of how construction of identity takes place in a broader context should be the interest of social researchers.

After this study it was clear to me that although national, cultural and ethnic identities are categories kept alive artificially in media discourses, this does not mean that they are at all 'fictitious'. For the participants these were no irrelevant categories: for those who identified strongly with their cultural group (like Manuela or Sihalebe) the social construct 'cultural identity' provided them a place to fight back from and redefine the cultural identity they claimed. They were able to construct new meanings for the existing construction of cultural identity. For those who did not identify with any cultural group in particular (like Jonas or Federico) it gave them a chance to 'invent' new identities that were trans-cultural or non-cultural. In any case, for all participants it was very difficult to escape from the social construct 'cultural identity' that media discourses impose on them.

Stuart Hall reminds us that the construction of (cultural) identity is a dynamic process in which new identities are claimed by showing what is *not* there or 'marking the differences' from what is actually expected within a certain system of representations (or 'culture'). It is the conjunction of showing those elements that are 'present' and showing the ones that are 'absent', by which cultural identity is constituted. When looking at how participants in this study constructed new identities by marking the differences from what was expected, we see that they were informed by the 'preferred' meaning of representations of their cultural group: a Colombian participant claimed reliability, a Roma participant claimed higher education for girls, an Argentinian participant claimed work ethos. In other words, their identities were constructed in function of what was absent, as much as of what was present.

[71] See Chapter 2, 2.2 'Visions of Culture and 'cultures': essentialism and constructionism'.

2.3.2. Gendered identities

We saw, for example, how Manuela articulated her cultural identity in terms of ethnicity, language and gender. She claimed her *Catalan* identity by marking the difference with what is generally expected from *gitanos* in Spain by the dominant society - namely that they speak Spanish, - by using the Catalan language in her daily life and in her documentary, Manuela was challenging the preferred reading of media representations of Roma in Spain. At the same time she claimed her identity as a *woman* by constructing a gendered identity which is a counter-hegemonic reading of representations of Roma women (both in the out-group and the in-group for that matter): by wearing a nose piercing, driving a car, having a university degree and working outside the home, she was at the same time challenging gender role patterns within her own culture and challenging the representation of Roma women as 'oppressed' and 'submissive' in the mainstream culture. By doing so, she put her finger on the differences between two systems of representations (Roma and non-Roma culture) and at the same time challenged both.

Indeed, female participants often 'marked the difference' in claiming a gendered identity that did not correspond with the stereotype. María, a Colombian participant, repeatedly stressed that not all women in her country obey to the image that generally appears in the media about Latinas: as sexy, voluptuous and shallow. María was not a 'typical' Latina: she always wore trousers and flat shoes, casual outfits, simple though stylish hairdos. She was somewhat chubby and didn't seem to care. She was most of the time a firm woman with no complexes, and explicitly rejected all identification with the 'hot, sexy' Latin woman who exhibits her sexual assests, especially her breasts. Also, María's interests were not 'typically girlish': she studied product development, was interested in design, fotography, film making... Unlike the traditional image of Latinas, finding a husband and raising kids did not seem to be a very attractive idea to her.

Likewise, Mexican participant Emiliana marked her gendered identity as a Latina by her dress, life style and tastes, none of which corresponded to the typical feminine role model. She doesn't need fancy dress or make up, and has a simple, though very feminine taste without resembling the 'hot Latina'. By marking the difference with the image of Latinas as sexy though docile housewives, María and Emiliana claimed their identity as Latin American women as educated, self-confident and independent individuals.

3. DIGITAL VIDEO AS A TOOL FOR SELF-REPRESENTATION

3.1. ACCESS TO OFF-LINE AND ON-LINE TECHNOLOGIES OF SELF-REPRESENTATION

Self-representation in the context of this study seemed to rely in the first place on IEM's access to technology. Technologies for self-representation includes still cameras, digital video cameras, microphones, mobile phones, editing software and the Internet. Some of these were already used by participants before the project started, while others were completely new to them:

TECHNOLOGY USED IN THE PROJECT	OFF-LINE	ON-LINE
USED BY PARTCIPANTS BEFORE THE PROJECT	Analogue still camera, digital still camera, mobile phone, computer, desktop applications	Internet
NEW TO PARTICIPANTS	Digital video camera, microphones, advanced editing software	New uses of the internet: web 2.0, webtop applications

Roots&Routes provided access to these 'new' tools for participants: cameras, computers and software were available to participants in a room at the University of Barcelona during and after their participation in the project. They could freely access the room during office hours and work on their video productions for the next day. Some participants got the most out of this access and spent hours and hours capturing, editing and optimising their videos, on their own or in groups.

This access to tools and equipment was, however, not the only condition for self-representation: the project also provided know-how and proper training in order to plan, produce, post-produce and distribute digital video on the Internet. They not only got acquainted with new technology and tools, but also to new *uses*. For example, all participants knew YouTube before the project started, but only some were aware of alternative video hosting sites such as Vimeo or blip.tv. They all knew that a video has to be 'converted' before you can put it on the web, but after the project they could optimise and compress media according to their own criteria. And last but not least: they learnt how to use video in their social networks. This introduction to new uses of the Internet on the social web (web 2.0) enhanced participants' curiosity and inspired them to make videos for a broader public than just their project peers: the idea that their videos would be available from the project vlog for the whole world to see - including their friends and relatives in the homeland! - encouraged participants in their production process and informed the quality of their products. It is this new way of looking at media and its link to the Internet that opened possibilities for participants to have their voices heard.

3.2. MEDIA LITERACY

In my view, not the access to the technology itself, but knowledge about its *uses* was the most important element in participants' process of becoming more media literate. Media literacy has been defined as 'the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create media messages in a variety of forms' (Jolls 2008). As such, media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society, as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.[72] As we have seen in Chapter 4, participants were already quite aware of the construction of media messages with regards to the representation of cultural groups, but during and after the project this awareness became more 'practical', as they had to construct their own media messages. Participants became more aware of *how* media construct messages about cultural groups, and *how* ideology operates through discourse in practice. They were able to link the production of media to the question of cultural identity by exchanging ideas with each other and reflecting upon their own products. Mikaela, for example, pointed out to the fact that after the project she was more aware of the mechanisms of prejudice in some of her previous productions:

> "In the project I learnt to see how things work, I learnt to question the image of immigrants that media show us, and I started thinking about how I can change that image. Well, I was doing that already, trying to avoid prejudices, but I was doing it unconsciously (...). Roots and Routes has made me more aware of the fact that I should and I can fight against stereotypes, or at least be more critical of the image that people have about immigrants." (E1.9, Colombian, female)

For Mikaela this enhanced awareness was an encouragement to go on and do even better next time. It is a good illustration of how media literacy strategies helped participants to take a stand and take well-informed decisions about the format and the contents of their videos.

Participants became more aware of the construction of media messages, but also of their distribution: who decides what appears where, what strategies do media corporations use to get the message across, etc... . They shared knowledge about how media is embedded in the Internet and how users can share, comment and exchange media on web 2.0. For participants it seemed to be

[72] See the CML MediaLit Kit Orientation Guide, Center for Media Literacy, www.medialit.org,, last accessed December 2009.

3.3. Opportunities and pitfalls of new media for IEM

During the time of research we kept track of the possibilities, as well as the main obstacles, of new media and web 2.0 towards fairer and more normalised representations of cultural diversity, as participants experienced them. Together we identified the opportunities as follows:

1. Agenda-setting: whereas participants did not feel as if they had any chances of breaking into the 'production of meaning' of mainstream media corporations, they did realise their potential to do so on the Internet. They seemed encouraged by the examples of people getting famous overnight on YouTube, or certain issues running like a fire over the Internet, like viral messages. Digital video, easily converted and distributed on the web 2.0 thanks to continuous technical improvements and developments, a way of setting the agenda for mainstream media: videos from YouTube or other video sharing sites increasingly appear into official channels, and are analysed, commented on, and subsequently watched by hundreds of thousands of users. 'Hot topics' are no longer decided by editors-in-chief, but depend on what audiences circulate amongst themselves. Participants were aware of this agenda-setting potential and explored by using the project vlog or their own channels of distribution.

2. Direct knowledge: for immigrants, direct knowledge about their countries is important. They not only use web 2.0 to get information about what is going on in the homeland, but also to send images of themselves to the people they left behind: personal blogs, Flickr accounts, Facebook profiles... At the time of writing, most participants of the study had a user account on Facebook, and some had a personal blog. All of them had a Blip.tv account from which they uploaded their videos to the project vlog. These 2.0 tools allowed participants to put up news, reports and creations on directly available channels which they then promoted among their friends and families in the homeland.

3. Alternative sources: one of the main advantages of new media and web 2.0 tools in the frame of representation of minority groups, is IEM's accessibility as alternative sources for mainstream journalists and media makers. IEM are no longer 'objects' of news or reports, but increasingly become sources of information. The Internet makes IEM more accessible to journalists, as traditional methods of selecting sources of information is being replaced by more direct and transparant ways of contacting people from diverse backgrounds. Likewise, reports made by IEM are also more widely available and are spotted more quickly by public and private broadcasters who have started to use web 2.0 strategies like tag browsing and advanced searching techniques to discover alternative material.

Apart from the opportunities web 2.0 offered to IEM, its pitfalls were also present during this study:

1. Visibility of user generated contents: participants said OK, I can now create my own message and put it out there, but who is going to watch it? How can I make it visible to audiences beyond my friends and family? Indeed, despite opportunities for IEM to set mainstream media agendas, distribution and visibility often remains a problem. Participants realised that if you are not always a step ahead, other individuals' or corporations' messages will be put forward and minorities' voices overshadowed. The initial optimism about the Internet being a more democratic and participatory platform than any other medium before has been partly replaced by minorities' concerns with regards to visibility and new forms of discrimination. It is therefore crucial that young people, and especially those of more vulnurable groups, are not only being 'kept busy' learning how to use new media and digital tools, but also keep up with the mechanisms that lie behind an efficient visibility and distribution of their contents.

2. Ethics and risks on the Internet: thanks to web 2.0 the 'good ideas' get out there faster, but so do the 'bad' ones. By trying to reverse or resist the stereotypes about their cultural group, participants sometimes reproduced and distributed other stereotypes, for example concerning gender roles or concerning other cultural groups. On the other hand, young people are often not aware of the risks and privacy issues related to online identities. A sixteen-year-old Roots&Routes media participant, a Morrocan boy who had arrived to Spain on his own hidden in a truck, could not put his videos on the project vlog because we did not get the permission from his tutor to do so. As he felt left out while all the other participants were uploading their productions, he immediately opened his own personal blog and put all his video material on it, with possible consequences for his personal privacy. For young people learning how to handle media, it is crucial that a technical training goes together with a critical training. This kind of media literacy includes notions of ethics and risks, possibilities and consequences of actions on the Internet, both for themselves and for others.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study departed from the idea that immigrants and ethnic minorities have similar problems as to their negative portrayal in Spanish and Catalan media. One of the first observations was that **despite their different social and cultural backgrounds, all participants were sharply aware of negative portrayal and stereotyping in the media**, and of its negative consequences in their own daily lives. These **consequences** were identified by participants as **prejudice, stigmatisation and exclusion**. Participants' views on media in general contained **tensions between the idea of media as a 'reflection' of reality and media as 'shaping' reality, and between the what media do to us (power of the media) and what we can do with media (power of the audience)**. Participants both blamed the media for unfair portrayals of cultural groups, and blamed themselves for giving media 'reasons' for negative portrayal. However, the data suggest that the **immigrants or 'newcomers' in this study had different attitudes towards media representations than those expressed by participants from Roma background**: whereas Roma participants had a general feeling of indignation and denunciation towards the media, young immigrants (especially the ones from Latin American background) tended to locate the causes of negative portrayal in their own behaviour. Further research should address underlying mechanisms that lead some ethnic minorities to tend to 'blame the media' and some immigrants to 'blame themselves'.

Furthermore, we saw that stereotypes and negative portrayal of cultural groups in the media can force individuals into acting contrary to stereotypes (cfr. 'the good Latino') or on the contrary, into acting according to stereotypes. It seems that **negative portrayal and perpetuated stereotypical imagery in the media impose cultural identities on IEM that they probably haven't asked for but which they cannot obviate.** This 'imposed identity', reinforced and perpetuated by media representations of 'Us' and 'Them', is a **double trap for IEM**: by trying to reverse or 'resist' stereotypes, participants of this study sometimes confirmed these in the very terms they were trying to resist them, or behaved in a way that conformed to what was expected from IEM in Spain. **Media representations seemed to be clues for IEM about how (not) to behave if they wanted to be included in the host/dominant society**. Another consequence of this 'imposed identity' is that IEM feel like they have to **continuously defend or justify themselves to show the locals in Barcelona/Spain that they are not 'like that'**. These constant efforts take up a lot of IEM's energy and time. Further research should look into how different groups of IEM (can) use this time to further transform their own social reality instead of constantly trying to justify themselves.

In terms of 'roots' and 'routes', the data suggested **four major sites where the construction of cultural identity takes place for IEM: (1) location and mobility, (2) work and education, (3) worldviews and (4) relationships**. Although these are relevant fields of identity exploration for any emerging adult, I tried to filter out the particularities of IEM's identity construction: **location, locality and mobility** took on great relevance – although in different ways for newcomers than for Roma – as a key theme in IEM's lives, and was also expressed this way in participants' documentaries. Additionally, it was interesting to see how clearly identity construction in a new environment (for migrants) or in a minority community (for Roma) was informed by **every-day practical issues**, as opposed to the media construction of cultural identity of the 'Other' built on discourses of 'origin', 'nation', 'religion' or 'language'. For example, **participants' construction of identity was more to do with getting a job, finding a flat and surviving in the city, than with ethnic or religious identity claims.** As the study progressed it became clear that participants' **aspirations for the future ('routes') constituted an important element** in the construction of their identity.

In my view, this insight has some important implications with regards to media and identity politics: **despite mainstream efforts to impose the language of 'Us' and 'Them' using a vocabulary of cultural difference, young IEM do not necessarily define themselves in those.** For the participants in this study, cultural identity was located in a much broader cultural field. Especially interesting for further research are the **emergent urban or local identities that evolve around specific life styles, tastes or habits.**

When looking at **participants' ideas about cultures and the multicultural society**, very different views emerged regardless of their social or cultural background: **cosmopolitanism, nationalism, essentialism and intercultural practices** were all present in participants' worldviews and were generally not perceived by them as contradictory. I lifted out three cases to explore the paradoxes between multicultural and intercultural practices, between nationalistic and cosmopolitan stances, and between structure and agency. By having a closer look at Manuela, Jonas and Federico's lives and media uses, I showed how some participants attempted (and were actually able) to **break the circle of representation**, I put my finger on instances of **cultural change** as it was taking place, and highlighted **intercultural practices**.

Manuela's case showed how **members of cultural minority groups are able to claim new identities by re-presenting themselves in their communities**, and by doing so find common meanings and directions for their community as well as for mainstream society. Manuela did this by reading the hegemonic message about Roma in an oppositional way, and by writing an

alternative message in her documentary. I showed why her **'oppositional writing'** was **a way of transforming social reality**, not only Manueala's personal reality but also her community's. I showed how **participants constructed their identity on the basis of what was *absent* in media representations as much as of what was present, by marking the difference**. Additionally, both female and male participants constructed **'oppositional' gendered identities** by deconstructing media representations of women and men in their cultural group.

Finally, I demonstrated that projects like Roots&Routes, which use **media and performing arts as a tool for mutual understanding between different artistic and cultural traditions, can empower participants in terms of self-awareness and self-presentation**. This empowerment was based on the **deconstruction of existing media messages on the one hand, and on the construction of their own media on the other**. For participants, the notion that 'the camera always lies', an assumption of intrinsic untruthfulness of media representations, was crucial to **understanding how stereotypes work and what can be done to fight against them**. Apart from participants becoming more aware of how media texts work, their identity construction was enhanced by actually producing (writing) imagery as opposed to only receiving imagery through mainstream media channels. **Access to technology and know-how** helped participants to start working in a meaningful way, but it was especially their **introduction to new uses of the Internet** that seemed relevant to them in terms of **self-representation.**

Digital video emerged as an increasingly relevant tool of self-presentation: cheap, easy to learn and flexible. Participants uploaded their material on the project blog, added it to their personal profiles in social networks, put it on video sharing sites. They needed no more than one training session to handle digital video on the web. **As participants were becoming *prosumers* of media texts, the separation between 'the study of media' and 'the study of how audiences read the media' was being challenged.** The fact that anyone can now produce media has deep implications for the field in two different ways. In terms of media studies and research, it implies the advantages of **an additional analysis tool as researchers do not need to rely on professionals for the production of visual material** and subjects can produce their own.

In terms of **media literacy education,** I have argued that **critical knowledge about the distribution of media messages is crucia**l, apart from accessing, analysing, evaluating and producing media. For without being able to actually distribute media texts and participate in an increasingly mediatised society, IEM will not be able to have their voices heard. **Problems related to visibility came up as one of the pitfalls of new media**, and it remains to be seen if the future web will contain better representations of minorities, or just more information.

In the meantime this study has – hopefully – contributed to making cultural and ethnic minorities' voices heard with regards to hegemonic media representations of IEM in Spain and Catalonia.

References

Abella Vázquez, C.M. (2007) 'La aparición de los discursos sobre el multiculturalismo en España: el debate del velo en la prensa escrita', *Athenea Digital. Revista de pensamiento e investigación social*, *11* (primavera): 83-103.

Ang, I. (1990) 'Culture and communication: towards an ethnographic critique of media consumption in the transnational media system', *European Journal of Communication*, *5*: 239-260.

Arnett, J.J. (2000) 'Emerging adulthood. A Theory of Development From the Late Teens Through the Twenties', *American Psychologist*, *55*(5): 469-480.

Awan, F. (2008) *Young People, Identity and the Media: A Study of Conceptions of Self-Identity Among Youth in Southern England*. Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Bournemouth University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, available at http://www.artlab.org.uk/fatimah-awan-phd.htm [last accessed May 2009]

Barker, C. (1999) *Television, Globalization and Cultural Identities*, Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Barker, C. & Galasinski, D. (2001) *Cultural studies and Discourse Analysis. A dialogue on Language and Identity*, London: Sage.

Bartolomé, A. (2008) *Vídeo digital y Educación*, Madrid: Editorial Síntesis.

Bauman, Z. (1996) 'From Pilrim to Tourist - or a Short History of Identity', in S. Hall (Ed.) *Questions of cultural identity*, London: Sage, pp. 18-36.

Bauman, Z. (1999) *Culture as Praxis*, London: Sage.

Berger, J. (2006) *Modos de ver*, Barcelona: Gustavo Gili.

Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. (1966) *The Social Construction of Reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge*, New York: Doubleday.

Bhabha, H. (1996) 'Culture's in-between', in S. Hall (Ed.) *Questions of cultural identity*, London: Sage, pp. 53-60.

Biltereyst D. & Meers Ph. (in press) 'The Political Economy of Audiences', in J. Wasko, G. Murdock & H. Sousa (Eds.) *The Handbook of Political Economy of Communications*, Malden: Blackwell.

Blommaert, J. (2006) *Ethnographic fieldwork: a beginner's guide*, unpublished course material for the Insitute of Education Doctoral School, University of London.

Bordwell, D. & Thompson, K. (1997) *Film Art: an Introduction*, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Brubaker, R. & Cooper, F. (2000) 'Beyond "Identity"', *Theory and Society*, *29*(1): 1-47.

Buckingham, D. (2009) ''Creative' visual methods in media research: possibilities, problems and

proposals', *Media, Culture & Society*, *31*: 633-652.

Burn, A. & Parker, D. (2003) *Analysing Media Texts*, Continuum Research Methods Series, edited by Richard Andrews, London&New York: Continuum.

Burton, Graeme (2005) *Media and Society. Critical perspectives*, New York: Open University Press.

Calvès, G. (2004) 'Color-Blindness at a Crossroads in Contemporary France', in H. Chapman & L. L. Frader (Eds.), *Race in France: Interdisiplinary Perspectives on the Politics of Difference*, New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 219-226.

Campbell, C.P. (1995) *Race, myth and the news*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cottle, S. (Ed.) (2000) *Ethnic Minorities and the Media: changing cultural boundaries*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

D'Haenens, L., van Summeren, C., Saeys, F. & Koeman, J. (2004) *Integratie of identiteit? Mediamenu's van Turkse en Marokkaanse jongeren,* Amsterdam: Boom.

de Block, L. & Buckingham, D. (2007) *Global Children, Global Media: Migration, Media and Childhood,* London: Palgrave.

de Certeau, M. (1980) *L'Invention du Quotidien. Tome 1: Arts de Faire,* Collection 10-18. Paris: Union générale d'éditions.

de la Fuente García, M. (2006) *La argumentación en el discurso periodístico sobre la inmigración*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Universidad de León.

de Saussure, F. ([1916] 1974) *Course in General Linguistics* (trans. Wade Baskin), London: Fontana/Collins.

Díez Nicolás, J. (2001) *Actitudes hacia los inmigrantes*, Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, IMSERSO.

Dyer, R. (1977) 'Stereotyping', in R. Dyer (Ed.) *Gays and Film*, London: British Film Institute.

Entman, R.M. (1990) 'Modern racism and the images of blacks in local television news', *Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 7*(4): 332-346.

Erjavec, K., Hvratin S.B. & Kelbl, B. (2000) *We about the Roma. Discriminatory Discourse in the Media in Slovenia*, Ljubljana: Open Society Institute-Slovenia.

European Commission (2000) *Push and pull factors of international migration: a comparative report*, Eurostat, Collection studies and research, Working Paper 3/2000/E/no. 14.

Fanon, F. (1968) *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press.

Ferguson, R. (1998) *Representing 'race': ideology, identity, and the media*, London: Arnold & New York: Oxford University Press.

Ferrés, J. (2003) 'Las emociones y el inconsciente en la comunicación audiovisual', in R. Morduchowicz (Ed.) *Comunicación, medios y educación*, Barcelona: Ediciones Octaedro, pp. 57-68.

Fiske, J. (1989) *Understanding Popular Culture*, London: Routledge.

Fiske, J. (2000) 'White watch', in S. Cottle (Ed.) *Ethnic minorities and the media,* Buckingham: Open University Press, pp. 50-66.

Frau-Meigs, D. (2008) *Necessary conditions for (intercultural) media literacy in the framework of social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and citizenship*, Keynote address at the European Conference Media4[ME], Den Haag, The Netherlands, May 30th, 2008.

Gauntlett, D. (2004) *Using new creative visual research methods to understand the place of popular media people's lives*, Paper for the IAMCR 2004, Audience and reception studies section, available at http://www.artlab.org.uk/iamcr2004.htm [last accessed April 2009].

Giddens, A. (2003) *La constitución de la sociedad: bases para la teoría de la estructuración*, Buenos Aires: Amorrortu (first edited in 1984).

Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Cambridge: Polity.

Gillespie, M. (1995) *Television, ethnicity and cultural change*, London and New York: Routledge.

Gillespie, M. (2000) 'Transnational Communications and Diaspora Communities', in S. Cottle (Ed.) *Ethnic Minorities and the Media*, Buckingham: Open University Press, pp. 164-178.

Gilman, S. (1985) *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Gilroy, P. (1987) *'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation,* London: Hutchinson.

Gilroy, P. (1994) *The black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness,* London: Verso.

Glaser, B. & Strauss, G. (1999) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: strategies for qualitative research*, 2nd Edition, New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Goffman, E. (1956) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. University of Edinburgh: Social Science Research Centre.

Gómez, J., Latorre A., Sánchez M. & Flecha R. (2006) *Metodología Comunicativa Crítica,* Barcelona: El Roure.

Goodman, Steven (2003) *Teaching youth media: a critical guide to literacy, video production and social change.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Gramsci, A. (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, New York: International Publishers.

Habermas, J. (1984) *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hall, S. ([1973] 1980) 'Encoding/decoding', in: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Ed.) *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*, London: Hutchinson, pp. 128-38.

Hall, S. (Ed.) (1996a) *Questions of cultural identity*, London: Sage.

Hall, S. (1996b) 'Who needs identity?', in S. Stuart (Ed.) *Questions of cultural identity*, London: Sage.

Hall, S. (Ed.) (1997a) *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*, London: Sage in association with Open University.

Hall, S. (1997b) 'The spectacle of the 'other'', in S. Hall (Ed.) *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*, London: Sage, pp. 223-291.

Harindranath, R. (2000) 'Ethnicity, national culture(s) and the interpretation of television', in Cottle, S. (Ed.) *Ethnic Minorities and the Media*, Buckingham: Open University Press, pp. 149-163.

Hebdige, D. ([1979] 2002) *Subculture: the meaning of style*, London and New York: Routledge.

hooks, b. (1992) *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, Boston: South End Press.

Huntingon, S. (1993) *The Clash of Civilizations?*, US Foreign Affairs, online forum published by the Council on Foreign Relations, available at http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/48950/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations [last accessed May 2009].

Hyland, M. (2006) 'Proud Scum: The Spectre of the Integrate', *Mute,* Dis-Integrating Multiculturalism, *2*(2): 19-25.

Igartua J. J., Muñiz C. & Otero J.A. (2006) 'El tratamiento informativo de la inmigración en la prensa y la televisión española. Una aproximación empírica desde la teoría del Framing', *Global Media Journal*, *3*(5), available at http://gmje.mty.itesm.mx/igartua_muniz_otero.htm [last accessed May 2009].

Jacobsen, M. H. & Poder, P. (Eds.) (2008) *The sociology of Zygmunt Bauman. Challenges and critique,* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Jensen, K. B. (Ed.) (2002) *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research. Qualitative and Quantitative methodologies,* London and New York: Routledge.

Jolls, T. (Ed.) (2008) *Literacy for the 21st Century. An Overview and Orientation Guide To Media Literacy Education,* 2nd Edition, Malibu, California: Center for Media Literacy, available at http://www.medialit.org/pdf/mlk/01a_mlkorientation_rev2.pdf [last accessed December 2009].

Kezar, A. (2000) 'The Importance of Pilot Studies: Beginning the Hermeneutic Circle', *Research in Higher Education*, *41*(3): 385-400.

Kitzinger, J. (2004) 'Audience and Readership Research', in J.D.H. Downing, D. McQuail, Ph. Schlesinger & E. Wartella (Eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Media Studies*, London, Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 167-181.

Kosinska-Krippner B. (2006) 'Mock-documentary and False Documentary', *Kwartalnik Filmowy* (*Film Quarterly*), *54-55*: 190-210.

Kunzru, H. (2006) 'The Values on the Ground: Multiculturalism and the War on Terror', *Mute*, Dis-Integrating Multiculturalism, 2(2): 2-6.

Laclau, E. (1990) *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, London: Verso.

Laclau, E. (1994) 'Why do Empty Signifiers matter to Politics?', in E. Laclau (Ed.) *Emancipation(s)*, London: Verso, pp. 36-46.

Landis, D., Bennett, J. & Bennett, M. J. (2003) *Handbook of intercultural training*, Third Edition, London: Sage.

Larson, S. G. (2006) *Media & Minorities. The politics of Race in News and Entertainment*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Levin, J. (1975) *The Functions of Prejudice.* New York: Harper & Row.

Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (1985) *Naturalistic inquiry*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. (1995) 'Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive inquiry', *Qualitative Inquiry*, *1*: 275-289.

Lorite, N. (2004) *Tratamiento informativo de la inmigración en España. 2002*, Madrid: Imserso.

Lyotard, J.F. (1979) *La Condition Postmoderne: Rapport sur le Savoir*, Collection 'Critique', Paris: Les Editions de Minuit.

Machin, D. (2002) *Ethnographic research for media studies*, London: Arnold.

Main, H. (2006) *France and The Netherlands: immigration, assimilation and conflict*, thesis presented to the Faculty of University of Washingon, Washington: University of Washington Libraries.

Maly, I. (Ed.) (2007) *Cultu(u)renpolitiek*, Antwerpen-Apeldoorn: Garant.

Maly, I. & Zienkowski, J. (2007) 'Tussen natuur en verbeelding', in I. Maly (Ed.) *Cultu(u)renpolitiek*, Antwerpen-Apeldoorn: Garant, pp 25-62.

Marcuse, H. (1964) *One Dimensional Man. Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, Boston: Beacon.

Massey, D. (1994) *Space, Class and Gender*, Cambridge: Polity.

Mastro, D.E., Behm-Morawitz, E. & Kopacz, M.A. (2008) 'Exposure to Television Portrayals of Latinos: The Implications of Aversive Racism and Social Identity Theory', *Human*

Communication Research, *34*(1), 1-27.

Maykut, P. & Morehouse, R. (1994) *Beginning Qualitative Research; a philosophical and practical guide*, London: The Falmer Press.

McClintock, A. (1995). *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge.

McKee, A. (2003) *Textual analysis. A beginner's guide,* London: Sage.

McNamara, T. (2006) *Proofs of identity: some social and political functions of language tests*, Paper presented at the cross-London seminar in culture & communication, 12 December 2006, London: Institute of Education.

McQuail, D. (2004) 'Identifying the field', in: in J.D.H. Downing, D. McQuail, Ph. Schlesinger & E. Wartella (Eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Media Studies,* London, Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 1-16.

Meigh-Andrews, Ch. (2006) *A History of Video Art*, Oxford: Berg.

Mok, T.A. (1998) 'Getting the Message: Media Images and Stereotypes and Their Effect on Asian Americans', *Cultural Diversity and Mental Health, 4*(3): 185-202.

Morales Hernández, G. (1996) *Fugados en velero,* Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: CCPC.

Morduchowicz, R. (Ed.) (2003) *Comunicación, medios y educación*, Barcelona: Ediciones Octaedro.

Morley, D. (2000) *Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity,* London and New York: Routledge.

Morley, D. (undated). *Audience Research*, article in the archives section of The Museum of Broadcast Communications Chicago, available at http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/A/htmlA/audiencerese/audiencerese.htm [last accessed May 2009].

Morley, D. & Robins K. (1995) *Spaces of Identity: global media, electronic landscapes and cultural boundaries*, London: Routledge.

Mulvey, L. (1975) 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen 16*(3): 6-18.

Munk, V. (2007) 'Play to Me Gypsy! How Roma Stars' Image Change in Hungarian Media', in K. Kallioniemi, K. Kärki, J. Mäkelä & H. Salmi (Eds.), *History of Stardom Reconsidered*, Turku: International Institute for Popular Culture, pp. 84-89.

Niesyto, H. (2000) 'Youth Research on Video Self-Productions in Reflections on a Social-Aesthetic Approach', *Visual Sociology, 15*:135-153.

Niesyto, H. & Holzwarth, P. (2008) 'Präsentativer und diskursiver Selbstausdruck junger Migranten und Migrantinnen im Kontext verschiedener (medien-)kultureller Ressourcen', in *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, *9*(3): Art. 10, available at http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1167/2577 [last accessed April 2009].

Noor, H. (2007) 'Assertions of identities through new production: news-making among teenage Muslim girls in London and New York', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *10*(3): 374-389.

Pla Integral del poble gitano a Catalunya 2005-2008 (2005), Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament de Benestar i Família.

Poulantzas, N. (1986). 'Class power', in S. Lukes (Ed.) *Power*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 144-155.

Price, S. (1998) *Media Studies*, 2nd edition, Harlow: Longman.

Prosser, J. (Ed.) (1998) *Image-Based Research: A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers,* London: Falmer.

Radway, J.A. (1988) 'Reception Study: Ethnography and the Problems of Dispersed Audiences and Nomadic Subjects', *Cultural Studies*, *2*: 359-376.

Ramírez Heredia, J. (Ed.) (1997) *¿Periodistas contra el racismo? La prensa española ante el pueblo gitano 1995-1996*, Barcelona: Unión Romaní.

Ramírez Heredia, J. (Ed.) (2002) *¿Periodistas contra el racismo? La prensa española ante el pueblo gitano 2000-2001*, Barcelona: Unión Romaní.

Retis, J. (2004) 'Miradas compasivas o atemorizadas? La construcción de
las imágenes de los inmigrantes ecuatorianos y colombianos en la prensa española', Paper presented at *4º Congreso sobre la inmigración en España: Ciudadanía y Participación*, Universidad de Girona.

Retis J. (2006) 'La construcción social de la inmigración latinoamericana. Discursos, imágenes y realidades', *Amérique Latine Histoire et Mémoire. Les Cahiers ALHIM*: 12, available online, uploaded September 2007 at http://alhim.revues.org/index1352.html [last accessed August 2009].

Rivadeneyra, R., Ward M.L. & Gordon, M. (2007) 'Distorted Reflections: Media Exposure and Latino Adolescents'Conceptions of Self', *Media Psychology*, *9*(2): 261-290.

Rizo, M. (2001) 'Miedo y compasión: dos estrategias de movilización afectiva en el discurso informativo sobre el inmigrante', *Revista Comunica*, *2*, available onine at http://www.aijic.com/comunica/comunica2/RIZO.HTM [last accessed December 2009].

Rodrigo, M. & Martínez M. (1997) 'Minories ètniques i premsa europea d'èlit', *Anàlisi. Quaderns de comunicació i cultura*, *20*: 13-36.

Rorty, R. (1995) 'Feminism and pragmatism', in R. Goodman (Ed.), *Pragmatism: a contemporary reader*, New York: Routledge, pp. 125-152.

Rose, G. (2001) *Visual Methodologies*, London: Sage.

Ruiz Olabuénaga, J.I. (1996) *Metodología de la investigación cualitativa*, Bilbao: Universidad de Deusto.

Said, E. W. (1979) *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books.

Schmidt, C. (2004) 'The Analysis of Semi-structured Interviews', in U. Flick, E. von Kardorff, & I. Steinke (eds) *A Companion to Qualitative Research*, London, Sage, pp.253-258.

Searle, J. (1995) *The Construction of Social Reality*, New York: Free Press.

Shandy, D.J. (2003) 'Transnational linkages between refugees in Africa and in the diaspora', *Forced Migration Online*, 16: 7-8, available online at http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:4748 [last accessed July 2009].

Shepherd, R. (2003) 'Contenidos y conceptos en una educación en medios', in R. Morduchowicz (Ed.), *Comunicación, medios y educación*, Barcelona: Ediciones Octaedro, pp. 57-68.

Spivak, G. (1988) 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of Culture*, Chicago: Univeristy of Illinois Press, pp. 271-313.

Staiger, J. (2005) *Media reception studies*, New York: New York University Press.

Storey, J. (2006a) *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture. An introduction*, 4th Edition, Harlow: Pearson.

Storey, J. (2006b) *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture. A Reader*, 3rd Edition, Harlow: Pearson.

Strauss, G. & Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, London: Sage.

The situation of Roma in Spain (2002), Report of the Open Society Institute, EUMAP, Monitoring Minority Protection in EU Member States, available online http://www.eumap.org/reports/2002/eu/international/sections/spain/2002_m_spain.pdf [downloaded May 2008].

Thompson, J.B. (1998) *Los media y la modernidad. Una teoría de los medios de comunicación*, Barcelona: Paidós.

Tölölyan, K. (2007) 'The Contemporary Discourse of Diaspora Studies', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27(3): 647-655.

Tomlinson, J. (1999) *Globalization and Culture*, Cambridge: Polity.

Tortajada, I. & Willem, C. (2009) 'Looking beyoond the B-side from the G-side: the under- and misrepresentation of the Roma in the media', *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies*, *1*(1): 29-46.

Tuchman, G. (1983) *La producción de la noticia. Estudio sobre la construcción de la realidad*, Barcelona: Gustavo Gili.

Tudor, A. (1999) *Decoding Culture: Theory and Method in Cultural Studies*, London: Sage.

Turner, G. (2003) *British Cultural Studies. An Introduction*, 3rd Edition, London&New York:

Routledge.

Urry, J. (2000) 'The Global Media and Cosmopolitanism', paper presented at: Transnational America Conference, Bavarian American Academy, Munich, June 2000.

van Dijk, T. (1997) *Racismo y análisis crítico de los medios,* Barcelona: Ediciones Paidós.

van Dijk, T. (2000) 'New(s) Racism: A discourse analytical approach', in S. Cottle (Ed.), *Ethnic Minorities and the Media*, Buckingham: Open University Press, pp. 33-49.

Wagner, J. (2002) 'Contrasting images, complementary trajectories: sociology, visual sociology and visual research', *VisualStudies*, *17*(2): 160-171.

Walliman, I., Tatsis, N. C. & Zito, G. V. (1977) 'On Max Weber's Definition of Power', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, *13*(3):231-235.

Watson, C.W. (2000) *Multiculturalism*, Oxford: Open University Press.

Weber, M. (1925) *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft,* Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr.

Weber, M. (1968) *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. New York: Bedminster Press.

Wester, F., Renckstorf, K. & Scheepers, P. (Eds.) (2006) *Onderzoekstypen in de communicatiewetenschap,* Alphen aan de Rijn: Kluwer.

Williams, R. ([1958] 2001) 'Culture is ordinary', in B. Highmore (Ed.) *The Everyday Life Reader,* London: Routledge, pp. 91-100.

Williams, R. (1975) *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. London: Fontana.

Williams, R. (2006) 'Analysis of Culture', in J. Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture. A Reader,* 3rd Edition, Harlow: Pearson.

Willis, P. (1990) *Common culture: Symbolic work at play in the everyday cultures of the young,* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Winston, B. (1998) 'The camera never lies: the partiality of photographic evidence', in J. Prosser (Ed.) *Image-Based Research: A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers*, London: Falmer, pp. 60-68.