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Ethnic and Aboriginal Media in Canada: Crossing Borders, Constructing Buffers, Creating Bonds, Building Bridges

1.   Introduction: "Taking Aboriginal and Ethnic Media Seriously"

Canada constitutes a multicultural society whose 'multiculturality' reflects different layers of meaning. Four semantic levels can be discerned, including multiculturalism as demographic fact, as ideology, as government policy and programs, and as practice. Of these multiple meaning levels, references to multiculturalism as official policy prevail (Fleras and Elliott 2007). At the core of Canada's official multiculturalism is a commitment to institutional inclusiveness. According to the Multiculturalism Act of 1988, all institutions (but especially federal institutions) have a responsibility to proactively engage diversity through initiatives that are reflective of the community they serve, respectful of cultural identities, and responsive to minority needs and concerns (Annual Report 2004/05). Both public and private institutions have taken steps toward improving levels of responsiveness, in part by eliminating the most egregious forms of racial discrimination in service delivery, in part by modifying institutional structures to ensure equitable treatment, in part by creating positive programs to improve access and representation.

However well intentioned, a commitment to inclusiveness is not always do-able. So structured are mainstream institutions around racialized discourses of whiteness that minorities are systemically denied access or equity (Henry and Tator 2006). Nowhere is this institutionalized exclusion more evident than in mainstream newsmedia coverage of minority women and men. Despite modest moves toward improving diversity depictions, the newsnorms of a conventional news paradigm continue to frame minorities as troublesome constituents, that is problem people who are problems who have problems and who create problems (Fleras 2004/2006). This framing of diversity around a conflict/problem/negativity nexus is neither intentional nor personal. To the contrary, the unintended yet logical consequences of largely one-sided misrepresentation are systemic in logic: that is, newsmedia coverage of migrants and minorities is systemically biasing than a systematic bias. In that the cumulative effect of such monocultural coverage imposes a controlling effect – after all, what is not said may be more important than what is - newsmedia may well constitute an exercise in systemic propaganda (Fleras 2007).

To say that minority women and men are mistreated by mainstream newsmedia is true enough (Mahtani 2002; Henry and Tator 2006; Jiwani 2006). Multicultural minorities and aboriginal peoples remain overrepresented in areas that don't count ('crime'or 'entertainment'), underrepresented in areas that do ('political or economic success'), and misrepresented along all points in between because of a pro-white (Eurocentric) bias (Fleras and Kunz 2001). They continue to be rendered invisible except in contexts of crisis, negativity, or conflict, in the process reinforcing their status as troublesome constituents for removal or control. To circumvent or neutralize the effects of this systemically biasing coverage, ethnic (or 'racialized') minorities and aboriginal peoples have turned to alternative media institutions. In privileging minority experiences, identities, and priorities, ethnic and aboriginal media have proliferated accordingly, including: (1) ethnic and aboriginal print (2) ethnic and aboriginal broadcasting, and the (3) inclusion within mainstream newsmedia. Reaction has varied as well: For some, their expansion is commensurate with Canada's multicultural commitments; for others, aboriginal and ethnic media are essentially manipulative advocates for special interest groups; for yet others, they are regressive for disrupting immigrant integration; and for still others, ethnic and aboriginal media are more complex and nuanced than simplistic bifurcation into either good or bad.

Integration or separatist? Insular or isolationist? Inclusive or exclusive? Bonding or divisive? Buffer or barrier? Bridges or roadblocks? Inreach or outreach? Progressive or regressive? Society-building or society-bashing? Debates over aboriginal and ethnic media clearly resonate with overtones of ambiguity, with few signs of subsiding, and these controversies are part of a broader project around the contested role of media institutions in advancing the integration of migrants and minorities (Geißler 2005; Geißler/Pöttker 2005). In keeping with the conference theme, namely, the role of media in integrating migrants with respect to what can be done, what should be avoided, and what we can learn from each other, this paper explores the promises and perils of Canada's ethnic and aboriginal media as well as their politics and paradoxes. The paper argues that aboriginal and ethnic media constitute an integrative component of an inclusive Canada-building project: First, by advancing Canada's democratic discourses beyond what is normally conveyed by mainstream newsmedia. Second, by improving the sectoral interests of multicultural minorities and aboriginal peoples via alternative media discourses (Williamson and DeSouza 2006). Third, by securing crossover points for promoting intercultural awareness and exchanges. As social capital, ethnic media not only foster community bonding, but also constitute a bridging device for enhancing a two way process of integration ("you adjust, we adapt/we adjust, you adapt"). To the extent that aboriginal

and ethnic media are multidimensional in logic, process, and outcomes, no single assessment is possible or desirable (Riggins 1992; Ojo 2006). Content is organized thematically as follows:

1. to conceptualize the contrasts between mainstream media (namely private and public) and populist media (including ethnic and aboriginal media) in terms of underlying logic, operating principles and process, and anticipated outcomes;

2. to theorize aboriginal and ethnic media as both insular and integrative, that is, inward- and outward-looking as well as active and proactive;

3. to focus on the nature of news coverage in ethnic media. What topics are covered – local stories or homeland stories for diasporic community members (Lin and Song 2006)?

4. to look into the popularity and success of ethnic and aboriginal media in Canada;

5. to discuss their implications for facilitating migrant integration (ie. to settle down, fit in, and move up) while helping established minorities to construct community & culture.

6. to demonstrate how ethnic media are critical in constructing a multilocal sense of belonging by linking contemporary migrants with Canada and their homeland.

7. to entertain the possibility that, for purposes of analysis, mainstream newsmedia constitute a type of ethnic media (but with power)

8. to acknowledge the role of ethnic and aboriginal media in contributing to a robust public sphere (Husband 2005), in part by asking those awkward questions beyond mainstream expertise (Color-Line 2002)

9. to demonstrate how the logic underlying Aboriginal media differ from that of ethnic media, given the distinctive constitutional status of Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

10. to explore the possibility of framing ethnic and aboriginal media as social capital because of their bonding and bridging 'functions'.

11. to determine the status, role and responsibility of both mainstream and aboriginal/ethnic media within the context of an inclusive multiculturalism.

2.   Conceptualizing Media Institutions

Media scholars have long acknowledged the existence of three major media institutions – private, public, and populist. Although the differences are not nearly as distinct as often assumed, the underlying logic of each differs with respect to what is being communicated, why, how, and with what purpose (Fleras 2003)

- *Private media* represent commercial enterprises. They are privately owned, concerned primarily with making money or profit (usually through advertising or subscriptions), focused on providing consumers with safe and formulaic content, of appeal to the lowest common denominator, and generally reject any social responsibility for actions and outputs unless involving the   bottom line. According to the underlying logic, private commercial media do not exist to inform, entertain, or enlighten per se; their goal is to make money by providing a commodity (or programming) that connects the right demographic with advertisers.

- *Public media* constitute a public service for advancing public interest. Public media are government or tax payer owned, focused largely on the enlightenment of citizens across a broad range of programming, and are geared to maximizing public good or advancing national interests. They also are viewed as elitist because of their mandate to provide audiences with programs they need for citizenship, belonging, and participation. To be sure, references to public media embrace a wide range of arrangements, from the publicly funded but arm's length system in Great Britain to the mixed funding model of the CBC in Canada and PBS in the United States to state-owned and government controlled system in China (Lincoln et al 2005). Such a range of public media process makes it difficult to define or characterize.

- *Populist (or alternative) media.* Populist media differ from mainstream (public (state) and private (market) because of content, structure, distribution, and consumption (Skinner 2006). In occupying mediaspace abandoned by increasingly homogenous mainstream media, populist media provide an alternative service for those without demographic clout and political power. These media tend to be independently owned and service-oriented, reflect localized interests by providing news and information of direct relevance to the communities they serve, embrace news values that differ from the mainstream newsmedia, communicate along horizontal lines rather than top-down hierarchies, encourage community wide participation in the production process (Lalley and Hawkins 2005;

Rennie 2006), and are highly partisan in empowering the disempowered Not surprisingly, populist news values differ from those of the mainstream. Whereas the latter emphasize the centrality of conflict or abnormality as newsworthy, especially when involving minority women and men, populist news values focus on minority success stories and positive role models.

The concept of populist media can be further subdivided into *alternative, community, ethnic* and *aboriginal* media. Although classification of these media into a single category may conceal more than it reveals, they share much in common, including closer relations with audiences, less preoccupation with the bottom line, more attention to areas of local interest, including city politics, offer an alternative to mainstream indifference to homeland issues, provides useful information for settling down and fitting in, promote public dialogue and exchange of ideas for the mobilization of audiences into social action, and challenge the status quo with its prevailing distribution of power and privilege (Journalism.org 2004; Rennie 2006; Downing 2000; Skinner 2006). The exponential growth of ethnic or minority media not only reflects global migration patterns, but also an internet-inspired emergence of various participatory, collaborative, oppositional, alternative, and community media practices that embrace the changing ways in which people 'use' and 'make' their media (Deuze 2006). In challenging the concentration of corporate media power by way of a participatory global media culture, Skinner (2006:217) says:

> Rather than tailor content, organizational structure, and production practices to maximize return on investment, alternative media foreground special social issues and values. In terms of organizational structure, they often purposefully shun traditional hierarchical models of organization to facilitate as much input as possible into the production. And in terms of production, in order to countermand the tendency to have professional values dictate the subjects, structures and sources of content, they often seek participation and contributions from the communities they serve rather than rely on professional journalists.

But while relatively easy to glamourize the populist case, populist media are not nearly as unsullied by crass business concerns as many believe. Despite a niche based orientation, their commercial dynamics may not altogether differ from mainstream media. Publishers and producers are known to follow a time proven trajectory: track what is profitable, repackage it as authentic in bolstering the bottom line, and link the package with a preferred demographic (Jeff Yang in Hsu 2002). Even issues of cooperation and consensus are

problematic. Their potential as sites of conflict cannot be dismissed, particularly when homeland strife is played out in the ethnic press, with publishers suffering serious consequences when siding with the wrong faction (Nallainathan 2007).

	private	public	populist a)alternative b) ethnic c) aboriginal d) community
logic	escapist (Give consumers what they want)	elitist (Give citizen what they need)	Empower (give the community the power/ voices denied to them)
Goal	profit (market driven)	public good and national interests	Partisan: for the people, by the people, about the people
function	Entertain	Enlighten	Embolden – Adapt, Challenge, Transform
scope	Market niche via mass commercial casting	universality (broadcasting)	Narrowcasting - Untapped 'minority' Group
perception of audience	Consumer	Citizen	Community/minority
ownership	corporate owned	general public taxpayer funded	Locally owned/controlled/ produced
programming content	Safe/ routine/ familiar	broad range with emphasis on high brow/ high culture	Different news values (Give the people what the mainstream media ignore)

Table 1: Media Institutions: A Comparison of Models

The table above compares media institutions models - private, public and populist (Fleras 2003). On the left hand column are the criteria that provide a basis for comparison - albeit in highly idealistic terms and categorically rather than contextually. The three columns to the right provide the comparison. It should be noted that the establishment of the user-generated internet content suggests the possibility of a new personal media model, one based on the ability of ordinary citizens to create, distribute, and consume media products beyond conventional channels of creation, distribution, and consumption (Rennie 2006; Ojo 2006).

To be sure, the distinction between mainstream and ethnic media may be overstated. Mainstream media consist of those private or public outlets that cater to the general public; by contrast, ethnic media are thought to specifically

target a specific ethnic minority. However intuitive such a divide, difficulties abound. Where exactly do mainstream media end and ethnic media begin? To the extent that aboriginal and ethnic media are more mainstream than many think, whereas mainstream media are more 'ethnic' than often thought, the distinction dissolves. Consider the seemingly counterintuitive possibility that mainstream media may be *interpreted* as ethnic media in servicing the interests of a white constituency:

> All mass media content could be analyzed from the experience of what is revealed about ethnicity. The New York Times, for example, could be read as an ethnic newspaper, although it is not explicitly or consciously so. (Riggins 1992:2)

The consequences of this 'inversion' are revelatory. In reminding us that all newsmedia are ethnically located whether conscious of this placement or not, media institutions and texts are neither neutral nor value-free but encoded in a fundamentally racialized (or ethnicized) way. Inasmuch as mainstream media are owned and controlled by corporate interests, they are organized by, for, and around 'white' experiences, realities, and priorities (Jiwani 2006). However unintended or incidental, content is designed to promote and normalize Eurocentric norms, while alternative discourses are discredited as inferior or irrelevant. This Eurocentric whiteness not only serves as the normative standard by which others are judged, evaluated, and criticized. The Eurocentrism that is embedded within institutional structures, processes, and outcomes also generates a 'palemale' gaze that tends to project fantasies or fears upon racialized others. Admittedly, media decision-makers and gatekeepers may not be consciously biased toward non whites. Nevertheless, they unconsciously frame their narratives in a way that selects, highlights, and imposes a preferred way of seeing and thinking. The end result? Whites and non whites stand in a different relationship to mainstream media: Whites see themselves painted into the picture as normal or superior, whereas minorities find themselves racialized by Eurocentric discourses that demean, deny, and diminish. Under the circumstances who can be surprised by the success and popularity of ethnic and aboriginal media?

Parallels between ethnic and mainstream newsmedia are unmistakable: Both serve the information needs of their primary consumers and advertising demographic (serve the people). Each is tribal in orientation, must target a specific audience, rely on advertising and subscription base for survival, and must adjust their content accordingly. But even if mainstream media can be conceptualized as ethnic media, the parallel breaks down because of a major difference - power. But unlike ethnic media which are relatively powerless

outside their sphere of influence, mainstream newsmedia possess the power, resources, and resourcefulness to make a difference, from agenda setting and defining public discourses to advancing national interests. That fact alone makes it doubly important to theorize aboriginal and ethnic media as dynamics in their own right as well as players coping with the challenges of a global and participatory media culture.

3. Theorizing Ethnic and Aboriginal Media: Putting Social Capital to Work

They respond to the needs of ethnic and racialized minorities; they provide a voice in advancing the welfare of the community; they challenge social injustices; they foster a sense of cultural pride; and they articulate the essence of their communities (Gonzales 2001). The 'they' refers to ethnic and aboriginal media whose collective objectives address the informational, integrative, and advocacy needs of those historically disadvantaged or diasporically situated. This multi-dimensionality is crucial in clarifying the origins and rationale behind ethnic and aboriginal media; the role they play in society at large, minority communities in particular; the challenges in navigating mediaspace; and their growing popularity because of increased participatory dynamics (Deuze 2006).

3.1 Framing Ethnic and Aboriginal Media

Ethnic and aboriginal media consist of mostly small broadcasters, cable channels, newspapers, and magazines that target racial and ethnic minority audiences, including aboriginal peoples, racialized women and men, and immigrants and refugees (also Lieberman 2006). Many are 'mom and pop' startups, published on a weekly or intermittent basis in languages other than English (or French), and distributed free of charge. Other ethnic media tend to resemble mainstream media, that is, sophisticated in operation, content, and distribution, employing sufficient resources to publish on a daily basis for profit (Lin and Song 2006). As well, ethnic media can be classified according to origins: To one side are homegrown ethnic media that are conveyed in either the native tongue or host country language or combination of both. To the other side are ethnic media produced abroad but circulated in the host country (Weber-Menges 2005). And while some ethnic media are meant to be intercultural in the sense of generating intergroup dialogue, many cater to a single target. Even here internal variations prevail, with some ethnic media

directed at the distinctive needs and concerns of immigrants, while others target native-born minorities, and still others address different demographics within each category.

This plethora of ethnic media suggests the need for a comparative structural framework along the lines proposed by Donald R Browne (2005), albeit intended for analysis of ethnic electronic media:

1. types of outlets and levels of service (licensed, unlicensed, radio, TV, presses, internet),

2. policy (by government or advertisers or community members),

3. financing (advertising, licensing fee, government grants donations, subscriptions),

4. primary audience (accessible to everyone or minority audiences; target group within the community)

5. programming type (information, education, entertainment

6. links with community (language used, staffing)

7. operational goals (links with ancestral homelands, preservation of language and culture, pride in community, information source, combating negative stereotypes)

Few would dispute the relevance of these dimensions in theorizing ethnic and aboriginal media. However valid such an assessment, this paper focuses primarily on the role of ethnic media in facilitating the integration of new Canadians. These media are shown to represent an exercise in social capital that bonds as it bridges by *connecting the 'here' with the 'there' by way of the 'in between'*. No one should be surprised by the bridging role of ethnic media in crossing borders. Nor should there be surprise by the bonding and buffering dynamic of ethnic media, thanks to information flows that are community-based, culturally-sensitive, communication-responsive and locally-relevant.

Ethnic media provide social capital in paradoxical ways. As Robert Putnam pointed in his landmark book, *Bowling Alone*, the quality of peoples lives and the life of society/community depends on establishing reserves of social capital. And yet the more ethnically diverse a community, Putnam (2007) more recently concedes, the less likely are people to connect or to display trustworthiness. The potential loss of social capital puts the onus on ethnic media to neutralize this disconnect and distrust, in part by providing both the bridging capital between different groups (ties to people unlike you), in part by way of bonding capital within one's own group (ties to people like you). To one side, ethnic media play an intermediary role by connecting community

with society; to the other side, ethnic media provide a strong migrant identity for making the transition from there to here by fostering a more multilocal sense of belonging (Cheng 2005). Or as Madeleine Bunting (2007) writes in linking the bonding with the bridging: "A strong community identity gives them the confidence and the self-respect to establish themselves and get on." (also Riggins 1992; Lam 1996).

Of particular note is the provision of relevant information that minority women and men want but cannot readily access. Ethnic and aboriginal media offer an alternative to those mainstream newsmedia that many perceive as increasingly centralized, standardized, and preoccupied with the trivial or sensational. Myopic and distorted coverage of global issues because of mainstream newsvalues creates a pent-up demand for more accurate information that speaks to diasporic communities (Tan 2006; Karim 2006). As a clearinghouse of information, ethnic and aboriginal media not only draw attention to those stories that the mainstream glosses over. Issues are also framed in ways that impart a fresh perspective in a language that resonates with community members (Hsu 2002). In their role as bulletin boards for announcements of upcoming events governments often use ethnic and aboriginal media to convey information or change attitudes, while commercial interests rely on them to expand their market penetration (Wu 2005). The advocacy role played by populist media is no less critical. Aboriginal and ethnic media not only crusade for justice and equality, but also pose those awkward questions that mainstream media avoid for fear of censure or reprisals.

In light of such a (dis)array of functions, reactions to ethnic and aboriginal media vary. For some, there is much to commend in processes that reflect the community, act as a political mouthpiece, foster a collective purpose, enhance group consciousness and sense of place, and create a sense of community consensus.[1] For others, this advocacy commitment inspires a softer journalism

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1   Consider, a proposed European Manifesto to support, recognize, and underline the importance of minority community (ethnic) media (Online/More Colour in the Media 2004 cited by Pat Cox). Below are select passages from the Manifesto.

In the Manfesto, minority community media call upon the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Governments of member states:

-    to recognize the important role that minority community media play in Europe as actors to implement social inclusion policies

-    to see the minority media being recognized as a public community service that, as such, they will be contained in all European and national media legislation and will obtain a "must see" status on all relevant broadcast platforms

-    to ensure that freedom of speech, the right to receive information and the right to communicate for all, including the right for minorities to receive

that ultimately privileges ideology over balanced coverage (Hsu 2002). To be sure, evidence suggests that not all ethnic minorities are gung-ho over ethnic media as sources of help or information (Lam 1996; Mahtani 2007; but see Gillespie 2005). Outlets that pander exclusively to ethnic minorities may be criticized for ghettoizing minority experiences or for excessively 'soft' news

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media in their own language, are recognized as basic human rights for all citizens. These rights should be included as part of the concept of civic citizenship and they should be enshrined in all media policies, legislation, and all social inclusion policies of the European Union and national member states.

- Being aware that sensitizing the majority populations to the benefits and challenges of immigration are core elements in a proactive social inclusion policy and that the mass media have a major responsibility in their role as educators of public opinion.

- Being aware that mainstream media have great difficulties in attracting ethnic minority audiences and to make their mainstream products a real reflection of the multicultural society.

- Being aware that unlike mainstream media, minority community media are able to link into networks of spokespeople and community leaders, and thus can act as a mediator.

- Being aware that minority community media, as part of the public ser vice…can play a major role in encouraging equal and full participation of immigrants and ethnic minority groups, by addressing issues of impor tance…and by offering them a platform for discussion within their own communities on important national and local issues, as well as providing them with a platform to share these views with the rest of the national population.

- Convinced that minority community media can contribute to the participation and emancipation process of immigrants and ethnic minority groups within the concept of civic citizenship, the improvement of intercultural communication, common understanding and dialogue.

- Convinced that by using the language of their audience, minority community media are able to effectively reach out to immigrants and ethnic minority audiences, which cannot normally be reached by other national and local media.

- Convinced that minority community media can have an important supporting role to mainstream media, as mediator between minority communities and mainstream society, in providing access to minority networks, and to alternative sources of information.

- Convinced that minority community media is a basic public service and that, as such, they should be a structural part of the national and European media environment.

- Convinced that minority community media need meaningful and relevant support in order to fulfil their important role.

coverage. No surprises here, argues Lawrence Lam (1996:255) since people are selective vis-à-vis their interests in what they see or read – especially in a media rich country like Canada. For others still, the inward looking nature of ethnic and aboriginal media not only postpones migrant integration into their adopted homeland, but also sabotages the integrationist logic behind a living together. This, of course, raises the question of what is meant by integration, how to bring it about, what it hopes to achieve, and what must be done to prevent mistakes from the past (Neill and Schweder 2007, but see EC Commission of the European Communities (Com (2005) 389/1-9-2005)[2] For yet others, the persistence and popularity of ethnic and aboriginal media attests to the multiculturality that informs and defines democratic governance.

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2   There is much talk of (civic) integration as a social contract to replace multi-culturalism. Yet there is little consensus regarding what integration means and how to bring it about (Neill and Schwedler 2007). To overcome this lacunae, the European Council adopted a commitment to integration in 2004 whose principles are paraphrased below (For critique, see Joppke 2007).

-   Integration is a dynamic two way process of mutual accommodation by immigrants and host country.
-   Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union.
-   Employment is a key part of the integration process for immigrants and host country.
-   Basic knowledge of the host country's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration.
-   Access to education is critical to the integration of immigrants.
-   Immigrant integration requires full and non-discriminatory access to institutions, public and private goods and services.
-   Frequent encounters and creative interaction between immigrants and member state citizens secures to successful integration.
-   Integration is predicated on guaranteeing the practice of diverse cultures and religions, provided these practices do not conflict with rights or laws.
-   Immigrant participation in the democratic process is critical especially in the formulation of programs and policies that impact on their lives.
-   Integration is contingent on mainstreaming integration polices and measures in all relevant portfolios and levels of government and public services.
-   Clear goals, indicators, and evaluation mechanism must be in place to adjust immigration policies and evaluate progress.

3.2   Accounting for Ethnic and Aboriginal Media: Reactive/Proactive; Outward/Inward

Ethnic media originated for a variety of reasons, both *reactive and proactive* as well as *outward and inward*. On the reactive side, ethnic and racialized minorities resent their exclusion from the mainstream newsmedia (Husband 2005; deSouza and Williamson 2006). Historically, newsmedia (mis)treatment of aboriginal peoples, immigrants, and racialized ethnic minorities left everything to be desired, given their placement into one of five negative frames, namely as invisible, problems, stereotypes, adornments, or whitewashed (Fleras and Kunz 2001). In an industry driven by the logic that only bad news is good news, the framing of minorities as troublemakers resulted in one sided coverage that demonized and denied (Butterwege 2005). Teun A. van Dijk (1993) writes:

> The strategies, structures, and procedures of reporting, the choice of themes, the perspective, the transfer of opinions, style and rhetoric, are directed at presenting "us" positively and "them" negatively…Their cause is only worth reporting when they cause problems, are caught in criminality or violence or can be represented as a threat to white hegemony.

Despite modest improvements in the quality and quantity of coverage, mainstream newsmedia remains a problem in two ways: first in a systemically biasing way that frames minorities as troublesome constituents; second, in their failure to frame 'deep' diversities except as conflict or problem (Fleras 2004/06). This problematic should come as no surprise: Newsmedia are fundamentally racialized because of how rules, values, practices, discourses and rewards are dispersed (both deliberately or inadvertently) thereby reinforcing white interests and eurocentric agendas. The end result? By framing diversity around conflict or problems as catalysts for newsworthiness to the exclusion of alternative frameworks – ie. by normalizing invisibility while problematizing visibility – newsmedia coverage of minorities has proven systemically biasing rather than systematically biased (Everitt 2005).

Newsmedia mistreatment of minorities and aboriginal peoples continues unabated (ERCOMER 2002; Jiwani 2006; Miller 2005; also Kelley 2006). But while news media may have once openly vilified minorities as aliens in a whiteman's country, it is no longer socially acceptable to do. A growing reluctance to say anything negative about minorities for fear of being branded racists or reactionary (McGowan 2001) encourages thinly veiled criticism that are subliminally pro white. First, minorities are criticized for not fitting into the framework of society as they should (minorities are ok if they are useful or

know their place); second, minorities are associated with negative contexts related to crime or terrorism; third, their cultural values and practices are dismissed as incommensurate with contemporary secular society; and fourth, minority realities and concerns are refracted through a pro white gaze (perspective) that invariably diminishes or distorts. However subtle and understated, such a negativity framework not only reduces minorities to the status of problem people, but, by essentializing minorities as little more than ethnics, also feeds into a national discourse over who is acceptable and what is normal (see also McLeod 2007/2006).

Nowhere is this negativity more evident than with media coverage of Muslims or those of Arabian appearance (Canadian Islamic Conference 2005). Positive and normalizing images of ordinary Muslims or Arabs are almost non existent in the mainstream media (Alliance of Civilizations 2006; Starck 2007). Coverage of Muslims as violent and irrational is heavily skewed towards international conflicts without providing a historical context (Manning 2006). For newsmedia, the debate over the so-called clash of civilizations – Islamic vs Western – tends to frame their coverage accordingly, that is, protagonists ensnared in global geopolitics (in the same way the Cold War once served as a framing function for geo-political developments) (Seib 2004/05). Newsframes routinely portray Muslim/Arab males as tyrants or terrorists, while Muslim/ Arab women are reduced to the level of burqa-bearing submissives at odds with modern realities. Visual images about Islam immediately triggers a sub-liminal negativity:

> A bearded Middle Eastern looking man wearing a black cloak and turban can trigger an entire series of images of a fanatical religious movement, of airplane hijackings, of western hostages held helpless in dungeons, of truck bombs killing hundreds of innocent people, of cruel punishment sanctioned by Islamic law, and of suppression of human rights – in sum of intellectual and moral regression (Karim 2006:118).

Clearly, then, mainstream media stand accused of being racist, including the use of loaded terminology (Islam as extremist, fundamentalist, terrorists, or primitive) and simplistic and negative stereotypes (deSouza and Williamson 2006). The combination of insult and injury, together with diminished self-esteem, fosters resentment and rage over what many see as white propaganda. Such racialized one-sidedness also intensifies the risk of racial tensions and increased discrimination. Not surprisingly, perhaps, when a Gallup poll asked 10,000 respondents in predominantly Muslim countries what the West could do to improve relations with the Muslim world, 47 percent (the single largest

response) said the western media must stop disrespecting Islam by portraying Muslims as inferior or threatening (Alliance of Civilization 2006).

In short, mainstream newsmedia are criticized for reneging on their commitment to integrate minorities (Whyte 2006). Criticism revolves around the media's refusal to treat minorities as individuals and active agents, but as faceless, homogenous, and unruly mob; their reluctance to go beyond the tokenistic; and a refusal to depict minorities within a holistic context of normalcy or acceptability (Weber-Menges 2005). The proliferation of these biases and blindspots creates resistance and reaction: What option is there except to adopt alternative media as sources of information that reflects minority realities in a language that relates to their experiences (Ahmad 2006). An alternative discourse offers a different menu of newsvalues from mainstream communication agendas. Instead of framing minorities as potentially troublesome constituents, profiles of success promote a positive self image that helps foster a collective community confidence. Even coverage of negative news is framed differently. With ethnic media, intergroup conflict and community problems may be situated within a historical context that apportions blame to the system rather than minorities (Ojo 2006; Lin and Song 2006).

Against this backdrop of negativity and the problematic, ethnic media *proactively* strive to celebrate minority successes, accomplishments, and aspirations. They are positioned to operate in a counter-hegemonic manner by providing the missing social and cultural context for understanding the complex social realities that minorities must endure. By amplifying a sense of culture and community, ethnic media secure a haven from the stereotyping and distortions that abound in mainstream media. Ethnic media also constitute an information system about the homeland that is crucial for adaptation; after all, news from or about home taps into an immigrants longing for content about the 'there' as basis for fitting in 'here' (Lin and Song 2006). No less critical is their role in supplying specific information needs, including information about settling down, fitting in, and moving up (Whyte 2006). Consider the potential benefits: An ethnic media may prove more accessible than mainstream outlets when publicizing free services or fund raising events; a range of information about upcoming events and visits from overseas dignitaries; in depth stories about their communities; advice on how to book a vacation or find legal representation; or a window to catch up on the latest cricket matches or rugby scores. Of particular importance are information tip sheets for manoeuvering one's way through government bureaucracies and service agencies (Silverstone and Georgiou 2005). In that people pay attention to media that pay attention to them, it is this dedication to community service that anchors the credibility of ethnic media (Husband 2005).

Ethnic media also play both an *outward-* and *inward-looking* role. *Outwardly*, by supplying information of relevance and immediacy to the intended demographic, including how to navigate the labyrinth of a strange new world. Ethnic media provide communities with a voice to articulate their concerns with the wider public, while providing a counterweight to an increasingly corporate mainstream newsmedia (Hsu 2002). This building of bridges with the outside world reinforces and advances the social capital of minorities both as individuals and community members. *Inwardly*, as a marker of identity by reporting news of relevance to the community through a perspective and tone that resonates meaningfully with these audiences. Focusing on homeland news or events in the immigrants native language strengthens identities, heritage and culture, especially since mainstream media tend to ignore minority issues or unnecessarily problematize them. In offering an alternative view to mainstream media, ethnic media focus on issues related to social justice, institutional inclusion, and the removal of discriminatory barriers. By providing local news of direct and immediate relevance, ethnic media acquire the potential to mobilize residents to act upon injustices and problems within the community (Lin and Song 2006).

Clearly, then, ethnic media can be aligned along a reactive-proactive and outward-inward dimension. With the globalized flows of migrants, ideas, information, capital, and technology around the world, traditional notions of belonging between people and place are changing. Immigrants now have the option of being firmly rooted in their adopted countries, without losing multiple links to their homeland, thereby exerting pressure on ethnic (and immigrant) media to construct a multilocality and transnational sense of belonging (Cheng 2005). In acknowledging the possibility of community as imagined or locality as narrated across national borders, the concept of multiple homelands and attachments challenges conventional notions that reduce the relationship between host country and home country as either-or dichotomies for winning immigrant attention and affection. Even questions regarding the role of ethnic media in helping or hindering the integration process may have to be rethought, according to Cheng. Rather than boxing them into one of these dimensional categories, most ethnic media are multidimensional. If these dimensions (inward-outward; reactive-proactive) are aligned along two continua and then bisected at right angles, a four cell table is created that acknowledges the dynamics and complexity of ethnic media:

	Reactive (defensive)	**Proactive** (affirmative)
Inward (insular)	Reaction to media negativity/invisibility by offering a minority perspective including access to local and homeland information. "constructing buffers"	Focus on celebrating both personal and community accomplishments to foster community cohesion and culture pride. "creating bonds"
Outward (integrative)	Counteract social injustice by advocating positive changes for leveling an unlevel playing field. "crossing borders"	Utilize positive images of minority success for bolstering minority civic participation in inclusive society. "building bridges"

Table 2: Dimensions of Ethnic Media

Of course, not every agrees with ethnic and aboriginal media as integrative in intent or outcome. Critics argue that ethnic and aboriginal media may dampen integration, especially with the inception of satellite TV and the internet, both of which allow disaporic migrants to easily retain their homeland roots by tapping into the latest news, fashions, and trends. The concern is understandable: In their commitment to transcend the limitations of mainstream media, members of ethnic communities tend to be the most enthusiastic and technology aware consumers of communication services (Online 2007). And once engrossed in their own media world, critics contend, immigrants no longer need to communicate or interact with others, resulting in the fragmentation of society into self-contained enclaves (Husband 2005; Weber-Menges 2005). For example some third language broadcasters in Canada, including Cantonese, Mandarin, and Punjabi offer modest amounts of local and current affairs news but most ethnic broadcasts include little Canadian editorial content – in effect, depriving minority audience of Canadian news, views, and cultural content. Admittedly, migrants neither live in media ghettos nor rely exclusively on a diet of ethnic media (Lam 1996; Mahtani 2007), but rather selectively rely on a rich media menu for closing the multilocality gap (Weber-Menges/Geißler 2007).

To summarize: In refusing to either canonize or demonize ethnic media, a rethinking is in order. Rather than typecasting ethnic media as divisive or integrative, a dialectical dynamic is in play. The interplay of the reactive-proactive with the inward-outward generates an insular and integrative process that pushes as it pulls – bonding and buffering as well as bridging and border crossing. A preoccupation with homeland and ethnic news may delay societal incorporation by virtue of reinforcing cultural identities and community networks (Lin and Song 2006). Nevertheless, in a world where the global is the local, and vice versa, such a focus does not necessarily preclude integration. By creating a comfort zone in a strange new land, ethnic media insulate migrants and minorities from the harshness of readjustment, thereby providing a buffer

between the 'here' and the 'there' by way of the 'inbetween'. Ethnic media also serve as a bridging device for facilitating integration into society at large while securing a reassuring bond of community, identity, and culture (Open Society Institute 2005). In that, ethnic media represent instruments of cultural preservation as well as agents of incorporation, their status as pockets of insularity as pathways to integration cannot be underestimated. No more so than in Canada where the popularity of ethnic and aboriginal media may well constitute the quintessential expression of Canada's inclusive multiculturalism.

4.   Aboriginal and Ethnic Media in Canada: Pockets of Insularity as Pathways to Integration

Canada has long campaigned to promote and preserve its cultural diversity in the face of globalization, trade liberalization, and border-busting technology. Support for the principle of cultural diversity is formulated in three ways: first through the promotion of ethnic or third language broadcasting within the framework of Canadian broadcasting system (Lincoln et al. 2005); second, through the mainstreaming of private and public media; and third, by acknowledging the legitimacy of ethnic and aboriginal newspapers/presses. Yet success secures neither clarity nor consensus. Although ethnic and aboriginal have enjoyed a long history in Canada, there is no agreement over magnitude and impact. Numbers fluctuate as new publications arise as quickly as they disappear because of costs, competition, and intimidation. Even the expression ethnic and aboriginal media is problematic because of internal diversity. Does ethnic refer to new Canadians or Canadian-born? To visibilized minorities or white European ethnics? To aboriginal people with status or without status? Despite these uncertainties and confusion, aboriginal and ethnic media can be divided into three main categories: Aboriginal and ethnic print, aboriginal and ethnic broadcasting, and mainstreaming of public and private media. First, however, a brief overview of Canada's mediascape.

4.1   Canada's Mediascape

Canada is widely regarded as a media rich society whose impressive achieve-ments are particularly striking despite a daunting geographic, demographic diversity, and historical obstacles (Attalah and Shade 2006). In articulating the objectives of the broadcast system, the Broadcasting Act establishes several priorities for Canadian broadcasting, including an emphasis on Canadian-owned and controlled media, responsiveness to the needs of all Canadians, and

a commitment to engage language diversity without losing sight of Canada's official French-English bilingualism. While operating primarily in English and French to ensure the integration of immigrants into Canadian society, broadcasting in Canada is expected:

> […] through its programming and the employment opportunities arising out of its operations, [to] serve the needs and interests, and reflect the circumstances and aspirations, of Canadian men, women, and children, including equal rights, the linguistic duality and multicultural and multiracial nature of Canadian society and the special place of aboriginal peoples within that society.

This diversity agenda has culminated in the development of a sophisticated and complex broadcasting system that serves both English and French as well as aboriginal peoples, in addition to a range of third language services that now constitute an important tile in Canada's media-mosaic (Lincoln et al 2005). Ethnic radio programming is present in most Canadian cities, ranging in scope from time slots at mainstream stations to ethnic radio stations in third languages. Television is particularly important, including an aboriginal television network. Multicultural channels (OMNI 1 and 2 in Toronto) are found in major Canadian cities, in addition to time slots on community cable, commercial stations and a national network (Vision TV). In total, Canada's system of mixed private-public-populist arrangement comprises nearly 700 private and public television services (511 English, 115 French, and 53 third language) together with 1, 158 radio services (867 English, 253 French, and 38 third language) (CRTC 2006).

Canada also possesses a lively if increasingly beleaguered publishing sector. Currently, there are 105 daily papers across Canada, down from a peak of 138 in 1938, but up from 87 in 1945. Ownership of newspapers has devolved as well to several major chains including CanWest Global, Hollinger International, Torstar, Quebecor, Osprey Media Group (recently purchased by Quebecor), and Power (Canadian Newspaper Association 2006). Although 5.2 million Canadians receive a daily paper (down from 5,7 million in 1989), readership continues to remain steady with a total of 11,8 million weekly readers in the major 17 markets – a figure that remained steady between 2001 and 2005 despite immigration driven population increases. Readership of online papers continues to grow; in 2005, 15 percent of adults 18 years and over read an online edition of a newspaper. Equally impressive is the growth of free daily papers; for example, up to 27 percent of Toronto adults and 23 percent of Montreal adults read a free daily each week. In short, despite

holding their own in these trying times, according to the Canadian Newspaper Association, the outlook for newspapers appears bleak:

> Canadian newspapers continue to face challenges and competition in their role as bearers of news in the information age. While information itself proliferates at an astonishing rate in a variety of forms, methods of storing and distributing it have grown more encompassing and complex.

Compounding media woes is a seeming inability or disinterest in cracking the ethnic market. Despite Canada's Multiculturalism Act, its Broadcasting Act and Ethnic Broadcasting policies, newsmedia remain divided along a colour line between the normalized white and the racialized "other" – in the process forfeiting an opportunity to connect with a largely untapped demographic.

Finally, ethnic media have expanded significantly over the last decade, playing a much larger role in the lives of the fastest growing ethnic groups (Chinese and South Asian Canadians) than traditional media measurements would indicate (Karim 2006). These media range in size from small newspapers printed in home basements to well established and professionally run broadcast stations. Hundreds of ethnic newspapers publish on a daily, weekly, or monthly cycle, including some that are increasingly sophisticated in operation and quite capable of competing with non ethnic papers. There are those that speak to specific groups (Share – Caribbean and African), while others are directed at immigrants in general (New Canada). Some are printed in English, many in native languages, others in both. Foreign based services are available as well, either through specialty cable channels or satellite television, thus reinforcing how ethnic media quickly adapt to new communication technologies to secure access to often small and frequently scattered audiences (Karim 2003). Of particular note is the emergence of the internet as a vital media option and communication tool for ethnic groups, possibly contributing to a diminished reliance on traditional media for major ethnic groups in Canada's MTV cities (Solutions Research Group 2006).

Of course, Canada is not alone in the ethnic newsmedia sweepstakes. The United States has also seen a major spike in the number of ethnic radio stations both local and national, newspapers, magazines, web portals, and public and cable television stations (Hsu 2002). (Scholarly interest in ethnic media as an instrument of assimilation by shaping immigrant worldviews and sense of belonging goes back to 1922 and the publication of Robert Parks *The Immigrant Press and its Control*). In contrast to mainstream newsmedia which are experiencing a decline in readership, revenues, and stock prices, ethnic media continue to expand (Annual Report 2006). Admittedly no concrete figures are

available for ethnic media nationwide, nevertheless, a study in the state of California estimated that 84 percent of Asian Americans, Blacks, and Latinos were exposed to ethnic media, more than half indicated a preference for ethnic broadcasts or publications over English language sources, and 40 percent said they paid more attention to ads in ethnic publications than to those in mainstream media (Briggs 2005). With ethnic minority audiences now accounting for nearly a third of the purchasing power in America, advertisers no longer dismiss this demographic as too small or too poor, but are pitching to these niches as vigorously as they do to the mainstream (Lieberman 2006).

4.2   Aboriginal and Ethnic Publications

The centrality of ethnic newsmedia in Canada cannot be denied. Ethnic newspapers are no stranger to Canada's mediascape - from the first ethnic papers written in German in Halifax at the end of the 18th century (Die Neuschottlaendishe Kalendar 1787) to the publication in 1835 of Waterloo Region's Das Museum Canada, followed by the emergence of the black papers of the 1850s (including the Provincial Freeman and The Voice of the Fugitive). Estimates at present suggest up to 350 ethnic papers (including about 200 third language publications) that cater to their audiences on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or bi-annual basis. Most of these paper are local or regional in scope, but a few are national including the Chinese language version of Canada's national newsmagazine (Macleans). In British Columbia the Indo-Canadian *Punjabi Times* competes with three English-language weeklies and four Punjabi weeklies that address Indo-Canadian issues, while in Southern Ontario there are seven Punjabi weeklies and a twice-monthly English newspaper targeted to the same audience.Their collective impact is immeasurable argues Ben Viccari (2007), President of the Canadian Ethnic Journalists and Writers Club: "These media keep their readers and audiences informed about Canada as well as providing a vehicle for expression of freedom of thought that many editors and broadcasters never found in their country of origins".

4.3   Aboriginal and Ethnic Broadcasting

No less significant are ethnic and aboriginal broadcasting – both radio and television. In contrast to the ethnic print media that are relatively free to come and go as they please, ethnic and aboriginal broadcasting is tightly micromanaged. On the assumption that airwaves belong to the public and must serve public interests, Canadians Broadcasting Acts (1991) not only

asserts the importance of diversity within the broadcast system, but the goals for ethnic and aboriginal broadcasting are established as well. The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) stipulates how to put these principles into practice by specifying the conditions for the dissemination of ethnic and multilingual programming (Karim 2006).

For the CRTC, ethnic programming is defined as any radio or television programming aimed at any ethnically or racially distinct group other than aboriginal peoples, and those descendents of French and English settlers. The programming may be in any language, including English or French, or combination of languages. Depending on size of the target group and resources available, stations that feature ethnic programming must incorporate several ethnic groups within their service catchment area. As the CRTC (1999) puts it:

> Ethnic stations are required to serve a range of ethnic groups in a variety of languages. This is because the scarcity of broadcast frequencies may not permit the licensing of an over-the-air single-language service for each ethnic in a given market. This approach also allows for the provision of service to groups that would not otherwise be able to afford their own single-language service.

Other restrictions apply as part of the mandatory licensing arrangement. According to CRTC regulations, ethnic radio and television stations must devote at least 60 percent of their schedule to ethnic programming. The other 40 percent of the schedule allows stations to establish a business model for generating revenues in support of ethnic programming. To reflect Canada's linguistic diversity, 50 percent of their programming schedule must be in third languages, i.e. languages other than French, English, or the many Aboriginal languages. Ethnic radio stations must fulfill this requirement each broadcast week; compliance with this requirement for ethnic television stations are measured monthly. It should be noted that non ethnic radio and television stations may air unlimited amounts of ethnic programming in French or English, but only 15 percent of their schedules can be in third languages, unless they obtain CRTC approval for up to 40 percent.

Such a high level of micro-management may appear excessively bureaucratic. But there is a rationale, namely, the need to protect ethnic broadcasting from undue competition while providing non ethnic stations with the flexibility to reflect local diversity. As is the case with mainstream broadcasting, Canadian content requirements apply to ethnic radio and television stations (generally speaking, radio programming must reflect 35 percent Canadian content – at least for category 2 general music, but only 7

percent for category 1 ethnic music). Television programming must reflect 60 percent Canadian content, including 50 percent during the evening ('prime time') broadcast slot.

4.3.1 Ethnic Broadcasting

The CRTC drafted its first ethnic broadcasting policy in 1985. The policy was predicated on the multicultural premise that new Canadians would have a stronger sense of belonging if provided with programming from within their community and in their own language (Whyte 2006). Since the CRTC issued Canada's first license for ethnic broadcasting to CHIN radio in 1966, the number of licensed ethnic radio and television services has grown dramatically. At present, licensed ethnic and third language services consist of five over the air TV stations in the MTV cities (Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver), 18 ethnic radio stations that offer nearly 2000 hours of third language programming each week), 10 specialty audio services that require special receivers, 5 analog specialty services, 11 launched category 2 digital specialty services and 50 approved but not yet launched (cited in Lincoln et al 2005; also Cardozo 2005). (category 2 services are digital, pay, and specialty services that are not obligated to be carried by cable or satellite distributor) (Kular 2006). OMNI 1 and OMNI 2 are world leaders in this field in producing in excess of 20 hours of original programming per week, including 60 percent that is non-French or non-English (Quill 1996). Vision TV, a national broadcaster, also hosts about 30 programs about different religious faiths and practices. Inroads are also evident in the private sector, where multicultural issues since 1984 have been addressed by Toronto's CITY-TV station through two large blocks of non-English, non-French programming.

4.3.2 Aboriginal Media and Broadcasting

Like ethnic minorities, Aboriginal peoples too have indigenized media institutions as a tool of empowerment for linking the past with pathways into a globally integrated future (Meadows and Molnar 2001; Roth 2006). But aboriginal and ethnic media operate on different wavelengths: While ethnic media provide an alternative service to that offered by mainstream newsmedia, aboriginal media strive to provide a first level of service since the mainstream does not service aboriginal audiences (Avison and Meadows 2000). Not surprisingly, because of differences in sociological and constitutional status aboriginal media reflect a different logic compared to ethnic media (Fleras and

Elliott 2007). Ethnic media are directed at immigrants/refugees and descendents of immigrants/refugees – those who sociologists define as voluntary minorities because of their decision to come to Canada. Generally speaking, their primary concern upon 'getting in' is to settle down, fit in, and move up – without necessarily sacrificing their homeland identity in the process. Rather than challenging Canada or separating themselves from society, the goal is improve the terms of integration, in part through removal of those discriminatory barriers that preclude inclusiveness, in part by capitalizing on special measures when necessary to facilitate the integration. Towards that end, Canada's ethnic media play a major role in the integration process by providing a set of inward and outward looking functions that facilitate the transition from 'there' to 'here' by way of the 'inbetween' – that is, linking immigrants with home country while bolstering a commitment to Canada.

By contrast, aboriginal peoples are defined sociologically as involuntary minorities. As descendents of the original occupants, aboriginal peoples were forcibly incorporated against their will into a colonial constitutional framework. Instead of looking to 'fit in' into a society not of their making, their primary goal is to 'get out' of this colonial predicament by restructuring their constitutional relationship along the status of a "nations within" status. Nothing less politicized will do for those who claim status as fundamentally autonomous political communities sovereign in their own right yet sharing sovereignty with society at large (Maaka and Fleras 2005). In rejecting a view of aboriginal peoples as ethnic minorities in need of assistance or information, aboriginal media tend to resonate with information that advances aboriginal peoples' claims as "first nations" for reasserting a right to self-determining autonomy, instead of a dominated people who are subject to dominant values and labels (Retzlaff 2007).

Admittedly, not all aboriginal media are politicized. Many incorporate an informational and community agendas that provide Aboriginal peoples with one of the few places where they can find a reflection of their lived experiences (Raudsepp 1996). For example, consider the mission statement by Anishnabek News, an aboriginal paper in Ontario, whole goal is: "…to foster pride and share knowledge about Anishnabek current affairs, culture, goals, and successes". Objectives include "…Sharing: Provide opportunities for people from the four corners of the Anishnabek Nation to tell stories and record achievements , and to keep our citizens informed about the activities of the Union of Ontario Indians. Strength: To give voice to the vision of the Anishnabek Nation that celebrates our history, language, and culture, promotes our land, treaty, and aboriginal rights, and supports the development of health and prosperous communities." To counteract and resist the

dominant Euro-Canadian discourse, combat stereotypes, and ensure that histories and contemporary issues reflect Aboriginal perspectives, aboriginal media emphasize different newsnorms to challenge and change (Retzlaff 2007). In brief, another slogan may capture the distinction between ethnic and aboriginal media. If ethnic media are about improving the prospects of *living together with differences*, then it may be more accurate to describe aboriginal media as advancing the challenge of *living apart together*.

Canada's Aboriginal Peoples may possibly possess one of the most advanced broadcasting systems in the world (Roth 2006). Nowhere is this more evident than in Northern Canada, where aboriginal communities have exercised control over the local media, largely by appropriating satellite technology to meet social and cultural needs (Meadows 1995; Molnar and Meadows 2001). The Broadcasting Act in 1991 proved pivotal as well. It not only enshrined an aboriginal right to control over their own communications, but also instructed mainstream broadcasting to ensure 'the special place of aboriginal peoples' in its programming and employment. In keeping with the spirit of the Broadcasting Act, the CRTC approved the creation of a national Aboriginal network (APTN) in 1999 with an availability to 8 million Canadian homes (all cable companies are required to carry APTN as part of their basic consumer package, costing each subscribers about 15 cents a month, which is then allocated to APTN). As a national network by, for, and about aboriginality, APTN provides a platform to produce culturally and linguistically relevant programming for aboriginal men, women, and children, while providing Canadians with a window into the aboriginal world. Creation of national mediaspace that is enshrined in federal legislation also promises to counteract mainstream miscasting by promoting a positive and realistic portrayal of Canada's First Peoples across a broad range of topics (Molnar and Meadows 2001 Baltrushchat 2004; Retzlaff 2007). As Lorna Roth (2006:327) puts it when describing APTN as a symbolic meeting place for aboriginal peoples and non aboriginals to communicate their common interests:

> APTN has enabled indigenous messages to be heard by constituency groups that might have never had access to a live person of Aboriginal descent; it provides an opportunity to share national imageries and histories, to build bridges of understanding, and to bridge cultural borders.

To what extent have Aboriginal Peoples (and indigenous peoples in general) and diasporic populations embraced the information superhighway to bridge and to bond? In response to the question of what can the electronic frontier deliver to a peoples on the fringes of power and far from the centres of

influence, the answer is increasingly clear: Greater empowerment for the historically disenfranchised by changing the subjectivities and practices (both online and offline) of the marginalized and disempowered (Landzelius 2006). This transformation goes beyond a simple asking of 'use' or 'effects' of the new media. Emphasis instead is on how members of a community are making themselves a(t) home in a global communicative environment.

Four patterns can be discerned according to Kyra Landzelius: (1) aboriginal/indigenous peoples are appropriating and moulding ICTs to reflect, reinforce, and advance their needs, interests, and identities - including the use of cyberactivism to promote their ends; (2) ICTs as forum for making claims in the name of ethnicity (or indigeneity or aboriginality); (3) for naming ethnicity or claiming ethnicity (or aboriginality); and (4) shifting the boundaries by which the politics of ethnicity/aboriginality is rethought, reworked, and revitalized.

To date, aboriginal peoples engagement with ICTs stretches along two directional pulls, namely, inreach (bonding) and outreach (bridging) (Landzelius 2006). Inreach orientations range from promoting localized interests and community services, including the dissemination of ingroup information to the importation of expert knowledge for community use. For example, aboriginal leaders are turning to ICTs to deliver high quality health care to remote Canadian communities (Gideon 2006). Telemedicine enables medical specialists to observe patients via real time links, thus providing an affordable way to defeat the tyranny of distance across Canada's vast expanses, while balancing Western medical knowledge with aboriginal health beliefs and practices. Outreach orientations tend to focus on bridging with the outside world, ranging in scope from simple tourist information to full blown indigenous revolutionary movements. The uprising of the indigenous and metizo peasants of the Chiapas in their resistance against the Mexican government constitutes one of the more spectacular examples of an indigenous cybercampaign against the new geopolitical order - thus reinforcing the web's potential for local empowerment (Belausteguigoitia 2006). In short, far from being at odds with each other or canceling each other out, inreach and outreach functions are mutually reinforcing by embedding the local with the global and their implications for the articulation of identities, experiences, and outcomes (Landzelius 2006).

4.4   Mainstreaming Ethnicity

References to ethnic and aboriginal media in Canada include an additional stream. Mainstream media in Canada are under pressure (both formal and

informal) to respect, reflect, and be more responsive to ethnic and aboriginal differences (i.e. "mainstreaming" – to bring into the centre what once was at the margins). The government Task Force on Broadcasting Policy, co-chaired by Gerald Caplan and Florian Sauvagneau in 1986, addressed the need to include aboriginal peoples and racial minorities (Raboy 1988). The Broadcasting Act of 1991 made provisions for Canadian broadcasting, both in terms of programming and employment opportunities, 'to serve the needs of a diverse society and reflect the multicultural and multiracial character of Canada.' The Act not only reinforced the case for "cultural expression" by expanding air time for racialized ethnic minorities; it also insisted on sensitivity training for program and production staff, language guidelines to reduce race–role stereotypes, and monitoring of on-air representation of racial minorities. The institutionalization of the Ethnic Broadcasting Policy established guidelines for portrayal of minorities; in turn a regulatory body was charged with developing broadcasting services that reflected Canada's diversity. The CRTC requires all television broadcasters (and increasingly radio applicants) to file seven year plans on how they will reflect diversity in their programming and operations, and report annually on their progress (Cardozo 2005) (for comparable developments in the Netherlands, see d'Haenens 2007).

Mainstreaming diversity can prove a win/win situation. According to Madeline Ziniak, chair of the Task Force for Cultural Diversity on Television and Vice President at Omni Television, advertisers are waking up to the advantages of multicultural advertising to minorities (cited in Prashad 2006). Demographics are propelling the changes: When people of colour compose nearly 40 percent of the populations in Vancouver and Toronto, the media have little choice but to acknowledge that diversity sells. Despite a more accepting social climate and a powerful business model, institutional inclusiveness does not come easily to commercial mainstream media. Put bluntly commercial media do not see themselves as reform agencies to promote progressive change or to accommodate, even if they may have social responsibilities because of the power they wield. They are a business whose raison d'être is simple: to make money by connecting audience to advertisers through ratings. Institutional practices that generate revenues (for example, stereotyping) will be retained; those that don't will be discarded. Such a bottom-line mentality will invariably clash with minority demands for balanced and contexted coverage, given media preference for morselization over context, conflict over co-operation, the episodic over the contextual, personalities over issues (see Atkinson 1994).

That competing agendas are at play is no less detrimental to mainstreaming diversity. Whereas mainstream media provide a key cross over point for intercultural understanding and exchanges (deSouza and Williamson

2006), the very changes that minorities want of the newsmedia (responsible coverage of minority interests, less sensationalism, more context, toned-down language, and less stereotyping) are precisely the newsnorms that media rely on to sell copy or capture eyeballs.

Challenging the conventional news paradigm will prove a difficult sell. To the extent that changes happen, it will arise only when the issue of power (-sharing) is addressed by transformation to the structural constraints that inform newsmedia production and the ideological mindsets of media workers (Mahtani 2007).

5. Ethnic and Aboriginal Media in Canada: A Blueprint for Living Together Differently

How then do ethnic and aboriginal media reflect and reinforce Canada's commitment to an inclusive Multiculturalism? Consider how multiculturalism originated and continues to exist as a response to the realities of new and racialized Canadians. Canada is a destination of choice for immigrants around the world. Just under half of Canada's population at present (47%) can claim some non French, non English, and non aboriginal ancestry. Visible (or racialized) minorities constitute 13.4 percent of the population in 2001, a sharp increase from the 6 percent that existed in 1981. This figure is expected to expand to about 20 percent by 2017 (Canada's 150th birthday), in large part because of Canada's robust immigration program including approximately 250 000 new Canadians each year, with about 60 percent arriving from Asia and the Middle East. Neither immigrants nor racialized minorities are distributed evenly across Canada. Racialized minorities account for nearly 40 percent of the population in Toronto and Vancouver, while about one half of the population is foreign born ('immigrant'). Not surprisingly, perhaps, about 70 percent of Canada's population growth is immigrant driven (reflecting a low replacement rate of Canadian births). By 2017, the entirety of Canada's population (and labour market) growth will reflect immigration intake.

Of those initiatives at the forefront of 'managing' this demographic revolution, the most notable is official multiculturalism (Kymlicka 2001, 2008; Fleras 2002; Stein et al 2007; Banting et al 2007). In contrast to the colonial paradigm that equated Canadian culture with the unquestioned mainstream while ethnic cultures and minorities were marginalized as subcultures, a commitment to multiculturalism signified a major paradigm shift (Canada Heritage 2003). Canada is now widely recognized as a multicultural society whose engagement with the inclusiveness principles of multiculturalism is unmatched. But notwithstanding over 35 years of official multiculturalism and

widespread acceptance, confusion continues. Both critics and supporter are prone to interpret multiculturalism in the literal sense of many cultures coexisting in harmony side by side. For some the idea of celebrating differences and promoting ethnic diverse communities is doable and worthwhile; for others, however, such diversity poses problems of cohesiveness. Having outlived its usefulness in an era of politicized diversity, multiculturalism is perceived as a recipe for divisiveness and danger, and counterproductive to the safety and success of society.

In reality, the rationale behind Canada's Multiculturalism model is inclusive in logic and intent. According to an inclusive multiculturalism, a Canada of many cultures is possible as long as peoples cultural differences don't get in the way of equal citizenship or full participation. A social climate is fostered that tolerates cultural differences as long as this commitment does not preclude belonging, equality, and involvement. To the extent that cultural differences are tolerated under Canada's multiculturalism, these differences cannot break the law, violate individual rights, or contravene core constitutional values (Fleras 2003). Canada's official multiculturalism reflects its modernist roots in promoting liberal universalism. That is, people should be treated the same as a matter of course regardless of their differences because everyone is equal before the law. Our commonalities as freewheeling and morally autonomous individuals are more important - at least for purposes of recognition or reward - than that which divides us as members of racially distinct groups. Insofar as cultural differences exist, they are largely superficial, tend to get in the way, and should rarely be deployed as a basis for reward or recognition even for progressive reasons.

The conclusion seems inescapable: Canada's multiculturalism model is not about celebrating diversity but removing disadvantage, not about separation and isolation but about interaction and integration, not about exclusion but about inclusion, not about differences but about tolerance, not about a one way process of absorption but a two way process of integration (you adjust, we adapt/you adapt, we adjust). Admittedly, differences are not entirely dismissed. They may have to be taken into account under extenuating circumstances; after all, a commitment to formal equality does not necessarily guarantee against exclusion or exploitation. However valid or valuable at times, these differences must conform with what is permissible in Canada with respect to laws, values, and rights. Yet another multicultural inversion is inescapable: If its goal is on removing disadvantage, promoting tolerance, and fostering integration and inclusion, Multiculturalism is more about the 'we' rather than the 'them'. The focus is not about changing the 'other' but about ensuring 'reasonable accommodation' at the level of structures/institutions and individuals/mindsets.

The paradoxes implicit in an official multiculturalism may well parallel those of ethnic and aboriginal media. To one side, ethnic media in general conform to a modernist notion for living together with differences, in part by acknowledging the need for new and racialized Canadians to be treated equally regardless of their differences. To the other side, ethnic media by definition constitute a postmodern reflection of an official multiculturalism. Cultural differences are important and may have to be incorporated in some circumstances into the existing institutional framework. That is, equal treatment as a matter of routine; differential treatment when the situation arises. In other words, ethnic media confirm the need for respecting cultural diversity and ethnic community while pursuing the goals of institutional inclusiveness and social justice, while facilitating dialogue where the two principles intersect (Alliance of Civilizations 2006).

By contrast, aboriginal media are unlikely to endorse the principle of multiculturalism. For those at the political forefront in politicizing the concept of a new postcolonial social contract, a multicultural governance cannot possibly cope with the politics of deep diversity, especially when addressing aboriginal demands for self-determining autonomy over land, identity, and political (Maaka and Fleras 2005). Aboriginal difference is key to survival, and aboriginal media play a key role in securing a special relationship with central authorities, with its corresponding flow of powers and entitlements. And yet aboriginal media also acknowledge that aboriginal peoples require the same kind of information and community as new Canadians, especially for those aboriginal peoples who live in cities (over one half of aboriginal peoples are urban although this urbanity may be fluid and imprecise). Aboriginal media content must be customized to address these concerns for integration through pathways of information and connection. To the extent that aboriginal media are expected to convey this complex dynamic of difference yet commonality, the challenges are striking.

Notwithstanding these limitations and insecurities, both aboriginal and ethnic media remain in the forefront of Canada building. In reflecting, reinforcing, and advancing the inclusiveness principles of Canada's multicultural model, ethnic and aboriginal media play an integrative role for advancing a cooperative coexistence. Aboriginal and ethnic media are simultaneously inclusive and insular: Insofar as aboriginal and ethnic media concurrently promote social integration and cultural insularity without sacrificing a commitment to community or to Canada they are both inward and outward looking. Aboriginal and ethnic media also reflect a reactive and proactive dynamic: reactive, in buffering minorities from the negativity of mainstream media; proactive, in building bridges by capitalizing on alternative media discourses. In doing so, they serve as a reminder: Before mainstream

media can assist in the integration migrants and minorities into society, they have yet to institutionally integrate diversity. And because people pay attention to media that pay attention to them, namely, ethnic and aboriginal media, therein lies their success and popularity: In securing a normative blueprint that buffers as it bonds, that bridges as it crosses borders, that insulates as it integrates, aboriginal and ethnic media are proving pivotal as social capital in advancing a living together without drifting apart.

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