

CHAPTER 1

What Are Ethnic Media?

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

This chapter is an introduction to ethnic media. By the end of this chapter you will:

- Be able to define ethnic media.
- Gain a basic understanding of key terms related to the study of ethnic media.
- Learn about the roles ethnic media play in everyday life.
- Understand how globalization is changing the media landscape as we know it, as well as the opportunities globalization creates for the founding and longevity of ethnic media.
- Understand what historical, social, political, and economic conditions make studying ethnic media timely and necessary.
- Have a map to how this book unfolds.

Introduction

The National Directory of Ethnic Media, which is compiled every year by New America Media, contains information on over 2,500 ethnic media organizations in the United States (New America Media, 2009).¹ These media tell the stories of vibrant African, African-American, Asian, European, indigenous, Latino, and Middle Eastern communities that comprise much of American society today. A study released in June 2009 indicated that nearly 60 million Americans of African, Latino, and Asian background get their news and other information regularly from ethnically targeted television, radio, newspapers, and Web sites. Just 4 years earlier, that figure was 16% lower (Allen, 2009).² Many of these ethnic media publish or broadcast their stories in languages other than English. In New York alone, a Ford Foundation report indicated that the circulation of Chinese language dailies has

grown from about 170,000 in 1990 to more than half a million in 2006. One in three New Yorkers is Hispanic,³ and four Spanish-language dailies serve this population. In other major cities in the U.S., Canada, the European Union (EU), and Australia, the growth of ethnic media is equally impressive. In 2007, there were more than 250 ethnic newspapers in Canada that represent over 40 ethnic communities and 40 television channels that provide programming to a variety of ethnic groups. Additionally, more than 60 Canadian mainstream radio stations offer ethnically targeted programming. CHIN Radio in Toronto, for example, broadcasts in over 30 languages (Media Awareness Network, 2007).⁴ Across the Atlantic, from 2001 to 2004, a number of reports that captured the vitality of ethnic media in Europe were released by the Diasporic Minorities and Their Media project housed at the London School of Economics and Political Science. In the Netherlands, there are more than 150 ethnic broadcasting organizations (Bink, 2002), while there are more than 90 print and broadcast media produced in Germany (Raiser, 2002). The ethnic media in Germany serve 15 different ethnic

Profile 1.1 Diasporic Minorities and Their Media in the EU (EMTEL II)—London

The project's goal was to map the diasporic communities living in European Union member-states and to examine how these communities develop their own media. Researchers on the project were particularly interested in understanding how ethnic media contribute to the integration of ethnic minorities into broader society or to their exclusion from civic life in the countries of the EU. Project affiliates also devoted their attention to how national policies on immigration and media impact social inclusion of ethnic minorities, as well as the development of ethnic media. The Diasporic Minorities and Their Media Project was housed at the London School of Economics, in Britain. The 12 national reports produced by the project provide a wealth of information about ethnic media in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The project was funded through the 5th Community Structural Funds Framework Program of the European Union and it ended in 2003.

communities, including people who identify as Albanian, Bosnian, Chinese, Greek, Russian, Turkish, and Vietnamese. In Europe, the United Kingdom is perhaps the country that has witnessed the largest explosion in the numbers of ethnic media. British citizens and residents read over 100 ethnic daily and weekly newspapers and periodicals, and they tune in to over 15 ethnic radio and 30 television channels (Georgiou, 2002b). In the southern hemisphere, in Australia's New South Wales, the regional Community Relations Commission for Multiculturalism has recorded the presence of more than 115 ethnic media organizations, which serve 39 different ethnic communities, including Armenians, Dutch, Egyptians, Fijians, Greeks, Indians, Indonesians, Koreans, Nepalese, Filipinos, Polish, Sri Lankan, and Turks.⁵

While these figures are compelling enough to warrant research,⁶ there are a number of other considerations that make studying ethnic media particularly salient today. However, before discussing the roles ethnic media play in the everyday lives of millions of people worldwide, we must first explain what we mean by the term *ethnic media*.

Defining Ethnic Media

Ethnic media are media produced *for* a particular ethnic community. The *Haitian Times*, for example, is a newspaper published in New York. It aims to cover all the news that Haitian-origin people living in the city care about. The paper's staff may write about developments in the political situation in Haiti, but they may also cover the campaign of Haitian candidates running for a seat on the City Council of New York. The *Haitian Times* is an ethnic medium. It is produced *for* the 200,000 Haitians who live in New York. But it is also produced *by* that ethnic community. The editor-in-chief of the *Haitian Times*, former *New York Times* journalist Gary Pierre-Pierre, is Haitian (Akst, 2003). There are numerous such media: newspapers, radio, and television stations, as well as Internet-based media.

However not all ethnic media are produced by the ethnic community they serve. The *Korea Times*, for instance, reaches Koreans in New York City, Washington DC, Chicago, Atlanta, Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. It is produced *for* an ethnic community. But, about half the stories that appear in its pages are written by staff writers located in the American cities mentioned, while the other half are written by journalists who live in South Korea. Antenna Satellite claims to be the first Greek radio and television network in North America. While the network targets Greeks in the U.S. and Canada, it is based thousands of miles away from its audience, in a suburb of Athens. SAT-7 is a Christian Arab channel based in Nicosia, Cyprus, but its audience is spread out across the Middle East and North Africa. The same holds true for the audience of Chinese satellite network TVBS-Europe, which is based in Middlesex (in Britain) and Paris. These media produce programming *for* people who self-identify as Greek, Arab, and Chinese respectively. However, the Chinese station TVBS-Europe, for example, does not target the Chinese living in Britain or in Paris in particular. It covers 48 European countries. Its programming is also not produced by any one of the Chinese communities found throughout Europe. Most of the programming comes from TVB-Hong Kong and other affiliates, and it is broadcast in both Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese.

The previous examples indicate that there is a large variety of ethnic media. They vary, first of all, with regard to who produces them. Producers may be members of one ethnic community living in one city or town, but producers can also be big media organizations whose activities span the globe. The audience of ethnic media can be co-ethnics living in a neighborhood of a huge metropolis, but it may also be comprised of all people with the same ethnic background living in various countries around the world. The content of ethnic media may be focused on the life of a particular ethnic community, the news from a home country, or both. And while there are many ethnic newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and television channels, ethnic media producers are also making use of cable networks, satellite network technology, and the Internet to distribute their stories and programs (Karim, 1998): For example, the Web site www.ayrinti.de is an Internet magazine that addresses cultural issues, literature, and the arts, for Turks in Germany. It is published in Turkish (Raiser, 2002).

Figure 1.1 indicates eight important dimensions across which ethnic media may vary. Every dimension includes multiple categories. Arguably, there are at least as

Figure 1.1

Defining ethnic media

Ethnic media are media that are produced *by* and *for* (a) immigrants, (b) racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities, as well as (c) indigenous populations living across different countries.



Who are the PRODUCERS?

Members of an ethnic community in a particular geographic area of a country (e.g., city or region)

One or more media organizations based in an ethnic community's country of origin

A media firm (or firms) in a home country with production units located in the ethnic communities of a host country or countries

A collaborative effort of one or more media organizations located in a home country and organizations based in ethnic communities outside the home country

What is the SIZE of the organization?

Small, family-owned, "mom-and-pop" type businesses

Medium-size organizations: relatively small number of employees, few levels of hierarchy, fairly formalized relationships and job descriptions, and clearly defined audience

Large corporations, organizations resembling major publishing organizations and broadcast networks

Multinational organizations

Who are the FUNDERS?

Entrepreneurs of the ethnic community in one or more countries of settlement

Entrepreneurs from a home country

Entrepreneurs from a home country and entrepreneurs of ethnic communities in host countries

Where is the organization LOCATED?

A neighborhood where many members of an ethnic community live

Anywhere in a host country with a significant number of people who self-identify as members of a particular ethnic community

In a home country

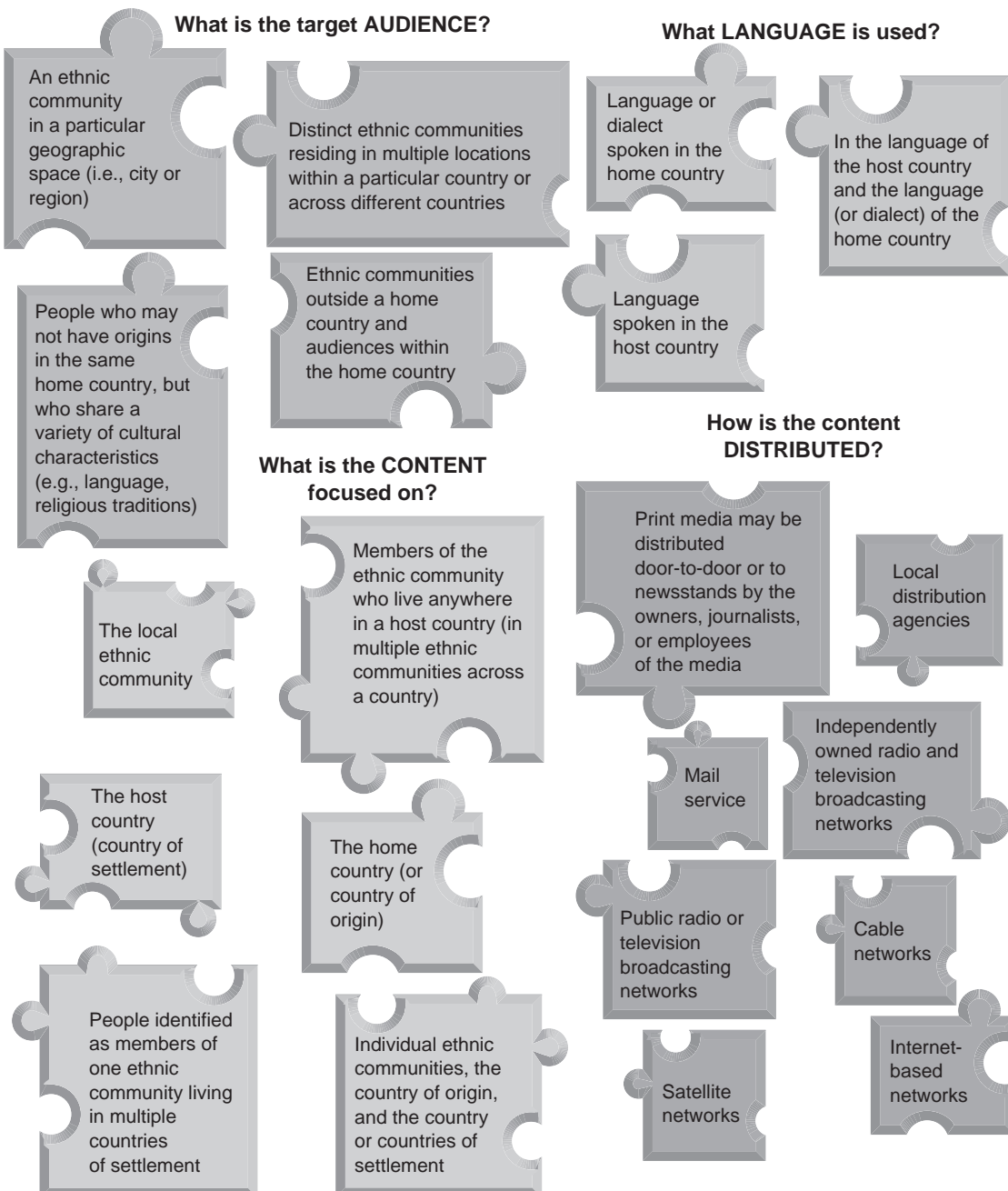
In a "home" country or a country of settlement, but with offices in more than one place around the world. They target audiences in more than one country



Diversity in the Ethnic Media Landscape

Our definition of ethnic media allows for the inclusion of a variety of different ethnic media. In this figure, there are eight piles of puzzle pieces. Think of every pile as a particular characteristic of ethnic media. The puzzle pieces in every pile represent

the variations we find in the universe of ethnic media. There are many unique ways to combine pieces and create the full picture of any of these media. If you had to describe the ethnic media available where you live, what puzzle pieces would you use?



many types of ethnic media as there are combinations of categories. Figure 1.1 is not comprehensive. It does not account, for instance, for different choices ethnic media make to target the older or younger generations of an ethnic community. These issues will be discussed at greater length as the book unfolds. Despite this variability, however, all these media are targeted to people who belong to a particular ethnic group.

For Further Discussion

Select two different ethnic media available in your community, a print medium and a television or radio station, for example, and create their profiles using the dimensions and categories presented in Figure 1.1. You may not have noticed these media before, but unless you live in a completely ethnically homogeneous community, you will find many of them canvassing the television or radio dial, street corner stands, and the shelves of your local grocery store alongside other newspapers and magazines.

Are there additional dimensions or categories you would add to Figure 1.1 that would help you better describe the media you chose?

Ethnic Media Contrasted With Other Types of Media

Even a cursory look at the bibliography on ethnic media would reveal that there are many different terms used to describe similar things. *Minority media*, *immigrant media*, *diasporic media*, and *community media* are terms often used along with or instead of the term *ethnic media*.

Term preferences are often related to how different countries understand differences between people based on their ethnic or racial background. In some countries, like France for example, there is no official recognition of ethno-racial differences among people. No one has to describe themselves as White or Caucasian, African-American or Black, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, Native-American, Pacific Islander, or indigenous, as people often have to do in the United States, Canada, Britain, and elsewhere. Individuals in France are identified only as citizens or non-citizens. In such cases, therefore, researchers rarely speak of ethnic media. They prefer the term *minority media* (e.g., Georgiou, 2001b; Malonga, 2002).

Sometimes, the choice of the term “minority” seems most appropriate because the group of people these media are produced for are in fact a minority among the general population. The term is limiting, however, because many groups that are referred to as “minorities” are actually the majority in particular cities or communities. The 2000 U.S. Census showed that Los Angeles had become a “plurality” city, with almost identical numbers of Whites and Hispanics. When one or more “minority” groups are such a large percentage of a city, referring to them as “minorities” would be misleading.

The term minority in some contexts also conveys a power differential in which one ethnic group is contrasted against another more powerful group. In much of the western world, minorities have been thought of as “non-White,” while the dominant group (and presumed majority) is identified as Caucasian or White. Some scholars choose to use the term *ethnic minority media*, because they study media produced for a particular ethnic group but, more specifically, they study the roles these media play in the negotiation of minority-majority or minority-dominant group relations (Riggins, 1992). A fair amount of research in Canada, for example, has looked at the creation of Inuit broadcast media as the result of this Native population’s determination to represent and speak for themselves. The success of these media is considered an indicator of the “minority” population’s empowerment (e.g., Alia & Bull, 2005; Valaskakis, 1992) in relation to the “majority” White population. These “minority” media are included in our definition of ethnic media.⁷

Other researchers refer to *immigrant media* (Waters & Ueda, 2006), as many ethnic media are focused on the concerns and interests of immigrant populations. This definition, however, is restrictive. It would not cover the media of Native populations in North, Central, and South America, Canada, and Australia. It also does not include African-American media, which represent an extremely vibrant segment of the ethnic media in the U.S., and Black media that have a long history in Canada and Britain. Additionally, the term has an expiration date: It refers to media that are created for newly arrived immigrants. When the majority of an ethnic magazine’s audience is young Algerians born in Southern France, and not their parents who moved from an Algerian village on the Mediterranean coast, is it still an immigrant medium? The goals this magazine serves are distinctively different from those a purely immigrant print medium would serve. One of the key roles of immigrant media is to help introduce new arrivals to the host country and a new way of life. That is not the role ethnic media that target younger demographics perform. The young Algerians in France were born into the French way of life. They do not require an introduction. What they may seek in ethnic media instead is a link to others who are like them; those who have similar family histories, similar family traditions, similar problems and dreams, and a common language.⁸

The term *diasporic media* (Georgiou, 2006) is common in European research on ethnic media. However, the term *diaspora* does not fit many immigrant or ethnic communities. Greek, Jewish, Indian, and Chinese origin communities are the most prominent diasporas. The term literally means to “to sow over.” Scholars generally agree that the idea of diaspora is qualitatively different from the idea of migration (e.g., Faist, 2000). Cohen (1997) has studied extensively some of the most well-known diasporas, such as Jews, Armenians, and African-origin, while Van Hear (1998) has focused on the evolution of diasporic communities from the 1960s onwards, including Kuwaiti Palestinians, Bulgarian ethnic Turks, Saudi Arabian Yemenis, and Dominican Republic Haitians. Common characteristics of diasporas are found in the extensive research of Cohen, Van Hear, and others:

- A diaspora entails movement of a large population from one or more points of origin. This is often connected with traumatic events, such as a massacre or expulsion of a particular ethnic group. This creates a common history of a

shared injustice, and this common history binds the group together (Chaliand & Rageau, 1995; Cohen, 1997; Safran, 1991).⁹

- Out of this common tragedy comes a shared identity and sense of “home” that the diasporic community remembers positively. The definition of diaspora is usually related to maintaining or restoring a homeland. When an independent homeland does not or has not existed, the diaspora may bond over the desire to create a homeland. Such was the case of the Jewish diaspora, which culminated in the establishment of the state of Israel.
- The term diaspora was originally used to describe the movement of people from the city-states of the Greek mainland to Asia Minor and the rest of the Mediterranean coastline, especially from 6th century BC and through the years of Alexander the Great. The Greek diaspora established itself primarily through trade and conquest, but also through voluntary migration and settlement. The establishment of a diaspora requires extended periods of time, often centuries. That is a third characteristic of diaspora, which makes it qualitatively different from migration (Marienstras, 1989).

As many groups do not fit the definition of a diaspora, diasporic media is too narrow a term for our purposes. However, diasporic media are included in our definition of ethnic media.

Since ethnic media generally serve people in a particular local space, some researchers refer to these as *local media* (e.g., Kaniss, 1991), *locative media* (Cherubini & Nova, 2004; Nova, 2004; Rheingold, 2002), or *community media* (Howley, 2005; Jankowski & Prehn, 2002). While the focus on geography is important, we feel that these terms do not capture the ethnic focus of the media in question. This is very important, since ethnicity is commonly a guiding motivation for the development, production, and consumption of these media.

Ethnic Media Versus Mainstream Media

We have defined ethnic media broadly to include media produced *by* and *for* (a) immigrant, (b) ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities, as well as (c) indigenous groups living in various countries across the world. Throughout this chapter and the ones that follow we often compare ethnic media to *mainstream media*. It is a commonly used term, but it is important to define it more formally, so that the differences between ethnic and mainstream media are clear.

The mainstream, say sociologists Alba and Nee (2003), is “that part of society *within* which ethnic and racial origins have at most minor impacts on [an individual’s] life chances or opportunities” (p. 12); that is to say that being in or outside the mainstream matters, with respect to how others, individuals, and institutions, treat a person. It affects, for example, the kinds of jobs a person gets offered or how he or she is treated by the authorities at an airport’s passport and border control checkpoint.

The mainstream includes the ethnic majority in a society, but the mainstream and the ethnic majority are not identical. The boundaries of mainstream society are broader. In the United States, for instance, individuals with European heritage are

considered part of the mainstream. Through multiple waves of immigration, particularly during the first half of the 20th century, European cultures mixed to create a composite culture that people started to identify as American. As new groups of people arrived in the country from other parts of the world, their cultures influenced and slowly changed that composite culture. Hence, the boundaries of the mainstream expand over time. For example, Alba and Nee (2003) suggest that at the turn of the 21st century intermarriage between Whites and Asian-Americans had become more widely accepted and that many Asian cultural practices and Asian cuisine had become part of the American mainstream. These trends, they argue, will eventually erode the notion that being part of the mainstream in the United States is synonymous to being White.

In this context, we define mainstream media as those media that are produced *by* and are produced *for* the mainstream of society; however that is defined in a specific country and at a particular point in time.

The Role of Geographic Context

Until this point, we have hinted at ethnicity and geography being related to each other in important ways. Geography and ethnicity shape each other. For example, an immigrant from a small town in Turkey might move to Berlin, while his cousin moves to Nierenberg, a more rural community in southern Germany. These two migrants may have grown up in the same house and left home with similar goals. However, having settled in different communities may mean that their migration outcomes are very different. They will face different challenges and opportunities in terms of the resources available in their local area. This will also mean that their needs for information might be different, and the content of locally produced ethnic media would (or should) be different for this reason. Therefore, after a period of years, these two cousins might compare and realize that the characteristics of the communities where they settled (geography) have resulted in very different migration experiences. Of course, the common point of origin and shared ethnicity will mean that these cousins still have a great deal in common.

Metamorphosis Project researchers (see Profile 1.2) have found that geography-based differences are even visible within a single city of settlement. For example, migrants from Mexico who settle in different communities within the city of Los Angeles have different settlement experiences. Even though these communities may be no more than a few miles or kilometers apart, the daily life experiences and challenges in those two spaces can be very different. One community, for example, may have a number of health care or social service resources, where employees speak Spanish and are in tune with the needs of the community. This community might also be more resource rich in terms of ethnic media produced in the area and in the information that these media provide about the local area to the residents. The other community may lack these resources, making everyday life a different and more difficult experience (Cheong, Wilkin, & Ball-Rokeach, 2004; Wilkin, Ball-Rokeach, Matsaganis, & Cheong, 2007).

Ethnicity and geography clearly affect and are affected by each other. We refer to this relationship as *geo-ethnicity* (Kim, Jung, & Ball-Rokeach, 2006). This term emphasizes that no two communities can be assumed to be the same, even if they seem very similar from the outside. Ethnicity cannot be considered without geography, and geography cannot be considered without ethnicity. The *interaction* of geography and ethnicity is the key to understanding the daily experiences and needs of ethnic minorities and immigrants, and the media that serve them.

The Roles of Ethnic Media

The reasons for studying ethnic media are directly related to the multiple roles they play in the everyday lives of immigrants, ethnic minorities, and the larger society, more generally. Before discussing these roles, however, we need to understand what we mean by *ethnicity*, how it is related to *culture*, and how ethnicity is different from *race*.

Defining Culture, Ethnicity, and Race

Culture is a learned, shared, and interrelated set of symbols whose meanings guide members of a society in solving everyday problems (Hofstede, 1984; Parker, 2000). Culture is revealed in our language, values, norms, and practices. Differences between cultures are captured by observing and comparing these symbols, values, and behaviors. What is more difficult to assess is why particular cultural practices have emerged. It takes a much deeper look into the traditions, beliefs, priorities, and values of a society to fully understand what is on the surface (Prosser, 1978; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). In this sense, Hofstede (2001) says, culture resembles an iceberg.

Ethnicity is a much debated term. Its roots lay in the Greek word *ethnos*, which means nation or people. Ethnicity generally refers to a community of people who have a common culture, history, language, and religion. Commonality along all these dimensions, however, is not a prerequisite for someone to belong to a particular ethnic community (Riggins, 1992). For many Basques,¹⁰ for instance, being able to speak the language will suffice to acknowledge someone as a member of the ethnic community (Browne, 2005). Within a particular country, we may find more than one ethnic group. In Belgium, for example, two distinct ethnic groups with different cultural backgrounds co-exist: the Flemish and the French-speaking Walloons. In countries that have been, are, or are becoming destinations for immigrants (e.g., United States, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, Portugal, and Ireland), ethnicity frequently overlaps with a minority status (U.K. NHS, 2006).

What Is Culture?

Culture is a set of traditions, customs, norms, beliefs, and values shared among members of a society.

Ethnic identity is a form of social identity. It is a way individuals put themselves and others into categories

(Turner, 1982), and it has three distinct dimensions: (a) self-identification as a member of a particular ethnic group, (b) knowledge of the ethnic culture, and (c) feelings about the behaviors that demonstrate belonging to the ethnic group. Knowledge of the ethnic culture means that someone has an intimate understanding of all those traditions, beliefs, priorities, values, and norms we described earlier. People develop their ethnic identity in the process of everyday life, as they come into contact with people who speak a different language, have a different cultural and historical background, and (or) have different religious beliefs. Ethnic identity, therefore, is a social construction that is the result of a dynamic process played out through communication (Anderson, 1991; Lieberman, 1985; Staino, 1980). As social constructions, ethnic identities are fluid. They change over time. They may disappear, fade, and resurge. Upheaval in the Persian Gulf and continued warfare in Iraq (in the early 1990s and again from 2003 onwards), for example, have accentuated the differences between Kurds living in Northern Iraq and Sunni and Shi'a Arabs who live in the center and south of the country. The increased friction between the three ethnic groups has strengthened the sense of common identity among Kurds who spread across the northern territories of Iraq, and parts of Turkey, Iran, and Syria, and who continue to pursue their goal of a unified, independent Kurdistan (O'Leary, 2002).

In some countries, race is considered as an element of ethnicity. In Canada, for instance, the concept of *race* is based primarily upon genetically determined features. Skin color is usually a dominant, but not the sole, attribute (Statistics Canada, 2006). Ethnic identities and racial identities can be heavily intertwined in many communities. Despite the difficulties in separating ethnicity and race, there is one key difference. Race is a label applied to individuals and groups by others. By contrast, we actively construct our own ethnic identities. We negotiate and debate the meaning of symbols, the importance of

Profile 1.2 The Metamorphosis Project—Los Angeles

The Metamorphosis Project is an in-depth examination of the transformations of urban community, under the forces of globalization, new communication technologies, and population diversity. From 1999 to 2010, Metamorphosis studied 11 ethnically diverse Los Angeles communities, which include African-American, Armenian, Chinese (from mainland China and Taiwan), Hispanic (of Mexican and Central American origin), Korean, and White populations. Project findings highlight the significance of ethnic vis-à-vis mainstream media in the lives of individuals and communities. Metamorphosis research has also engaged ethnic media producers through interviews, joint audience studies, and market analyses. More recently, the project has focused attention on the instrumental role ethnic media play in the hands of policymakers and health service providers for communicating with populations that generally do not read mainstream newspapers or watch English-language television. Project researchers have also analyzed the content of ethnic newspapers and broadcast media to gain a better understanding of why ethnic media, in certain communities, focus primarily on producing stories about the country of origin (e.g., about current events in South Korea), while others seem more invested in the everyday life of the local community (e.g., Mexican-origin residents of East Los Angeles).

particular values, and the behaviors that are appropriate in a given situation. In 1992, for instance, Barcelona held the summer Olympic Games. Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia, a region of Spain that has a distinct culture, language, and identity. Catalans thought of the Olympiad largely as a Catalonian event, not Spanish. The regional government at the time launched an advertising campaign in the international press to present the Barcelona Olympics as a symbol of Catalonia's cultural vitality and economic vigor. They did not see the success of the Olympics as a reason to be proud that they were Spanish. The text in the two-page advertisement published in newspapers, including *The New York Times*, read: "In which country would you locate this point (Barcelona)? In Catalonia, of course. A country inside Spain which has its own culture, language and identity" (Ladrón de Guevara, Còller, & Romani, 1995, p. 7).

Italian immigrants in the United States are a good example of the difference between racial and ethnic identities. In the early days of Italian migration to America, the Italian state had not been formed as we know it today. The differences

What Is Ethnicity?

Ethnicity is a category we construct in the process of our everyday interaction with other people, to identify with or differentiate ourselves from others we perceive as having a common culture, history, language, and religion.

between regions, especially northern and southern regions of Italy were much more pronounced than they are today, and there was no common Italian identity. In fact, immigrants from Northern Italy, who were lighter-skinned, loudly proclaimed that the darker complexion immigrants from Southern Italy were Black and therefore racially distinct from the northerners (Guglielmo, 2003). Over time, however, immigrants from cities all over Italy realized that they had more in common with each other than with immigrants from other parts of Europe. Slowly, these immigrants came to live in the same neighborhoods,

and shared and exchanged traditions and celebrations. In many ways, Italian "ethnicity" was born in the United States before it emerged on the Italian peninsula (Conzen, Gerber, Morawska, Pozzetta, & Vecoli, 1992; Orsi, 1992). In addition, Southern Italians eventually came to be seen as White. Their case shows the arbitrary nature of racial categorizations.

For Further Discussion

What are the traditions, customs, norms, beliefs, and values that define your culture? Make a list and then ask a family member, a friend, and a colleague to do the same. Do you see any differences across these lists? If so, explain why.

In what ways do mainstream media, like the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) or the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), or *The New York Times* influence how we define ourselves and others with regard to ethnicity? Do you believe that ethnic media have a similar or qualitatively different impact?

The Roles of Ethnic Media

Ethnic media are at the heart of the everyday practices that produce and transform ethnic identity, culture, and perceptions of race. Numerous studies document mass media impacts on public opinion and the agenda of policymakers (Dearing & Rogers, 1996; McCombs & Reynolds, 2002). People depend on the media for vital information that will help them understand what is going on around them and to make informed decisions about their lives. This is especially true when they feel that a situation is ambiguous or there is a crisis of some sort (Ball-Rokeach, 1985; Ball-Rokeach, 1998). Both in times of crisis and otherwise, ethnic media can be “teachers.” Ethnic media can educate and orient newcomers to their new community and its resources, and can also teach more subtle rules about correct behaviors and what the new society values.

Mainstream media, however, by their very nature are less sensitive to the ongoing negotiation of ethnic identity, culture, and race. In making decisions about content, managers of mainstream media have to be more inclusive. The number of channels available via cable or satellite continues to grow to satisfy particular tastes (e.g., news-only channels, channels that broadcast historical documentaries exclusively, sports channels, channels with only children’s programs), indicating that the audience is becoming more and more segmented (Alexander, Owers, & Carveth, 1998). Even so, a language barrier continues to exist for those viewers or readers whose first language is not English, in the U.S., Britain, and Australia; or French and English in Canada; or German in Germany and Austria.

Therefore, individuals are more likely to connect to ethnic media to achieve goals that have to do with understanding what makes them Chinese-American, for example, and not just American, to negotiate conflicts in cultural values (e.g., the importance of family), but to also find ways to “fit in” and to co-exist with others who have a different cultural background. Ethnic media contribute to larger social processes as well, such as the negotiation of what it means to be a citizen of a country. Additionally, ethnic media also participate in policy

➤ What Is Race?

Race is an artificial category ascribed to people based, primarily, on genetically determined features, such as skin color and facial characteristics.

Profile 1.3 Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Media in British Columbia–Vancouver

The project aimed to develop a map of third language media—meaning non-English and non-French language media—in Vancouver. Project investigators also analyzed the content of international, national, and local media in the Vancouver area to better understand how different media form their news agenda. Moreover, researchers interviewed the prominent stakeholders in the ethnic media sector (e.g., publishers, journalists, marketing and advertising professionals) and delivered policy recommendations to the regional department of Canadian Heritage; these recommendations were meant to encourage further development of ethnic media and help the communities these media represent to address their needs. The project, which was housed at the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University, concluded in 2008.

discussions affecting ethnic communities. The founding of ethnic media companies that operate across national borders linking diasporas and their homelands (i.e., *transnational media*), and the emergence of many ethnically targeted satellite television channels worldwide, for instance, has forced policymakers to consider the implications of ethnic media for the larger society. In some cases, state officials have concluded that granting television or radio station licenses to ethnic communities will negatively impact their adherence to a national identity and core cultural values. This was the case in France in the mid-1990s, where licenses were refused for the establishment of cable channels by Muslim ethnic communities with origins in Morocco or Algeria (Hargreaves & Mahdjoub, 1997).

Ethnic media perform other important roles as well, including the following: (a) They can become mobilizing forces for the ethnic community; (b) they are indicators of larger social change; and (c) they can redefine the media market and introduce new organizational structures. We will examine these roles in turn.

The Ethnic Community: Ethnic Media as Mobilizing Forces

Ethnic media provide newly arrived immigrants as well as members of more established ethnic communities a kind of social barometer. They offer an understanding of the current relationship between the ethnic community and the broader society. They identify points of contention, and they offer a venue for the ethnic community to debate the issues at hand and come to a consensus about

the best course of action. In the issue resolution process, ethnic media can also serve as mobilizing agents. For example, in the spring of 2006, the U.S. Congress considered passing a law that would change the country's immigration policy. Immigrants and other supporters took to the streets to protest the proposed bill. Ethnic radio was where Hispanic-origin immigrants debated how they would deal with the changes to the immigration law introduced in Congress. Ethnic radio disk-jockeys moderated these debates and played a key role in orchestrating the rallies across the country (Baum, 2006; Félix, González, & Ramírez, 2006; González, 2006; Starr, 2006; Watanabe & Beccera, 2006). The 2006 immigration protests caught the mainstream media off guard. Many of them discovered that the proposed

Profile 1.4 The Ethnic Media Project, University of Massachusetts–Boston

The Center on Media and Society, located at the University of Massachusetts–Boston, launched a project in 2004 to support ethnic media and to build bridges across ethnic boundaries in Greater Boston. The Ethnic Media Project has created a free online directory of ethnic media organizations that are active in the region. The project's programs and initiatives are shaped by a core group of media organizations, representing the Haitian, Russian, Latino, Irish, Indian, Chinese, African, African-American, and other ethnic communities in Boston. Apart from the ethnic media directory, project participants are also working on an online news digest service, story exchanges, newsmaker press conferences, and "best practice" type of workshops for ethnic media journalists.

change to the law had been discussed in the ethnic media for months before it actually became headline news in every major media outlet in the United States. In general, ethnic media have the capacity to raise awareness about issues not addressed in mainstream media. Immigration reform, citizenship rights, and the role of immigrants in the economy and the military are only a few of these issues.

Ethnic Media as Indicators of Social Change

Ethnic media can offer people who do not belong to the intended and ethnically defined audience insights into changes that are taking place around them. In recent years, major media associations, such as the Newspaper Association of America (NAA), have urged mainstream media journalists to follow the agenda of ethnic media and to collaborate with them. Workshops and conferences have been organized by the NAA to help mainstream media professionals to get better acquainted with ethnic communities' issues and to help ethnic media journalists to get their voices heard. Similar initiatives, including the Ethnic Media Project (see Profile 1.4) developed by the Center on Media and Society at the University of Massachusetts in Boston and the Mediam'Rad Project developed by the Panos Institute in Paris (see Profile 1.5) have been launched recently by academic institutions and non-profit/ non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and Europe.

Ethnic Media Change the Landscape, Make Markets More Competitive

Dramatic worldwide changes in population diversity have created the potential for many ethnic media to grow into major and profitable operations. Their successes have prompted mainstream media, marketers, and advertisers to research ethnic audiences. They want to know how to appeal to these audiences. In the United States, Spanish-language media, like the Univisión network and the newspaper *La Opinión*, have grown to the point where they compete against established English-language media. Ethnic media,

Profile 1.5 Mediam'Rad: Ethnic and Diversity Media in Europe/Panos Institute—Paris

Mediam'Rad is a program of the Paris-based Institute Panos that promotes collaboration and partnerships between ethnic media and mainstream media. The project members assert that ethnic media can provide mainstream media with expert knowledge necessary to address issues that are increasingly challenging in Europe. By fostering ties between ethnic and mainstream media, Mediam'Rad hopes to broaden the range of perspectives Europeans have on issues related to the integration of immigrants into European societies, and ethnic and racial discrimination. Major collaborators of the Panos Institute in Paris include the Italian non-governmental organization COSPE (Cooperation for the Development of Emerging Countries) and Mira Media, based in the Netherlands. COSPE projects focus on human rights issues, combating racism, and promoting equal opportunity policies for ethnic minorities in Italy. Mira Media is an independent cooperative founded in 1986 by the major national migrant organizations in Holland. The organization works closely with Dutch national and private broadcasters to promote the participation of immigrant professionals in radio, television, and interactive media.

therefore, are redefining media markets and bringing ethnic communities out of invisibility.

Moreover, thanks to new communication technologies and the capacity they give to organizations for joint ventures, even if they are a world apart, numerous transnational ethnic media corporations and satellite-based ethnic broadcast channels have been founded worldwide. The emergence of this type of media operation has altered the way we view the media landscape. It is no longer constrained by national borders and it is more diverse in organizational structure (e.g., from mom and pop to transnational operations; see Figure 1.1.).

Globalization and the Ethnic Media

Ethnic media lay at the nexus of globalization forces that are felt by all of us. We experience increased population diversity, the emergence of more hybrid or hyphenated identities (e.g., Mexican-American, French-Algerian, Japanese-Brazilian), fewer restrictions on travel, more affordable telecommunication-services, and new organizational forms (e.g., transnational ethnic media organizations).

The idea behind pre-globalization “melting-pot” theories (e.g., Gordon, 1964; see also Alba & Nee, 2003) was that, over time, immigrants sever their ties to the culture of their home country and get assimilated into the culture of their new country. According to this line of thought, ethnic media, over time, should perish, losing their audience to mainstream media. However, today, people can continue to be connected to their home country long after they have moved away. This is because traveling is cheaper, telecommunication systems are less expensive and more efficient, and new modes of communication have been developed (e.g., e-mail, instant messenger applications, IP telephony). Being able to be linked to both “home” (i.e., the home country) and “here” (i.e., the country of settlement) enables people to forge new, dual, or hyphenated identities. I am not just American or just Chinese, but rather Chinese-American. I am not just Vietnamese, but also German. This ability to preserve elements of multiple cultural identities makes it likely that members of ethnic groups will continue to connect to ethnic media long after they set foot in their new country. Ethnic media, therefore, may survive their founders. However, the roles these media play may change. For example, people may, over time, rely on ethnic media more for negotiating bicultural identities and for social networking, as they are already acquainted with the social norms of their host country.

The impact of globalization is not uniform across the world (Scholte, 2000). Most schools in the United States, for example, provide access to the Internet for their students, while in many African countries, access to a telephone line is an unaffordable luxury. Therefore, we should expect that the opportunities afforded by globalization to ethnic media will not be the same worldwide (Castells, 2000a). Such differences across national contexts will be explored in more detail in subsequent chapters.

For Further Discussion

The volume of letters that crossed the Atlantic around the turn of the 20th century is astounding. Approximately five million letters were sent to Russia and Hungary by American sojourners from 1900 to 1906 (Morawska, 2001). Letters were more than a monthly update of family affairs. Morawska observes that

The back and forth flow of migrants and the density of this correspondence created an effective transnational system of communication, social control, household management, and travel and employment assistance that forward from the immigrant's native places in Europe into the United States and backward from America to their original homelands. (p. 182)

The five volumes of letters studied by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918–1920) and reported in their book *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, provide similar evidence. On February 4, 1909, for instance, Tomasz, Antonina, Aleksander, and Marya Barszcewski write to their brother Stanislaw who is in the United States:

We beg your pardon, don't be angry with us if we offended you about this ship-ticket because we did not know at whose expense you counted it, and now we thank you for explaining to us how it ought to be. Aleksander says that he will give us 100 rubles [of the debt he owes you] and we thank you for it. (Vol. 2, p. 114)

Think about what would be different and what would be the same had Stanislaw moved to the U.S. in the past year.

In the early 1900s, letters were a way of staying on top of what was happening in the family, but also getting news about what was new in the neighborhood, city, or country left behind. Do you believe that a Polish newspaper published in the city Stanislaw settled in could perform the same roles that letters did? What do you think the stories published in such a paper would be about? What sources would journalists have at their disposal at the time?

What sources would Stanislaw be able to rely on for information if he migrated from Poland to the U.S. today? How would these sources be different compared to the letters and early 20th century ethnic newspapers?

Social Changes That Make Studying Ethnic Media Necessary

The sheer number of new ethnic media founded in recent years is impressive enough to warrant intensive research on the subject. But marketing professionals and advertisers have also increased their interest in ethnic media, as they promise access to a large, diverse, and vibrant market. Latino media have been of particular interest in the United States. That is because the already significant spending power

of Hispanics is expected to grow even more in the coming years. Hispanic spending power was estimated at \$736 billion, while it is expected to reach \$1 trillion by 2010 (Selig Center, 2006). Similar growth trends are observed with regard to other ethnic groups in the U.S. According to the University of Georgia Selig Center reports (2006), Asian spending power in the U.S. is expected to be 434% larger in 2011 than it was in 1990. There are a number of reasons why these trends are likely to persist. The most important reasons are (a) increased population diversity, (b) a higher degree of interaction and communication across national borders, (c) the development of new communication technologies that make this possible, and (d) the rekindling of ethnicity as an important dimension of identity.

Societal transformations are also felt in university and college classrooms around the world. In the U.S., over the past 10 to 15 years, a number of publications have surfaced to help teachers and students respond to the needs of ethnically and culturally diverse schools (see, for instance, Banks, 1991; Chism, Cano, & Pruitt, 1989; Marchesani & Adams, 1992). University faculty around the country are rethinking and changing their curricula to address issues pertaining to ethnic diversity. Instructors are participating in programs to learn how to create more inclusive classrooms and how to tailor the content they teach to the needs of an ethnically diverse student body (Castañeda, 2004). In some institutions, students must complete at least one diversity course in order to graduate. A recent survey conducted by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) yielded a database consisting of approximately 460 scholars, researchers, and investigators of diversity issues in media and mass communication courses in U.S. colleges and universities.

In the rapidly changing education environment, communication and journalism schools are charged with the added responsibility of preparing a new generation of journalists and communication professionals. This new generation needs to be trained to deal with a number of new challenges, many of which are related to the emergence of new media. Young professionals in communication and media-related fields of work will also need to be able to deal with the challenges of working in an increasingly multi-ethnic society. They will need, for instance, to know how to engage the ethnic media when asked to run a political campaign, a public relations or even an advertising campaign. It will be necessary, because particular segments of the population cannot or choose not to access mainstream television, radio, or newspapers.

With the challenges, however, new opportunities present themselves, too. The new generation of journalists is also more likely than ever before to seek and take a position on the editorial staff of ethnic media organizations. This is due to the tremendous growth of the ethnic media as a sector of the media industry and the emergence of certain ethnic newspapers (e.g., Spanish-language *Hoy* in New York), radio (e.g., 102.9 FM/La Nueva in Los Angeles), and television channels (e.g., Univisión in the U.S.) as serious competitors of the mainstream media in local, regional, and national markets. For those journalism graduates who choose not to seek a position in one of the many ethnic media organizations, knowing more about these media is imperative. There is a growing consensus that mainstream media need to pay more attention to ethnic media, as they often capture a side of

reality that eludes mainstream media journalists (Mira Media, 2006; NAA, 2005, Panos Institute–Paris, 2006).

Mainstream media, their audiences, and policymakers are often unaware of important unfolding events. In 2004, the mainstream media in the U.S. not only failed to capture the impact of the tsunami disaster on the local communities in Southeast Asia, but also the broader effects of the disaster. A story that appeared soon after the tsunami struck the region contemplated how the disaster might divert funding from other areas of the world in need of aid (Rodis, 2004). The article was published in the San Francisco-based newspaper the *Philippine News* on December 30, 2004, and it suggested that United Nations aid, meant initially for reconstruction in typhoon-stricken provinces of the Philippines, would, most likely, be redirected to Indonesia. The author calls upon the overseas Filipino community to cover the expected drop in international relief sent to their home country. This story was not told in the mainstream media in the United States. For days, the focus of the major television networks and print media was primarily on Americans who lost their lives or had miraculously survived.

A decade into the 21st century, it seems that there is more than ever an understanding that mainstream media can no longer ignore the ethnic media that are emerging and growing around them. Mainstream media are coming to terms with the idea that ethnic media are real competitors in their markets. In addition, though, both mainstream and ethnic media are realizing that there are concrete reasons for pursuing collaborations with each other. Out of such collaborations, ethnic media may, for example, gain access to resources they do not have (e.g., investments in new productions, online ventures). For the mainstream media, building bridges to ethnic media offers a clearer view of aspects of society they have not been able to (and possibly cannot) otherwise access. The co-presence of ethnic and mainstream media in our communication environment is critical for individual citizens and society as a whole. Society needs to be able to see itself in its media and reflect on the changes it is undergoing due to globalization and increasing population diversity. Moreover, individuals should understand that a rich, ethnically diverse media landscape helps us better understand and build bonds to each other, despite and ultimately because we are different.

Chapter-by-Chapter Book Overview

Understanding Ethnic Media: Producers, Consumers, and Societies is organized into 5 parts:

Part I, “Ethnic Media in Context,” provides the historical and geographical context needed to grasp the content discussed in later chapters of this volume. **Chapter 1** begins by defining ethnic media, identifying the roles they play in the lives of millions of people worldwide and discussing social changes that make understanding ethnic media essential today. **Chapter 2** introduces the history of ethnic media, beginning with their origins in Europe and then tracing their development in Europe, the Americas, Australia, and elsewhere.

Part II, “The Consumers,” identifies the individuals, families, and groups who connect with media in a variety of local and national contexts. In Part II, we also consider the reasons and goals that might motivate individuals to connect with ethnic media. In **Chapter 3**, we detail the particular roles and goals that ethnic media can serve in various migrant contexts, while **Chapter 4** traces the relationships between ethnic minorities and their media in different parts of the world and at different times in history. This chapter documents the range of ways in which media have been a forum for the development of and questioning of ethnic identities and group solidarity. In addition, this chapter discusses how the children of immigrants and later generations start to develop ethnic rather than immigrant identities and how their media facilitate this development and their negotiations of the meaning of “home.”

In **Part III**, “The Producers,” ethnic media are treated as organizations. In **Chapters 5 and 6**, we discuss major trends that are reflected in the circulations and ratings of print and electronic ethnic media, the politics behind these audience statistics, the dynamics of competition among ethnic media, and strategies these media employ for survival and growth.

Much has been written about ownership of the mainstream media, but little has been written about ethnic media ownership. In **Chapter 7**, we take a closer look at who is at the helm of ethnic media organizations and why. The impact of globalization on the structure of ethnic media organizations, the processes of production, and the people who work in these media is examined.

In **Chapter 8**, we focus on the effects of policies pertaining to immigration, citizenship, and the rights of ethnic minorities on ethnic media production. We examine differences across multiple countries. Immigrant-receiving nations have different laws and customs that govern media production. Government policies and how ethnic minorities are defined vary from place to place, as do definitions of legal and illegal immigration. These definitions have wide-ranging consequences for immigrant and ethnic minority institutions, including ethnic media.

Part IV, “Ethnic Media as Civic Communicators,” focuses on the role of “place.” In **Chapter 9**, we look at ethnic media’s role in local communities and how ethnic media are connected to the local residents they serve. This chapter presents examples from local communities that illustrate the role of ethnic media in building civic engagement, in mobilizing residents, and ultimately, in community change. The discussion on ethnic media as local community advocates continues into **Chapter 10**. In this chapter, we detail the challenges for ethnic media journalists and producers, who are often expected to play a number of disparate roles. The complications of “speaking for the community,” questions of advocacy versus journalistic “objectivity,” and concerns around ethnic-mainstream media relationships are considered in this chapter.

Part V, “The Future of Ethnic Media,” looks at current trends in ethnic media, and projections of future development and growth. In the Conclusion, we continue our discussion on ethnic media viability, paying particular attention to how the present media landscape might foretell continuing trends in the ethnic media sector. In addition, we hear from a number of ethnic media researchers and professionals from

Australia, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, and the United States, about how they see the future of ethnic media. The book concludes with suggestions for future research into the study and practice of ethnic media, as these outlets come to merit increased attention across a breadth of disciplines, including, but not limited, to communication, media, and journalism studies.

Notes

¹New America Media is a collaboration of ethnic media founded in 1996 by the non-profit organization Pacific News Service.

²Interviews for this study were conducted in English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese, Hindi, and Tagalog.

³We use the terms Hispanic and Latino interchangeably throughout the book, although the meaning of the two words is not identical. Hispanic is a broader term that may be used to refer to individuals whose native language is Spanish, whereas the term Latino may be reserved for individuals of Latin American origins.

⁴The Media Awareness Network is a Canadian non-profit organization based in Ottawa. Its activities focus on developing media literacy among teenagers.

⁵For more information, see the Web site of the Community Relations Commission of New South Wales, Australia: http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/ethnic_media

⁶It should be noted that the actual numbers of ethnic media available in any country are likely higher, as many are small-scale operations that often elude the radar of researchers and policymakers.

⁷We should add that in much of the Canadian literature, the designation “ethnic” is reserved for media that are not produced in English or French (i.e., “third-language” media) and not targeted to indigenous communities.

⁸For similar reasons, European ethnic media professionals who met in Paris in 2005 and subsequently in Strasbourg, France, in June 2006 rejected the term *immigrant* media. As an alternative, they offered the term *media of diversity* (*media des diversités*). According to the Panos Institute in Paris that organized these meetings in the context of the Mediam’Rad Project (see a profile of the project later in this chapter), “*These media have an editorial policy that is mainly focused on the diversity of the components of European society. Albeit not exclusively, they address an audience that is linked to one or more of the groups that comprise this diversity, are produced and mainly disseminated within the European Union, and have an editorial staff that is representative of the diversity within our societies*” (*Mediam’Rad, April 2007, pp. 1–2*).

⁹According to Chaliand and Rageau (1995), “A diaspora is defined as *the collective forced dispersion of a religious and/or ethnic group* [italics added], precipitated by a disaster, often of a political nature” (p. xiv).

¹⁰The Basque people inhabit a region around the western end of the Pyrenees. The region spans the border between France and Spain, on the Atlantic coast.

