Editorial:

Multi-cultural, Multi-ethnic, and Multi-faith Communication

Mahmoud Eid
Isaac Nahon-Serfaty
Rukhsana Ahmed

University of Ottawa, Canada

Human beings with different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds share the globe and communicate together on interpersonal, organizational, and international levels. Globalization, new communication technologies, media conglomerations, trade agreements, and even military treaties have virtually removed borders among nations. New media technologies, for example, have created new communicative spaces, forms, and strategies that transcend face-to-face and nation-to-nation communication barriers; yet, cultural, ethnic, and religious differences remain. This highlights the significance of the cultural, ethnic, and religious dimensions of human communication, as well as the interrelated relationship among them; culture usually arises from various ethnic groups, and each ethnic group does not necessarily follow one religious tradition (i.e., faith).

Communication is at the heart of any culture, ethnicity, and religion. People become more engaged in contexts where communication reflects on their cultural, ethnic, or religious identity. Hence, it is crucial to look deeply into, and compare, how people from differing cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds communicate among themselves, and across cultures, ethnicities, and religions. Cultural, ethnic, and religious differences are causing communication problems; hence, communicators should be careful, enduring, and forgiving, rather than imprudent, intolerant, and hostile. Discussions about culture, ethnicity, or religion can be empowering, but can also at times be disturbing.

Many contemporary societies are proud of their diversity in culture, ethnicity, and faith; however, cultural, ethnic, and religious communication forms have not been yet sufficiently or effectively embraced in such societies. It is evident in many of such societies that cultural exclusivity, ethnic stereotyping, racial discrimination or xenophobia, and religious intolerance are prevalent. There have also been various biases and crimes/violence against those perceived as "others" in such societies. Recent global debates demonstrate the extent to which communication, including traditional and new media, can be a disruptive force when focusing only on the most negative aspects of certain cultural, ethnic, or religious practices, particularly those related to fundamentalist views. However, communication can also be powerful in bringing

people of different cultures, ethnicities, and faiths together in mutual understanding and cooperation.

Communication can help avoid inter-cultural, inter-racial, or inter-religious clashes; it can promote peace, patience, tolerance, and understanding, deepen public knowledge about religious traditions and practices, promote dialogue and mutual understanding among different religious traditions and between religious and secular visions of the world, and shape public perceptions of cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity. The Spring 2011 issue of the *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition* (GMJ -- CE) sheds light on the role of multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-faith communication in contemporary societies, covering a variety of themes and cases from global perspectives.

The refereed papers section of this issue of GMJ -- CE opens with a paper that focuses on an example of promoting peace justice, and freedom, when the Catholic Church at Vatican Council II promulgated the declaration *Nostra aetate in 1965*, expressing its respect for the world religions and recommending dialogue and cooperation with their followers. Gregory Baum's paper, "Interreligious Dialogue: A Roman Catholic Perspective", explains how *Nostae aetate* also transformed the relationship of the Catholic Church's to Jews and Judaism. The paper examines the new teaching in regard to Judaism and the world religions and record the gradual turn to greater openness on the part of Cardinal Ratzinger/Benedict XVI. It is argued in this paper that interreligious dialogue is capable of transforming the participants; however, religion sometimes legitimates unjust regimes or fosters contempt of outsiders, and therefore interreligious dialogue must also listen to the critical thinkers of the Enlightenment.

In his paper, "Understanding Relationality: A Challenge for Religion Communicators", Douglas F. Cannon examines the challenges religion communicators face in the United States. The paper utilizes a hermeneutical approach and present results from surveys of U.S. religion communicators and faith group leaders, discussing how religion communicators and faith group leaders understand public relations, approach their work, and rate their skills for dealing with conflicts.

Donn James Tilson explains in his paper, "Public Relations and Religious Diversity: A Conceptual Framework for Fostering a Spirit of *Communitas*", that changes in immigration law, globalization and increased ease of transportation have transformed modern societies into culturally diverse landscapes with religious diversity, presenting both opportunities and challenges. The paper discusses that public relations professionals and other communicators in the United States model the conceptual framework in interfaith initiatives that would serve as a helpful foundation for guiding communication professionals toward socially-responsible behavior, which often has a common foundation across various faith traditions.

Wondering about the possibility to reconcile the spectacular approach of the media with the inner nature of the spiritual, Guy Marchessault in his paper, "Religion et entertainment sont-ils compatibles?", argues that historians, film directors, communication researchers, philosophers, sociologists, and anthropologists have refined understandings of the capacity of play revealing the human search for meaning and spiritual journey.

In their paper, "Jeunes et minorités ethniques dans la presse européenne: Les médias et les émeutes parisiennes de 2005", Paola Garcia and Jéssica Retis present a 2005 violent event of unrest in Paris when police and youth collided. The widespread riots forced the government to declare a state of emergency, resulting in the construction of a social debate through political and media reactions. They argue that riots were seen as failure of the French integration model because the principal actors of the violence were mostly identified as immigrants.

Khaled Zammoum also investigates a relevant topic. His paper, "Minorité ethnique issue de l'immigration et communication communautaire: Les spécificités du modèle intégrationniste français", examines the fundamentals of French cultural and media policy for ethnic minorities of immigrant origin. Through an analysis of several socio-political and cultural aspects of French texts, the paper reveals that the design of policy with regard to information and communitarian communication was inspired by the French model of integration, which is based on Jacobin republican philosophy. The analysis shows that the lack of a media or cultural strategy by French authorities encouraged media frenzies about French ethnic minorities, which involved stereotypes that exploit the social and economic problems, strengthening the argument that minorities are a burden to the national economy.

South Korea, once one of the most ethnically homogenous nations in the world, as Robert Prey argues in his paper, "Different Takes: Migrant World Television and Multiculturalism in South Korea", has recently adopted multiculturalism as an official policy in order to manage a still small but rapidly growing population of foreigners. This paper focuses on the tensions and contradictions that exist by examining the emergence of a unique experiment in multi-ethnic media called Migrant World Television. The paper reveals a dynamic, everyday form of multiculturalism that has taken root as different ethnic groups come together to practice multiculturalism by deciding what counts as news and entertainment for (im)migrants in South Korea.

The next paper is about Desi films, which are movies created by and/or for South Asian immigrants. Rekha Sharma argues in her paper, "Desi Films: Articulating Images of South Asian Identity in a Global Communication Environment", that Desi films are capable of reaching large numbers of people regardless of their educational level, economic status, or linguistic proficiency. The paper examines Indian diasporic films as a vehicle for cultural articulation and debate.

Another debate concerning the accommodation of different cultural and religious traditions and practices, this time in Québec, is presented by Alan Wong. His paper, "The Disquieting Revolution: A Genealogy of Reason and Racism in the Quebec Press", discusses the controversy labeled the "reasonable accommodation" issue by the local press, which has incited responses ranging from denunciations of racist discrimination to calls for more stringent measures to ensure the assimilation of non-Westerners into Québécois culture. The paper provides an analysis of the 2007 Québec election and the campaigns leading into it, revealing how the press and the leaders of the three major political parties were complicit in transforming some negligible and private incidents into a greater menace endangering the very existence of Québec society.

Finally, Michael Nevradakis' paper, "From Assimilation to Kalomoira: Satellite Television and its Place in New York City's Greek Community", examines the role that imported satellite television programming from Greece has played in the maintenance and rejuvenation of Greek cultural identity and language use within the Greek-American community of New York City.

In addition to the above ten refereed papers, this issue of GMJ -- CE has a review section that includes two review articles and two book reviews. In his review article, "The Globalized and the Polarized: Seeking the Golden Mean in Intercultural Communication", Mohammed El-Hashash reviews the books: *Empathy in the Global World: An Intercultural Perspective* (2010), and *The Handbook of Critical Intercultrual Communication* (2010). In her review article, "International News Production and Globalization", Valérie Belair-Gagnon reviews the books:

Al-Jazeera and U.S. War Coverage (2010), *Transnational Television in Europe: Reconfiguring Global Communication Networks* (2009), and *Global News Production* (2003). Finally, Isaac Nahon-Serfaty reviews *De la fraude: Le monde de l'onaa* (2010) and Darcy Knoll reviews *International Communications Strategy: Developments in Cross-Cultural Communications, PR and Social Media* (2009).

About the Editors

Mahmoud Eid is an Associate Professor at the Department of Communication, University of Ottawa, Canada. Dr. Eid is the author of *Interweavement: International Media Ethics and Rational Decision-Making*, editor of *Research Methods in Communication* and *Communication and Media Studies: An Introduction*, and co-editor of *The Right to Communicate: Historical Hopes, Global Debates and Future Premises*. His professional expertise and research interests concentrate on international communication, media ethics, quantitative and qualitative communication research methods, terrorism, crisis management and conflict resolution, modernity, and the political economy of communication.

Isaac Nahon-Serfaty is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Communication, University of Ottawa, Canada. Dr. Nahon-serfaty has more than 25 years of experience in health communication, international communication, public relations, and journalism. He coordinated the international workshop "Cultural Dialogues, Religion and Communication" that was held at the University of Ottawa on October 22, 2009. His essay *Actualidad del mito de la Independencia: En búsqueda de sentido en la Babel fragmentada* won the Banesco Award "La Independencia de Venezuela: 200 años después". He is the author of several papers and book chapters about public discourse on health and illness in French, English, and Spanish.

Rukhsana Ahmed is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Communication, University of Ottawa, Canada. Dr. Ahmed's research interests lie at the intersections of health, interpersonal, intercultural, media, and religious diversity. She has presented and published in health communication, media studies, intercultural communication, and public address. Currently, she is working on a co-edited volume on health communication research and applications as well as other projects on health beliefs among Muslim women in Canada for exploring culturally and religiously appropriate healthcare practices, health profile on immigrant and refugee children and youth in Canada, and multicultural media on the integration of immigrants.

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