

Editorial:

## Multicultural Media and Immigrant Integration

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Multicultural media, also known as “ethnic media”, consisting of print, broadcast, and electronic media and intended for ethno-cultural communities, are important resources for immigrants. These diverse forms of media play an important role in meeting different information needs of immigrants. For example, multicultural media are important sources of and channels for the delivery of settlement, government, ethno-cultural, and home country news, information, and services for immigrants.

The proliferation of multicultural media during recent decades has produced much scholarly and journalistic works, which have focused on multicultural media’s function in helping immigrants adapt and adjust to the new host country and preserve their cultural heritage; meanwhile, sometimes in contributing to their social isolation in the host country. The role of multicultural media in immigrants’ inclusion/segregation in the host society remains a growing concern among researchers and practitioners. With the changing media landscape through the rise of the Internet, the proliferation of digital media, and the growth of mobile devices, as well as international migration increasing in scale, it has become all the more important for researchers and practitioners to further discuss, debate, and document different aspects of the role of multicultural media in the integration of immigrants. Hence, this issue of the *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition* (GMJ -- CE) takes on this task by including commentaries, refereed papers, and reviews of books from multiple perspectives that are theoretical, analytical, critical, empirical, and comparative in their approach.

The journal issue opens with two commentaries. In the wake of the 2015 Federal election and the approaching Syrian influx of refugees, in her essay, “Rethinking Multicultural/Multiracial Media and the Integrity of Immigrant Integration”, Catherine Murray makes a well-timed call for multicultural/multiracial media policy driven by principles of inclusivity, integrity, and innovation. Boulou Ebanda de B’béri, in his essay, “La ‘Black Press’ canadienne du 19<sup>ème</sup> siècle: Racines et trajectoires des pratiques communicationnelles et d’un activisme intellectuel exceptionnels gommés dans nos études en communication”, offers an often ignored perspective on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Canadian Black Press as a site of intellectual activism that helped to shape Canadian identity.

The five refereed papers in this issue of the GMJ -- CE address challenges and opportunities multicultural media present to immigrant integration. In the first paper, titled "Multicultural Media in a Post-multicultural Canada? Rethinking Integration", Augie Fleras problematizes the notion of "post-multicultural media" in the backdrop of the changing and diverse demographics of Canadian society, giving rise to what he refers to as "a post-ethnic Canada". He argues that Canada is witnessing an intense diversification of its population, giving rise to "post-ethnic identities" and "transmigrant linkages" and thus gradually developing into a "post-multicultural society". He questions whether Canada's multicultural media can deal with the new integrative challenges of voluntary affiliations over fixed identities. Accordingly, Fleras calls for reinventing multicultural media to address the complexities in, what he calls a "lived-integrative world of diverse-diversities".

The succeeding set of papers in this journal issue is concerned with the role ethnic/multicultural media play in immigrant settlement and integration process. April Lindgren, in her paper, "Municipal Communication Strategies and Ethnic Media: A Settlement Service in Disguise", focuses on a relatively less researched area—municipal government's outreach efforts via ethnic news media. She uses a case study approach to examine how and why the City of Brampton, Ontario, once characterized as unresponsive to the needs of its growing immigrant population, has come to adopt one of the most proactive municipal ethnic media strategies in Canada. She does this through interviews with the City's communications chief and document analysis, and content analysis of a Brampton-based Punjabi-language newspaper. Lindgren argues that using ethnic media to communicate municipal news and information to newcomers entails more than just sending out news releases in English or French. Municipalities could adopt a more comprehensive policy by translating English or French releases into the most commonly spoken non-official languages of the concerned cities, and thus broaden their reach to various linguistic and ethnocultural communities.

In their paper, "The Role of Multicultural Media in Connecting Municipal Governments with Ethnocultural and Immigrant Communities: The Case of Ottawa", Luisa Veronis and Rukhsana Ahmed continue this line of inquiry into the role ethnic and multicultural media in connecting municipal governments and ethnocultural and immigrant communities. They analyze surveys from members of Ottawa's Chinese, Latin American, Somali, and South Asian communities to document their access to and use of multicultural media; focus groups with members of these communities to discuss challenges and opportunities they face to access information about the City of Ottawa; and interviews with local multicultural media producers from each community about their experiences with media production and views on the role of multicultural media in their communities. The findings reveal that ethnocultural and immigrant communities actively seek various media sources, including multicultural media (print, broadcast, and digital) to meet their information needs. The authors underscore the importance of developing communication strategies, combining traditional and digital media, including multicultural media, and also translating important information into various community languages to guarantee accessibility.

The next two papers centre on issues related to multicultural media production and consumption in one of Canada's largest ethnic communities, the Chinese community. Focusing on norms of social responsibility, Xiaoping Li, in her paper titled "A Critical Examination of Chinese Language Media's Normative Goals and News Decisions", probes into commercial Chinese language media outlets' Canadian news decisions. Through interviews with Chinese language media personnel (publishers, editors, reporters, television and radio news, and current

affairs program producers) in the Greater Toronto Area and Vancouver, she examines their understanding of Chinese language media's social responsibility in relation to news decision-making and the challenges they face. The analysis of the interview data uncovers that, although some media outlets and news workers have commendable goals, narrow definitions of social responsibility and commercial interests often undermine Chinese language media outlets' normative goals. Emphasizing ethnic media's role in facilitating immigrant's settlement, integration, and participation in Canadian society, the author argues that professional training in journalism for ethnic media workers, inclusion of minority narratives into mainstream media, and publicly funded multilingual communications can help improve the quality of Chinese language media.

Lastly, Yuping Mao, in her paper titled "Investigating Chinese Migrants' Information-Seeking Patterns in Canada: Media Selection and Language Preference", advances understanding of information-seeking behaviours of Chinese migrants in Canada by investigating how these behaviours relate to their intercultural communication sensitivity levels. The survey results show that overall, when information sources are available in both Chinese and English languages, Chinese migrants tend to seek information from the Chinese sources. Interestingly, Chinese migrants with higher levels of intercultural communication sensitivity prefer English information channels, such as newspapers and websites, more frequently. The author finds Chinese migrants' reliance on Chinese ethnic media as an opportunity for government and other organizations to reach this community by disseminating important information in this media outlet. Nonetheless, she argues that Chinese migrants should be proactive in improving their English proficiency and intercultural communication sensitivity so that they can get firsthand, accurate, and more up-to-date Canadian information from English sources more frequently than the translated information in Chinese sources in order to better integrate into the Canadian society.

This issue of the GMJ -- CE concludes with a review section that includes reviews of relevant and recent books related to the theme "Multicultural Media and Immigrant Integration". The review section begins with a review article by Sherry S. Yu, titled "The Inevitably Dialectic Nature of Ethnic Media", which reviews the three books: *Global Communication: New Agendas in Communication* (2014), *The Media Gaze: Representations of Diversities in Canada* (2011), and *Understanding Ethnic Media: Producers, Consumers, and Societies* (2011). Then, the section ends with two book reviews: *Engaging the Other: Public Policy and Western-Muslim Intersections* (2014) by Hosai Qasmi and *Gender, Migration, and the Media* (2013) by Peruvemba S. Jaya.

Finally, the successful completion of this issue of the GMJ -- CE would not have been possible without the invaluable guidance from the journal's Editor-in-Chief, Mahmoud Eid, authors' contributions on timely topics, constructive feedback from the many referees, and support from the editorial assistants.

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### **About the Editor**

Rukhsana Ahmed is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication, University of Ottawa, Canada. Dr. Ahmed's research interests lie at the intersections of health, interpersonal and intercultural communication, media, religion, gender, and development. As co-director of the Diversity and Equity Research Group at the University of Ottawa, she advances the study and understanding of challenges and opportunities that minority and marginalized groups, including immigrant and ethnic communities, face within Canadian society. She serves on editorial boards of and reviews papers for journals in the areas of communication, media, health, and nursing.

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