

Friday, June 22nd 2007

9.00-10.00h

Ethnic and Aboriginal Media in Canada: Breaking Barriers, Crossing Borders, Constructing Buffers, Building Bridges

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Canada possesses a lively and unmatched aboriginal and multicultural (ethnic) media. Despite their centrality and magnitude, questions and confusion persist. Are aboriginal and ethnic media inclusive or insular in logic and function? Do ethnic and aboriginal media play an integrative or isolationist role in advancing a cooperative coexistence? Do ethnic and aboriginal media reflect or detract from the challenges of living together? This paper acknowledges the validity of both an inward- and outward-looking dynamic: That is, the multidimensionality of aboriginal and ethnic media in simultaneously promoting social integration and cultural insularity of new and racialized Canadians without sacrificing a commitment to Canada or the community. The paper argues that aboriginal and ethnic media constitute both a reactive and proactive response to the challenges of Canadian society: reactive, in buffering minorities from the negativity of mainstream media; proactive, in building bridges by providing an alternative discourse to the mainstream communication agenda. It is also argued that, despite differences in underlying logic, ethnic and aboriginal media provide a key service, not only in improving the integration of new and racialized Canadians, but also in constructing a more inclusive Canada. The paper concludes on a positive note: However counter-hegemonic in style and content, aboriginal and ethnic media typify a commitment to Canada's inclusive multiculturalism. By advancing a normative blueprint for living together without drifting apart, Canada's ethnic and aboriginal media are proving a success story worthy of scholarly attention and international acclaim.

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