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MINORITIES AND MEDIA: PRODUCERS, INDUSTRIES, AUDIENCES

Introduction

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As a country with a rich history of migration, a high level of cultural diversity and a long tradition of ethnic and Indigenous media, Australia provides an ideal setting for an investigation into the relationships between minorities, migrants and media. Media are a vital part of multicultural and multi-ethnic Australia. They are central to the formation of public opinion, to political and public debates, and to the way in which different groups in society see themselves and each other. Yet key questions persist in Australia and around the world regarding the ability of different media forms and systems to sufficiently recognise and give voice to ethnic and Indigenous minorities. With an ever-expanding source of media platforms available, from print and broadcast to DIY digital, the questions of access, representation, and the ability to have one's voice heard and recognised, are more important than ever. The purpose of this book is to bring minority – ethnic and Indigenous – issues to the centre of media analysis and to shift the inquiry ever so slightly towards a greater recognition of the increasingly active and important role minorities play in Australia's media landscape.

In doing this, the diverse chapters in this book share in common a focus on the practices, voices and behaviours of Indigenous, migrant and ethnic Australians when they engage with a variety of media. Recognising the importance of the way in which the final media product is always implicated in wider political-economic, cultural and social relationships and networks, the studies within engage with the complex ways in which minorities 'speak back' through different media industries and networks, as well as different types of media use and production.

Thus, as well as recognising the importance of representation within powerful media texts, this collected edition focuses on the actions, responses and identities of migrant, Indigenous and Ethnic Australians as active media producers, consumers and social actors. Each chapter within therefore in no small part features the voices of the communities at their centre – whether specific groups based on nationality or ethnicity, or broader groups based on their internal and external articulation as minorities – focusing on them not simply as victims of dominant media, but also as speaking back through their own media and managing and engaging with different media organisations and texts.

Such an approach lends itself to a holistic analysis of minorities and media. By holistic, we refer to a recognition that separate media forms are in reality part of a wider media environment with few, if any, hard and fast borders. The media production of racial and ethnic minorities must be understood for its own unique complexities, as must their media use, including the way much of it is framed by problems with their relationship to mainstream media industries, practices and texts. And yet we must also be careful not to reify difference through an assumption of media separatism in use and production, when the media diet of migrants has been shown to be highly omnivorous (Deuze 2006). As Roger Silverstone (2003 in Georgiou 2005) argues, the meaning of minority and mainstream media can only be appreciated if they are analysed in their contrapuntal relationship to each other and to the audiences they address, positively or negatively. It is not enough to simply track and describe diverse media forms. Rather, we must seek to understand 'the dynamics that constrain, but may also enable, future interrelations between those elements' (Couldry & Dreher 2007, p. 96). This book therefore approaches the relationship between minorities and media as part of a wider social and communicative environment, in which it is impossible to isolate the concerns of minority peoples from broader social structures and relationships.

The importance of this approach is that it avoids reducing the media experiences of ethnic and racial minorities to one dimension, whether that is production, representation or consumption. Rather, it highlights the fact that minorities are often simultaneously victims of institutionalised media practices and structures, producers and controllers of their own symbols and narratives, and active and creative media users. This not only recognises, and brings into analytical focus, the power differentials that exist in a media environment dominated by a majority ethnic group, but also the myriad of ways in which minorities resist, circumvent, appropriate and counter-act this imbalance. Indeed, we argue that the relationship between minorities and media cannot be fully understood without appreciating the way in which the micro and macro levels of media (from individual texts to large organisations) impact on each other and on producers and audiences. That is, the ways in which mainstream media, in their political-economy and institutionalised practices, motivate the work of so many minority media producers; the ways in which minority and mainstream media shape the media experiences of migrants and Indigenous Australians; and the ways in which minority media production has impacted on public opinion towards migrants and Indigenous Australians.

Many academic studies and governmental and non-government reports have critiqued some of Australia's most powerful media for their failure to come to grips with Australia's diverse and fluctuating racial, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic make-up (Human Rights and Equal opportunity Commission 2009; Jakubowicz, Goodall, Martin, Mitchell, Randall, & Seneviratne 1994; McCallum & Holland 2009). A history of stereotypical representations, a lack of diversity in media organisations and a failure to engage with minority communities has permeated Australia's media landscape (Jakubowicz et al. 1994; Windle 2008; Forde, Foxwell & Meadows 2009). The extent of this can even be found in studies of Australia's specialist multicultural broadcaster, the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), which has been criticised for

offering a safe form of cultural diversity for elite white consumption (Roose & Akbarzadeh 2013).

It would be a mistake, however, to assume the relationship between minorities and media begins and ends at the commercial and public broadcasting sectors. As this book will demonstrate, minorities are far from passive victims of media stereotyping. In an unequal media landscape, they create and manage their own media, and utilise cultural products to engage in public and policy debates, construct communities of difference and form and negotiate shifting identities. Both Indigenous and ethnic minority media have a long and rich history in Australia, dating back centuries and reaching well into the 21st century through an engagement with digital technologies and online content (Gilson & Zubrzycki 1967; Browne 2005). These media play a pivotal role in empowering minority communities. They provide a space within which issues of most concern to migrants and Indigenous Australians - issues so often ignored in mainstream media - can be debated and evaluated (Browne 2005; Forde et al. 2009). They act as counter-measures to a commercial media system increasingly guided by market concerns rather than public interest. They facilitate the passing on and negotiation of traditions, languages and cultural practices (Gillespie 1995). And they allow minorities to negotiate a sense of belonging, identity and citizenship within the context of a social system that often places them at the margins (Gillespie 1995; Downing & Husband 2005).

Importantly, the relationship between minorities and media is intrinsically tied to the health of the public sphere and civil society in Australia (Husband 2005; Forde et al. 2009). A great deal of energy, throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, has been spent addressing the challenge and opportunity of establishing 'solidarity among strangers' (Garnham 2007, p. 203). How can we, in increasingly diverse modern societies, ensure that minorities are not only seen and heard, but also understood and respected (Husband 1998; Dreher 2010)? How can we ensure that official policies of multiculturalism do not simply mask inequality as cultural

diversity and a 'safe' form of difference (Bauman 2011)? If the Bourgeois public sphere was constituted through exclusion, how can we ensure a more inclusive space for public opinion be formed in which minority voices have an impact (Fraser 1990, 2014)? Such questions cannot be answered without considering the role of ethnic and Indigenous media in public discourse. This makes it even more paramount that we understand the way in which minorities 'speak back' in this environment, as well as the precise ways in which they engage with media that can be both liberating and marginalising. It is only through such a holistic understanding that ways forward can be gleaned.

This book also comes at an important time in Australia's media and political history. This is a history that includes a wide range of approaches to cultural and racial diversity. Policies towards Indigenous Australians have moved between assimilation, domination, and recognition. One of the most notable aspects of Australia's migration policy history is the Immigration Restriction Act, otherwise known as the White Australia Policy. Dissolved as recently as the late 1960s and early 1970s, this Act has given way to an official policy of multiculturalism that has been adopted with more or less enthusiasm by subsequent federal governments (Jupp 2011). Increasing movements of people, media and ideas across the globe have challenged the primordial linkage of nation and state, and have hybridised identities the world over as people experience themselves as part of local, national and transnational spheres of activity simultaneously (Vertovec 2009). The policy environment in Australia and elsewhere is also shifting, according to some, towards an ever-increasing market approach. In Australia, community, ethnic and Indigenous media producers and representative bodies have recently been involved in struggles on several fronts, including a proposed, but for now abandoned, weakening of Australia's Racial Discrimination Act, and funding cuts to, and the restructuring of, the community broadcasting sector, in turn jeopardising ethnic broadcasting. It is within this

charged political climate that we offer a wide ranging analysis minorities and the media in Australia.

Australia in Global Context

Media industries, texts and audiences are increasingly imbedded in transnational networks, defying any straightforward reduction to a single culture or bounded territory. The relationship between ethnic and Indigenous minorities and media is tied to global issues such as social cohesion, ethnic diversity, the public sphere and national identity (Browne 2005). The 'project' of the nation state is under pressure from globalising forces, as well as the reactions of localisation and parochialism (Downing & Husband 2005). Transnational movements of people, objects and ideas continue to reshape boundaries, both physical and symbolic. The politicisation of identity, with the resultant claims to new legitimate sub- and trans-national communities based on factors such as religion and ethnicity continue to challenge the imagined primordial nature of the national community (Brubaker 2010; Downing & Husband 2005). Amongst these processes sit a variety of media that provide both 'frameworks for inclusion' as well as 'frameworks for exclusion' and 'are at once global, national, ethnically-specific, regional and local' (Silverstone & Georgiou, 2005, p. 435).

In modern societies, diversity is managed through a complex set of political and cultural systems (Brubaker 2010). Formally, belonging to the nation state is guided by factors such as official citizenship status, among others. Informally, belonging in the national community is managed through cultural mores, symbols of inclusion and exclusion and national narratives (Brubaker 2010). The development of national broadcast and print media has been tied to the emergence of a national consciousness and a sense of belonging in nation-states around the world (Anderson 1991; Scannel 1996). Through the transcending of regional dialects, the sharing of narrative and symbolic materials, the promotion and construction of national myths,

and the temporal structuring of nationally shared events and rituals, these media are charged with creating an imagined national community to which certain people can claim a legitimate sense of belonging. Whether state run, commercial, or some mixture of both, national broadcast and print media manage internal and external diversity and symbolically define matter out of place (Morley 2000).

As part of this process, external 'risky flows' of people, ideas and products are managed through the symbolic construction and maintenance of fluid and networked borders (Gillespie 2007, p. 278; Shields 2014). Studies suggest that in constructing a national identity, broadcast and print media position migrants as outsiders and a potential threat to the imagined community of the nation (Alghassi 2009; Gillespie 2007; Morley 2000). Such processes have become particularly pronounced since the beginning of the so-called "war on terror". Feelings of exclusion from, and misrepresentation within, mainstream media have been felt by migrants and minorities in Europe, Australia and North America, amongst other regions (Downing & Husband 2005; Deuze 2006; Alghassi 2009). The situation in Europe in 2004 was such that over 700 ethnic media organisations, alarmed by the lack of attention paid to minority issues in the mainstream media, called for the European parliament to recognize minority ethnic media as a basic public service (Deuze 2006). In the preface to their 2005 book, *Representing 'Race'*, John Downing and Charles Husband sum up the situation in the following way:

> We have been struck for well over thirty years now, both in the USA and the UK, and via research evidence from still other nations, by the continuing failures on the part of mainstream media, globally, to fulfill their potential to inform, enlighten, question, imagine and explain in this often troubled and dangerous field of ethnic diversity in the contemporary world (Downing & Husband 2005, p. x).

Such a statement does not bode well for media, which, in several countries, have failed to accurately reflect the internal diversity of multicultural and multi-ethnic nations. This lack of representation extends beyond the faces on television and the type of stories covered in the news and includes a failure to incorporate minority groups into the machinations behind the scenes of media production (Sreberny 2005; Asumadu 2013). Sreberny (2005) argues for the pressing need for minorities to be included in industrial media discourses and organisations, in ways that enable them to extend beyond their "ethnic" typecast and engage with broader social issues. Indeed, such issues have been at the centre of debates and research in several industrialised countries (Greenberg & Brand 1998). Recent studies from Europe suggest that ethnic minorities continue to face obstructions to careers in media industries. Rather than being reducible to some form of overt racism, these obstructions include more intractable problems, such as a lack of recognized media training amongst minorities and an oversaturated media job market in Europe (Markova & McKay 2013).

The failure of much mainstream media to account for ethnic and racial diversity in countries around the world must, however, be examined in the context of the emergence of new and complex communicative networks that are aligned with transnational and sub-national communities based on religion, politics and ethnicity, and which themselves challenge neat divisions between minority and mainstream. There has been a renewed interest in minority, diasporic and transnational media globally (Forde et al. 2009; Deuze 2006; Browne 2005). These media have challenged the mainstream media's hold on the "national" audience, as has the increasing personalisation and flexibility facilitated by new communications technologies (Cunningham 2001). As Hopkins (2009) suggests, the national audience is being broken up, with diasporas, transnational communities and migrant groups producing and consuming media outside the broadcast realm of the national state.

Significant questions are being asked of the national audience. There is evidence to suggest that in some countries different ethnic groups enjoy vastly different media, signalling a possible fragmentation of the social sphere (Deuze 2006; Morley 2000). Indeed, a 2005 report in the United States suggested that almost half of all African-American, Hispanic, Asian American, Native American and Arab American adults prefer ethnic media to that offered by mainstream organisations (Deuze 2006). Yet there is also extensive evidence to suggest that ethnic minorities are inclusive media consumers, actively and critically comparing and contrasting different media (Forde et al. 2009; Gillespie 2007; Aksoy & Robins 2000). Indeed, mistrust of mainstream media is part of a wider, more complex process in which transnational audiences put together what Gillespie (2006, p. 917) calls a 'jigsaw of truth' by comparing and contrasting multiple news sources. As Deuze (2006, p. 270) argues, 'Minority media become part of the media diet of people without necessarily replacing other, existing (mass) media on offer – thus becoming part of what can be called our "media meshing" behaviour'.

Still further questions concern Indigenous media production and reception around the world (Ginsburg 2008; Matsaganis, Katz &Ball-Rokeach 2011). Indigenous media have been at the forefront of minority media in countries such as Australia and Canada. These media were some of the earliest non-majority media to emerge in North America and Australia, and in many ways paved the way for later migrant media by challenging and changing systemic attitudes towards minority self-expression (Matsaganis et al. 2011). However, despite successes in utilising new media technologies to tell their stories, Indigenous media practitioners still work in a broader system largely not of their own making. This issue is felt in the struggle to maintain control over important cultural resources within a context of western based intellectual property laws and the pressure of a culture of freedom of information that permeates the internet (Ginsburg 2008). Such challenges are a warning against the over-celebration of Indigenous media practices without also looking critically at the overarching policy environment.

This book engages with several of the themes that have emerged in international studies of ethnic and Indigenous minorities and the media, including relationships with majority media, the production of alternative media, and the engagement with media in the negotiation of identity and social and political positions. Australia shares many similarities with other culturally diverse countries when it comes to media. Like North America and many parts of Europe, there are serious questions as to the willingness and ability of Australia's commercial and non-commercial mainstream media to sufficiently and sensitively represent different ethnic and cultural groups. Like countries in the Americas, Australia is also home to a strong – and sadly often underfunded and under-appreciated in official political circles – Indigenous media sector. However, in order to appreciate the specific nature of Australia's minority media environment, it is important to look for both the connections and dissimilarities between the situation in this country and elsewhere around the world. The chapters in this study are therefore informed both by an international set of literature, theories and findings, as well as locally embedded research and evidence.

A Note on Terminology: Why Minority?

Like all terms in the humanities and social sciences, "minority" comes with intellectual and political baggage. Our choice to use the term minority in the title reflects a desire to recognise certain specific experiences that the subjects of the following chapters share – inequality, lack of access to certain resources, implicit and explicit discrimination. At the same time, the term minority is broad enough to allow the contributors to further specify the unique experiences and practices central to their studies. Minority is therefore used in an attempt to articulate the inequalities felt by many minority groups in Australia, whilst also allowing for recognition of the particular ways in which these inequalities are experienced by different groups and peoples.

The use of minority does not come without fore-thought or recognition of the critiques of the term (Wilkinson 2000; Nibert 1996). Wilkinson (2000) suggests the term minority does little more than reduce differences among different racial, ethnic, gender, political and sexual groups to a broad, politically palatable misnomer. What is needed, she argues, is a more direct engagement with specific histories and experiences and a more robust willingness to employ less palatable terms such as 'oppressed groups' (Nibert 1996, in Wilkinson 2000, p. 117). While we certainly agree with the need to recognise the different historical and contemporary experiences of people often lumped under the broader minority umbrella, unlike Wilkinson we view the terms openness and lack of specificity as a useful entry point into more specific discussions of power, inequality and media in Australia.

For one thing, the term minority is helpful in its acknowledgement of power imbalances. At its broadest level it can be used to refer to any group in society that is systematically marginalised and made relatively powerless in economic, political, social or cultural arenas. However, unlike notions such as oppressed groups, minority leaves more room for resistance, creativity and the expression of power and agency. It is therefore used in the introduction and title of this book as a heuristic device more than a specific identifier. Another advantage of the term is that it is flexible enough to allow for a discussion of Indigenous Australians, migrants, and those who were born here but are identified – internally or externally – as belonging to a particular ethnic or cultural group. We therefore employ the term precisely to allude to the complex interplay between oppression, empowerment and resistance to be further elucidated and detailed throughout the book (Matsaganis et al. 2010).

The term minority, and antonyms such as majority and mainstream, have also been applied to media in this introduction, and feature amongst the chapters in this book. Again, such terms are employed here not in an attempt to rigidly define categories, but rather to encourage analysis. The conceptualisation of mainstream media has, for example, been problematised

significantly by new media technologies such as the internet, which have in turn lead to a new appreciation of, and analytical focus on, the conceptualisation of alternative media (Coyer, Dowmunt & Fountain 2007). It is important to also recognise that understandings of media are relational, and that terms like minority, majority, mainstream and alternative are defined in relation to each other. Despite the somewhat clumsy nature of the terms, we feel minority and mainstream are still useful in their relation to existing inequalities in access to, and representation within, media, as well as the power of media in political and policy dialogues and influence. While new digital communications networks have empowered minority and alternative media, there are still many instances of marginalisation. Conversely, while the hold of monolithic big media corporations over national media landscapes has been significantly challenged, these same media corporations have not stood idly by, but have sought to use their political and economic muscle to ensure their control over an ever widening array of media technologies, platforms, products and industries.

Outline of the book

The chapters in this book are tied together by a focus on the relationships between minorities and media beyond, as well as within, the text. Issues of production, ownership and management are engaged with as several studies focus on an area often neglected in western media studies: the work of migrants and minorities in making media. The way in which minorities and migrants use and engage with media is also analysed, and importantly the Indigenous media sector is analysed in the context of Australia's policy environment when it comes to Indigenous issues. When representation is discussed, it is done so in a way that ties it to global patterns of media portrayals of minorities and to the responses to such media coverage.

In order to give the book a general shape, the first four chapters focus on the production and industry side of minority media. Rob Cover's chapter examines the connections between

complex identity politics and increasingly networked migrant media in the context of growing concerns over border protection and fears over radicalisation. The chapter interrogates the ways in which migrant media prioritises and facilitates complex, hybrid and resilient migrant identities rather than the safe forms of diversity and cosmopolitanism accepted in liberal multiculturalism. Drawing on interviews with migrant print and broadcast media producers and workers, Cover contextualises their work within both local and diasporic networks that give rise to the complexification of identity in a way that potentially circumvents the simplifying discourses that emerge in migration debates in the west. As a concept that draws attention to the flexibility afforded by transnational and local networks of media production, resilience is an under-utilised concept when thinking through the role of migrant media in providing a space beyond the rigid classifications of the wider social and political machinery. As Cover suggests, resilience provides opportunities through which to understand migrant settlement in a contemporary global context.

John Budarick's chapter draws on a series of interviews with African media producers in Australia. Drawing on a history of ethnic and foreign language media in Australia, Europe and North America, Budarick teases out some of the connections between old and newer forms of ethnic media, looking at both the role of foreign language and migrant media through the 19th and 20th centuries, and the way it has been shaped by both formal political measures and less formal cultural attitudes. In analysing his interviews with African-Australian media producers, he argues that they often emerge from a space of marginalisation, exclusion and information poverty, displaying the lack of sufficient communicative space within the dominant, mainstream media environment in Australia. African media not only address such issues by providing their own space for African voices, but also have the potential to change dominant media and social attitudes and practices.

Jia Gao and Lu Zhang's chapter provides a recent history of one of the largest and most dynamic minority media sectors in Australia, that of Chinese migrants. Contextualising their study within patterns of Chinese migration to Australia, the authors note the resumption of direct and significant Chinese migration in the early 1990s and its impact on the Chinese media sector. Importantly, the chapter provides a historically informed analysis of the Chinese media sector, tracking changes as they have occurred in three areas; the re-establishment stage in the early 1990s, the diversification period and the current transformation phase. Importantly, Gao and Zhang analyse the Chinese media environment as emerging from factors such as migration, economics and trade, as well as pointing to the more localised forces that have shaped these media. The chapter thus situates Chinese-Australian media as being both internationally infused as well as locally responsive. Taking a political-economy approach, the authors highlight an often overlooked factor in media and cultural studies approaches to ethnic media; that the establishment of a vibrant and diverse Chinese media sector in Australia is a response to the practicalities of employment and income amongst highly educated and skilled migrants.

Heather Anderson and Shepard Masocha draw on an intimate participatory action research study involving community radio production by young refugees in South Australia. Engaging with the transformative potential of media and social research, the authors engage directly with questions of power and trust when engaging with young refugee participants. Drawing on interview data gathered in the final stages of the production process, Anderson and Masocha point to the significance of 'voice' in overcoming settlement issues amongst participants. In particular, overcoming barriers of self-expression, both in practical terms of confidence, language barriers and accents, as well as in ways related to the dominance of official voices in media debates, provided participants with an important shared sense of confidence and achievement. The chapter applies these outcomes to wider issues of the public sphere, and Anderson and Masocha argue that community media are vital for the way they can

interrupt the dominant discourses of a public sphere dominated by mass media. Such a process is important for cutting across different communities in a way that makes cross cultural understanding possible.

Kerry McCallum and Lisa Waller then move us gently away from a concern with migrant and ethnic media production, to an examination of Indigenous media in Australia, locating it within the broader Australian media landscape. McCallum and Waller's chapter is significant in that it contrasts the development of Indigenous media with that of ethnic minority media. There are few comparative analyses of Indigenous and ethnic media in Australia. Despite both media sectors arguably sharing a marginalised position in Australia's communications hierarchy, McCallum and Waller note that Indigenous media have been shaped by specific political and policy histories in Australia. Indigenous media also provide a space through which Indigenous Australians are able to talk back to those in power and impact on policy debates in health and education.

Gil-Soo Han examines the diverse role of Korean media amongst Korean students, sojourners, business migrants and older migrants in Australia. These media provide a space through which Koreans of different ages are able to form, manage and (re)form their identities and play with the cultural and experiential distances between Australia and Korea. Korean media are used to manage the challenges of life in Australia in ways that allow Korean-Australians to reconcile their goals and aspirations with the reality of life as migrants. Looking at both print and social media, Han locates the Korean media in Australia in a historical and global context, pointing to both localised production processes and wider diasporic spaces that encapsulate such practices. Importantly, the realities of economics and resources are at the forefront of discussions of the Korean print media system in Australia. The chapter engages with intimate and detailed analyses of Korean-Australians and their use of media, pointing to the way media are used to narrate, understand and extrapolate experiences in Australia in terms

of aspirations, identities and belongings. The chapter also includes a discussion of the use of social networking sites by Koreans, an increasingly important form of media in contemporary globalised lives.

Sukhmani Khorana examines the media reception practices of a diverse range of migrants, as well as drawing on her own previous experiences as a young migrant in Australia. Examining the global phenomenon of cooking shows, and tying together issues of food and cooking, cultural and ethnic identity, and cosmopolitan identities, she looks at the different responses to the Australian version of *Masterchef*. Khorana suggests that *Masterchef* is more than simply a show about food, but instead allows an active audience of first and second generation migrants to think through and articulate complex cosmopolitan identities in a the context of a changing Australian national identity that potentially de-centres the normative white, Anglo subject. The chapter is important in the way it supports a growing body of literature on migrant and minority audiences, and the way their active use of media is situated in wider contexts of identity and belonging in an increasingly transnationally interlinked world.

Jacqui Ewart and Jillian Beard's chapter rounds out the book by providing an in depth summary of both the representation of ethnic minorities in the mainstream news media, and the ways in which those minorities have spoken back in their own voices. Importantly, they situate this research within wider international literature, pointing to similar negative news representations of minorities in other western countries. Such comparisons are vital for situating Australia's media within an international context, particularly in light of increasing international collaboration and partnerships between media companies, as well as cross media ownership. In line with one of the major themes of this book, the chapter examines the ways in which ethnic groups who have been marginalised in the Australian media manage their own representations in their own media spaces. Ewart and Beard conclude the chapter by suggesting future pathways

for research into the practices and consumption habits of marginalised groups, pathways we hope are taken up in future research.

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