

CHAPTER 3

Immigrants and Their Media

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, you will have learned more about:

- The differences between immigrants and other types of migrants.
- How migration experiences are different depending on where people have come from and where they have settled.
- The roles that ethnic media play in immigration and settlement.

Why Immigration Matters

What percentage of the world's population do you think lives outside of the country where they were born? 10%? 25%? Maybe even more? Most of you will be surprised to learn that international estimates put the number around 3% (International Organization for Migration, 2005). If almost everyone stays where they are born, why do we hear so much about immigrants, and why does where they move to and how they settle matter so much? The answer lies in who immigrates. People who are the most likely to immigrate tend to be young and/or highly skilled (Fischer, Martin, & Straubhaar, 1997). This means that those who are most likely to move are disproportionately highly trained and educated, or alternatively, are young and capable of physically challenging work, in the case of low-skilled workers. Immigration therefore becomes a high-profile issue because sending countries stand to lose valuable parts of their workforces, and the country receiving these immigrants stand to gain a great deal from their strengths (Carrington & Detragiache, 1999).

Defining Immigration

To properly understand migration and the roles that media play in the movement and settlements of different groups of people, it is necessary to identify the differences between types of migrants. A *migrant* is any person who moves from one country to live in another one. A migrant can be either a *sojourner* or an *immigrant*. A sojourner is a migrant who only intends to spend a short time in the new country. An immigrant leaves the home country intending to make a permanent move. Many sojourners end up becoming immigrants when their temporary move stretches into permanent settlement in the host country.

Why is it important to distinguish between temporary and permanent movers? We make this distinction because people relate to their new environment differently if they are planning a permanent move rather than a temporary one. Sojourners, such as students who study abroad, are not likely to feel that they really need to learn their new environment because they will be going home soon. Sojourners' media connections will also focus mainly on home country news and events, reflecting a commitment to returning home. Immigrants, on the other hand, are usually more motivated to make conscious and unconscious changes in their behaviors, media connections, commitments, and relationships. For these reasons, this chapter is primarily concerned with immigrants and their media, rather than with sojourners.

People immigrate for a variety of reasons. Researchers generally distinguish between voluntary and involuntary immigrants, although this distinction is sometimes hard to make. *Voluntary immigrants* are motivated by economic reasons: seeking a better life. However, many people who leave their home countries because there are no jobs or very few opportunities for their children would be unlikely to describe their economic motivations as "voluntary." There are other kinds of voluntary immigrants, like family members who move to join relatives who are already settled in the host country, or people who move because they have married a citizen of another country.

Involuntary immigrants are asylum seekers and refugees who are given permission to live in a new country to escape war, personal persecution (for religious reasons, for example), or other similar dangers. There is a lot of controversy regarding which groups are granted refugee status and which are not. For example, Cuban immigrants receive automatic asylum in the U.S. (and therefore refugee status) upon arriving on American soil because they are fleeing a communist regime. In contrast, immigrants from El Salvador fleeing their country's civil war in the 1980s and 1990s were not granted refugee status by U.S. courts (Coutin, 2003). The official status immigrants are granted on arrival has a profound effect on their settlement patterns. Salvadorans were forced to choose between returning to El Salvador—which for many would have been a death sentence—or having to live in the United States without legal documentation.

Refugees in other countries also face difficult odds in their quests to gain asylum, and treatment also depends in part on one's country of origin. In the European Union, fewer than 5% of those seeking asylum are actually granted permanent petitions. During the 2001 genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina, almost

Figure 3.1 Political Cartoon Responding to New Australian Restrictions on Asylum Seekers

Source: Cartoon by Nicholson from *The Australian*. www.nicholsoncartoons.com.au

all petitioners were granted at least temporary asylum in the EU. In contrast, the EU has not extended this kind of blanket acceptance, even temporarily, to applicants suffering from similar crises, such as the Darfur region of Sudan (Reynolds, 2002). Asylum seekers in Australia have also faced increasingly restrictive policies, as the cartoon above, originally published in *The Australian*, points out in an ironic way (see Figure 3.1).

How and why people immigrate are complex questions that are beyond the scope of this book to answer.¹ What is important to consider is that the conditions that prompt immigration profoundly impact how immigrants settle in their new country, as well as what issues arise during the processes of movement and settlement that can be addressed by the ethnic media. For example, the content of ethnic media serving involuntary immigrants may be different from that of media targeting voluntary immigrants, since the pre-migration and settlement experiences of these immigrants give rise to different sets of needs. Refugees who leave their countries under threat or after periods of deprivation or abuse of their human rights suffer disproportionately from conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder and other psychological and

physical concerns resulting from their ill treatment (Chong, 2002). Media serving these populations may, for example, broach issues of mental health more frequently and in more depth than ethnic media serving voluntary migrants.

Ethnic media are part of immigrants' settlement experiences, which take place in the particular context of reception immigrants face upon arrival in their new country. In the next section, we detail the most important factors constituting immigrants' context of reception and their relationship both to ethnic media and to immigrant settlement.

Context of Reception

Many factors affect who is accepted by a host society, and who is not. Four major factors affect immigrants' *context of reception*, as developed by Portes and Rumbaut (1996). The first is the *policies of the host government*, including legal definitions of (il)legal migration and status—for example, who qualifies as a refugee. As we discuss in more detail in Chapter 7, government policies vary widely. For example, Austria only extends protections of free speech and publishing privileges to ethnic media produced by groups legally recognized as ethnic minorities (Böse, Haberfellner, & Koldas, 2002), whereas these rights are more universally protected in other EU countries. In these ways, production and consumption of ethnic media can be constrained by government policies.

The second factor is the *condition of the labor market*. In strong economic periods when jobs are plentiful, immigrants filling empty positions in the labor market may be welcomed. In an economic downturn, when immigrants are perceived as competition for the few jobs, government services, or housing resources available, immigrants will face a more hostile context of reception. However, even in difficult economic times, immigrants who possess education, trade knowledge, and other occupational skills highly valued by the host country may experience a more favorable context of reception than lower-skilled immigrants. For example, a professor hired from another country for his particular expertise may not face the social resistance that immigrants who do not possess such specialized skills might.

Immigrants who have skills that are not recognized or valued in the host country may face a loss in occupational status that forces them to compete for lower-skilled jobs or to reinvent themselves in new professions. Ethnic media can be one such occupational shift. Many ethnic media entrepreneurs were not involved in media production in their country of origin, but see economic opportunities in doing so in their new country.

The third factor, *characteristics of the settlement community*, affects immigrants most on a day-to-day basis. The immigrant or family that settles with others from the same home country will have a different immigration experience from the family that settles in a mixed ethnic community. Research shows that immigrants' decisions about where to settle are usually based on economic considerations. Poorer immigrants tend to settle in urban areas with other immigrants from their home country. These areas are called *ethnic enclaves* (Waldinger & Lichter, 2002),

and these are the Japantowns, Little Ethiopias, or Koreatowns that are found in the urban areas of most major cities.

Most professional migrants do not settle in these poorer neighborhoods because their work is usually located elsewhere, and they can afford to live in the pricier suburbs (Alba, Logan, Stults, Marzan, & Zhang, 1999; Alba & Nee, 2003). Many immigrants who initially settle in ethnic communities may move out to the suburbs as their economic conditions improve. Some suburbs are ethnically diverse. Other suburbs, particularly in large cities, might be middle- or upper-class communities of immigrants from a particular country (Alba et al., 1999). In these instances, moving to the suburbs might mean an economic step up without having to leave the ethnic community, as is the case for mainland Chinese and Taiwanese-origin immigrants living in San Francisco's Peninsula and South Bay suburban regions, for example.

Immigrants who live in ethnic enclaves or ethnically homogeneous suburbs can maintain their cultural customs and language more easily than can immigrants living in ethnically mixed communities. In a Thai Town, for example, business can be conducted in Thai rather than English, and an ongoing influx of new Thai immigrants to these areas can replenish the linguistic vitality of these communities (Zentella, 1997). Children in these communities often speak their parent's native language at home and in the local community. For this reason, children are more likely to speak their parents' primary language fluently when they grow up in more ethnically concentrated communities (Alba & Nee, 2003; Lieberman, 1981; Lopez, 1996).

Ethnic enclaves and ethnically concentrated suburbs are also likely to have a range of ethnic media options. These media range from small "mom-and-pop" local publications and free newsletters to media produced by international conglomerates. The presence of these media further encourages children being bilingual as many of the media are produced in the immigrants' native language (Zentella, 1997). In a larger sense, ethnic media are carriers of the home culture. When they are seen and heard in the home, on the street, and in the public spaces of an immigrant community, they reinforce ethnic and cultural identity.

Immigrant parents who move their families to mixed-ethnic suburbs usually face unintended consequences of this decision (Alba & Nee, 2003). There are likely to be lower rates of bilingualism in the second generation, because children go to school with groups of mixed peers, parents work with individuals from a variety of backgrounds, and English is the common language at school and at work. Children in mixed ethnic suburbs can still be bilingual, but not hearing their parent's language outside of the home means that parents have to go to a lot of trouble to insure bilingualism in their children. Children who grow up in mixed-ethnic suburbs are more likely to develop habits of connecting to mainstream media, and if they are not bilingual, ethnic media produced in the home language may not be accessible to them at all.

Finally, attitudes toward immigrants in *the larger society* are part of the newcomer's context of reception (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). Host country hostility toward outsiders can affect how and where immigrants settle and what kinds of jobs and

opportunities are made available to them and their children (Martin & Nakayama, 2007b). Some immigrants may face more discrimination than others based on the color of their skin or country of origin. For example, Zolberg and Woon (1999) argue that the size and visibility of the Mexican immigrant community in the United States results in more discrimination and hostility than is experienced by other groups; they also contend that Muslim immigrants in Europe face similar prejudice for the same reasons. World events can also shift societal attitudes toward particular groups of immigrants. In the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks, many countries have responded with stricter limitations on immigration from Muslim countries than they had in place before the attacks (Cainkar, 2002; Schildkraut, 2002).

Immigration restrictions can have a big impact on the development of ethnic media. Ethnic communities that have fewer new residents needing media content in the home language and/or information about settling in the new community have to shift their focus to cover news that suits the tastes of longer-settled readers. For example, when the Johnson-Reed Act restricted annual Syrian immigration to 100 people per year in 1924, media serving this population had to adapt to these restrictions in order to survive (Naff, 1987). *The Syrian World* (published between 1928 and 1932) was the first newspaper that explicitly targeted the needs and interests of the “Syrian American,” meaning the American-born children of Syrian immigrants. Published in English, the editor’s stated goal was to give readers

a broader vision of their racial heritage . . . that our Syrian-American generation will come to better understand the country of their parents and appreciate more fully their racial endowments which constitute a valuable contribution to the country of their birth [the United States]. (Naff, 1987, p. 11)

This publication was a clear departure from media targeted to the immigrant generation, as a direct result of the legal restrictions placed on immigration from Syria.

The Syrian World represents one possible outcome of immigration restrictions, but some consequences are more clearly negative. When groups face a hostile reception from the host society, immigrants may choose to settle in less ethnically diverse areas to shield themselves from prejudice (Kasinitz, Waters, Mollenkopf, & Anil, 2002). Ethnic enclave communities can be distinct from the host society in terms of income, employment, educational attainment, and other social factors. When these distinctions are maintained because the host society desires to keep a group separated, we say that that migrant or ethnic minority group faces *segregation*. When migrants choose to maintain their original culture by avoiding interaction with the host culture, we call them *separatists*. The Amish, certain Muslim sects, and Hasidic Jews, are examples of separatist groups (Martin & Nakayama, 2007b).

Table 3.1 summarizes these four factors affecting immigrants’ context of reception, and the potential outcomes each factor may have on ethnic media development.

Table 3.1 Relationship Between Immigrants' Context of Reception and the Development of Their Ethnic Media

Factors Affecting Immigrants' Context of Reception	Potential Impacts on Ethnic Media
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government policy: Includes definitions of (il)legal migration, recognition of minority status and attendant rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictions in immigration policy, media policy, and freedom of speech can constrain or enable ethnic media production.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor market conditions: Level of competition with other groups (immigrant and native born) for jobs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong labor market combined with open immigration policy can encourage a steady flow of new immigrants who create ongoing demand for ethnic media, and opportunities for ethnic media entrepreneurs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characteristics of the community of settlement: Living in an ethnic enclave, ethnically homogenous or mixed-ethnic suburb has consequences for linguistic and cultural retention in the second generation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settling in an ethnic enclave can provide consistent access to a wide range of ethnic media outlets and contribute to bilingualism in the second generation, giving them greater access to ethnic media produced in their parents' native language.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The larger society: Attitudes toward immigrants generally, and potential hostility toward specific groups of immigrants can affect how and where immigrants settle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hostility toward an immigrant group can result in restrictions on media-produced in home country languages, particularly in times of war. In other contexts, hostility from the larger society may encourage immigrants to develop ethnic media outlets that provide their community's perspective on their experiences and issues.

For Further Discussion

Suppose two migrants from Chile both immigrate to the United States at the same time. Eduardo comes from a rural village, has little formal education, and only speaks Spanish. Carlos has a college degree, is fluent in English, and has years of work experience as an aeronautical engineer.

Refer to Table 3.1, and describe possible differences between Eduardo and Carlos' contexts of reception.

How you would expect Eduardo and Carlos' contexts of reception to affect:

1. The communities where Eduardo and Carlos would be likely to settle;
2. How these migrants would adapt to life in the host country; and
3. The media (ethnic and/or mainstream options) with which you think Eduardo and Carlos would be most likely to connect?

Most immigrants, however, are not separatists. Most immigrants wish to adapt to their new community and country, even as they may wish to maintain cultural and ethnic ties to their home countries. *Adaptation* is the long-term process of adjusting to and feeling comfortable in the host culture (Kim, 2005). Ethnic media can serve as important tools for immigrants' adaptation to their new environments.

Ethnic Media as Resources for Immigrants

Ethnic media serve an important function in connecting the immigrant to news and events in the home country (*connective function*), while also orienting the newcomer to their new community and new country (*orientation function*) (Adoni, Caspi, & Cohen, 2006). The introduction of new communication technologies has made the connective functions of ethnic media increasingly rapid and accessible. A good balance of connective and orientation stories contributes to the creation of a *dual frame of reference* (Reese, 2001) where immigrants know the norms of both the country of origin and the host country and can use both sets of cultural rules. Ethnic media can serve as resources for immigrants by serving both connective and orientation functions.

Understanding What Is Happening in the Settlement Community

As we discussed in Chapter 1, media can be teachers of culture for immigrants by portraying the social norms and communicative rules of the settlement country, which is key for developing a dual frame of reference. For example, ethnic media may include articles on how to enroll children in school (Valdés, 1996), open a bank account, or similar explicit guidance on how to get established in the local community. Ethnic media can be resources for new immigrants in learning about available health and social services in the community (Wilkin & Ball-Rokeach, 2006). News coverage of local events, cultural festivals, and community meetings can help immigrants connect with other residents and become integrated into their new communities.

For example, *New Vision—The Independent Refugee News and Information Service* in London serves Ethiopian refugees by connecting them with local resources (Georgiou, 2003). Calling itself “The Voice for the Voiceless,” *New Vision* serves as a message board, updated with events, information, and news that affect refugees as they establish themselves in London. There are links to jobs and other community resources that new refugees might need to access when they arrive. The Web site also promotes positive images of refugees by reporting integration success stories, such as profiling a refugee trained as a nurse, or the UK-born children of refugees performing well in English schools (Georgiou, 2003).

Some ethnic media focus almost entirely on news from the country of origin and do not produce the kinds of stories that help immigrants learn about their new community. A study of Chinese, Korean, and Spanish-language ethnic newspapers in Los Angeles found that the ratio of home country to local community news has consequences for immigrants' sense of belonging to their new community

(Lin, Song, & Ball-Rokeach, in press). When ethnic newspapers focus entirely on home country news, readers are encouraged to look homeward (*connective function*), away from their new community (*orientation function*). Residents reported higher levels of belonging to their new community when newspapers told stories about that community in addition to providing home country news. We discuss ethnic media as local media in greater detail in Chapter 9.

Kerr (2007) found a similar imbalance between connective and orientation-related content in the Polish-language media in Ireland. Ireland imposed no restrictions on workers moving from states added to the EU in 2004, including Poland. Since then, ethnic media serving these newcomers have developed as rapidly as the Polish population itself has grown. When Kerr conducted research in Ireland at the beginning of the summer in 2006, there were three Polish-owned, Polish-language newspapers being produced in Dublin alone; one weekly, the other two fortnightly. By the end of that same summer, two more Polish-language print publications had emerged (Kerr, 2007, p. 177). Kerr found that these publications have a strong focus on the home country, in that there is “an implicit assumption by the producers that many Polish workers will return home, and that they have a constant need for basic information on Ireland and information about communicating, traveling and sending money home to Poland” (p. 186). Therefore, information provided on living in Ireland tends to be focused only on the bare necessities of temporary settlement, with most content related to ways to remain fully connected to the home country.

Immigrants in Germany also find that their ethnic media do not always strike the perfect balance between their connective and orientation functions. Geißler and Weber-Menges (2009) surveyed 2,208 Turkish, Italian, and Russo-German immigrants living in Germany and found that the majority of all three groups think that ethnic media provide insufficient coverage of topics related to living in Germany. However, the majority of all three groups believed their ethnic media served a strong connective function by helping them sustain their language and culture and helping them manage feelings of homesickness. Italian and Turkish immigrants also indicated a desire to see inserts in their own language in the German media, demonstrating a desire for some merging between mainstream and ethnic media content.

Ethnic media serve different functions for different kinds of immigrants, and some immigrants have strong connections to both ethnic and mainstream media outlets. For example, professional immigrants who are more likely to live in mixed-ethnic neighborhoods are able to access mainstream and ethnic media sources due to their bilingual proficiencies. These professionals are able to connect with both mainstream and ethnic media outlets to stay on top of what is going on in their country of origin, their country of settlement, and in their local community as well (Bendixen & Associates, 2006; Durham, 2004). On the other hand, immigrants with limited English language proficiency are more likely to connect only with ethnic media outlets. This means when local news is missing from ethnic media content, these immigrants may not be able to access other media resources that can help them learn about their new community.

Some immigrants may face not only language barriers but literacy barriers as well. Ethnic radio broadcasts can be a valuable alternative for immigrants with limited literacy to connect with the news and information they need. This potential use for radio was first recognized with the advent of radio broadcasting in the U.S.

in the early 1900s: “Many émigrés could not read or write the languages of their mother tongues . . . the advent of an explicitly oral medium [radio] might have provided hope that there would soon be broadcasts in Italian, Spanish and other languages” (Browne, 2008, p. 24). Such broadcasts may have been slow to materialize, but today they provide limited literacy immigrants with information resources they may otherwise be unable to access.

Finding Jobs

For many immigrant groups, information that informs the decision to move, where to move to, and the availability of resources like jobs and housing comes from family, friends, and other members of their communities. Many people immigrate because a friend or family member has arranged a job for them (Waldinger & Lichter, 2002). This is the reason why immigrants from a particular hometown tend to settle in the same places.

For skilled immigrants, ethnic media can be a crucial part of finding work before moving. Family and friends can inform a potential migrant of job opportunities in businesses owned by other immigrants who often advertise in the ethnic media or in online postings. Once potential migrants contact the hiring company and secure jobs and necessary visas, they would make the decision to migrate. As discussed in Chapter 1, immigrant-receiving countries have ties with the developing countries that are their largest sources of migrant workers. Connections between emigrant-sending and immigrant-receiving countries may be the result of previous colonization, as is the case of Great Britain with Jamaica, India, and Pakistan, and of France with the countries of North Africa. Sending/receiving country connections can also result from the global nature of business today, as in the case with China’s migration flows to the United States (Martin & Nakayama, 2007a).

Close ties between the sending and receiving countries can prepare immigrants for life in that new place (Sassen, 1998). For example, working for a British-owned company in India can prepare a potential migrant for the corporate culture and values of British business, making a potential migration to Britain more likely. Media produced in India as well as ethnic media targeted to Indians living in Britain can be transmitted by satellite. These media are information resources for potential immigrants as they decide whether to stay or go. India, by virtue of its strong historical and cultural links, has a high *degree of international interaction* (Sassen, 1998) with Britain. Media content contributes to the degree of international interaction, because media content and images can reinforce familiarity with Britain’s culture and history, making assimilating seem less difficult to potential migrants. Migration therefore becomes more likely.

Understanding Their Rights

Ethnic media can play important roles for new immigrants in developing an understanding of their rights in the host society. For example, new immigration or citizenship policies often prompt ethnic media to cover these changes in a way that informs new immigrants about how these changes will affect them. Coverage might

include a step-by-step explanation of the changes or requirements and information about where to file necessary forms or to get help (Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism [PEJ], 2009a). Advertisements in ethnic media for immigration attorneys and related professional aid can be additional resources.

Proposed changes in immigration policy can also incite ethnic media to galvanize the community for protests or demonstrations. In Los Angeles in 2006, for example, disk jockeys for the three largest Spanish-language radio stations encouraged a peaceful protest of proposed U.S. immigration reform. Almost half a million listeners were mobilized, many of whom were new immigrants (Félix, González, & Ramírez, 2008). Figure 3.2 is a collection of pictures taken at that immigration rally.

Figure 3.2

The immigration rallies that took place in Los Angeles and nationwide on May 1, 2006, were advertised and participation was heavily encouraged by Spanish-language radio disk jockeys. These rallies gave immigrants and their supporters an opportunity to peaceably register their opposition to proposed legislative changes to immigration policy in the U.S. These pictures were taken at the Los Angeles rally, and the poster in the picture at bottom right aims to tie the plight of current immigration issues to the historical origins of the United States as a nation of immigrants.



Photos: Michelle Hawks.

Ethnic media play similarly important roles in educating their communities about voting rights. During the 2008 U.S. election period, the Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism (2009) found that Latino and African-American media took more of a hands-on approach to election reporting than their mainstream counterparts. Specifically, they found that:

In many cases the ethnic media acted as teachers, voter-advocates and even watchdogs . . . Spanish-language and African American newspapers devoted more than twice the space as English-language ones to explaining specifics on voting, such as necessary documents and when polls close. (PEJ, 2009a)

These media outlets also kept a close eye on potential irregularities at voting booths and explained what their readers should do if they were turned away from a voting booth.

As these examples illustrate and as we will discuss further in Chapter 10, there are times when ethnic media organizations may balance the values of journalistic “objectivity” and community advocacy differently from their mainstream media counterparts.

For Further Discussion

The 8 o'clock news on a U.S.-based ethnic television station reports that they have confirmed that ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) will be conducting a surprise raid the next day in a certain neighborhood to round up undocumented immigrants for deportation.

- Do you think that the station should have reported this story? Why or why not?
- Do you think this story differs from reporting other public interest stories, such as, for example, naming restaurants that have recently failed a health test or reporting on a particular disease that disproportionately afflicts that ethnic community? Is this news story in the public interest?
- Does this report violate the notion of “objectivity” in reporting? Why or why not?

Ethnic media can serve other advocacy roles. For example, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2006, New Orleans residents began returning to a city where there was fierce competition for the few remaining apartments. Black newspapers ran a stinging series of editorials on what they called “linguistic profiling” (Bullock, 2006). An investigation conducted by the National Fair Housing Alliance had Black and White callers inquire about available apartments. They found that landlords were discriminating based on accent, renting to people who “sounded White,” and telling callers who “sounded Black” that the apartment was taken. These findings were printed alongside information about renter’s rights, state and national policies on racial discrimination in housing, and legal resources for people who had experienced this discrimination firsthand.

Immigrants often struggle with linguistic profiling as well. Ethnic media can be instrumental in informing newcomers of their legal right to fight linguistic profiling and other discriminatory practices. Ethnic media can also teach newcomers about their rights to freedom of speech, religious practice, assembly, and peaceable protest. For many immigrants, these rights are not protected in their countries of origin. Particularly in the case of refugees, having protections for such rights may have been their reason for seeking refuge in the first place.

Connecting to Immigrants With Similar Experiences

Ethnic media are important resources for new immigrants in their own right, but can also work to connect newcomers to other immigrants with similar experiences. Immigrants can become resources for each other by sharing information about available services and events in the new community.

Connections with other new immigrants matter for a number of reasons. Relationships with other migrants, family, and friends from the same home country affect the degree of *culture shock* new immigrants experience in their initial adaptation. Culture shock is defined as the set of short-term feelings of disorientation and discomfort caused by unfamiliar surroundings. The stress and anxiety resulting from the need to relearn “natural processes,” like how to buy groceries, order a meal, or express oneself in a new language or dialect, are all examples of culture shock. Culture shock causes immigrants to question many of their own cultural habits and ways of doing things, which have to be modified or replaced to get by in their new environment (Kim, 2002; Kim, 2005). Ethnic media are much more likely to include information that can help immigrants get through their initial culture shock than mainstream media sources that do not directly target a new immigrant audience.

For new immigrants who arrive without a support system in place (e.g., family or friends living in the local community), ethnic media can be especially useful for locating other immigrants from the same home country who have similar interests. For example, ethnic media often have community calendars giving the time and location of events related to religious organizations, recreational activities, or hometown associations. Ethnic media thus can serve as links between new arrivals and local organizations and activities, putting the newcomers in touch with other members of the community.

In 1999, 3CW Radio in Melbourne became the first 24-hour Chinese-language radio station operating in Australia. In Australia, as in other parts of the Chinese diaspora, community members believe that there are “three pillars” that maintain a Chinese identity and lifestyle in a new environment: Chinese community associations, newspapers, and schools (Gao, 2006; Li, 1999). While newspapers, including *Huaxia*, which is owned by the same company as 3CW, are important elements of community life, 3CW is perceived by community members as connecting all three “pillars.” According to Gao (2006), listeners see 3CW as having three primary roles in the community: supporting community businesses, coordinating social and cultural activities and events, and providing a platform for community members to

share ideas, opinions, and information. In these ways, 3CW connects residents to community organizations and associations, provides them with information resources, and helps to educate the community on local and international issues that affect them. By informing newcomers about community events, issues, and organizations, 3CW provides new immigrants with ways to connect with other immigrants and become integrated into local support networks.

Keeping Up With Developments in the Home Country and Community

Ethnic media's orientation functions are generally coupled with connective functions, by providing immigrants with news from the country and community they have left behind. New communication technologies make it possible to keep up with home country events in real time. In addition, many ethnic media organizations are actually transnational organizations, with offices in the country of origin and in major immigrant-receiving countries. Immigrants can connect with the same newspapers, for example, that they received in the country of origin with an insert that covers events and news from the host community as well (Lin, Song, & Ball-Rokeach, in press).

The concept of transnationalism has become very popular in immigration research in the United States and in Europe. It was originally borrowed from research on business, where "transnational" referred to businesses that operate in more than one country. Large ethnic media corporations are often transnational. The term, however, is increasingly used to describe individual migrants' experiences of being both "here" and "there." In this context, *transnationalism* is defined as the set of connections that individuals maintain across borders between their home and host country (Levitt & Waters, 2002). These home-host country connections could be interpersonal, such as phone calls to family members, but are also made through a wider range of media connections.

The day-to-day connections maintained by most immigrants are with individuals or news in the particular region or town that they come from, rather than national news from the home country (Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004). Immigrants generally focus more on national-level coverage when a crisis or major event occurs in the home country. Crises bring the nation or the ethnic group to the forefront, and generally increase immigrants' dependence on ethnic media. This trend was certainly visible in the days following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States (Kim, Jung, Cohen, & Ball-Rokeach, 2004). As the United States declared war on Afghanistan in the days following 9/11, with Britain following soon after, Afghani residents of the United Kingdom and Germany became "active viewers" of ethnic media to follow the events in their country of origin (Mousavi, 2006). Afghani immigrants reported that they felt Western media were biased, and therefore depended primarily on ethnic media and satellite broadcasts for news they felt they could trust (Mousavi, 2006).

During the same post-9/11 period, a large-scale survey revealed that Britain's Arabic-speaking population turned to *Al-Jazeera*, a major Arabic news network, because they believed that coverage was "more credible and balanced" than CNN or the BBC (Miladi, 2006, p. 947). These studies, including a third conducted with

British Arab Muslim audiences in Wales (Harb & Bessaiso, 2006), found that times of crisis increase the strength of immigrants' connections to ethnic media—not just for trusted news, but as a reinforcement of ethnic identity. In all cases, Muslims indicated they sought out news sources that reinforced a positive image of Islam and Muslims living in Europe.

Ethnic media can serve similar functions in more routine times as well. In a Cypriot Greek community in London, Georgiou (2001a) observed people viewing the 6 p.m. news broadcast in a local Cypriot community center. She found this public and communal viewing of ethnic media fostered a sense of community. A core group of immigrants attended this nightly ritual, but the group expanded when there was a big event on the island of Cyprus. Following their viewing of the broadcast, members of the community would stay to discuss and debate the latest news events. This ritual of nightly viewing and discussion would be less remarkable if these immigrants could not watch the news broadcast at home. However, Georgiou found that more than a third of the regular nightly viewers had satellite cable and, therefore, could have watched the broadcast privately. The news became more than a daily update on Cyprus when shared and discussed with family, friends, and members of the community. This is why people would go the trouble of attending this evening ritual.

For Further Discussion

Imagine that you are an Indonesian immigrant living in Sydney, Australia. A recent dispute between Indonesia and Australia over control of the waterways between the two countries has made you depend on and connect with Indonesian ethnic media more than you usually do, to follow the events as they unfold.

For the duration of this particular event, how do you think increased awareness of your nationality or ethnicity might affect:

- Relationships with friends from other ethnic groups, including the Australian majority?
- How you define your own identity—are you Indonesian, Australian, or both?
- Interactions with other Australians as you go about your daily activities?

Online Ethnic Media Resources for Immigrants

There are stark differences between immigrant groups' rates of Internet access (DeBell & Chapman, 2006) and, thus, their likelihood of connecting to online ethnic media content. For many groups, Internet access remains limited due to both financial and literacy barriers. There may also be a lack of *new media literacy*, meaning a lack of familiarity, knowledge, and/or comfort with new communication technologies like computers and the Internet (Kress, 2003; Potter, 2004). Traditional literacy, meaning reading and writing (either in the language of origin or in the language of the host country), may also be an obstacle for many immigrants who have not been formally educated in either the home or host country.

The majority of ethnic media lack an online presence. For many producers, the cost of creating and maintaining a virtual presence is prohibitively high, particularly if their audiences are not connecting to the Internet in large numbers. The Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism (2009) also indicates that many ethnic media outlets have not gone online due to difficulties estimating potential online advertising revenue, which is less straightforward than calculating advertising revenue from print formats. We discuss the influence of consumer demand on ethnic media production in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

For immigrant groups that do access the Internet in significant numbers, online ethnic media content can facilitate connections to both host and home country news around the clock. New evidence suggests that increasing numbers of ethnic media outlets are going online and are providing English-language content in recognition of the needs of second and third-generation connectors. For example, *Nguoi Viet*, a newspaper serving the Southern California Vietnamese-origin community, offers readers the choice between *Nguoi Viet Online* in Vietnamese and *Nguoi Viet 2* in English. Even ethnic media producers serving immigrant communities with limited new media literacy may see potential profit in providing online content for the children of immigrants. The second generation is generally more media literate than their first generation parents.

Online ethnic media that consciously target second generation audiences are emerging in many places. These often seek to appeal to *conglomerate identities* of a growing number of second-generation youths who identify, for example, with a conglomerate “Asian” identity rather than a more specific “Chinese-American” or “Korean-American” identity. *A*, a magazine that targeted second-generation Asian youth in the United States, closed in 2002, but was quickly replaced by *Hyphen* magazine, which has a strong online presence and Web-only components available for consumers at *hyphenmagazine.com*. *Africana.com* has no offline presence, but is geared to a conglomerate African identity. This site became so popular that it was bought out and incorporated into America Online’s *blackvoices.aol.com* (Hsu, 2002). We examine conglomerate identities in more detail in Chapter 4.

In Austria, collaborations between radio stations targeting African communities living in that country have led to the development of a shared online presence. Over the last 10 years, Radio 1476 and Radio Africa have established Internet services that supplement their radio content and have cooperated with other ethnic broadcasters to create African television programs in Vienna as well (Herczeg, 2009). And in Ireland, the Internet facilitated the development of *Africans Magazine* as an inexpensive medium for launching a magazine, which later became a print version as well when the online version had helped the editors secure the necessary funds for printing (Ugba, 2002).

Africans Magazine’s strategy may have worked in part because immigrants to Ireland appear to disproportionately access the Internet with the goal of connecting to both local and home country news. O’Donnell and Ní Leathlobhair’s (2002) study of immigrants and ethnic minorities in Ireland reported that connecting with “news and newspapers from home” and with “their communities, both in Ireland and at home” was the third most popular reason for these groups to go online

(p. 12). However, Ugba (2002) points out that Ireland has one of the most expensive Internet connection rates in Europe, and that there are few well-maintained places where Irish residents may access the Internet for free, such as public libraries. These factors likely indicate that there are real barriers to online access in Ireland, even if immigrants to Ireland are more connected to the Internet than newcomers in other countries.

Finally, Web sites linked to hometown associations are a popular form of ethnic media among Latinos in the United States, even though Internet penetration is generally low in these communities (DeBell & Chapman, 2006; Livingston, Parker & Fox, 2009). Hometown associations have been a feature of immigration, particularly amongst Mexican-origin migrants, for more than 100 years (Fitzgerald, 2008). Recall earlier in this chapter when we noted that immigrants from the same hometown tend to move to the same community in the host country. As the population of immigrants from a particular hometown grows, hometown associations are started in order to develop a formal connection between the two places. These hometown associations often take on improvement and development projects in their hometown, including building and supplying hospitals and sport stadiums, resurfacing roads, and setting up electricity plants² (Fitzgerald, 2008). As part of this connection, many hometown associations have active Web sites, where news from the hometown (*connective function*) and the host community (*orientation function*) are regularly published along with news on fundraising for ongoing hometown projects. Many hometown association Web pages have added webcams to their sites. These cameras are usually placed in the hometown's main square, so that immigrants can watch what is going on "back home," in real time.

As the examples in this section demonstrate, online ethnic media are developing asymmetrically as resources for immigrants. In some communities, new communication technologies are valuable platforms for ethnic media to reach large audiences quickly with relatively low costs. In other communities, low media literacy rates make online ethnic media less viable and attractive options. However, this area of ethnic media development is relatively new and is still taking shape. In the coming years, clearer patterns may emerge as to the shape that online ethnic media outlets are taking.

Summary

This chapter focused on immigration to identify who moves and why and how these experiences might be different depending on their pre-immigration experiences and their context of reception in the host country. Ethnic media serves a *connective function* to the news and events of the home country. These media also serve an *orientation function* by familiarizing newcomers with resources in the local community, and explaining the laws, protections, and norms afforded by the host country. In the next chapter, we focus on the *symbolic functions* of the ethnic media in the maintenance and creation of ethnic minority identities.

Study Questions

1. Select a home and host country of your choice, and refer to Table 3.1. How would you describe the context of reception you think an immigrant from that country would encounter in the host country you have chosen? Give reasons for your answers to each of the four factors, and consider how ethnic media could potentially help that immigrant to deal with the settlement challenges you have identified that he or she may face.

2. Under section heading, “Understanding What Is Happening in the Settlement Community,” a study of Korean, Chinese, and Spanish-language newspapers showed immigrants’ feelings of belonging to their new community relates to ethnic media’s coverage of the local area. What particular kinds of content do you think would help improve immigrants’ feelings of belonging to their new community?

3. Under section heading, “Finding Jobs,” the degree of international interaction between India as an emigrant-sending country and Britain as an immigrant-receiving country illustrated how ties of history, culture, and media can make a move seem more viable for potential migrants. Can you think of other ways that these media can help the migration process, or might misrepresent the challenges of moving?

4. Under section heading, “Keeping Up With Developments in the Home Country and Community,” we discussed immigrants’ increased dependence on ethnic media during crises in the home country. How do you think spending more time with ethnic media would affect connections to other media forms during that time? For example, do you think that immigrants would spend more, less, or the same amounts of time connecting with mainstream media, or the Internet? Provide support for your answer.

5. Using terms and ideas from this chapter, describe (using examples as necessary) how ethnic media may contribute to immigrants’ ability to create a dual frame of reference, as discussed under heading, “Online Ethnic Media as Resources for Immigrants.”

Notes

¹For more comprehensive answers to these migration questions, please see Castles and Miller (2009) and Massey et al. (2005).

²See <http://sixthsection.com> for more information on a hometown association that connects immigrants living in New York with their hometown in Mexico.