Building Transnational Media Spaces: Immigrant Journalism in South Florida

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BUILDING TRANSNATIONAL MEDIA SPACES: IMMIGRANT JOURNALISM IN VENEZUELAN SOUTH FLORIDA

By
Moses A. Shumow

A DISSERTATION

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BUILDING TRANSNATIONAL MEDIA SPACES:
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Since the election of Hugo Chávez in 1999 and the subsequent rapid growth of Venezuelan immigration to the United States, there has been an explosion of Venezuelan community media in South Florida. While focused on local issues, the mediated communication being produced and distributed among members of this community remains distinctly transnational in scope, informed primarily by events taking place in Venezuela as the country is being transformed politically, socially, and economically under the controversial leadership of President Hugo Chávez. This study presents an empirical, qualitative investigation into the practices of Venezuelan media producers in South Florida through a series of 34 in-depth interviews, concluding with the conceptualization of three distinct models of immigrant journalism. The goal is to provide a more complete picture of global journalism and transnational migration in the digital media era.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my dearest Rosie; without you, this would never have been possible. Thank you for standing by me and giving me the strength and support to see this through.
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I would like to thank the journalists and media makers of the Venezuelan community in South Florida, who gave so freely of their time and were willing to share their fascinating stories and experiences with me. "'Ta barrato, dame dos!'" I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my dissertation director, Dr. Sallie Hughes, whose scholarship I greatly admire. Sallie, thank you for guiding me during this journey and giving me feedback and revisions throughout the summer, ensuring that I could defend on time and move on to the next chapter in my life. Thank you also to the other members of my committee: Drs. Leonardo Ferreira and George Yúdice, and Professor Sanjeev Chatterjee.
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INTRODUCTION: IMMIGRANT JOURNALISM IN A GLOBAL LANDSCAPE

Since the election of Hugo Chávez in 1999 and the subsequent rapid growth of Venezuelan immigration to the United States, there has been an explosion of Venezuelan community media in South Florida (Ocando, 2009), from weekly newspapers and radio programs to blogs and social networking sites. These media are focused on local issues confronting this expanding immigrant community. However, the mediated communication being produced and distributed among its members is also transnational in scope. Events taking place in Venezuela as the country is being transformed under the controversial leadership of President Hugo Chávez (Lauerman, 2009; Romero, 2008, 2009; Semple, 2008), as well as the impact of those events on immigrant communities, heavily inform the content of these information outlets.¹

Numerous studies have examined and theorized the processes and outcomes of the consumption of media by immigrant audiences (Appadurai, 1996; Christiansen, 2004; Georgiou, 2006, 2007; Karim, 2003; King & Wood, 2001) as well as the resulting hybrid ‘glocalization’ that often manifests in the identity of these deterritorialized communities (Kraidy, 1999; Morley, 2000; Ong, 1999; Robins & Aksoy, 2005; Thompson, 2002). Additionally, there is a wide body of literature dedicated to the role that ethnic minority media play in the development of community identity (Deuze, 2006; Hollander, Stappers, & Jankowski, 2002; Riggins, 1992; Tsagarousianou, 2002; Dayan, 1998). However, there have been very few studies that have attempted to describe and explain more clearly the ideologies, motivations and professional norms that guide the work of the producers of this media - sociological elements that are often the focus of researchers of journalistic

¹ The fact that the focus of much of this media concentrates heavily on Venezuela was also confirmed by many of the participants in this research.
practices (Benson, 2004, 2006; Deuze, 2004, 2005; Hughes, 2006; McNair, 1998). This is a seemingly essential undertaking if we are to more closely understand the processes and outcomes where media and migration intersect and how they fit within the larger field of transnational migration studies.

The purpose of this research is to understand how transnational mediated communication is created, because even though it is an important factor in shaping how transnationalism is lived and experienced by immigrants, we have little understanding of how it is produced and why it turns out as it does.

Guided by the methods of grounded theory, this study addresses this gap through an empirical, qualitative investigation into the practices of Venezuelan media producers in South Florida. The Venezuelan population in the United States has more than doubled in the past decade, making it the fastest growing sub-population of Latinos in the country (Semple, 2008). A majority of these new arrivals have settled in South Florida (US Census, 2008). Given the rapid changes this community has undergone in the previous 10 years, the final result of this investigation is a more complete picture of global journalism and transnational migration in the digital media era through the recognition of the complexities inherent in the work of immigrant journalists, offering new contributions to conceptualizations of immigrant assimilation as non-linear and providing an updated framework for understanding the production of Spanish-language, immigrant media in the United States.

This research is built around a conceptualization of ‘immigrant journalism’ that defines immigrant journalists as members of an immigrant community who produce communication focused on adapting to life in a new country while at the same time
providing a narrative that is both culturally and nationally familiar to their audience. This definition is presented as a distinct departure from Western, liberal-democratic definitions of what it means to be a journalist: serving as a check on powerful interests, both public and private, and providing civic information crucial to voters in a representational democracy. It also deviates from definitions provided by literature on ethnic minority media that tend to view these media producers as providing alternative (non-mainstream) or community-centered communication, as well as departing from the body of literature focusing on the history of Hispanic immigrant media in the United States, which has tended to focus on exile journalism (in the case of Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Mexicans) and those media outlets that advocate on the behalf of oppressed, marginalized ethnic groups (Fitzpatrick, 1987; Kanellos, 2000; Cortéz, 1987).

Three distinct models of immigrant journalism – *Oppositional, Market-Driven/Hybrid*, and *Immigrant/Community* - are conceptualized as the outcomes of the work of the journalists interviewed from this study. These models are presented as a heuristic tool for drawing out the most important variables that inform and shape the work of these journalists and their production of transnational media spaces. A ‘transnational media space’ is a concept that builds on the idea of the social spaces connecting populations across borders, but focuses particularly on how these spaces are produced and modified through media and communication. Karim (2003) has written that the places where migration and global media meet are the “diasporic site(s)” that form the “cultural border between the country of origin and the country of residence” (Karim, 2003, p. 5). Understanding these cultural sites and how they are created is a key outcome of this investigation. As detailed in this work, the variables that shape the work
of these journalists include the context of departure and arrival, the unique role that ideology plays in the formation of their work, and the inherent transnational nature of these media outlets that allows them to shift their focus fluidly depending on the demands of international events and the needs of local audiences. The discussion of these models of immigrant journalism and the media spaces that are created as a result of their work, both of which are seen as overlapping and fluid, also helps to uncover some of the complexities inherent in transnational migration that challenge traditional, linear notions of immigrant assimilation and acculturation and recognizes the distinct role that mediated communications plays in the lives of 21st century immigrants.

Narrating migration

The city of Doral, FL, in Miami-Dade County, is filled with a seemingly endless number of strips malls, each filled with small storefronts packed in one next to the other. Nearly all of them show signs of the impact that immigration from Latin American has had on the city and the region. Shop windows are adorned with flags from Peru, Colombia, Chile, Venezuela, and Argentina; wire-transfer services, Internet cafes, and travel agencies advertise quick and easy ways to connect with home; cafeterias catering to national tastes entice fellow compatriots with familiar dishes; and everywhere one turns are signs and ads written solely in Spanish. Doral, with its dizzying amalgam Latin American nationalities and cultures, all coexisting within the confines of a U.S.-city, elicits a disorienting feeling of displacement and at the same time is emblematic of the societal changes helping to redefine the cultural landscape in South Florida.

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2 The U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey for Miami-Dade County 2006-2008 reports that more than half of the residents in the county (approximately 1.2 million) were born outside of the United States; 93% of these residents are from countries in Latin America (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).
Manuel Corao, a journalist originally from Venezuela, works out of a small, anonymous office in one of these Doral commercial centers. Corao has been producing media for the Venezuelan community in South Florida for nearly 15 years, beginning with a weekly publication, *Venezuela al Día*. More recently, Corao’s work has turned towards multimedia. These efforts include *Venetubo.com*, a news aggregation website for video clips and articles on Venezuela, and a daily, five-minute Venezuelan news bulletin, that Corao produces at his desk and distributes via the Internet to radio stations in South Florida and throughout Latin America.

Transnationalism has been defined as the maintenance of multiple ties (ideational, informational, physical or material) “linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states” (Vertovec, 1999). Research on the topic has also emphasized the “fluid social spaces” that are formed and reformed through the activities of migrants that are simultaneously embedded “in more than one society” (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007, p. 131). As Portes (1999) has pointed out, these activities can be carried out by larger, institutional entities, such as corporations, but also by a “mass of ordinary people,” all of which require “a series of time and space-compressing technologies and their commercial diffusion” (p. 464). These phenomena have also been theorized as transnationalism from above and below by Smith and Guarnizo (1998), depending on the flow and direction of goods, capital, communication, and information across borders, either from the ground up or the top down.

When viewed through this optic, Corao’s work as a journalist appears inherently transnational in scope. As an immigrant journalist, he creates a mediated narrative of nationality and immigration that flows regularly back and forth across borders, focusing
one day on the Venezuelan community in South Florida and the next day on events in Venezuela, depending on the news of the day. Through use of the Internet and the distribution of radio segments, his reports reach out across disparate geographies throughout Latin America. As Corao sees it, his work is the logical outcome of “the growth of the Venezuelan community” and the perceived needs of this community. “Just like other ethnicities,” he says, this group wants “to be informed about Venezuela as well as the United States; as much the realities in Venezuela as how to live and coexist in this country.” This need to coalesce around issues of national identity on the part of immigrants in the United States has been a recurrent theme throughout the country’s history as a receiver of immigrants. As Portes and Rumbaut write in Immigrant America (2006), “old loyalties die hard because individuals socialized in another language and culture have great difficulty giving them up as a primary source of identity” (p. 120).

Actualidad 1020 broadcasts out of Coral Gables, another city within Miami-Dade. The station is part of the Union Radio network, one of the largest radio chains in Venezuela. During a recent broadcast, Eli Bravo, a well-known journalist from Caracas and one of several prominent Venezuelan journalists whose talk shows dominate Actualidad’s primetime, had an interviewee on a phone line from Venezuela. The guest was a television anchor for Radio Caracas Televisión (RCTV), the oldest broadcaster in Venezuela before the government refused to renew its broadcasting license in 2007 following a confrontation with President Chávez (Romero, 2007), who accused the station of being complicit in a 2002 coup attempt.4

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3 The author translated all of the interviews conducted for this research, the majority of which were in Spanish, unless otherwise indicated.
4 RCTV continued to air their programming on cable and satellite throughout Venezuela until January, 2009, when they were subsequently also shut out of these outlets (James, 2010).
Bravo was taking calls from his local listeners throughout Miami-Dade, many of them members of the rapidly growing Venezuelan community in South Florida. The callers heatedly discussed the turbulent situation for the media in Venezuela under Chavez’s presidency, looking for an outlet for their frustrations and peppering the guest with questions about the future of their country. The blurring of national boundaries and geographic space that defined this discussion, taking place in real time across dispersed technological and social networks, challenges previous notions about the spatiality of co-existence and the role of communication in forming nationally oriented “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1983).

Patricia Poleo arrived in the United States from Venezuela in 2007. An influential investigative journalist in Venezuela, Poleo is also a member of a powerful and conservative publishing family with a long history in Venezuelan journalism. A vocal member of the opposition media in Venezuela, she had fled on a boat to Curacao in the middle of the night after being accused by the Chávez government of being involved in a car bombing that killed a federal investigator in 2004 (Kraul, 2005). Now living in a quiet community in North Miami Beach, Poleo maintains high-level contacts within the Venezuelan government and military. Her missives from abroad appear in the form of columns and investigative pieces in her family’s media outlets, as well as on her widely read blog. At the same time, she has become a fixture of Spanish-language media in Miami, appearing frequently on television and radio to discuss her reporting and the situation in Venezuela.

The content and reach of Poleo’s work as a journalist has become a constant source of irritation for the government in Venezuela, leading them at times to question
whether or not Poleo might actually still be in the country, given the detailed nature of her reporting, which often reveals highly sensitive and detailed information. The compression of time and space through the use of technology, a key component of globalization and transnational phenomena, is a defining element in the work of Poleo. She is able to capitalize on the connectivity presented by technology, as well as her contacts in Venezuela, in order to continue her work as an oppositional figure within the Venezuelan media. At the same time, she has integrated smoothly into the Spanish-language media landscape that is a defining aspect of the Miami media market.

*Immigrant journalism and the production of transnational media spaces*

There are unique transnational complexities inherent in the production of immigrant media presented by the work of Corao and the other Venezuelan journalists in greater Miami. The conversation between Bravo in his studio, the guest on the line from Caracas, and the local radio audience present another snapshot of the scope of immigrant journalism that will be revealed through this research, as do the investigations carried out by Poleo from her home office and used to antagonize the Chávez government in Venezuela. The work of these Venezuelan media producers represent multiple, distinct, yet interconnected forms of immigrant journalism that highlight the cultural processes found at the intersection of media, migration, nationality and globalization. This dissertation draws on these modern phenomena to create a *theoretical framework*, a process that “lays out the terrain of a topic,” thereby helping to “define and differentiate one topic from another” (Naficy, 1998, p. 1). The framework is then employed to address the following central questions: What are the processes and outcomes of the
production of media by transnational immigrants? What insights are gained by focusing on producers’ motivations, ideologies, life worlds, and production practices?

This research explores processes of the production of mediated communication for immigrant audiences that have received little attention in previous studies, with few conceptualizations or theories having been developed to explain this particular form of media production. Thus, a grounded theory investigation, defined by Bryant and Charmaz (2007) as “a systemic, inductive, and comparative approach for conducting inquiry for the purpose of constructing theory” (p. 1), was used to approach the work of Venezuelan journalists in South Florida. The results of this inquiry were 34 in-depth, semi-structured interviews and over 500 pages of transcripts. A theoretical framework connecting communication with identity, nationality, migration, and globalization informed the structure of the interviews and subsequent data analysis. The methodology was guided by literature from the sociology of media production, outlining theories of socially constructed subjectivities that motivate action. Drawing on this framework, the following specifying questions and operationalizing sub-questions were used to both guide the interviews with the journalists and inform the interpretation and analysis of the data:

• What are the mental models of these journalists?
  
  o How do they understand their place within the community? What are the ideologies\(^5\) that motivate them in their work? What roles do they assign themselves and why? How are these roles related to the context of their departure and arrival?

\(^5\) I use the definition provided by Deuze in his research on journalistic ideology: “a set of values and practices that serve to sustain a more or less ‘naturalised’ way of seeing and interpreting the world” (p. 277).
• What is the opportunity structure for media production?
  o What are the different political and economic pressures that help shape the production choices made by these producers? How do these producers go about finding a space for their particular form of mediated communication within the larger context of immigrant media that is produced in South Florida?

• How do these journalists decide whether to expend resources on local information vital to an immigrant community in transition or information relevant to events and connections in Venezuela?
  o What are the different factors shaping the professional and personal backgrounds of the interviewees that guide these decisions? What are the final journalistic outcomes of these decisions?

The end result is a model that explains key variables contributing to the rise and particular form of media serving a transnational community and hypothesizes the creation of ‘transnational media spaces’ as a direct outcome of the production of media by immigrant journalists.

This work builds on past research on the transformations that have taken place among other groups of media producers during periods of societal change, normative uncertainty, and institutional flux. In Mexico, as an example, a generation of journalists transformed deeply institutionalized practices because their value systems and lived experiences produced mental models of the world in opposition to the long-standing single party system in that country and de-legitimized a form of journalism that helped sustain that system (Hughes 2006, pp. 30-37). Additional examples are Iranians in
California, where the work of Hamid Naficy (1993) has been instrumental in documenting the creation of an exile identity through television production; the creation of a “transnational, exile” belonging imagined through various types of storytelling by members of the Tibetan diaspora (Dukes, 2006); and, perhaps most relevant in this case, the history of Hispanic immigrant media in the United States, including Mexican and Mexican-American media in the Southwest (Kanellos, 2000), Puerto Ricans in the Northeast (Fitzpatrick, 1987), and the influence of the Cuban exile community on the mediascape of South Florida (Portes & Stepick, 1994; Soruco, 1996).

The above examples raise the issue of the relation between the physical space in which media producers live (for example, Mexico) and the imagined space in which they act (Iranians in Los Angeles; Cubans in Miami). In The Production of Space (1991), philosopher Henri Lefebvre looks for connections between imagined space and physical space, locating three that are relevant to human existence: “firstly, the physical – nature, the Cosmos; secondly, the mental, including logical and formal abstractions; and thirdly, the social” (p. 11; emphasis in the original). Lefebvre’s works represents an effort to theorize the different ways in which human societies inhabit the world and the desire to illuminate the “concrete processes of social life” (Giddens, 1984, p. xvii) that are fundamental to social inquiry. Media scholars like Naficy have wrestled with the challenges of globalization and the liminal, neither-here-nor-there existence of migrant communities (Naficy, 1993). These two lines of epistemological reasoning have guided and informed much of the research into the production and consumption of immigrant media (Robins & Aksoy, 2005, 2006; Karim, 2003; Appadurai, 1996; Gerogiou, 2006). However, the process of the production of mediated communication is also always a
matter of seeking out an audience, and finding a “place” of reception – whether on the
newsstand, the radio dial, over the airwaves, or through the Internet – among sympathetic
consumers. Without this audience, the logic behind the creation of this form of
communication, whether driven by ideological, political, or commercial impulses, falls
apart. The idea of finding a space for their particular form of communication among
fellow immigrants was a key conceptual thread winding throughout the interviews that
make up this study and in many ways tying them all together. Combined with the
transnational nature of immigrant media, particularly in a community made up of
immigrants arriving from a situation of uncertainty and driven by the need to maintain
regular contact with home, the outcome appears to be the creation of transnational media
spaces.

In the introduction to Transnational Spaces (2004), editors Jackson, Craig and
Dwyer go some distance towards approaching this problem. They advance an “expansive
notion of transnational space,” one that “encompasses all of those engaged in
transnational cultures, whether as producers or consumers” (p. 3). By this, they mean
both physical geographies, such as labor migration and the transportation of goods, but
also the “symbolic and imaginary geographies through which we attempt to make sense
of our increasingly transnational world” (p. 3; emphasis in the original). These authors,
all of them geographers, emphasize the geographically bounded nature of nation. The
present research is more interested in the communicative aspects of the nation as an
imagined community. What are the implications for these communities when they span
borders yet maintain simultaneous connections brought about by the compression of time
and space and the resulting interconnectivity that is fundamental to understanding the
processes of globalization? In this sense, the present study is focused more on the
“symbolic and imaginary” spaces of transnationalism, constructed through the practice of
immigrant journalism and production of immigrant media.

In the following chapters, I first present the rationale for conducting this research
and the theoretical framework that guided the interviews, data analysis, and the resulting
development of a grounded theory of immigrant journalism. I then address the external
variables that influence the work of these journalists. I focus first on the context of
departure, through an analysis of the situation for the media in Venezuela and the past
experiences of these journalists that contributed to their professional formation.
Secondly, I examine the context of arrival, laying out the mediascape presented by Miami
as a global city, the socio-economic profile of the rapidly expanding Venezuelan
community in greater Miami, and the ways in which this community fits within dominant
cultural and political structures that have long defined the social make-up of the city. I
also explore connections and deviances between this research and previous work on
Hispanic immigrant media in the United States. These contextual variables are followed
by an in-depth look at the personal motivations of these journalists and an analysis of the
different levels of ideology that drive them in their work. The result is a more complete
and nuanced explanation of their motivations, opportunities, and strategies for seeking a
space of reception for their form of mediated communication.

Three models of immigrant media production created through the analysis of the
work and life worlds of immigrant journalists – *Oppositional, Market Driven/Hybrid, and
Immigrant/Community* – are then presented. Each model explains the creation and
maintenance of a distinct configuration of immigrant journalism and the transnational
media spaces that are created as the result of the work of these journalists. These models are envisioned as both encompassing distinct forms of mediated communication, while at the same time reflecting the multi-directional, nonlinear, often overlapping processes of transnational migration. The mental models and ideologies shaping the work of the journalists directly influence the formation of these media spaces. At the same time, these media are manifested in physical form and the formation of these media outlets relies heavily on the complicated political economy of the media landscape found in Miami, a factor that will be more fully developed with a discussion of the models. I conclude with a discussion of the theoretical implications of the outcomes of this investigation on research into transnational migration as well as the study of journalism and media production in a global landscape. Finally, I address the limitations of this inquiry and suggest avenues for future research that could strengthen as well as broaden the applicability of the results.

The transnational media spaces presented in this research take on a variety of forms – economic, political, ideological, community based, oppositional, cultural, assimilative – and yet, because of the context of their creation within a transmigrant community, all of them are representative of the spatial changes being wrought by globalization. It is important to point out that these media spaces should not be seen as existing separately or independently from the transnational social spaces (Faist, 2000) that exist in “two or more cultural spaces” (Aksoy & Robins, 2003, p. 92). Rather, they should be seen an extension and iteration of these spaces, the outcome of the confluence of migration and media production within a globalized setting.
In *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes, and Cultural Boundaries*, Morley and Robins (1995) write:

In the present period, we are seeing processes of political economic restructuring and transformation which involve changes in the historical system of accumulation and social organization. At the heart of these historical developments is a process of spatial restructuring and reconfiguration (p. 26).

It is the reimagining of spatial organization brought on by the conjoining of media and migration that drives this research. The end result, a deeper understanding of immigrant journalists through the presentation of three distinct models of immigrant journalism and the ensuing transnational media spaces that are created as a result of their work, provides a new and hopefully useful model for understanding how producers of the narrative of migration find their place within a global media landscape.
CHAPTER 1. IMMIGRANT JOURNALISM IN A TRANSNATIONAL CONTEXT: BUILDING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

...globalization has intensified intercultural relations, in the process encouraging countless new combinations and blurring distinctions between nations and civilizations... (Scholte, 2000, p. 2)

In his seminal work on the rise and form of nationalism since the late 18th century, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (1983), Benedict Anderson writes: “Nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time” (p. 3). And yet, as Robertson (1991) points out, “...in the contemporary phase of globalization, the concept of homogenous national society is breaking down...” (p. 30). The increasing movement of populations around the globe, and the growing “complex connectivity” (Tomlinson, 1999) and simultaneity, facilitated and accelerated by technology, that often defines their experience, are hallmarks of globalization and modernity (Appadurai, 1993). Given this seeming paradox, a study of the production of media by immigrant journalists for immigrant audiences must first build a theoretical framework that drives the methodology and places the findings and conclusions in a context that addresses the apparent contradictions of nationality without borders and the production of a narrated identity that has been uprooted by the forces of globalization.

To understand the larger epistemological implications of the study of immigrant media, at least from the theoretical constructs of nationalism, globalization, culture, and the rise of ‘representational spaces’ (Robertson, 1991), the tangled ties between communication and nation must first be unraveled. This is essential for any study of immigrant journalists working within the context of an immigrant community. We must start with premise that, in the present instance, the term ‘immigrant’ refers to someone
who ‘migrates into a country as a settler’ (OED) and that questions of nationality will be an essential element in the production of that media.

In order to build a theoretical lens for investigating, through empirical social inquiry, the production of immigrant media, this chapter first conceptualizes the macro-theories that connect globalization, nationalism, cultural studies, and transnational migration with mediated communication. Then, on an operational level, a framework is built for understanding and interpreting the motivations, ideologies, and lifeworlds\(^6\) that guide and shape the work of media producers. I will illustrate the evolution and growth of the elements that form the foundations of the proposed framework and the relevant conceptualizations that apply (see Figure 1). The insight gained through the investigation into the work of Venezuelan immigrant journalists – the contribution to the production of transnational media spaces – can be seen as an outcome of the work of those interviewed. The different variables impacting and shaping the work of these journalists, drawn from the results of the interviews and the explanatory approaches found in the extensive literature on the subject, are presented by the model as an avenue towards understanding how and through what process these spaces are constructed. Clearly, there are multiple factors that contribute to the production of these spaces not addressed in this study, including national media systems in the host and home countries, media policies codified into law by governing bodies, and national and international political economies. However, this theoretical approach, which focuses solely on the contribution to these spaces made by immigrant journalists, allows for a contextualized, empirically based interpretation of the findings.

\(^6\) Lifeworld is understood here as the state of affairs in the world as it is perceived from one’s personal perspective; seen as a driving factor in almost any social inquiry. See Habermas’ *Theory of Communicative Action* (1987).
For a study of immigrant journalism, it is necessary to first begin with the role of communication in the growth of the nation as a social construct. I draw on Anderson’s theory of ‘imagined communities’ (1983), in which the growth of nationalism during the past two and a half centuries is seen as being closely tied to forms of collective identity that bind geographically disperse populations through shared narratives and experiences. The framework next draws on the literature connecting communication to culture and globalization, in which the ‘mobilized, collective identities’ (Appadurai, 1996) that are bound through mediated communication and dubbed ‘cultures’ are seen as increasingly deterritorialized, hybridized, and fragmented by the processes of globalization.

The discussion then moves from macro to more functional, journalism-specific approaches. The framework builds on the sociology of journalism, looking at influences on the practice of journalism that exist within the larger societal context and social milieu in which mass communication is produced. This operational level, aimed at understanding more concretely the specific variables acting on the day-to-day work of immigrant journalists, includes studies of immigrant and community media and the ideological nature of journalism as a profession. It then turns to institutional approaches to the study of journalism that emerge from research using Bourdieu’s Field Theory and the New Institutionalism. Finally, the study of global journalism is addressed in order to question the continued relevance of nationally bound definitions of the journalism that are delimited by the cultural mores and socio-politics of individual nation-states. Immigrant journalists themselves are the placed at the center of this construct in order to best illustrate the wider implications of the study at hand and propose a suitable methodological approach.
Finally, the work of these journalists is tied back to the field of transnational migration, in which migrants are seen as having multiple connections that span borders; while physically rooted in a certain location, they maintain sustained social contacts both real and virtual with their country of origin (Basch, Glick Schiller, & Szanston Blanc, 1994; Georgiou, 2007; Vertovec, 1999). While these connections are not new, and have been noted by immigration researchers since sociologists first turned to issues of migration in the early 20th century (Park, 1923), the most recent changes in immigration at the beginning of the 21st century are qualitatively different (Pedraza, 2006). Thus, the field if transnational migration is particularly relevant to this inquiry, as it is a line of inquiry challenges traditional notions of the role media plays in processes of cultural pluralism versus assimilation and acculturation (Portes, Guarnizo, & Landolt, 1999).

Nationalism, culture, globalization and communication

In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson (1983) argues that the nation is in fact an imagined community, defined by borders and sovereignty, but held together by something deeper and more primordial, an unspoken form of connectivity that is in fact a cultural artifact. He posits that the strength of the idea of the nation emerged from two historic phenomena: religious communities and dynastic realms. While not stated explicitly within the text, a careful reading of Anderson’s theory reveals that both phenomena were held together at least partially by communication. In the case of religious communities, it was a shared set of symbols and beliefs that bound the faithful together. As Anderson points out, how else could pilgrims to Mecca centuries ago, arriving from different corners of the *Ummah* and sharing no cultural or linguistic bonds, make sense of their situation without the written Arabic of the Koran (p. 13)? Dynastic
realms, the most dominant political system prior to the Enlightenment, also bound their subjects together through a shared belief in divine appointment to power, a legitimacy that had to be communicated to those living within their often porous and ill-defined borders.

However, the demise of these two older forms of imagined communities that dominated human societies for centuries did not in itself signal the rise of the nation. As Anderson writes, “What was needed was a secular transformation of fatality into

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7 The dashed arrow connecting Immigrant Journalists and Transnational Media Spaces is in recognition of multiple other factors, not included in this study, that contribute to the construction of these spaces.
continuity, contingency into meaning...few things were (are) better suited to this end than an idea of nation” (p. 11). According to Anderson, the growth of the nation to its position of dominance was connected to the emergence of vernacular languages, the growing influence of print-capitalism, the rise and popularity of the novel and the newspaper, and a sense of horizontal, homogenous time and simultaneity. The idea that we exist parallel to others in the world, not because of some divine act but simply as a random co-existence (same time, different places), represented a fundamental shift in human thinking and how we view the organization and maintenance of our societies. This sense of simultaneous existence based on a spatiality that in most instances could only be imagined, not experienced directly, was essential to the growth of nationalism: “The idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogenous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily up (or down) history “(p. 26).

At the heart of this process of perceived co-existence, of sharing something in common with others that can neither be seen nor defined, and yet of such strength that millions have died in order to defend it, lies the need for narrative. A communicated identity, even if it is built on myths and legends, must reside at the core of a nation’s collective imagination in order for a national project to succeed. This collective identity must be reinforced through repetition and the ability to tell the story of ‘us.’ These narratives have been incredibly successful in helping to shape the geo-political contours of modernity. Globalization, while clearly a contested phenomenon lacking a universally accepted definition (Scholte, 2000), presents a fundamental challenge to the continuity of these narratives.
Of immediate importance for an inquiry into the production of immigrant media is the concept of *deterritorialization*, “a reconfiguration of geography, so that social space is no longer mapped in terms of territorial places, territorial distances, and territorial borders” (Scholte, 2000, p. 16). It is a concept that is seen as a key element for understanding and studying globalization through social inquiry (Appadurai, 1993; Papastergiadis, 2000; Scholte, 2000). Among the proponents of embracing deterritorialization for a deeper understanding of globalization, Scholte rejects definitions of globalization that rely on internationalization, liberalization, universalization, or Westernization, pointing to them as providing few new insights. Instead, he argues that in order to understand our current situation, globalization must be viewed as an “increasing transcendence of territorial space” that is effecting a “far reaching change in the nature of social space” where “supraterritorial relations” between people bring an end to social spaces being “entirely territorial” (pp. 42-46). In this conceptualization, “…globality marks a distinct kind of space-time compression, and one that is mostly new to contemporary history” (p. 48).

Using this theoretical approach for the study of the production of immigrant media underlines several key questions relevant to this inquiry. After all, who is it that produces the narrative of collective identity? Who is it that tells the story of our shared reality? Often, it is professional communicators, those who monitor and report the events

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8 This is by no means the only component of globalization, only what I deem most appropriate for the inquiry at hand. For a more complete range of conceptualizations, see also: Tomlinson, 1999; Giddens, 2003; Robertson, 1992; Jameson & Miyoshi, 1998.

9 To draw out Scholte’s definitions (pp. 44-45), *internationalization* refers to the decreasing importance of borders and increasing interaction and interdependence among global populations; *liberalization*, the rise and spread of Western-style capitalism and free trade, opening up access to markets as the global economy grows; *universalization*, the heterogeneity created by the spread of different populations to all different points of the globe; and *Westernization*, the idea that Western consumerism is homogenizing global cultures into a giant McWorld.
of our day-to-day lives. When those lives have become deterritorialized through immigration, technology, and the processes of globalization, does it stand to reason that the journalists serving those populations will see their new role as continuing the work of telling that community’s story, relying on the traditional narratives of national identity from their country of origin? From the perspectives of those who help to tell it, how does the narrative of a nation continue after displacement and relocation? Through the eyes of these producers, in what ways is this narrative changed and transformed? Given that audiences actively interpret mediated messages and thus producers provide an important ingredient for meaning making, what are the possible transnational outcomes of this narrative? These are the questions that propel this research forward. However, to continue building a theoretical framework, it is essential to look next at the implications of globalization for our understanding of culture and nationality, while keeping communication at the center of the intersecting social forces that shape modern societies.

The study of culture and how it is produced offers conceptual tools useful to the exploration of immigrant media and the production transnational spaces. As Robertson (1991) has written, cultural studies “has become increasingly conspicuous as a disciplinary site for the creation of representational space…in the concern with perception of the Other, migration and the proliferation of diaspora, postcolonialism, identity formation…” (p. 48). Moving a step further, Tomlinson’s theory of complex connectivity, which he uses to explain “the rapidly developing and ever-densening (sic) network of interconnections and interdependence that characterize modern social life” (1999, p. 2), places mediated communication and culture at the center of globalization. He suggests that culture be understood as the “order of life in which human beings
construct meaning through practices of symbolic representation…if we are talking culture, we mean the way in which people make their lives, individually and collectively, meaningful by communicating with each other” (p. 18). It is the creation of collective meaning, socially constructed through the communication of national identity, shared symbolically and culturally, and then consumed and interpreted by deterritorialized populations, that lies at the heart of the work of immigrant journalists.

The influence of technology on how cultures are being reshaped is equally important. As Manuel Castells has noted, the technological revolution at the end of the 20th century, which “centered around information technologies” (2000, p. 1), created a situation in which “symbolic communication between humans, and the relationship between humans and nature, on the basis of production (with its complement, consumption), experience, and power crystallize over history in specific territories, thus generating cultures and collective identities” (p. 15). These communication technologies are the driving component behind the practices of immigrant journalists. They make possible the instantaneous communication across borders inherent to the transnational migrant experience - and thus must be seen as an integral component to the study of immigrant media production.

Immigrant journalists, living in a host country and contributing to the new identities being formed among their fellow ex-patriots, focus on issues relevant to home and host county; they are firmly enmeshed in the interconnectedness of globalization as theorized by Tomlinson. Arjun Appadurai takes this idea one step further in Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization (1996) by trying to unpack the incongruities that arise when cultures, migration, and media come together. His
formulation applies more concretely to the situation of immigrant journalists, since at the heart of Appadurai’s proposal is a theory of ‘rupture.’ This theory seeks an explanation for the current state of the globe under the forces of globalization that breaks with previous conceptualizations by focusing intently on electronically mediated communication and mass migration. He holds up these two forces as not specifically ‘new,’ but ones that “seem to impel (and sometimes compel) the work of the imagination” (p. 4). Both media and migration, and the places where they intersect, can no longer be understood as residing within traditional social spaces, Appadurai argues, whether they are local, national, or regional. This break, or ‘rupture,’ from the spatial concepts that have defined human existence for centuries, and the irregularities and uncertainties that are produced, “defines the core link between globalization and modernity” (p. 4). If we accept culture as essentially the “mobilization of group identities” (p. 12) driven by communication, then the role that electronic mediated communication, which crosses and transcends borders at the speed of light, plays in the collective existence of 21st-century migrants is inherently transnational in scope and influence.

As a means of unpacking even further the complexities presented by globalization and the “fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics,” Appadurai proposes a model with five dimensions of cultural flows: ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes. These are presented as the ‘building blocks’ of imagined worlds, “constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe” (p. 33).
According to Appadurai’s theoretical framework, the groups and populations that inhabit the constantly shifting landscape of globalization (immigrants, tourists, exiles, refugees, guest workers, etc.), represent *ethnoscapes*. *Technoscapes* are the outcome of the increasingly fluid and international nature of advanced technologies, from industry to communication, that help define globalization. *Financescapes* are built by the increasingly globalized financial connections that underlie the world’s economies, while *mediascapes* provide the imagery and narratives for the “strips of reality” that allow those living through this confluence of cultural flows to create scripts that help them comprehend “imagined lives, their own as well as those of others living in other places” (p. 35). *Ideoscapes* are similar to *mediascapes* in that they provide a narrative for comprehending globalization, and yet they are inherently ideological in nature, most frequently having to do with the ideology of the state: “These *ideoscapes* are composed of elements of the Enlightenment worldview, which consists of a chain of ideas, terms, and images, including *freedom, welfare, rights, sovereignty, representation*, and the master term *democracy*” (p. 36, italics in the original).

One of the primary outcomes of the cultural flows presented by Appadurai is that the narrated sentiments “whose greatest force is in their ability to ignite intimacy into a political state and turn locality into a staging ground for identity, have become spread over vast and irregular spaces as groups move yet stay linked to one another through sophisticated media capabilities” (p. 41). For the inquiry in question - understanding the motivations, ideologies, and lifeworlds of Venezuelan immigrant journalists in South Florida - the links to Appadurai’s framework of cultural flows are particularly helpful. The social geography of Miami, a truly ‘global city’ (Sassen & Portes, 1993; Yúdice,
2003), is an *ethnoscape* of immigrant enclaves; the *mediascape* produced by the journalists being interviewed is constructed of multiple narratives of immigrant existence (the *transnational media spaces* that are being presented as the key outcome of this investigation); and the nature of the *ideoscape* that drives the work of many of these journalists, shaped and in some cases radicalized by their experiences in Venezuela under the turbulent presidency of Hugo Chávez, is clearly based on ideas of the Enlightenment as outlined above: freedom, welfare, rights, sovereignty, representation, and democracy.

The missing element thus far, and indeed in much of the writing on globalization that focuses on communication, culture, and the resulting impact on the nation-state is that many of these authors fail to take into consideration the role of the *producers* of mediated communication. In many instances, it appears as if the narratives of collective identity that are given such significance in shaping human societies are assumed to exist on their own. In other words, little thought or theorizing is given to the communicators who, working within mass media, *produce these narratives*. What drives these communicators? And what are the motivations - personal, professional, organizational, institutional, political, and ideological – that shape their work and help them to rationalize their efforts as they navigate a complex, transnational landscape?

The answers to these questions would seem to be fundamental in any attempt to paint a more nuanced picture of the forces shaping the outcomes of globalization, with all the talk of the pivotal role of media, culture, nationalism, and technology, and yet immigrant media producers have for the most part been overlooked. This investigation is an attempt to remedy this gap in our understanding of these processes. The theoretical frameworks offered by the sociology of journalism are a step in the right direction, as
they present an avenue of inquiry to addressing some of these missing elements.

However, before moving on, it is important to look at one more concept in the macro-theoretical landscape of globalization, nationalism, and culture and what is tells us about the role of communication in these larger processes: the hybridization of cultures and the glocalization that is often the result of diasporic media, when deterritorialized populations produce and consume global communication and yet remained anchored in a local geography.

In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Homi K. Bhabha argues that cultural production in a globalized landscape is often an uneven and ultimately unsettling prospect. As the traditionally defined geographical, social, ideological, and political spaces that have shaped societies are turned upside down and inside out, the narratives that have sustained them are increasingly seen as having been invented – it turns out there was nothing primordial or inherently ‘natural’ about them. At this point, culture becomes …an uneven, incomplete production of meaning and value, often composed of incommensurable demands and practices, produced in the act of social survival…The transnational dimension of cultural transformation – migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation – makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification. The natural(ized), unifying discourse of ‘nation’, ‘peoples’, or authentic ‘folk’ tradition, those embedded myths of culture’s particularity, cannot be readily referenced (p. 172).

As an outcome of this disjuncture in historical narrative, Bhabha theorizes a ‘third space’ (p. 218) that seeks to fill-in the *in-between spaces* (p. 216) created by the compression
and distortion of time and space brought on by globalization. It is only in this cultural space that the “incommensurable differences…peculiar to borderline existences” (p. 218) can be negotiated. However, Bhabha points out that because this is an ‘in-between’ space waiting, essentially, to be filled, the ‘third space’ is an ideal space of production. As the uncertainties and disorienting nature of immigration become more complicated under the forces of globalization, it falls to the producers of collective narrative to help fill this void, to take advantage of the opportunities created by this ‘third space.’ Immigrant journalists, whose work lies directly at the nexus of technologies, communication, and deterritorialization that are hallmarks of migration in the 21st century, can be seen as occupying this ‘third space,’ creating media that fills the void of displacement.

Following on this idea of a ‘third space’ and the potential cultural outcomes of globalization and international flows of people and communication, it is useful finally to look at the work of Marwan Kraidy (2005, 1999) and other cultural and communication scholars\(^\text{10}\) who have theorized cultural ‘hybridity’ as a possible outcome when these processes meet. In *Hybridity, or The Cultural Logic of Globalization* (2005), Kraidy proposes that hybridity, the fusion and commingling of cultures, be viewed as an unavoidable outcome of the forces of globalization, as the multiple flows of globalization that have been discussed thus far collide into and careen off one another like so many sub-atomic particles in the Large Hadron Collider. While not attempting to come up with a definitive description of these outcomes, Kraidy does present a theory of *critical transculturalism* in which he advocates “doing away with the view that cultures are stable

\(^{10}\) See García Canclini, 2001, 1995; Jenkins, 2006; Morley, 2000; Papastergiadis, 2000; Straubhaar, 2007. I focus here on Kraidy because he approaches the problem from the perspective of international communication, drawing on the debates that have marked the brief history of the field – “about material and symbolic power, cultural influence and change, social agency, and so on” (p. 3) – in the belief that they might present a “better and more practical understanding of hybridity” (p. 3).
and autonomous units, because the holistic view of culture is an obstacle to a critical approach to international communication” (p. 153). Further endorsing the concept of hybridity, he goes on to argue that the way power is exercised within a local context cannot be attributed solely to global imperatives, but is often made up of struggles between local actors who are themselves “embedded in larger external networks” (p. 154). Thus, he presents critical transculturalism as an attempt to take into consideration that “…(1) the local is intricately involved in supralocal relations and that (2) exogenous and endogenous circuits of power pervade the local” (p. 155).

The most helpful contribution made by Kraidy to this investigation, along with his focus on the study of international communication as it relates to globalization and cultural hybridity, is his embrace of diasporic media, and in particular, the production of this media:

...the main contribution of diasporic media research is...its focus on production. Key in this regard is the analysis of the practices involved in producing media programs for migrant communities and how these practices lead to hybrid texts that at once appeal to people with hybrid identities and contribute to further cultural hybridization (p. 11).

This recognition of the complexity of global and local forces that are at work in the production and consumption of immigrant media underlies this investigation into Venezuelan journalism in South Florida. To approach this topic from too narrow a perspective – focusing on theories of ‘ethnic/minority’ or ‘community’ media, liberal-
democratic theories of the press, or on the creation of ‘diasporic public spheres’\(^{11}\) (Appadurai, 1996) built by members of the Venezuelan exile community – would be to ignore the many complexities and subtleties that lie just underneath the surface of a mediascape where the local works in direct relation with the global. Established lines of research often place community and ethnic/minority media in opposition to the homogenizing effects often attributed to the mainstream press; ethnic/minority media are seen as providing an alternative source of information to marginalized populations and helping to construct multi-ethnic, multicultural societies (Georgiou, 2005; Husband, 2005; Viswanath & Arora, 2000; Tsagarousianou) while community media are conceptualized as ‘essentialist’ by providing key information for members of the community that will not normally be found in traditional media sources (see Hollander, Stappers, & Jankowski, 2002; Jankowski, 2002).

It is beyond the scope of this investigation to measure any concrete political effects as an outcome from the diasporization\(^{12}\) of Venezuelan immigrants, whether on the sending or host country. However, it is essential to point out that Venezuelan politics is a key feature, if not the defining characteristic, of a majority of the work of these journalists and a primary example of how the global interacts with the local when examining the work of immigrant journalists. Examples of the social and political impact that immigrant communities can have on the sending country are varied and numerous.

In the case of the Haitian diaspora, which former President Jean Bertrand Aristide referred to as the “Tenth Department” (Laguerre, 2006, p. 45), members were able to

\(^{11}\) As Appadurai writes, these new forms of public discourse, that move beyond national boundaries, are the “crucibles of a postnational political order. The engines of their discourse are mass media (both interactive and expressive) and the movement of refugees, activists, students, and laborers” (1996, p. 22).

\(^{12}\) A term borrowed from Michel Laguerre’s treatise on the political and transnational aspects of the Haitian diaspora, *Diaspora, Politics, and Globalization* (2006)
effect real political changes in Haiti through grassroots, transnational organizing. The social capital of the Dominican diaspora, as documented by Levitt (2001), has been instrumental in achieving real, locally-based benefits for the sending communities. In the case of Mexican immigrants, the largest group of immigrants in the United States, the social and political organizing efforts have been extensive. An example of this transnational organizing is the formation of numerous comités del pueblo in the United States, in which members from the same communities and states in Mexico form organizations in their host country that are in turn supported and even courted by Mexican politicians who recognize the transnational impact of the activities of the comités (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

The situation for Venezuelan immigrants is different, at least at this point in their political history. Many of the participants in this research are in the United States by their own choosing; however, many of them are not. It is this group that focuses heavily on Venezuelan politics due to the context of their departure; many of its members are political asylees. As Portes and Rumbaut (2006) point out in *Immigrant America*, when compared to other immigrants groups and their levels of political activism, “the case of refugees is unique” (p. 164):

While the very reasons for their departure makes these groups very ‘political,’ salience of politics does not necessarily translate into transnational activism given the relationship of opposition between these groups and the regimes they escaped...the situation of political refugees may be referred to as ‘blocked transnationalism’ because the realities on

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13 Portes and Rumbaut (2006) provide a useful framework for examining these differences with their observation that the “changing combination of personal skills, past political socialization, and return plans helps explain the basic dissimilarity of (political) behaviors among immigrants...” (p. 125).
the ground prevent interest and concern with the home country to be
translated into an effective presence there (pp. 164-165, emphasis added).

The idea of “blocked transnationalism” will be a key element in the political analysis of the work of the journalists presented in this research. There is a considerable amount of research that looks at the potential impact of social movements fueled by diasporic or transnational public spheres\textsuperscript{14} built up through the processes of globalization and the deterritorialization of populations, particularly those forced from their homelands by authoritarian or dictatorial regimes (e.g., Appadurai, 1996; Fraser, 2007; Guidry, Kennedy, & Zald, 2000; Mules, 1998; Olesen, 2005). The argument made in this research is that social movements among Venezuelans are still very in their infancy, “blocked” for now, as it were, by the continued strength and overall popularity of the Chávez government, but that journalism and mediated communication are playing a key role in the organization of a public sphere that is ultimately transnational in scope. In this sense, the work of these journalists could also be seen as a form of “tame transnationalism,” insomuch as the work of these journalists does not at this point affect actual political change in the home country through grassroots efforts, as theorized by Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller (2003), but is still active in keeping the narrative of opposition to Chávez alive in the diaspora, in the process creating a more symbolic form of transnationalism.

Politicization is just one component of the complexities of the day-to-day lives of journalists producing immigrant media in a global context. Along with the scarcity of

\textsuperscript{14} Public sphere is defined by Thomas McCarthy in the Introduction to the English translation of Jürgen Habermas’ \textit{The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere} (1989) as “a sphere between civil society and the state in which critical public discussion of matters of general interest was institutionally guaranteed” (p. 1).
previous research on the topic, this context presents a strong case for a grounded theory
approach to the sociology of journalism, a methodological choice that will be presented
next.

*The sociology of (global) journalism: A methodological approach*

Within the theoretical landscape of the study of mass communication, the
sociology of journalism has been embraced as an alternative way of approaching liberal
democratic notions of the function of the press in modern societies, which are based on
notions of autonomy, diversity, and assertiveness and the ability of the press to serve as a
check on the powers of government and business. This mode of inquiry also moves
beyond political communication theories of agenda-setting, gate-keeping, and framing,
which focus heavily on the content of the media and its potential effects on audiences,
voters and democracy; and theories of media effects and audience reception, critical-
cultural approaches in the vein of the Frankfurt and Birmingham Schools, in which the
media are seen as contributing to a hegemonic status quo by serving as an outlet for the
production of consumerism and an instrument for building and maintaining systems of
inequality. Rather than focusing solely on the content, outcomes, societal forces
(primarily political and economic) shaping media content and the resulting effects of its
distribution and consumption, journalism sociology has looked at the “social processes of
the mass media and of the people engaged in them” (Christian, 1980, p.5). In this way, it
refocuses attention on the media “as a social institution, in which formally organized
work takes place, directed toward the production of knowledge and culture” (McQuail,
1985, p. 97).
The outcome of this new emphasis, which began in earnest at the end of the 1970s, has been the growth of a field that focuses on “how news gets constructed – by individuals – within a social and occupational setting” (Reese & Ballinger, 2001, p. 641) as a way of gaining deeper understanding of the “broader social structure of press practice” (Reese, 2000, p. 174). This line of social inquiry attempts to address perceived shortcomings in existing theories of the press that assumed the existence of information as evolving independent from wider social processes. In other words, many studies of the press, from audience reception to content analyses, while going some distance towards providing explanations for the what, where, and how of media, do little to address the more critical question of “why”?  

The resulting effort of researchers to delve into the lifeworlds, motivations, and ideologies of media producers, as well as a deeper understanding of the social processes that structure the organizations in which they work, fits well within the larger perceived gap mentioned previously: the inconsistent effort on the part of globalization and cultural theorists, while placing a great amount of emphasis on the central role of mediated communication in creating collective, hybrid identities, to address the central role that the producers of mass media play within these processes. Thus, in order to investigate the day-to-day practices of immigrant journalists using a sound theoretical framework, one must understand their motivations, mental models of the world, and where they see themselves, as media producers, fitting within these larger models. Often these models

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15 For just a few examples, see Benson, 2004; Hughes, 2006; McNair, 1998; Schudson, 1989; Tuchman, 1972, 1973, 1978; Waisbord, 2000.
translate into unspoken, even unacknowledged routines, *habitus*,\(^{16}\) and ideologies (Deuze, 2004, 2005; Reese, 1990). Furthermore, as Hughes (2007) has noted, organizational cultures can be measured through 1) artifacts (in the case of media, content); 2) “stated beliefs, values, strategies, goals, and philosophies of the organization”; and 3) the underlying hegemonic assumptions that remain unquestioned and unexamined, as taken for granted elements of the organization (p. 81). Journalists’ mental pictures of the world and their place in it structure the options and possible courses of action they take by conditioning what is normatively appropriate, legitimate, or even conceivable (Hughes, 2006). Moreover, these mental models may under certain circumstances impel action by acting as a motivating morality.

Understanding immigrant journalists’ mental models of what it means to be a journalist and their place in the world as media producers is especially important in a community whose members often consider themselves driven from their homeland by what they perceive to be a highly illegitimate political leader and his following.\(^{17}\) Their ideologies and lifeworlds drive a particularly intense form of media production that is focused on the homeland, and yet politics, state- and border-imposed constraints, culture, and economic realities in the new society also crowd into these pictures and experiences in unavoidable ways. One of the key outcomes of this research is a deeper understanding of how these visions coalesce as the mental models and ideologies of transnational media producers.

\(^{16}\) Defined by Bourdieu (1977) as “…the principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without in any way being the product of obedience to rules…”

\(^{17}\) At the time of writing, there were multiple Venezuelan ‘exile’ groups operating in South Florida. See *Organización del Venezolanos en el Exilio* (orvex.org); *Federación de Organizaciones Venezolanas en el Extranjero* (fovex.org); and *Resistencia del Venezolanos en el Exterior* (recivex.org) for a few examples.
In the following pages, I make the argument for using the theoretical frameworks presented by the sociology of journalism as an empirical methodology for approaching this problem. A particular emphasis will be placed on the contributions made by field theory and new institutionalism in understanding more clearly the forces inherent in journalistic work and the social organization of the occupation and its structuring industries, not simply the outcomes. This is a way of transitioning from the macro-social theories on nationalism, globalization, culture, and communication to a more concrete theoretical landscape specific to journalists that will also help set up my arguments for the methodological decisions made during the collection of data. However, I will also contribute new questions for this field by arguing that existing models drawn from sociological approaches to the media and journalism (and journalists), still heavily based on liberal-democratic, Western notions of what is means to ‘be a journalist’ and ‘practice journalism,’ often fall short of presenting theoretically viable models for the study of immigrant journalists. A more nuanced, critical-cultural approach is needed.

My goal in this section is to build a sociological model of the theoretical variables influencing the production of journalism (see Figure 2), providing a methodological approach that draws on the different approaches to the sociology of journalism as they relate to the phenomenon of immigrant journalism. I begin with Rodney Benson’s writing on a field theory of journalism (2004, 2005, 2006) and ‘new institutionalism’ as it relates to the news media for a larger sociological perspective of the media as an institution within modernity (Kaplan, 2002, 2006; Ryfe, 2006). I then move on to arguments about global journalism, the shifting landscape of what it means to be a journalist in an interconnected world, and the argument that ideology is a driving
component in the shape of 21st century press practices (Josephi, 2005; Reese, 2010; Deuze, 2004, 2005); as well as the influence of theorization that addresses the role of ethnic/community media in multicultural, multiethnic societies; and finally, look at Reese’s ‘hierarchy of influences’ approach (2000) as a concrete model for guiding an investigation into the production of immigrant media. The resulting analytical framework draws out the multiple and interacting variables that may influence the behavior of the immigrant journalist and will serve as a theoretical lens that draws on the various approaches to the topic provided by the sociology of journalism. This framework will in turn shape and inform the analysis of the data.

In “Bringing the Sociology of Media Back In” (Political Communication, 2004), Rodney Benson points to the scarcity of writing on media theory that treats the media as an independent variable, instead viewing media and content as influenced by other processes. This approach relegates “the media, a priori, to an essentially passive and secondary role” (p. 278); very little writing actually takes on the task of delving into the questions of “why, how, and how much” (p. 278). Benson points to the sociology of media, with its emphasis on the factors that influence the production of media, as useful in its ability to address these questions, and, along with co-author Eric Neveu, provides a useful interpretation of Bourdieu’s field theory as it applies to the news media environment in Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field (2005).

Bourdieu’s field theory is related to other theories of differentiation that analyze the way in which modern society has become increasingly segmented, with different institutions related to one another in different ways. These institutions often develop and follow their own rules that are to a greater and lesser extent connected to larger societal
forces and processes. This situation can be applied in a parallel sense to the world of journalism, according to Benson and Neveu. There are certain rules and normative structures that have been adopted by the media to the extent that they are able to “conceptualize the news media as a social sector at least partially autonomous from external pressures and exhibiting some sort of degree of internal homogeneity, which taken as a whole is able to exert a certain amount of power vis-à-vis other social sectors” (Benson & Neveu, 2005, p. 189).

According to Bourdieu, most fields are composed of a struggle between economic capital and cultural capital; the first being the possession of goods that can be turned into money, the second is the legitimatization of that accumulated wealth, meaning that it is accepted socially. Thus, “fields are arenas of struggle in which individuals and organizations compete, unconsciously and consciously, to valorize those forms of capital which they posses” (Benson, 2006, p. 190). By taking this approach, field theory moves beyond gathering data on “journalists, newsbeats, and media systems into progressively larger systems of power” (p. 11); it is positioned between political economy and cultural theories which link closely to larger structures, while at the same time, does not become as narrowly focused as organizational theories (p. 12).

Although the immigrant journalists under investigation here operate on a smaller-scale and in media organizations that are often less organized and more informal then those envisioned by Bourdieu, Benson, and Neveu, the most helpful contribution made by field theory to this study is illustrated by Neveu:

…Bourdieu’s sociology places the accent on relations of forces, on the ways in which the end product of the work of journalists within press
organizations flows out of restraints. In so doing, the approach does not become mechanistic, nor does it make journalists mere automatons of a systematic machine… (Neveu, 2005, p. 205-6).

This highlights the point made earlier: it is dangerous to remove too much autonomy from individual journalists; doing so is to risk missing an entire sub-level of nuance and complexity that, while not overt, will have an impact on the resulting work of the media producers.

The theories of the news media provided by new institutionalism (NI) present a parallel set of ideas, that, when combined with field theory, help to fill out the picture that is built up when the news media and its workers are approached from a “more integrated view of the mass media as social institutions forming interdependent parts of the wider society…” (Christian, 1980, p. 6). Like field theory, NI is interested in uncovering macro-societal processes and their influence on the segmentation, social structure, and make-up of modern societies, and posits “organizations and their practices typically consist in taken-for-granted, culturally sanctioned conventions” (Kaplan, 2006, p. 174).

In 2006, Political Communication devoted an entire issue to “New Institutionalism and the News.” In the guest editor’s introduction, Ryfe argues that there has been a “dearth of theorizing on news production in the last quarter century” (2006, p. 136). New institutionalism, he writes, presents a “common framework for understanding social action” (p. 137) that can help to fill in for this lack of theories. Ryfe presents five principles as key to the understanding the NI framework (pp. 137-138). In the interest of space, I will not delve into all five, but two of the principles are particularly useful to the present inquiry: 1) Institutions help us to understand how larger societal forces affect
“micro-level” actions; 2) Institutions evolve in a “path-dependent” pattern, which does not suggest that actions are predetermined but that past precedent is always a guiding force (this is often referred to by new institutionalists as the “stickiness” of institutions). Both of these tenets of NI are useful tools for investigating the social processes guiding the production of immigrant journalism once this occupation is established as operating within a wider “journalistic institution” guiding the work of the journalists and the recognition their work is not carried out in a vacuum but within the context of organizational structures and past precedents.

Writing in the same issue of Political Communication, Kaplan suggests that Bourdieu’s emphasis on journalists as status-driven in their pursuit of economic and cultural capital ignores the fact that “news is the creative accomplishment of people ordered through social relationships” (p. 175). In this regard, the personal motivations and ideologies of journalists cannot be discounted, but instead must be taken into account as helping to define and shape the position they build for themselves within their organizations and larger institutions. As Ryfe (2006) points out: “…the very identity and interests of journalists are defined by the routines and practice of journalism” (p. 140).

Following on this idea of the driving ideologies and motivations of journalists is Benson’s point that within Bourdieu’s conceptualization of the journalistic field any divisions between the spaces of production and reception of mediated communication present a false dichotomy. Producers and audiences are instead seen as “parallel social spaces” and that cultural production “seeks out its homologous space of reception, that is, an audience predisposed by education, wealth, and social background to readily accept the kinds of information and ideas being proposed to it” (2006, pp. 190-191). This idea is
of particular use for studying the production of immigrant media, which by its very nature is focused on a narrow audience. The concept of seeking out and building homologous spaces through the production of immigrant media is a guiding conceptualization of this research and strengthens the arguments for employing field theory and NI in understanding the work of immigrant journalists.

Viewing ideology as a driving motivation in the work of journalists is often theorized as essential to developing a deeper understanding of journalism. The concept of *habitus*, which emphasizes how “social and educational background shape action” (Benson, 2006, p. 194), tells us that the personal histories and experiences of journalists must be given close attention. This can also apply to organizations. Management theorist Peter Senge (1994) argues that it is in a shared sense of purpose that humans find motivations for their actions. In Mexico, to mention an example cited previously, with the collapse of the authoritarian political system that had ruled the country for 70 years, there emerged a generation of journalists who helped to transform deeply institutionalized practices that had created a system of collaboration between the government and the media. These journalists found that their value systems and lived experiences were creating mental models of the world in opposition to the long-standing single party system and through their work, helped to de-legitimize a form of journalism that sustained the illegitimate system (Hughes 2006, pp. 30-37). The work of Hamid Naficy (1993) has been instrumental in documenting the creation of an exile identity through television production among the Iranian community in Los Angeles. For Naficy, the term “exile” refers to “…groups who voluntarily or involuntarily have relocated outside their original habitus. On the one hand, they refuse to become totally assimilated
into the host society; on the other hand, they do not return to the homeland – while they continue to keep aflame a burning desire to return” (p. 16). Perhaps most relevant in this case is the influence of the Cuban exile community on the ideographic and mediascapes of South Florida (Portes & Stepick, 1994; Soruco, 1996). As Portes and Stepick have documented, the perception of the Cuban immigrant community has been tied closely to the region’s dominant newspaper, *The Miami Herald*, and the newspaper’s change in editorial tone during moments of crisis – such as during the Mariel boatlift in the early 1980s, in which over 100,000 Cubans arrived on South Florida’s shores.

The study of journalism and globalization has gone some way toward coming up with new conceptualizations for understanding the work of journalists that embrace more global notions of a professional ideology that is unconstrained by the notions of journalistic norms previously tied to either national or cultural ideas of what it means to be a journalist. Deuze (2004, 2005) has argued that in order for a global definition of journalism to emerge, the occupation *must* be seen as a professional that is ideologically oriented. This frees researchers to “lift the field from its often-used national or culture-specific boundaries and theoretically address what is common and consensual in the self-descriptions of journalists across the globe” (2004, p. 277).

By addressing the concept of ideology, it is possible to gain a deeper insight into how journalists choose to give meaning to their work. Rather than implying that ideological impulse underlies the work of journalists worldwide, Deuze is more explicit in his conceptualization, defining journalism as a “shared occupational ideology among news-workers which functions to self-legitimize their position in society” (2005, p. 446). Deuze lists five shared components of this ideology – public service, objectivity,
autonomy, immediacy, and ethics (2004, pp. 279-27; 2005, p. 447). I would argue that what drives journalists in an immigrant context is broader than this set of factors - based once again on Western, liberal-democratic models of the press - but that the most important contribution for the present inquiry is the idea that being a journalist is more than a profession; it’s an ideology.

Where does the present argument stand thus far? Three key elements bear repeating:

1. Understanding the production of immigrant journalism and the motivations that drive these media producers requires a set of theoretical tools drawing first upon the connections between the macro-structural conditions of nationalism, culture, and globalization, with mediated communication seen as the connective tissue binding these phenomena together;

2. The resulting outcomes of the intersection of the set of five *scapes* theorized by Appadurai (1996) are the hybrization of cultures (Kraidy, 1999, 2005) and the creation of a ‘third space’ (Bhabha) as a way of understanding and conceptualizing the disjunctures and incommensurabilities brought about by the disintegration of traditional notions of collective identity, community, and societies built around spatial existence;

3. Because journalists producing immigrant media lie at the nexus of these social processes, an argument is being made that the theoretical frameworks of the sociology of journalism, particularly those presented by field theory, new institutionalism, and the ideology of journalism are particularly suited for an
empirical investigation into the motivations, lifeworlds, and mental models driving and shaping the work of this group of immigrant media producers.

I would like to highlight a final area of research focused on community media producers and their relationship with the audience as being particularly useful to this study, since the majority of the participants are producing media not for global or national audiences, but for their fellow immigrants in South Florida. This will be followed by a discussion of the ‘hierarchy of influences’ approach to understanding global journalism (Reese, 2000) as a segue into an argument for using grounded methods for the study of immigrant journalism.

Extensive literature has been devoted to the idea that “the experience of a sense of community does exist and that it does operate as a force in human life” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 10). Among the facets involved in the creation of this sense of community, McMillan and Chavis point to two important elements that are relevant to this investigation: a sense of belonging and identification and a common symbol system (p. 10). Community media, which take shape when members of a community bound by geographic proximity, social systems, and a shared sense of identity participate in public communication (Hollander, Stepper, Jankowski, 2002, p. 26), fit squarely into this equation and contribute to the way in which a sense of community can emerge. This creation of identity is informed by shared experiences. It is a process increasingly shaped by the production and consumption of mediated communication as a way of negotiating a complicated modernity where subjectivities are constantly being contested and renegotiated (Appadurai, 1996; Bhabha, 1994; Morris, 2008). Community media are particularly useful in fulfilling this role; their content will be familiar to us, yet they will
also bind us more closely with those whose presence we are only aware of through our shared consumption of media created for us as a group.

A study of community media producers within an immigrant, transnational context can help us understand the identity of the population being served as well as the potential outcomes of immigrant media production (in this case, the production of transnational space) because they blur the line between audience and producers that has traditionally been envisioned when trying to understand the processes and outcomes of mass communication (Hollander, Stappers, & Jankowski, 2002). Within a community setting, particularly one made of up immigrants, the concerns, issues, and day-to-day experiences of media practitioners, who are in many cases members of the community they serve,18 and their audience are more closely in line. These situations create a back and forth dialogue that is more circular and horizontal in nature (Deuze, 2006).

Producers of immigrant media, due to the nature of their work and the complexity of the communicative environment in which it is carried out, present an ideal case for further strengthening the study of community media. As Tsagarousianou (2002) points out, “...diasporic media are enmeshed in a web of political, economic, and cultural imperatives that relate directly or indirectly to definitions of community, identity, and the cultural politics that surround them” (p. 226).

Finally, I will turn to the “hierarchy of influences” approach to global journalism as outlined by Reese (2000), based on an earlier model developed by Shoemaker and

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18 This was particularly true of participants in the current investigation, in which no active members of the mainstream Spanish-language media in Miami (e.g., Univision, Telemundo, MegaTV) were interviewed. The connections between mainstream Spanish language media and immigrant communities in Miami are less apparent, and not the focus of this research; however, a strong argument could be made that simply because these stations are in Spanish, they have an important role within the immigrant community in South Florida, 90% of whose members are from Latin America (U.S. Census, 2008). Much of their coverage is based around issues important to the Hispanic audience, and so immigration becomes, almost by default, a crucial element in their daily reporting.
Reese (1996) and updated in an attempt to grapple with the challenges presented by globalization to traditional notions of the profession. While Reese focuses on research concerning journalism education and the development of journalistic professionalism within a cross-national, comparative context, I believe his recognition of the different levels of influence affecting the work of journalists and the waning influence of the national structures on press development and practices is particularly applicable to this investigation.

Reese adopts a similar sociology of the media approach as outlined by researchers mentioned earlier (e.g., Deuze, 2004, 2005; McQuail, 1984; Schudson, 1989), and locates “the individual journalist within a web of organizational and ideological constraints” as a way of recognizing “important distinctions between levels of analysis” (2000, p. 174). Reese proposes five levels of analysis, each of which subsumes the one before (see Figure 1.2). Starting from a micro level and moving towards a more macro perspective, they are:

1. **Individual level**, where the background, attitudes, and training of the journalists are taken into consideration (p. 179);

2. **Routines level**, focusing on “those ongoing, structured, deeply naturalized rules, norms, procedures that are embedded in media work” (p. 180);

3. **Organizational level**, which gives consideration to the larger, formal structures in which journalists carry out their work and relate to others within that structure (p. 181);

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19 This approach is not unlike those of field theory and new institutionalism outlined earlier; however, I find this model more narrowly focused on the journalists themselves and therefore easier to operationalize from a methodological perspective.
4. *Extra-media level*, an acknowledgement that the creation of media is shaped from the outside as well as from within, and that journalists are bound up in the larger power structures of society (p. 182);

5. *Ideological level*, a culmination of the previous four levels and an attempt to ask “how a system of meanings and common-sense understandings is made to appear natural through the structured relationship of media to society” (p. 183).

Identifying each of these levels allows researchers to extract different forms of analysis when studying the work of journalists. Understanding how journalism is practiced requires an awareness of the multiple influences that shape their work.

The social inquiry approach to studying the media that has been discussed thus far - using sociological methods to understand the influences that shape the work of journalists - has been employed successfully in a number of different cases, a few of which are worth noting here. Hughes (2006) examined the transformation of the press in Mexico as the country emerged from 70 years of single-party, authoritarian rule in which the media worked in coordination with the ruling party to maintain mutually beneficial positions of power. She theorizes an ‘institutional model of media transformation’ (p. 16), in which journalistic change is viewed as a process “that develops through exchange between four domains of institutional action: the societal environment, the organizational field, the newsroom as an organization, and the social-psychological world of the individual journalist” (p. 17).

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20 This ideological level can be tied directly back to the individual level, creating in essence a feedback loop, rather than a hierarchy, and resulting in a more reflexive approach to understanding the interconnected nature of journalistic influences.
Figure 1.2. A sociology of journalism analytical framework.

In South America, Waisbord (2000) tracked the growth of “watchdog journalism” during the demise of the military dictatorships that ruled many of the region’s countries during the second half of the 20th century, and the journalists who managed to negotiate the political and economic pressures that have traditionally molded, and in many instances corrupted, the press as an institute throughout the region. In an effort to explain the success of watchdog journalism relative to other press models, Waisbord delves into the “traditions and historical conditions that have influenced South American journalism” in order to clarify the “family lineage, continuities and breaks with the past, and strengths and weaknesses of present-day watchdog journalism” (p. 8).
In a cross-national comparative analysis of French and US media practices, Benson and Hallin (2007) analyze media content in order to test hypotheses about the influence of government and market forces on the media. McNair, who has written extensively about the sociology of journalism and the forces shaping the production of news (1994, 1998, 2003a, 2003b, 2009), has tracked the changing face of British media over the past several decades, as commercial pressures and influence have reshaped a media landscape that was dominated by the public service model of the BBC for many years. These studies, and many other that won’t be mentioned in the interest of space, all have contributed to a growing tradition of sociological approaches to the study of journalistic production, a tradition that this research will build on by focusing on the work of immigrant journalists.

Methodology

Once a sociological framework for understanding the production of immigrant media is established, the question then becomes: How do we operationalize it? What is the best way to apply this model to the population in question? What are the challenges presented by this particular population and how can they be addressed, both from a theoretical as well as practical standpoint? Following the theoretical framework developed thus far, how do we uncover the ideologies, motivations, and mental models that shape the work of this group of immigrant journalists? The answer, inherently complex in its execution, is: Ask them. As discussed previously, understanding the complexities inherent in the day-to-day lives and work of the journalists in question is a key element to this investigation. However, with little empirical, theoretically driven prior research into the sociology of immigrant journalists to draw upon, interviews were
employed in an attempt “to understand the lived everyday world from the subjects’ own perspective” (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 27). This decision falls in line with the ‘social constructivist’ approach to qualitative research (Creswell, 2009; Crotty, 1998; Rubin & Babbie, 2010) in which investigators do not attempt to confine the responses from their participants into a given set of categories or topics, but are instead interested in the view the participants have of the situation being studied, with the understanding that most meaning is socially constructed (Cresswell, 2009, p. 8). This approach also takes into account the social and historical context of their participants and the situation in which they live, understanding that subjectivities are shaped and formed through interaction with others. Thus, a large amount of background research on the subjects as a group and their individual histories was necessary prior to beginning the data gathering process as well as before each individual interviewee. This included investigations into the history of Venezuelan media and present media-government relations; the history of Venezuelan politics as well as the political situation today; the socio-economic make-up of the Venezuelan immigrant community in South Florida; as well as a basic understanding of the content and orientation of each media outlet approached. In this regard, social constructivism also lends itself naturally to an inductivist approach to analysis, as the researched attempts to derive meaning from the responses of the participants based not just on the responses but how they fit into a larger contextual and historic framework.

The research presented here is based on a series of 34 interviews with Venezuelan media producers working in South Florida. They were conducted during 2009-2010, each lasting between 45 minutes to an hour and a half. Because of the relatively small population of Venezuelan media producers in South Florida and the qualitative nature of
the research, the sampling strategy used to recruit participants for this study was primarily the snowball method, a purposeful sampling method often used when certain attributes or characteristics are necessary for the study (in this case, Venezuelan immigrants in South Florida actively involved in the production of mediated communication). In fact, as Hood (2007) points out, nearly all qualitative research employs purposeful sampling, once the researcher has decided on the subject matter/research questions in which they are interested, and that this method is often equated with theoretical sampling (emphasis added). In *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe this method as “the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges” (p. 45, quoted in Hood, 2007, p. 63). When using the snowball method, the researcher first identifies “several people with relevant characteristics and interviewing them...These subjects are then asked for names of other people who posses the same attributes they do...” (Berg, 2007, p. 44). This is a methodology that has proven effective given the social organization and connections that exist within immigrant communities (Babbie, 2007; Biemacki & Waldorf, 1981) and employed as a sampling technique in numerous social inquires across disciplines into the defining characteristics of immigration (e.g., Reichman, 2006; Uriely, Zahniser, 2000). I also drew upon contacts that were developed during an earlier study focused on transnational Venezuelan audiences in South Florida (Shumow, 2010), a study that also used a snowball technique.

The question driving sampling strategy during qualitative research is always how to determine when enough material has been collected to provide sufficiently empirical,
valid results, since the number is not provided by probability rules for a random-sample survey based on the size of a population. The interviews that make up this study were conducted over the course of a year. By the end of the process, it was clear that a significant portion of the population of interest had been reached. Multiple participants were mentioning the same names, organizations, and media outlets when asked to provide potential contacts; an interview would be in progress and a previous interviewee would show up for a meeting, unbeknownst to the researcher; a participant would take a phone call in the middle of an interview and it would be from someone interviewed previously. It became clear that this was a community of immigrant media producers that had been thoroughly sampled, although a caveat should be made that this sampling represents a particular group of Venezuelan media producers, those nearly 100% opposed to Chávez. It stands to reason that there would be multiple shared points of contact among its members. However, in more than two years of research, I uncovered no pro-Chávez media outlets in South Florida. This does not mean that these outlets do not exists, but they are most likely very low-profile in terms of scope and reach, with little noticeable presence among local media outlets, and given the make-up of the Venezuelan community, they would have a very difficult time attracting a sizable audience.

At the same time that this began happening, the interviews themselves were also starting to provide little or no new information. Often, when using grounded theory, the best determination for deciding when enough data has been gathered is when theoretical saturation has been achieved, that point “determined by the discovery that additional interviews are yielding so little new information that more interviews would be a waste of time” (Hood, 2007, p. 161).
Table 1 provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the 34 participants that took part in this study (also, see Appendix B for a complete list of the Venezuelan media outlets investigated during the course of this research). There is an inequality here among genders, with women making up one third of the participants. However, as with many professional occupations, recent data for U.S. newsrooms show that women in media organizations still tend to be underrepresented (Weldon, 2004). Little similar research exists for Venezuelan or Latin American media, given the overall gender inequalities that still exist throughout the region (Hoffman & Centeno, 2003), but a recent study of Latin American television found gender imbalance as well (Hughes and Prado, in press). Journalists over the age of 36 are heavily represented, a reflection of the sampling strategy employed, in which currently working, established professionals were sought out for interviews. This selection process naturally lends itself to an older demographic, as younger professionals will be earlier in their careers and therefore less accessible and also less likely to be making as large of an impact on the community at large. It is also possible that younger producers have fewer resources to allow for migration, or that may limit them in their ability to re-establish themselves and their careers in a new country.

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was pre-tested and subsequently modified both in an earlier, published study on Venezuelan transnational audiences (Shumow, 2010) and during a doctoral level class on qualitative methods. Because of the open-ended nature of the questions being asked, the questionnaire also evolved as the research progressed and new, previously under-conceptualized themes emerged and then bore further
Table 1.

Demographics for sample Venezuelan Immigrant journalists (n = 34)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age ranges of Participants</th>
<th>Journalist in Venezuela</th>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>13</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time in the USA</th>
<th>Media Format</th>
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<td>&lt;10 yrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Radio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Print</td>
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investigation in subsequent interviews. However, from the very first interview, it was clear from the answers to the questions being asked, which had been shaped and informed by the literature on transnational migration, culture, globalization, and nationalism, and the connections to mediated communication and the practice of journalism, that this topic was entirely relevant to the population being studied.

Based on arguments presented earlier about the need to uncover the complexities of the day-to-day lives and work of the population being studied, the interview method allowed the participants to guide the interview to a certain extent, through the sharing of his or her life experiences, personal background, reasons for immigrating and working as a journalist, perceived impact on the larger community of fellow immigrants, connections to their home country, both real and imagined, etc. (See Appendix A for the entire questionnaire). In this sense, the grounded theory method used here can be seen as taking the social constructivist approach as described above, “emphasizing diverse local worlds, multiple realities, and the complexities of particular worlds, views, and action”
(Charmaz, 2006, quoted in Creswell, 2007). This approach also meant that the questions were kept intentionally broad and general “so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation” (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). The researcher was also particularly well suited to carry out this specific form of research, being both bilingual (English/Spanish) and having conducted hundreds of long-form interviews during a decade-long career in documentary filmmaking. As Morse (2007) points out, interviewing within a social scientific context requires a very specific skill-set that must be built up over time:

> [E]xperience enables the researcher to know at what points in the interview process to move the participant’s narrative from the general to the specific...to establish trust with the participant quickly and early in the interview process, so that adequate and accurate information may be obtained, and it is the researcher’s skill that enables the relevant from the less pertinent or irrelevant information while the interview is ongoing. At the same time, the experienced researcher does not lead the participant or interrupt, thereby cutting off a stream of potentially important data (p. 230).

The interview transcripts yielded over 500 pages (est.) of data for analysis. Following the methodological guidelines laid out by grounded theory, “the discovery of theory from data” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1), the goal in analyzing the transcripts yielded by the interviews, through the use of NVivo qualitative software, was to build a descriptive, theoretical model of the work of these journalists through the use of analytical induction. This is not to say the data were approached blindly – providing

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21 Defined by Nagy Hesse-Biber (2007) as the “iterative relationship that exists between data collection, data analysis and theory generation” (p. 320).
theoretical context for the analysis of the data collected is the purpose of the entire argument laid out thus far – but that the interviews and resulting transcripts were not expected to prove or disprove preconceived notions about the practices and outcomes of immigrant journalism. Too little research has been conducted on this topic, and too few theoretical models exist. Instead, an open, followed by axial, coding method was employed (Creswell, 2009, 2007; Berg, 2007), in which themes emerging from a close analysis of the transcripts were gathered first into open codes. These codes were then reflected back on the literature and assumptions guiding the research, rechecked to see that they accurately represented the contents of transcripts, and then interrelated and interpreted to best understand how they fit within a larger theoretical framework (axial coding\(^ {22} \)), as well as what new insights they offered. This process is not linear. Instead, it should be seen as employing a high degree of reflexivity – an “iterative process of moving back and forth between empirical data and emerging analysis” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 1) – in which the researcher is constantly moving between theory, data, analysis, and interpretation, similar to the “spiraling research approach” as illustrated by Berg (2007). Saturation also becomes an essential element in the coding process as well, when a point is reached such that “no new properties or dimensions are emerging from continued coding and comparison” (Holton, 2007, p. 265).

Issues of validity were addressed by drawing on strategies suggested in the literature on qualitative research methodologies. In developing different themes and codes, these elements were checked across the answers given by participants in order to determine that this was indeed a recurring theme throughout the data, not just a singular

\(^{22}\) Also defined as coding that looks beyond categorization towards “causes, contexts, and contingencies” that seek out relationships among variables leading to hypotheses or propositions (LaRossa, 2005).
occurrence in two or three transcripts. A peer debriefer strategy (Cresswell, 2009) was also used to test validity of the coding, as well as reliability. During this process, a bilingual doctoral student familiar with the research concepts was asked to read through three of the transcripts and asked to code the emergent themes that he saw in the materials. These were then compared with the findings of the researcher in an attempt to confirm that the results of the data analysis were not particular solely to the research but also accessible and valid in the eyes of a disinterested third party. Additionally, inherent in the questions asked of the participants, was a built-in strategy of validity-checking and verification, in which answers that were either ambiguous or unclear where repeated back to the respondent to make sure the intended meaning was understood by the interviewer.

Finally, it is worth addressing a more fundamental issue that concerns ‘construct validity’; that is, beyond questions of where or not the “concepts we use are meaningful ways of interpreting the data that we investigate” but also the “degree to which our theoretical claims are consistent with well-established knowledge” (Dey, 2007, p. 177). This does not mean that all of the findings of qualitative research must fit within already developed concepts, but that when we find variation, it provides an opportunity for further “reflection and investigation” (p. 177).

A final note on methods and theory

There are certain complexities when working within an immigrant, transnational community that inform both theory and methods, and are addressed here as a way of concluding a discussion of how the data used in this study were both gathered and analyzed. A solid foundation in the theoretical implications and historical context of participants’ realities is necessary for any social constructivism inquiry based on
grounded theory (Glaser, 2007); it is this understanding that guides the selection of participants, the way the interviews are shaped and conducted, how the resulting transcripts are coded and interpreted, and the application of the resulting grounded theory to different research questions and settings. Globalization, which presents an “uneven delinking of the spatial and the social” (Gille & Ó Riain, 2002, p. 271), poses particular problems for this method of inquiry, which historically has been built upon a deep understanding of a particular location and the insight gained through “being there” (Geertz, 1972). Arjun Appadurai (1996) best sums up the problem of conducting qualitative media research within an immigrant community in his arguments for a new form of ethnography for the study of globalization:

The terms of negotiation between imagined lives and deterritorialized worlds are complex and they surely cannot be captured by the localizing strategies of traditional ethnography. What a new style of ethnography can do is capture the impact of deterritorialization on the imaginative resources of lived, local experiences. Put another way, the task of ethnography now becomes the unraveling of a conundrum: What is the nature of locality as a lived experience in a globalized, deterritorialized world? (p. 52).

An effort at a ‘new style’ of inquiry is attempted in the following research by applying grounded theory to the study of immigrant journalism. This approach is new in the sense that it is attempting to provide original insights into an under-researched and under-theorized area of inquiry. Informed and guided by the sociological approaches to the practice of journalism already presented, grounded theory in this instance provides a
suitable methodological framework for investigating the implications of the production of immigrant media. As a methodology, this approach offers the flexibility needed for uncovering the complexities inherent in the day-to-day work and lives of immigrant journalists that take place both within local geographies and simultaneously across global communication and social networks.

The research on diasporic, immigrant media states repeatedly that investigations overly focused on divisions between the ‘local’ and the ‘global,’ as indicated in the passage above and earlier in this chapter, no longer serve useful epistemological or ontological purposes in an increasingly interconnected world (Kraidy, 1999; Murphy & Kraidy, 2003). By focusing on the production of media that grapples with global issues within a local context, research into immigrant media using grounded theory does not place itself in opposition to globalization but instead examines the impact and influence of globalizing forces as they play out on a daily basis. Since even globalized media operate “in local environments” and are “embedded in local cultures” (McQuail, 1997, p. 7), the study of media in small-scale settings, as was done here, fully engages the theories of cultural media.

The data and resulting theoretical model yielded by this investigation, while not providing the generalizable results of a random sample survey, do offer insight into the subjectivities inherent in media production. While sometimes deceptively simple, it is important to remember that in constructing a qualitative, ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973), the researcher “inscribes social discourse; he writes it down. In so doing, he turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted” (Geertz, 1973, p. 19). In
this case, and following on the arguments by Appadurai above, the ‘thick description’ presented by Geertz relied heavily on ideas of locality and the insights gained through close, sustained contact within a given setting. Immigrant media presents a more complex situation in which questions of nation, culture, identity and transnationality are inherent, interconnected, and yet often unstated factors in the lives and work of the journalists under investigation. It is these resulting phenomena, and their theoretical connections, interdependencies, and outcomes, which will be explored and developed further in the following chapters.
CHAPTER 2. VENEZUELAN IMMIGRANT JOURNALISM IN CONTEXT

The theoretical framework presented in Chapter One argued for the importance of understanding the historical, political, cultural, and social milieu in which these immigrants produce media. This approach is based on research and literature from the sociology of journalism and from arguments made when using grounded theory as a methodology, in which the societal context in which journalism is practiced is seen as being fundamental to building a deeper understanding of how the profession functions as a modern institution. Thus, for the present inquiry, before delving more fully into the analysis of the interview data collected during the research phase of this work, it is important to build a clearer picture of who these journalists are and the contextual factors that influence their work; only through a nuanced description of the context in which they produce mediated communication for fellow immigrants can a thoroughly contextualized analysis of their work be carried out.

As an attempt to present the context of both departure and arrival for this particular group of immigrant journalists, which will be shown in following chapters to be an influential component of the form and character of their approach to media production, this chapter will introduce the participants in this research first through an exploration of the situation for the Venezuelan media under Chávez; the growth of Miami as a “global city” and a center for the production of Spanish-language media, as well as the pivotal role that Latin America and Caribbean migration has played in that process; and the current state of the Venezuelan community in South Florida and what it means to
produce media within this globalized, immigrant landscape (this section will be based mostly on evidence presented in the interviews of the participants, as very little literature has yet to be published on this group as a whole). A brief history of Hispanic immigrant media in the United States will also be discussed as means of contrasting this research with one of the most significant finding presenting in this chapter: the work of these Venezuelan producers present a form of immigrant journalism that, with its transnational focus and production within the multinational, multicultural social milieu of South Florida represents a distinct departure from traditional conceptualization of Hispanic media as advocacy oriented and an alternative to mainstream (Anglo) media narratives.

These three elements all come together to form a multi-faceted picture of the social, political, economic and cultural context that is essential to understanding the professional formation and motivations of these Venezuelan immigrant media producers. Each of these contextual factors is envisioned here as being composed of three sub-elements (see Figure 1): the media landscape in Venezuela is defined by a polarization of the media along political lines, an early opposition to Chávez by the commercial media followed by increasing levels of censorship, co-optation and polarization; Miami as a transnational, world city with a unique Spanish-language media landscape; and a Venezuelan immigrant community marked by rapid growth, an increasing influence on the mediascape in South Florida, and yet still grappling with marked levels of division, a result of an unfamiliarity with immigration, individualism and a lack of social support networks, and also a reflection of the divisions that increasingly define Venezuelan society. This process is presented in the following discussion as containing a certain

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23 The U.S. Census American Community Survey for 2008 reports that more than half of the approximately two million residents in Miami-Dade county were born outside of the United States; of the foreign born population, 93 percent arrived from Latin America (U.S Census, 2008).
chronological directionality. However, as much of the previous discussion indicates, and even inherent in the notion of transnationalism, this is not entirely a linear process, but also a simultaneous one, where certain influences are stronger at one time or another, not necessarily isolated not occurring in sequence. While there may be a linear process on one level, the material or physical, but it is distorted through mediated, interpersonal and intrapersonal communication.

Figure 2.1 Contextual framework for the production of Venezuelan immigrant journalism

*Context of departure: Media polarization in Venezuela*

In 2002, high ranking members of the military, opposition politicians, and prominent business leaders in Venezuela, frustrated and frightened by the revolutionary government and policies implemented by Hugo Chávez since being elected in 1998,
staged a coup d’état. For 48 hours, President Chávez was held at a military base outside the capital of Caracas, until a massive uprising led by Chávez’s supporters forced the interim government to restore Chávez to power.\textsuperscript{24} Predicted by many (including Venezuelan ex-president Carlos Andrés Pérez, Chávez’s arch enemy since a coup attempt by Chávez in 1992 [“Venezuelan President dismisses talk of coup,” 2002]), the coup was seen as an outcome of the societal divisions and polarization in Venezuela heightened and manipulated under the leadership of Chávez as he implemented his vision for “21st century socialism” and the ideals of an egalitarian society envisioned under the “Bolivarian Revolution” (Myers, 2008; Sontag, 2002).

Chávez’s political career has always been heavily mediated (Tanner Hawkins, 2003). From his very first coup attempt in 1992, in which he went on national television after failing to topple the government and told his followers that he was giving up his struggle \textit{por ahora}.\textsuperscript{25} Chávez has been a canny manipulator of mass media, adroitly using the press in order to make sure his message is being delivered, push forward his agenda, and maintain a state of a perpetual political campaign.\textsuperscript{26} He has also gone after critical opposition media outlets. In 2007, Chávez refused to renew the broadcast license for Radio Caracas Television (RCTV), the nation’s oldest broadcaster, citing their support for the 2002 coup d’état as the reason for non-renewal (Romero, 2007 May 27). This has created a situation of complete polarization among the mass media in Venezuela, with the single remaining opposition media outlet, \textit{Globovisión}, under constant attack from the

\textsuperscript{24} See Ginger Thompson’s and Juan Forero’s coverage of the coup d’état for The New York Times, April 14-18, 2002.
\textsuperscript{25} “For now”; this thinly veiled threat of possible future actions was a move that “captivated Venezuelans and launched his (Chávez’s) political career” (Anderson, 2008)
\textsuperscript{26} See Conaghan and de la Torre’s description of the “plebiscitary presidency” (2008), which refers to the “various aspects of how political marketing techniques have become intertwined with and essential to the act of governing” (p. 268); they use this model to analyze the presidency of Ecuador’s Rafael Correa, whose governing techniques and populist rhetoric closely resemble those of Chávez.
Chávez government, which is, in turn, increasingly bombastic and sensational in its coverage of the government. Guillermo Zuloaga, the president and CEO of Globovision, the nation’s first 24-hour news network, is currently in hiding, along with his son, Guillermo Zuloaga Siso; the Venezuelan government is calling for their arrest over charges of usury and conspiracy related to a car dealership their family owns (Carroll, 2010). This is just the latest in a string of moves by the government against the last remaining opposition network in Venezuela. Past attempts have involved accusations of tax evasion, violation of the country’s authoritarian press laws that essentially forbid many forms of government criticism (Zuloaga was recently accused of making false and “offensive” remarks about Chávez at a meeting off the Inter American Press Association [Romero, 2010]), as well as moves against the former station director, Alberto Federico Ravell, and the seizure of assets of the company’s primary stakeholder, Nelson Mezerhane (Carroll, 2010).

The 2002 coup marked a defining moment for the deterioration of the relationship between the Chávez government and the formerly powerful commercial media in Venezuela (Romero, 2007), as both sides tried to control the images of the conflict to their own advantage, each side at one point moving to censure the opposition’s media outlets, or remove them from the air all together. For Lourdes Ubieta, a prominent investigative journalist who had come up against the government before for her reporting on connections to Cuba (personal communication, 2010 March 2),\(^\text{27}\) the impact of the coup on her career and personal life were immediate and direct. The day of the coup, Ubieta received a phone call from the organizers of the coup asking her to come to the

\(^{27}\)This interview was conducted in English.
presidential palace, no doubt because of her well-known and outspoken criticisms of the Chávez government, to take a video statement and get it out on the air,

...on that 11th of April, 2002, a general phoned me – I was reporting for *Univision*, in Venezuela – and this general phoned me at 1 p.m. and said that he was going to pronounce himself against Chávez and he needed the media. That’s my job to go and when I went there, it was the official, the high ranking officials of Venezuela who were there together, they didn’t tell me, and I was one to pronounce all of them against Chávez and that’s what took him out of power for 48 hours... at the beginning, when I got there, we wanted to go live. Because at the same time there was happening this massacre, killing people who were walking by 1000s to the Miraflores Palace,28 and we needed, I mean they needed to go live, to stop these killings, etc. That’s what they said. So I tried to find, you know, a TV station with resources to go live. When we were going to go live, and we had everything ready, President Chávez cut down the screen, he didn’t let the media show the images of what happened...

It is important to point out here that Ubieta, a self-proclaimed member of the opposition while she was working as a journalist in Venezuela and since arriving in the United States, is offering her narrative from one side of this story; different accounts of the day’s events have been provided by both sides, some of which claim that the deaths were the result of pro-coup agitating. Seventeen people died in the clashes between protesters from both sides (“Venezuelan coup leader quizzed,” BBC). There was also a great deal of media manipulation on both sides, with the Chávez government attempting to control

28 The official residence of the Venezuelan president.
access to the airwaves by the opposition media, as indicated in the quote from Ubieta, and accusations that the opposition media refused to cover the pro-Chávez demonstrations that ensued following the coup (Campbell, 2002).

After Chávez had been restored to power, he went on national television and declared Ubieta a golpista (coup-plotter), claiming that the video had been made the day before the coup actually took place and that since, in the video, the generals mention the deaths that had already occurred that day, she must have been complicit in the killings. Ubieta went on the air herself, demanding that Chávez open an official investigation into her case, certain that her name would be cleared. The next day, she found herself at the Attorney General’s office, and was interrogated for ten hours. In the end, no charges were brought against her. However, the situation for the media in Venezuela has only continued to deteriorate and become increasingly polarized, as indicated in the following passage from Ubieta’s interview, and echoed by nearly every participant in this research:

“...what has happened in Venezuela is that, it’s like a bipolar disorder. Either you are with him, or you hate him. The media is divided – with officialist (sic) and with opposition.”

In the eight years following the coup, numerous press freedom and human rights groups have documented the continued deterioration of the media landscape in Venezuela under the Chávez government. In a report from 2008 titled “A decade under Chávez,” Human Rights Watch states:

President Chávez and his supporters in the Venezuelan Congress have undermined freedom of expression through a variety of measures aimed at influencing the control and content of the country’s mass media. They have extended and toughened penalties for speech offenses; implemented

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29 A transliteration of oficialista, Spanish for ‘pro-government’
a broadcasting law that allows for the arbitrary suspension of channels for a vaguely defined offense of "incitement"; limited public access to official information; and abused the government's control of broadcasting frequencies to punish stations with overtly critical programming (Human Rights Watch, 2008, p. 64).

In their report, Human Rights Watch also points to the resulting polarization of the media, mentioned by Ubieta in the quote above, pointing out that both “the government and its critics have used the media at their disposal as tools to attack each other and to mobilize their own supporters” that that media coverage “has tended to be extremely partisan on both sides” (p. 68). Reporters Without Borders is similarly strident in their condemnation of the state of press freedoms in Venezuela, ranking the country 124 out of 175 in their latest worldwide index (equal to Turkey and between Philippines and Kyrgyzstan), and reporting that Chávez “continues to increase his power over the media through legal devices to stifle dissident major radio and TV stations and by obliging them to carry his long-winded speeches to the nation (‘cadenas’)” (Reporters Without Borders, March, 2010).

The increasing difficulties in practicing journalism in Venezuela was a theme continually echoed by all of the interviewees in this investigation; in many cases, this was the primary reason that participants had chosen to leave, either voluntarily or because of persecution by the government as a result of their work. As Patricia Poleo, an exiled journalist who has been in the United States since 2005, after being accused of murder by the Chávez government (a trumped up charge with no credence; Poleo was given political asylum by the United States government almost immediately upon her arrival), puts it:
We (journalists) are the heroes of the film, in this matter. Because we have been the ones to that have resisted, the political parties have gotten out of the way and done things differently, we are the ones that have been more willing to take risks...we’ve confronted this regime like no other sector...(personal communication, April 16, 2010).

As with Lourdes Ubieta, it is important to put this quote from Poleo in context. Poleo comes from one of the most influential journalistic families in Venezuela (her father, Rafael, has since joined her in exile in Miami; he was also interviewed as a part of this research). The Poleos have been in nearly constant conflict with the Chávez government since its installation in 1999, and have made their criticism public through their various magazine and newspaper holdings (Rafael Poleo, personal communication, May 10, 2010). However, the Poleos are a primary example of the constant conflict that has completely polarized the media from the government, and journalists like Patricia Poleo have embraced the role of oppositionists. It has also led to a situation in which very little reporting that is critical of the government goes unpunished. As Julio Cesar Camacho, news director for Union Radio in Miami with more than 30 years of experience as a journalist in Venezuela and the United States, points out: “In Venezuela right now, there is a fear of reporting. Why? Because simple and plain, if one does it openly, you are going to find yourself in a fight with the government. And this is a fight that the government is always going to win” (personal communication, February 2, 2010).

Context of arrival in Miami: Media production and Miami as a global city

Despite her conflict with the government, Lourdes Ubieta continued to work as a journalist in Venezuela for two more years following the coup. However, she was
increasingly disillusioned with the situation in Venezuela and in 2004, when her father passed away, she moved to Miami to take care of some properties that he owned in the city. Today, Ubieta works as a talk show host for Actualidad 1020, an AM radio station in Miami affiliated with Venezuela’s largest radio network, Union Radio. Her experience and the trajectory of her career are representative of a number of the journalists interviewed during the course of this research: a career as a journalist in Venezuela that cut short through conflicts with the Chávez government, and presented with the opportunity to start anew within the media landscape of South Florida (as well as the key component of having the economic resources to relocate, demonstrated by the fact that she came from a family with the financial means to own property in an expensive city like Miami).

Understanding the social, political, and economic environment created by the city of Miami and the influence it has on Spanish-language media producers is essential to creating a contextual account of Venezuelan immigrant journalism. Since at least the mid-1980s, Miami has increasingly come to be seen as a “world (or global) city” (Grosfoguel, 1995; Portes & Sassen, 1993), a central hub for international commerce and media production, as well as a magnet for Caribbean and Latin American immigration. However, Miami does not fit well within traditional geographic and economic models of how and why cities develop and become important crossroads of capitalist activity, which tend to emphasize economic growth, enhanced through geography, that places the city at a crossroads of global capitalistic activity. Instead, as Portes and Stepick (1994) write, “...in Miami’s case it was not so much economic as political geography that played the

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30 Conceptualized as “nodal points of co-ordination, command, control, and management of global capitalist production and/or trade” (Grosfoguel, 1995, p. 157)
determining role” (p. 205). They are referring to the impact of continuous waves of migration that have marked the city and transformed it during the latter half of the 20th century from a sun-soaked, backwater tourist destination into a center for global economic and cultural growth. Thus, in the case of Miami, politics preceded economic growth, with the heavy influence of the United States throughout the Caribbean during the 20th century transforming Miami into a natural destination for immigrants from the region as individual countries. This process began with Cubans, who were encouraged to immigrate through U.S. policy and within the context of the Cold War, but was continued by Nicaraguans, Haitians, and other political and economic refugees, as their countries also went through long periods of political unrest and economic instability.

The influx of these foreign groups produced “a resurgence of ethnicity and, along with it, a transformation of the fabric of local society” (Portes & Stepick, 1994, p. 210). This includes the rise of “ethnic enclaves,” immigrant groups defined not by their marginalization within the host society, but instead by their relative success and the ability of their members to turn inward for important social, political and economic resources that “build dense and durable networks that, in turn, condition their ethnic identity and solidaristic bonds” (Forment, 1989, p. 47). The most obvious example of this phenomenon, particularly in Miami, is that of the Cuban community, whose growth was the direct outcome of policies instituted by the United States for political reasons. However, this concept of “ethnic enclave” goes some way towards providing an explanation for the experiences of multiple immigrant groups in South Florida and will be helpful in understanding the experiences of Venezuelan immigrants and the context of arrival that shapes the media practices of the journalists under investigation.
While the focus of scholars such as Grosfoguel, Portes, Stepick, Sassen, and others tends to be on the role of economic production, geo-political military/security and symbolic strategies in the development of world cities, there is a cultural component to this growth that, especially for this investigation, is equally important. One of the results of the transformation of Miami through immigration is that the city has become one of the most important centers of Spanish-language media in the United States. In many ways, it is the “Hollywood of Latin America” (Sinclair, 2003). The connections between Miami and transnational Spanish-language media corporations, many with a focus stretching across North and South America, are varied and multiple. The key industry is television (Sinclair, 2003), not film, but Spanish-language music should not be ignored either. The city is home to the production headquarters for the two largest Spanish-language networks in the country, Univisión and Telemundo; MTV Latin America and their subsidiary music channel, Mun2, as well as the Latin American headquarters for all the major music companies (Sony, Universal, etc.); in addition to numerous smaller production companies, publicity, advertising and marketing firms, and digital media outfits – not to mention the entertainment, production, and business empire built by Emilio and Gloria Estéfan. As Sinclair writes: “Miami’s particular fusion of physical, economic, demographic, and linguistic attributes have secured for it a unique entrepôt role in the television trade of the whole geolinguistic region of the Spanish-speaking Americas, a node in the space of flows” (2003, p. 226).

Daniel Mato (2005) makes several engaging arguments about the transnational nature of media in Miami that are relevant to this inquiry with his investigation of the telenovela industry and its connections to the city. He points out that the growth of the
telenovela industry has made Miami a “‘territorial’ reference in the transnationalization of the telenovela industry” (p. 430) and that among the interviewees in his study, many pointed out that what made Miami important for the telenovela industry was in fact the “transnational character of the city” (p. 432). Mato argues that Miami has not become ‘deterritorialized’ but instead ‘reterritorialized’ in that it now represents two simultaneous locations - Latin America and the United States. In his analysis, Mato questions long held assumptions about the homogenizing and deterritorializing effects often attributed to transnational media and shows that while telenovela production has taken on an international element in terms of its production and market penetration, there are still key elements of territoriality that are specific to certain social markers and references.

In this sense, Miami becomes not just a backdrop against which the narratives of transnationality and media creation/consumption play out; it is a key player in this vignette on globalization: “Cities are not merely empty containers of transnational articulations...the local site of global processes do matter. The social construction of 'place' is still a process of local meaning-making, territorial specificity, juridical control, and economic development, however complexly articulated these localities become in transnational economic, political, and cultural flows” (Guarnizo & Smith, 1998p. 12). This socio-cultural aspect of Miami also carries with it important implications for new immigrants to Miami which fit “neither the assimilationist nor the identity politics paradigms familiar to U.S. scholars of race and ethnicity” as they increasingly “maintain ties to their homelands and travel back and forth with frequency” and yet “have also developed a new spirit of belonging to the city” (Yúdice, 2003, p. 206). Added to this physical mobility, we must also acknowledge the creation and consumption of national
media from home countries, an essential element in this investigation, as well as the increasing use of the Internet and social media sites to stay informed on news from home and maintain social ties across space and time. In this sense, it becomes apparent that “…Latinness or Latinoness is undergoing a transformation in Miami; it is less rooted to a specific or minority identity” (Yúdice, 2003, p. 206).

It is important to point out that there are several key influences that shape the experiences of transnational migrants. Given the social and economic capital that the Venezuelan community still maintains at this stage of its development (the attainment of a bachelor’s degree or higher among Venezuelans is almost twice the national average [US Census, 2008]), as well as their legal status, members of this community are able to maintain these links and capitalize on these connections more readily than other, more marginalized groups of immigrants. This is apparent when the Venezuelan experience is contrasted with Herns Marcelin’s discussion of race and Haitian immigrants in Miami (2005), the difficulties encountered by Central Americans seeking asylum from the civil wars of the 1980s as described by Portes and Rumbaut (2006), as well as broader discussions of power hierarchies among ethnic and immigrant groups in Miami and South Florida by Grenier and Stepick (1992), Stepick (2003), and Hughes, Colon, and Santiague (2010).

Miami as a natural destination for Venezuelan immigration\(^{31}\) was a recurring theme throughout the interviews with these journalists, with connections to the theoretical

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\(^{31}\) According to the US Census, between 2000 and 2008 the numbers of Venezuelan immigrants in the United States increased from 100,000 to nearly 210,000, an increase of 110%; in Florida, the number jumped from 47,000 to over 100,000. While specific estimates of Venezuelans for 2008 in Miami-Dade and Broward counties have not been released, 2006-2008 estimates place the population at over 70,000. A survey of this community to determine the reasons for leaving has not been conducted, but anecdotal evidence, interviews, and media coverage all suggest that the rapid growth is connected closely to the changes in the country brought about by the government of Hugo Chávez.
discussion of Miami as a global city. This was a city to which the participants felt historical, cultural, and social connections, as illustrated by Manuel Corao, publisher of *Venezuela al Día*:

For reasons political, as much as social, touristic, economic, why do they (Venezuelans) come to Miami? Because Miami is the place they met when they first left Venezuela. As a tourist destination, for the opportunities that is offered, because they built Disney World in Florida, and the tour packages would take them there. And because logically if you have a good time somewhere, you want to return. All of these factors make Miami the obvious choice for Venezuelans outside of their birth country.

The feeling of living in a particularly “Latin” city clearly made an impression on the interviewees as they recounted their immigration experience. There was a strong sense of being culturally, linguistically, and geographically close to the country they left behind, as described here by Reinaldo Hernández, a television producer:

…the good thing about Miami is that it gives you the feeling that you’re in a city in your country…there’s the Latino community here…you’re two hours from Venezuela, two and a half hours by plane, from here, you’re close, your family can come and visit you. The language also helps you a lot, with everything in Spanish…And now, with the proximity and the number of immigrants, Miami is like the connection point with all of Latin America. And so one feels more comfortable here.
Thus, Miami as a setting for the production of immigrant media highlights many of elements of the framework being used to analyze the data emerging from this research: the increasing transnationality of immigration within a cosmopolitan context and implications for traditional ideas of communication and national identity and culture in the face of globalization, as described in the telenovela work by Mato and on Miami as a site of cultural production by Yúdice; as well as new notions of space, location, and the increasingly porous boundaries of the nation-state as seen by the transnational experience of Miami immigrants and the maintenance of strong national identities within a globalized, world city. This idea of the changing identity of Latinos within the media context of Miami was a recurring theme throughout the participant interviews. Miguel Torre, director of entertainment at America TV, a Spanish-language television station focused on news and entertainment that broadcasts throughout Miami-Dade and Broward counties, sums up the multicultural, multinational nature of their audience:

América TV, yes, clearly, it’s very Cuban, it’s very Venezuelan, it’s very Colombia, it’s very Chile, it’s very Ecuador, it’s very Haiti...It’s very much “us.” América TV has...something that fascinates me. América TV has our face. It has the face of the Haitian mulato, it has the face of the Cuban, of the sadness of the Venezuela, the joy of the Nicaraguan, that is to say...América TV, the name says it all. América Te-Ve, or “I’m looking at you.”32 And the way I see you, beyond the television, there’s the basic act of seeing, of observing. And by looking at you, I’m telling you who I am, and I look like you. And so, definitely, since I came to América TV, I feel a lot of empathy with my viewers. I feel an identification with the

32 From the conjugation of the Spanish verb ver, to see.
street. I feel...that they look a lot like me! (personal communication, 31 March 2010; translated from Spanish by the author).

The most theoretically interesting element to this observation by Torre is his focus on nationality, the idea that his audience is composed not just of “Hispanics,” “Latinos,” or Spanish-speakers. Instead, it is an amalgamation of different nationalities, each holding on to his or her national identity and at the same time, finding common ground with one another as immigrants.

In Miami particularly, there are also clear power hierarchies that affect media production among immigrant communities. Hughes, Santiague, and Colon (2010) outlined these hierarchies in a recent work by on Haitian media in South Florida. The authors criticize the use of a “triadic” racial lens to view the make up of the region – Afro-american, Latino, and Anglo - and that this overarching narrative is accentuated by the larger Spanish-language media outlets, who view reality “through a lens that is culturally proximate to Anglos and acculturated Hispanics” (p. 25). The result is that the Haitians who took part in this study saw the media, English as well as Spanish, focusing primarily on Anglos and Cubans, therefore reinforcing and “reflecting the status and cultures of the two elite groups (Anglos and Cubans) that control political and economic power in the county” (p. 25).

The perspective of immigrant groups who have less status in terms of class, legality and racial makeup is in contrast, then, to the responses given by many of the Venezuelan media producers in this study. According to the model built up by Hughes, Santiague, and Colon, Venezuelans would be more positively impacted by existing Cuban exile power structures among Miami immigrant groups because of their class
status and a framing of the Chávez project in Venezuela as similar to the Communist project in Cuba (Ocando, 2007). This tendency among Miami media, particularly *The Miami Herald* and its Spanish counterpart, *El Nuevo Herald*, to cater to the dominant Cuban narrative has been well documented by previous researchers (Croucher, 1997; Portes & Stepick, 1994). The way in which Venezuelans adapt to this framework is a key difference in the experiences of this group of immigrants, one that is confirmed in this quote from Eli Bravo. It is clear that Bravo sees his station as fitting into the dominant Spanish-language dialogue in South Florida, blending seamlessly with other privileged Latino immigrant enclaves:

Radio Union is a Venezuelan radio station. Yeah. And I think that’s ok, but we have to grow, and that’s part of the process, it’s normal, we are also very young and we are a lot of Venezuelans here, but we have Jaime Flores, he’s Colombian, and we have Ricardo Brown, which is Cuban (sic), and there might come other shows, and we have hosts from different parts, you know, that’s the idea...When you are talking here about Hispanic media, *you forget about the English* (emphasis added).

This insight from Bravo also shows the extent to which the market in Miami has fundamentally altered the conceptualization - at least for this group of media producers - of “minority” media. This is not a marginalized or underrepresented group of immigrants. For these producers, the emphasis is not on language; they are much more focused on nationality and issues salient to those national groups, as well as to the issues that are pertinent to immigrant groups as a whole. The idea that these are marginalized
ethnic groups seeking a space in the dominant discourse really doesn’t apply to the milieu in which these media producers operate.

This phenomenon – a city in which immigrants make up a majority of the population, and where “minority” is really determined in terms of power rather than ethnicity – provides a new context for understanding the production of minority or ethnic media, and requires a different framework than that provided by previous literature on the subject, which emphasized the oppositional elements of minority media production, and the “media needs and rights of ethnic minority communities” (Husband, 1994, p. 1). Of particular significance and relevance to this study, this variable adds a new facet to theorizations about the history and function of Spanish-language immigrant media in the United States. Given the long-standing influences and connections in the United States to Spain, Mexico, and the Caribbean, Hispanic immigrant media arguably have the one of longest histories of any ethnic/minority media institutions in the country (Kanellos, 2000). The research into this history has tended to focus most heavily on three groups: Mexican-Americans (and Chicanos, or those groups of people who have historically populated the southwest United States and seen their nationalities change throughout the centuries without ever having actually emigrated), Puerto Ricans, and Cubans.

In the case of Mexican-Americans, one study found 372 Mexican-American newspapers established prior to 1940 (Rios and Castillo, 1975, quoted in Cortés, 1987). These outlets were not as tied to ideas of nationality, given the fluid nature of the US-Mexican border and ideas of Chicano identity. They generally fit more closely with other models of ethnic/minority media, providing an alternative narrative to the dominant (Anglo) culture: “(Mexican-America/Chicano) newspapers often took strong editorial
positions, ranging from criticism of society discrimination to appeals for action and changes of behavior or attitudes among Mexican Americans” (Cortés, 1987, p. 249). These media took a particularly political slant during the Mexican Revolution of 1910. The most famous case was that of Mexican revolutionary, journalist and anarcho-syndicalist Ricardo Flores Magón, who launched his newspaper *La Regeneración* (“The Renewal”) in Mexico City in 1900 (Kanellos, 2000). Magón later went into exile and, along with his brothers, continued to publish around the United States, stridently calling for the overthrow of the Porfirio Díaz regime in Mexico and the unification and uprising of the working classes worldwide. Though eventually imprisoned in the United States for his extreme leftist leanings, Magón became one of the most influential characters in the lead up to the Mexican Revolution in 1910.

The tradition of providing an alternative narrative to mainstream media among Mexican-American media has continued in the form of Los Angeles-based *La Opinion*, a Spanish-language newspaper founded by Mexican immigrant Ignacio Lozano Sr. in 1926. Lozano was passionate about journalism, having fled the turmoil of Mexican Revolution (Cortés, 1987), settling first in San Antonio and later in Los Angeles. *La Opinion* continues to publish today and remains an influential voice among Spanish-speaking immigrants to the Southwest, focusing heavily on issues of migrant labor, minority education and immigration reform.

Exile publications and alternative narratives among Spanish-speaking media were also found in the East, among first Puerto Ricans in New York and later among Cuban immigrants, both in the Northeast and in Florida. Early Puerto Rican newspapers called for independence from Spain, and often were forced to operate in exile, usually with a
base in New York City. In the lead up to the Spanish-American War of 1898, there was a “strong and persistent effort of some of the most able men and women of Puerto Rico to use the press as an important element in the struggle for independence. They were a sadly discouraged and disappointed group when the United States took possession of the island in 1898 and failed to grant independence to Puerto Rico” (Fitzpatrick, 1987, p. 304). Later, there were bilingual publications that attempted to address concerns of the community, but by the 1930s, there still existed only a single Spanish-language publication in New York City, which still had the largest concentration of Puerto Rican citizens in the United States. Eventually, two influential newspapers emerged – *La Prensa* (originally oriented towards the Spanish immigrant community, particularly during the 1930s and that country’s Civil War) and *El Diario de Nueva York* (which was popularly known as Puerto Rican, but was in reality more Hispanic oriented, and founded by a Dominican). These two papers merged during the 1960s and as Puerto Ricans became scapegoats for New York’s rising crime rate, and *La Prensa/El Diario de Nueva York* stepped forward in their defense. Again, this influential outlet of Spanish-language media was not focused so much on nationality, but on presenting a voice for an ethnic minority, speaking up for the rights of its community and defending them against racism and xenophobia.

The history of Cuban exile media is also a key element in the development of Hispanic immigrant media in the United States, and of particular interest to this investigation, given the role of Cuba immigrants in shaping the media environment in South Florida (Portes & Stepick, 1993; Soruco, 1996; Stepick, 2003). Beginning in the mid-1800s with Cuban journalist Felix Varela and the publication of *El Habanero,*
pressing for Cuban independence from Spain, which was published in Philadelphia but circulated in Cuba. This was followed more famously by the work of prominent Cuban revolutionary José Martí and the publication of *La Patria* in New York (Kanellos, 2000). With the arrival of the first wave of Cuban exiles in the early 1960s following the revolution, the media in Miami and South Florida, particularly the airwaves, were almost immediately impacted. As Soruco (1996) illustrates, radio played a key role in the growth of a Cuban presence among South Florida’s Spanish-language media. Cubans had long been innovators in radio, and among the new exiles were ‘talented and aggressive’ immigrant media producers (p. 38). The arrival of this new group also helped change the dominant narrative among media outlets, from one of distrust and fear of the impact the Cuban exiles would have on South Florida to an embrace of the anti-Castro, anti-Communist, Cold War framework that would later come to define political discussions in the region’s media, particularly Spanish-language outlets. It is partly due to this context that the Venezuelan media producers profiled in this research, with the close connections between the governments and ideologies of Venezuela and Cuba, were able to blend so seamlessly into the existing Spanish-language media structures.

*The impact of Venezuelan immigration on the Miami mediascape*

Because of the rapid growth of Venezuelan immigration to Miami and South Florida, the community context in which the Venezuelan immigrant journalists interviewed for this research practice their profession is the third important contextual factor for understanding the influences affecting the work of these journalists. Multiple factors related to the make-up and social dynamics of the community influencing their work arose repeatedly during the course of this research: while Miami and South Florida
are familiar destinations for Venezuelans, this is not a population accustomed to immigrating; many of those who arrive are hungry for news about home and they are eager to contribute to the dialogue taking place within the diaspora; and, as will be shown in this research, they are often willing to take the initiative to launch media enterprises of their own.

A headline from the July 6, 2007, edition of *The Miami Herald* written by Casto Ocando, a Venezuelan journalist interviewed as part of this project who covers Venezuela and the Venezuelan community in South Florida for *The Miami Herald* and its sister publication, *El Nuevo Herald*, reads “Venezuela Rules the Airwaves: So. Florida Spanish-language radio stations are homing in on Venezuela.” The articles chronicles the growing influence of the Venezuelan market on the media landscape in Miami, as more and more Venezuelans immigrate to the region:

The media broadcast menu in Miami includes a very profitable range of Venezuela-related programs, from political analyses and interactive newscasts to news magazines and musical programs. The most important Spanish-language stations in South Florida have scheduled prime-time segments on the topic of Venezuela. Stations that broadcast via the Internet carry those programs even farther (Ocando, 2007).

33 Historically, Venezuela was a primary destination in South America for immigrants from around the world, particularly following World War II; for an overview of how this model has changed, see Morales Díaz and Navarro Pérez, “Venezuela: de receptor de inmigrantes a emisor de inmigrantes” (Venezuela: from receiver of immigrants to sender) (2008). As Muñoz points out, “We had the most stable democracy in Latin America. We weren’t ready to immigrate. It’s been tough for us to immigrate and confront all of the realities that exist when one immigrates.”
As this article demonstrates, the rapid growth of the Venezuelan population in South Florida is having a direct and observable effect on the region’s media landscape.³⁴ Ocando revealed in an interview that the management of his newspaper, arguably one of the most prominent and influential Spanish-language information outlets in South Florida, decided a few years ago to make a concerted effort to address the information needs of the Venezuelan community (personal communication, May 5, 2009). Manuel Corao, publisher of Venezuela al Día (Venezuela Daily), points to a similar outcome in his work resulting from the growth of the community: “Logically, there became a need, just like other ethnicities, to be informed about Venezuela as well as the United States; as much the realities in Venezuela as how to live and coexist in this country” (personal communication, January 9, 2010). And Oswaldo Muñoz, publisher of El Venezolano (The Venezuelan), echoes this point, tracking the rapid and extensive growth of his publication (El Venezolano is currently published in four major U.S. cities [Miami, New York, Orlando, and Houston] and in Panama, Costa Rica, and Aruba/Curacao) to the rapid growth of Venezuelans in the exterior: “We’ve been growing at the same violent pace as the Venezuelan community” (personal communication, January 13, 2010). For Biaggio Correale, a photographer for multiple community media outlets in Miami whose father is one of the most well-known sports photographers in Venezuela, it is clear that the context of departure and arrival is a key element for this group of media producers: “Yes, because of this, I’m telling you, I don’t know if it’s because of having lived, or for many, to be living through, let’s say, such an interesting process, politically, in

³⁴ The 34 journalists interviewed for this project represent an almost equal number of media outlets, across all formats, that either focus exclusively on Venezuela, the Venezuelan community, a combination of both, or at the very least produce daily or weekly segments that relate directly to events in Venezuela or the expatriate community.
Venezuela, that it creates in you this sensation, this need, you know, to involve yourself in the media” (personal communication, March 26, 2010).

Many of the participants in this research cited the lack of familiarity that Venezuelans have with the process of immigration is an important influence in the creation of the mediated content directed at this community. Carla Croes, whose family publishes *Miami en la mira* (Miami In View), a monthly publication that is distributed in Venezuela, but produced in Miami and directed at Venezuelans who are getting ready to leave the country, with useful advice for immigrating, stories of Venezuelan successes in Miami, and opportunities from investment in real estate and commerce, points out:

> They’ve always come here to buy...Finally, they come to spend and everything, but right now with the situation the way it is, a little difficult, now people are coming with a different perspective, they’re coming to invest. So for them, generally, the problem that Venezuelans have is that they come here and they don’t know what to do...(personal communication, April 13, 2010).

As a result, the focus of many of the journalists interviewed is on using their position as communicators to help their fellow immigrants adjust to life in a new country.

Finally, the relative “newness” of this population, combined with the levels of polarization that exist in Venezuela and the uncertainty that many new arrivals face - whether or not they will stay for the long term or hope to return when the situation improves, trying to maintain personal and business connections in Venezuela, levels of animosity and opposition towards the Chávez government - has also created an immigrant community that, in the eyes of many of the participants, remains very divided.
As Hérmendez points out, there are multiple reasons for the perceived feelings of isolation and lack of unity among members of the Venezuelan community:

I don’t feel it’s very united (the Venezuelan community). There’s a lot of *amiguismo*, no? A lot of *panadería*, a lot of ‘*brother*’, and so on, to go dancing, out partying, and everything. But in the end, united in the community, like the Central Americans or sometimes the Colombians, I don’t feel it that way...I think we can be very shallow, spoiled. And part of the problem is that the Venezuelan community here isn’t like other communities of immigrants that come with family, in groups. Here you see Venezuelans that are immigrating, but immigrating alone.

While the majority of Venezuelan immigrants in Miami are opposed to the Chávez government, as seen by frequent protests in Miami-Dade and Broward counties, and the poll results when the community goes to vote on major issues like the referendum for extending Chávez’s presidency held in 2009, the intricacies of levels of opposition are much more complex. A repeated theme that emerged from many of the interviews was either the perceived lack of politicization among fellow immigrants or, on the other side of the debate, the overly political emphasis of the community and the larger, long-term implications that this might have for the growth and assimilation of the community. Alexis Ortiz, an exiled politician, journalist, and political activist, believes connections to Venezuela can be maintained, but only up to a certain point:

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35 These are colloquialisms that are difficult to translate, but loosely they mean “friendship without depth”
36 Exact numbers are difficult to find, but reporting from the day of the referendum, as well as the extensive number of opposition groups throughout South Florida, point to a large degree of dissatisfaction with Chávez (Gentile, 2009; Helberg, 2009).
The situation is so dreadful that what I say is that it is about selling your dignity, because I understand if someone doesn’t agree with the government, and you have a business, you defend it, and I would do the same, no? But when the price is selling the liberty of the country where one was born, I don’t think that this has a price. I prefer that the business fails and then see what happens, no?

On the other side of this discussion is the risk posed to the community if they remain overly focused on the situation in Venezuela, as summed up by Eli Bravo:

...we could end up being concentrated on a very small circle, which even though it’s growing, this is a very interesting and wonderful community, there are more and more Venezuelans coming every year, the only way that we will really engage, adapt, or integrate...to this country is if we open up those walls and we really go outside so we are not talking to ourselves.

Beyond socio-cultural variables such as the lack of experience immigrating and an inability or unwillingness to face the new reality of living as immigrants, a culture of individualism, and a still underdeveloped support network within the community, there are also political and economic reasons for divisions in the community, a reflection of the situation in Venezuela as described in the passages from Ortiz and Bravo above. All of these variables influence the work of these journalists and the nature of the media they produce, a phenomenon that will be explored in Chapter 3 and modeled in Chapter 4. However, as an indicator of the realities of the situation, a particular anecdote bears repeating. While waiting for an interviewee one day, I had a chance encounter with a
member of the Venezuelan Business Club, a social organization in South Florida that works to develop business opportunities and connections in the United States and Venezuela. I mentioned to him the divisions within the community that I had observed so far in my research, and the impact this seemed to have on what was and was not said by members of the Venezuelan immigrant media community. He told me frankly: “You have to be careful what you say here in Miami. It’s true that things are difficult under Chávez, but there are also a lot of people making a lot of money. Nobody wants to put those connections at risk.”37 It was a brief but eye-opening conversation and confirmed for me many of the themes regarding divisions within the community and the impact on media producers that I had already seen emerging from my research.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to present the general context within which Venezuelan immigrant journalism is produced in an attempt to identify and delineate a number of the contextual factors - geographic, political, economic and socio-cultural - that impact the work of the participants. The external factors presented are not necessarily independent of one another nor do they occur separately or simultaneously, but they are all being conceived as have an impact on the work of Venezuelan immigrant journalists. These variables will be developed further and integrated into the results extracted from the interviews as I develop in greater depth the models of immigrant journalism that have emerged from this research. However, it was important to devote this space to understanding the structural influences that shape the day-to-day realities of these journalists. The next chapter will be devoted to understanding the individual

37 I am paraphrasing, as I did not have an audio recorder at the time.
ideologies and motivations that guide the work of these journalists and how they interact with the external factors outlined above.
Thus far, I have built a framework for understanding the sociology of immigrant journalism produced within a globalized, transnational context, and applied this model to understanding the more concrete reality in which the journalists in this study go about the process of creating media and the contextual variables that influence their production. In this chapter, I will delve more deeply into the interviews conducted during the course of this research in order to develop a more nuanced explanation of the motivations and ideologies of these journalists and how they approach seeking out a space for their particular form of immigrant journalism. The case will be made that in the process of leaving Venezuela, a country passing through a particularly turbulent and transformative period in its history with a media that is polarized, deeply embattled with the government, and increasingly censured, arriving in South Florida among a rapidly growing community of fellow immigrants, and launching new endeavors in the production of mediated communication, these journalists are in fact creating transnational spaces of communication. In doing so, they draw on the motivations and ideologies that drew them to the profession, as well as the experiences of immigrating and planting

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38 Among the changes in Venezuela that have taken place under Chávez are an increased role of the executive branch, limiting the influence of private business, the nationalization of countrywide industries, including petroleum, electricity, and communications, the expropriation of property, and changes to the constitution limiting the ownership of private property and allowing for the indefinite reelection of a president. The economy has also suffered under Chávez, with foreign investment drying up as a result of government take-overs, a devalued currency, inflation around 25% and a decline in GDP for the first quarter of 2010 of nearly 6% (CIA World Factbook, 2010; Cancel & Pons, 2010; Myers, 2008; Padgett, 2009).

39 Notions of journalism as a profession vary widely throughout the research on the topic, particularly across national frameworks. While journalism is an occupation lacking the levels of institutionalization that guide the professional formation of its practitioners compared to fields such as engineering, medicine, architecture, etc., empirical comparative studies have found guiding frameworks for defining journalism in representative democracies. Among these universal normative pressures of what journalism “should be” are ideas of autonomy; the ability to distinguish newsworthiness from party politics or the interests of other powerful societal actors; and ideas of providing a ‘public service’ (See Deuze, 2002, 2004; Hallin & Giles,
roots in a new society. At the same time, they remain cognizant of the fact that ties to Venezuela and the need for information and analysis of events taking place there are still important for members of their audience, to varying degrees, and that the level of focus on those events depends heavily on the context of departure, both for the producers and their audience, and their levels of connection to, and length of time residing in, their host country.

In the following pages, I will draw on the framework developed in the first chapter to analyze the interviews by first looking at issues of globalization, transnationalism, and culture and the role of media and communication within these larger processes; deterritorialization and the creation hybrid identities, and the cultural flows that lead to the creation of media- and ideoscapes; and the liminal existence and ‘third space’ (Bhabha, 1994) created through the confluence of migration and media. More concretely, I will examine the different forms of journalistic ideology that drives the work of these media producers and how these elements have been shaped and influenced by their experiences working in Venezuela, immigrating to the United States, and launching new careers in Miami’s media landscape.

These ideologies and motivations emerged through application of the grounded theory methodology, using what practitioners of this method refer to as a process of ‘constant comparison.’ The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory defines this process as “a method of analysis that generates successively more abstract concepts and theories through inductive processes of comparing data with data, data with category, category with category, and category to concept. Comparisons then constitute each stage of

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2005; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). The way in which the journalists in this research articulated ideas of professionalism, which draw on the universalizing characteristics found elsewhere in the literature, but with a distinctly Venezuelan tint, will be elaborated later on in this chapter.
analytic development” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 607). In this case, the interviews from the 34 journalists were read through repeatedly and coded using qualitative analytic software, looking for notions of professionalism and ideological motivations for pursuing the practice of journalism. I was particularly interested in what drew these participants to the occupation and how this helped shape their work as journalists. As related concepts began to emerge from the analysis, they were grouped together into different categories. The categories took shape in a fluid process, in which new concepts emerged, older versions were discarded, and others were merged together, as further delineations and interrelations became apparent through re-reading. Comparisons across the interviews were made in order to check for accuracy, which included verifying information from participants across interviews, as well as going to outside sources of information (media reports, newspaper articles, historic documents, etc.); validity, drawing on Whittemore, Chase and Mandle’s (2001) primary criteria for validity in qualitative research of credibility, authenticity, criticality and integrity; and finally, a close inspection of the categories was made to insure clarity of organization and conceptualization.

“Mis Dos Mundos”

Maria Eugenia Pardo, an advertising and marketing executive who moved to Miami with her family from Caracas in 2007, writes a popular blog called “Se Habla Venezolano.” In a blog post from September 2009 titled “Mis Dos Mundos,” she wrote about the dual reality and “in-between” existence of having recently immigrated:

40 "My two worlds"
41 “Venezuelan spoken,” roughly translated; an interesting take on nationality and culture, since clearly, Spanish is the official language of Venezuela. However, the title is a commentary on the individuality and cultural context that inflect the multiple versions of “Spanish” spoken among Miami’s Latino immigrant groups. In 2010, Pardo’s blog was awarded the Hermes Creative Award for best Blog.
One of the most difficult aspects for me to manage, in this, my life as an immigrant, is my relation with the events that happen in the two worlds – as you know – in which I am living. On one side, I have a new, prosperous and beautiful life, with its ups and down, routines, actors, situations and events in Miami. But on the other, there is an entire other world that I don’t belong to any more because I am not there, but that continues to affect me in nearly everything that I do, think, and feel…my life (or ex-life?) in Venezuela.

Pardo goes on to describe her daily use of media to remain connected with events in Venezuela, through web portals, news aggregators, and social media, and how she translates these into her blog, which is followed both by fellow immigrants and audiences in Venezuela. For Pardo, the blog started as a personal endeavor, a way to chronicle her new life in the United States and the experience of what it means to immigrate; however, as she observed events taking place in Venezuela from afar (such as the closing of RCTV, as discussed in the previous chapter) she felt the need to proclaim more forcefully her opposition to those events. She also felt a developing relationship with her readers: “I understood that there are people that were waiting to read what I wrote. I noticed this…I noticed the power that this (the blog) has to bring people together. So, the blog stopped being anonymous, and one day I said, I’m a journalist, here is my carnét, completely identified, with my journalist number, my identity card.”

Pardo’s experience in producing immigrant media, particularly through a new media outlet, touches on several of the themes that emerged from the participant

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42 In Venezuela, journalists are required to have a degree in journalism and to carry official press identification.
interviews and will be developed in greater detail in this chapter. Many of the interviews shared the difficulties inherent in immigrating and the feeling of being between two worlds that Pardo expressed, of remaining Venezuelan in spirit and yet caught up in a wave of globalizing processes that compress time and space, creating a transnational simultaneity that both disconnects them from the concrete realities of day-to-day life in their birth country and at the same time allows them to remain connected in so many other ways, through media, communication, and social networks. They also discussed the search for a communication outlet and a sympathetic audience and the frustration of observing the tumultuous events in Venezuela from afar (enhanced and exacerbated by the constant level of connectivity and immediate access to information that is provided by globalized systems of communication). And ultimately, as a foundational element, there were the ideological underpinnings (“I’m a journalist”) that drive much of the work of this group of journalists.

The story of immigrating told by Pardo is representative of the immigration stories shared by a large number of the interviewees in this research: uprooted from their lives and careers in Venezuela, dislodged by the abrupt and large-scale changes in society there, they arrive in Miami seeking out new opportunities for media production, drawing on the professional formation they had in Venezuela, but also affected by the current state of the media landscape there and the levels of polarization and government interference

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43 A direct outcome of modernity, as commented on by multiple scholars of media, communication, and globalization (see Giddens, 1990; Morley & Robins, 1995; Robertson, 1992).
44 Bhabha (1994) describes this simultaneity as the “liminality of migrant experience” and writes that it is “no less transitional as translational; there is no resolution to it as the two conditions are ambivalently enjoined in the survival of migrant life” (p. 225). This idea that immigrating is both process of change and interpretation, and the complex negotiations in identity that this brings about, is an experience echoed throughout the interviews in this research.
45 Deuze (2004), in writing about the ideology of journalism, has described this as “understanding how journalists give meaning to their news work” (p. 277). It is an important distinction and is an influential factor in much of the work of the group of journalists in question.
that currently exists, as described in the previous chapter. At the same time, they were all confronted by the realities of producing media within the communication landscape in Miami, as well as the differentiation that they felt when comparing their particular visualization of what it means to pursue journalism as an occupation and what they observed in the work of fellow media producers in South Florida. These experiences lend themselves to a particular conceptualization of journalistic practices, one that is both professionally and ideologically driven.

Alejandro Marcano, a founding member of Globovisión, Venezuela’s first 24-hour news network and now the sole remaining opposition broadcast media outlet in the country, arrived in South Florida in 2009. He had remained with Globovisión for as long as he could. However, there arrived a moment in which he felt that he could no longer tolerate the levels of polarization and fracture that had penetrated into his own organization: “…within the channel there was a tense environment where the decomposition that was being experienced without…was being seen within the channel” (personal communication, March 28, 2010). Now, he works as the news director and anchor for a Spanish-language channel in West Palm Beach; like Pardo, he finds himself stuck somewhere between two distinct realities:

…I don’t know how to explain it because it is as if I am still in two waters. I still have a ‘chip’ from Globovisión, I don’t know, of the sharp journalist. But also, and this is the empty part, maybe, I enjoy more putting the image of a train that nearly hit a woman because I think that this is what people want to see. They are two realities totally different. Here what I’m experiencing is a different form of professionalism,
because not everyone here is professional, they don’t study. So really, there is no comparison.

Two elements emerge from this quote from Marcano, along with the discussion of liminality⁴⁶ and being caught between two worlds, that bear further elaboration: the complete deterioration of the media environment in Venezuela in the eyes of these producers, a phenomenon echoed by every interviewee, and how the experience of living through this process has influenced their professional and ideological conceptualization of the profession; and comparisons between the media and levels of professionalism found in Miami and the professional formation of journalists in Venezuela.⁴⁷

Julio Cesar Camacho, with more than 40 years as a journalist both in Venezuela and abroad, sees the situation for the media today in Venezuela as having been completely transformed under Chávez:

In Venezuela, at this point, the most serious problem is that you can’t report the way you would like. Because there are…restrictions…this type of government, it doesn’t tolerate freedom of expression the way we understand it. They don’t accept criticism, they don’t accept debate. And that is what journalism is. It’s debate, it’s critique, it’s opinion. And so, without this, the journalist feels restricted.

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⁴⁶ Liminality, as a social rite of passage originally laid out by Turner (1969), has been applied to numerous media studies, seen as “an ideal vehicle for defining both media production and media consumption, best fit to represent the symbolic interruption in daily life and the opportunity for detachment, reflection, and challenging social structures…” (Coman, 2008, p. 95). However, only a few studies have looked specifically at media production (see Naficy, 1993) and even fewer at immigrant journalism in particular.

⁴⁷ There is another important contextual variable affecting the professional efforts of all immigrants, and that is the ability to work legally through the procurement of a visa; this would clearly be an important factor in how immigrant journalists pursue their work, but in the case of this particular cohort, with just a few exceptions, issues of obtaining a work visa did not play a significant role in their professional efforts.
The idea that democratic processes have been undermined by government censorship was cited repeatedly by the interviewees, as in this comment from Alexis Ortiz, exiled politician and journalist: “I see the mass media as being…gagged, brought to their knees.” Those media that have not been completely silenced were viewed as increasingly polarized: “Even if they (the media) are more open, they are extremely critical, because it is a very politicized, polarized environment, and this is a reflection of the society, which is very divided” (Casto Ocando, personal communication).

As was outlined in the previous chapter, the deterioration of the media landscape and freedom of expression in Venezuela is not a phenomenon singular only to this group of journalists; it is a situation that has been reported on and criticized by numerous international organizations that monitor press freedoms and human rights around the globe. In the report on Venezuela from Human Rights Watch cited previously, “A Decade Under Chávez” (2008), the polarization of the media in Venezuela is given ample attention, with an entire section of the report dedicated to the issue:

The print and broadcast media have been the site of intense political struggle throughout the Chávez presidency. Both the government and its critics have used the media at their disposal as tools to attack each other and to mobilize their own supporters. Media coverage has tended to be extremely partisan on both sides (p. 68).

The kind of government censorship and intolerance of press freedoms noted by Camacho has been reported on by multiple press freedom monitoring groups. This includes Reporters Without Borders, the Committee for the Protection of Journalists, and the Interamerican Press Association, who write that in Venezuela, “Freedom of the press and
of expression continue in full deterioration” and that the “widespread demands of the people arising from the socio-political reality is denounced and is made known thanks to the independent journalists and news media, whose elimination the government has made a vital priority” (“Information by country: Venezuela,” 2010). The experience of working under these conditions plays a key role in the motivations driving the journalistic work of the participants in this study, as will be seen below in a discussion of the different ideological elements that emerged from an analysis of the interviews.

The second important factor influencing the interviewees’ conceptualization of their work as Venezuelan journalists was their regard for the professional training and formation that they received in Venezuela. As Julie Ferrer, a television reporter who has lived in the United States since the early 1990s and worked for some of the largest Spanish-language broadcasters, including CNN Español and Univisión, relates: “They’re very prepared. They’re really very well prepared. Venevisión, Radio Caracas, are huge. The level of professionalism there is great because there, they really live the news, from morning to night” (personal communication, February 26, 2010). This level of preparation was often presented in contrast to the less developed levels of professionalism that they perceived among fellow journalists in Miami: “We’re not accustomed to certain things you see here in Miami…(for example) there are television programs that are competitors, and so, when one program finds out that the other has a certain guest, they will try to steal the interview, and in Venezuela, that kind of thing doesn’t happen” (Patricia Poleo).
This process of comparing the professionalism of other journalists and trying to distinguish ‘real’ journalism from practices considered to be sub-par has been noted extensively in literature devoted to the ideological underpinnings of the profession:

In decades of journalism studies, scholars refer to the journalists’ professionalization process as a distinctly ideological development, as the emerging ideology served to continuously refine and reproduce a consensus about who was a ‘real’ journalist, and what (parts of) news media at any time would be considered examples of ‘real’ journalism (Deuze, 2005, p. 444).

Thus, scholars of journalism see a sense of professionalism as a key element in the ideological motivations guiding the work of journalists (Golding & Elliot, 1979; Schlesinger, 1978; Soloski, 1990). Through multiple references regarding levels of professional preparation and responsibility uttered by the interviewees, this group revealed itself to be following similar guidelines; however, at the same time, their constant references to a particularly Venezuelan form of journalism also distinguishes this model through its origins built on national identity. Here again, as discussed in the opening of the chapter, we see that notions of professionalism, while taking on certain universalizing qualities, especially among liberal democracies, still maintain identifying national characteristics. This was also confirmed in the interviews when subjects would make references to “Colombian” or “Peruvian” forms of journalism.

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48 As Luis Alcala, publisher of Ciudad Doral Newspaper explained, “One has to have a lot of values and professional ethics, because mediated communication is a great responsibility” (personal communication, January 29, 2010).
An analysis of the interviews showed that this perception of bringing a wide range of journalistic skills to the media environment in Miami is also tied to national identity and the process of immigrating. Venezuelan journalists in Miami, because of their close personal connections to the situation at home and the tendency to focus on events there in the course of their work, draw on their experiences both as Venezuelans and as immigrants to inform their work, as related by Eli Bravo of Union Radio:

   The first one is the familiarity you have with the issues. So it’s easier for you to talk about that once you are here because you understand it and you have an emotional relationship with that, which is part of the process of migrating, where you have to manage your homesickness and somehow find a new identity once you are rooted here.

The emphasis on both local and global contexts, of overcoming the inherent difficulties in immigrating and drawing on these experiences as a way of moving forward and finding a “new identity” relates to the theorization of hybrid identities that are created through the confluence of migration and media, as discussed in Chapter One. The work of these journalists, given their constant connection with events in Venezuela combined with the need to understand the tastes and preferences of local audiences, can be viewed within the context of what Appadurai (1996) calls “puzzling new forms of linkage between diasporic nationalisms, delocalized political communications, and revitalized commitments at both ends of the diasporic process” that in turn create a “more complicated, disjunct, hybrid sense of local subjectivity” (pp. 196-197). This idea of engaging at “both ends of the diasporic process” is encapsulated by Yolanda Medina, a journalist who has worked with Oswaldo Muñoz at El Venezolano for 15 years: “We

49 A phrase that was repeatedly uttered in the interviews was “todero,” essentially a “jack of all trades.”
here are like a sounding board for what happens in Venezuela…We’re staying one step ahead, when something happens there we try to help from here…” (personal communication, March 10, 2010).

The concept illustrated by Medina, of providing a “sounding board” for events in Venezuela, touches on the inherently transnational existence of the participants in this study. As immigrants and journalists, they are in constant contact with Venezuela, monitoring events from abroad, analyzing and contextualizing them for their fellow immigrants, and at times, through the Internet and electronic media, providing an important source of alternative information for audiences back home. Julie Ferrer describes the kind of impact this level of connectivity has on the Venezuela immigrant community:

They keep the community together. They do. They keep it informed.

And they keep it informed in such a way that you really feel that you’re in Venezuela. When you hear the interviews of Ravell and everything, you really feel you’re still there in Venezuela and you feel what they’re going through. You can’t – I mean, you can’t understand it 100%, but you’re there in a way, you know? You don’t feel the day-by-day frustrations

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50 This kind of activity fits nicely with the definition for transnationalism provided by Basch et al. (1994): “the process by which transmigrants, through their daily activities, forge and sustain multi-stranded social, economic, and political relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields that cross national borders” (p. 6).

51 Alberto Federico Ravell, former station director and minority shareholder of Globovisión. Ravell resigned in February 2010, amidst threats from the Chávez government to take the station off the air for allegedly inciting violence to overthrow the government (Orozco, 2010).
because we live here, very comfortably. We still have light, 24 hours, electricity, you know what I mean?\textsuperscript{52}

Leo Romero, an exiled journalist who worked for Globovisión in Venezuela, sees the journalism practiced by Venezuelans outside of the country as being summarily important in keeping tabs on the actions of the government:

Globalization is incredible. Incredible. Nothing is hidden. And this has meant that the ugly things he (Chávez) has done are seen. Because he might get away with a lot, but in the eyes of the world, there are things that can’t be hidden. That’s why it’s so important to have journalists outside of the country…the images always talk (personal communication, March 25, 2010).

At the same time that these levels of transnational connectivity were being emphasized, the participants also expressed concerns about the impact this level of connectivity might have on the long-term prospects for the assimilation of their community into their host society. There was a fear that this focus on Venezuela would inhibit the process of settling in their new country. As Nataly Salaz, a television reporter in Venezuela who has worked for community media outlets since arriving in Miami six year ago, points out: “So then, you are not living here or there. If you stay worried about things happening there, you’re never going to adapt here and right now you have to get situated, you have to…you are here in this country and you have to love it and respect it, right?” (personal communication, April 6, 2010). Assimilating in a new country is a step by step journey, one that is not made any easier by a constant preoccupation with what

\textsuperscript{52} Ferrer is making reference to the rolling blackouts that plagued Venezuela in early 2010 when a drought lowered water levels in the hydro-electric dams that supply a majority of the country’s electricity ("Chávez lifts electricity rationing in Venezuela," 2010).
was left behind, as described by Biaggio Correale: “I think the process is gradual, slow, progressive, what we call ‘the shedding’ - that is, to separate ourselves from everything, from our reality and from what worries us in Venezuela. This is something that’s hard to accomplish overnight.”

The role of immigrant media within this context was seen by the interviewees as helping their community to navigate this complex terrain of adapting identities and cultures to new realities, of remaining connected to events in Venezuela while at the same time not ignoring the realities of day-to-day living. Vilma Petrash, an exiled journalist who works in Spanish-language television in Miami, summarizes her work this way: “My role is to adapt my people to the situation, that you all live in the United States, we’re going to be Venezuelan-Americans… and we have to keep fighting for Venezuela” (personal communication, February 17, 2010).

The conceptualization presented by this group of journalists of the role of media within the Venezuelan community, of the delicate balancing act between remaining connected to home yet at the same time struggling towards a new identity, of finding information relevant to the realities that confront this growing population in their new country while also maintaining an exiled form of resistance to the Chávez government, is placed in a concrete theoretical context by Stuart Hall (1993):

The new diasporas which are forming across the world . . . are obliged to inhabit at least two identities, to speak at least two cultural languages, to negotiate and “translate” between them. In this way, though they are struggling in one sense at the margins of modernity, they are at the leading edge of what is destined to become the truly representative “late-modern”
experience…These “hybrids” retain strong links to and identifications with the traditions and places of their “origin.” But they are without the illusion of any actual “return” to the past. Either they will never, in any literal sense, return or the places to which they return will have been transformed out of all recognition by the remorseless processes of modern transformation. In that sense, there is no going “home” again (p. 362; cited in Sinclair & Cunningham, 2000, p. 23).

This is the complex immigrant community context that helps to inform the work of these journalists. However, there are also the internal motivations and ideologies that drive their production of media. It is this facet of their work that will be explored next, before concluding with an exploration of the process of seeking out a place for their particular form of mediated communication upon arriving in the United States and how this leads to the production of transnational media spaces.

“It’s a way of life”

Before moving on to the process of seeking out an audience in Miami, a communicational space among fellow immigrants, it is important first to break down even further the different forms that the journalistic ideology of these media producers takes on, as there were multiple ideological facets that emerged from an analysis of the interviews. Journalism has long been recognized as containing ideological elements that set it apart from other professions. As Deuze (2004) writes, “journalism history can be typified by the consolidation of a consensual occupational ideology among journalists in different parts of the world” (p. 277). This focus on ideology, combined with the contextual reality for the media that exists in Venezuela and the impact that this

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53 Patricia Poleo, personal communication, March 16, 2010
transformation has had on these journalists, will go some way towards explaining how
the spaces that these producers create with their work are distinctly transnational in
scope.

Five sub-levels of journalistic ideology driving the work of these journalists
emerged from the interviews. Drawing on responses from the participants, below I
conceptualize these different ideological facets that help to make up the journalistic
visions of the participants.

_A calling._ For many of the interviewees, a passion for communication emerged at
an early age; they describe the desire to engage in mediated communication as an affinity
that was discovered very early on in their careers, sometimes as early as childhood. As
Julio Cesar Camacho relates, “From the time I was a child, I felt that journalism was my
future, because I saw in journalism a way of serving the community. To serve society…I
like to inform, I like to keep up keep up with what is happening in the world and at the
same time, communicate it, express it.” Leo Romero felt a similar calling at a young age:
“Since I was little, I was also conscious of what I wanted to do…Some people want to be
a fireman, a policeman…No, I already knew that I wanted to do television …In college,
in high school, everything, everything. I always, always knew.”

Growing up in families with a history of journalism also emerged as an important
influence for several of the participants, as was the case with Biagio Correale, whose
father is one of the most well-known photojournalists in Venezuela: “So, in one way or
another I was always bombarded with photos, public notices, lots of newspapers and
magazines in the house. It was something that was practically obligatory.”
**Personal motivations.** Similar to the discussion of experiencing a ‘calling’ to be a journalist, the interviewees discussed multiple personal motivations that propelled them into the profession. For many, there is an enthusiasm for this work that seems to drive them forward, compelling them to push harder and make personal sacrifices in achieving their goals. For Militza González, Biaggio Correale’s wife and co-founder of a Hispanic-oriented magazine titled Veintiseven, this drive to produce media has involved a great deal of sacrifice, since the magazine was launched with no outside investment and a complete reliance on volunteers:

...this is something I like so much that I would say it’s almost a passion. I love writing, I love all the editorial side of the house, and I think that when you see the final result, you say, Ok. It was worth it. All the effort of – I think you have to feel passion for what you do. I do like my job, but it was like a personal challenge for me, as well (personal communication, April 6, 2010).

However, for many of the interviewees, the sacrifices made through their dedication to their careers went much further. Of the 34 journalists interviewed for this research, 13 were forced to leave Venezuela as a result of their reporting. Ricardo Guanipa began receiving death threats after being contracted as a correspondent for Radio Marti54 in Caracas and was forced to flee the country. He now anchors a weekly community television talk show in Miami dedicated to covering events in Venezuela.

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54 Since 1985, Radio Martí, a U.S. government sponsored broadcast outlet, has been broadcasting “news and programming whose goal is promoting a open and plural society” ([www.martinoticias.com](http://www.martinoticias.com)) towards Cuba; in recent years, especially since the election of Chávez, they have begun to increase the programming aimed towards South America. Voice of America and Radio Martí recently launched a program title “A Fondo” (“In Depth”), a “new weeknight, Spanish-language radio program targeted to audiences in Latin America and the Caribbean, providing vital news and information to a region where media freedom is under attack” (“VOA and Radio Marti Expand Radio Broadcasts to Latin America,” February 3, 2010).
through his particularly slanted, ideologically tinged view of Chávez and his government, titled “Venezuela en la Mira”:\footnote{“Venezuela in Sight”} “Maybe I’m wrong, I don’t know, because all of my family is in Venezuela, but I’m in love with my profession, man. I live from Monday to Monday for my journalism” (personal communication, February 11, 2010). As with many of the exiled journalists, Guanipa’s work is particularly vehement in its criticism of Chávez, leaving behind most traditional notions of fairness, balance, or objectivity, driven by the firm belief that they are on the ‘right’ side of history.

**Providing an important service.** This ideological component draws on the belief expressed by the participants that being a journalist is much more than just a career. They view it both as an essential component of democracy (when discussing their work in Venezuela), and a vital source of information for their community of fellow immigrants (when discussing their work as immigrant journalists); regardless of the scope, it was clear from their responses that these journalists derive meaning for their work by seeing it as important within a larger societal context. Lourdes Ubieta sees her work as an avenue for resisting Chávez from abroad: “It hurts me as a Venezuelan, because I love my country, and I know what we are losing and where we are going, but there’s nothing I can do. But being on the radio and saying what is happening.” For Carlos Herrádez, publisher and editor *Doral News*, a community newspaper, the orientation towards society is framed within a different context: “So then, the people recognize you, they recognize you, not for your commercial efforts, but for your efforts as a human, as a professional, and they recognize you on the street. And this is beautiful, it’s not a question of ego, it’s something that you’re doing for your community.”
Objectivity versus subjectivity. There was a dialectical tension that emerged in the interviews between the desire to remain objective and balanced as a way of maintaining credibility, while at the same time, given the state of the media in Venezuela, the desire to be critical and report on issues from an oppositional standpoint. Carla Croes, who comes from a family of journalists and whose father publishes an important magazine in Venezuela, described the model of journalism that was idealized in her family: “…it is very important that we have to be objective. Because if you are an independent journalist, you can’t be a fan of one side or the other. If not, where will your credibility lie?” Julie Ferrer echoes this need for balanced reporting and for journalists to remain above the fray:

Our job is not really to convince people about anything, but to at least get all the information, gather all of the information, so that we can show the sides and so that people can see a more global perspective of what’s going on. People are smart and they will know…you can’t let that passion, that love you have for Venezuela turn in to a hate so, so deep against Chávez that it will jeopardize the way you express yourself, the way you release the news.

Thus, for a segment of journalists in this research, notions of objectivity played a key role in their conceptualization of the job of a journalist. However, as is also apparent in the quote from Ferrer, she begins from the starting point that in her opposition to the Chávez government there lies truth, a claim that supporters of the Venezuelan government would certainly contest. This outcome can be seen as a reflection of the general ideological and political leanings of this group of participants and their nearly
unanimous rejection of Chávez and his policies. However, it also indicative of the underlying tension of two different models of journalism: that of an objective, balanced press that has been the liberal democratic, North American model for at least the last century; and of a more politicized, critical-analytical form of journalism that has been practiced historically in Latin America (see Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002, for a comparison of the political clientelism that exists in the media systems found in Southern Europe and Latin America).

On the other side of this dichotomy are the views of Roger Vivas, an exiled former politician and journalist with an AM talk show in Miami focused on Venezuelan topics. “When they tell me, ‘you’re more of a political commentator than a journalist,’ I say that I’m a journalist with clear positions,” he says. “When you’re losing your country, you can’t be objective” (personal communication, April 6, 2010). Alexis Ortiz feels similarly: “I focus on the freedom of journalism, of communication, and want to drop this cliché of objectivity.” This kind of approach to journalism lends itself to a particular form of oppositional journalism that will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter. However, it is worth noting that these journalists see themselves as providing outside information that is accurate and verifiable, in contrast what they see as the propaganda put forth by the Chávez government. Thus, for these journalists, any attempt to remain ‘objective’ in the Western, liberal democratic notion of journalistic norms, is actually a failure to report what they see as the ‘truth.’ At the same time, as has been discussed with other ‘exiled’ journalists (those who are literally exiled and have had to seek political asylum from the United States government and those who are living in self-imposed exile due to the dramatic changes at home), it is important to place media
producers such as Vivas and Ortiz, and their conflicts with the Chávez government, in the proper context of media conflict and political polarization that presently exists in Venezuela. These journalists represent a direct outcome of the ideological rift that has opened up in Venezuela as a result of Chávez’s reforms, actions that have uprooted deep seated divisions of power and influence, and should therefore be viewed through the heavily politicized lens through which these journalists see their work. This point is also being made as a way of distancing myself as a researcher from my subjects; while I expressed sympathy for their personal hardships and present situations during the course of interviews, I made a concerted effort to remain neutral not to align myself ideologically with them or their causes.

*Speaking “truth” to power.* Following closely on the previous construct, many of the journalists interviewed saw it as their professional and moral duty to speak out against the Chávez government. Luis Ortiz hosts a news and analysis program on an Internet radio station called RadioNEXX. He sees his work as closely tied to opposing Chávez:

> What Hugo Chávez has is a democracy, a dictatorship disguised as a democracy…because one always has to defend the truth. That is what I’m trying to do. Use the truth as a weapon… I wish I could do something else, but right now the political situation compels me to do this (February 18, 2010).

For Rafael Poleo, whose family has paid a high price for their work as journalists in Venezuela, and outspoken criticism of the government, the drive to speak out against

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57 Poleo is the father of Patricia Poleo and a highly respected journalist and founder of numerous newspapers and magazines in Venezuela. He was also forced to flee the country in August 2009, after a warrant was issued for his arrest following comments he made about the Chávez during an interview on Globovisión (personal communication, May 10, 2010).
official abuse and denounce what they viewed as injustices was simply a part of the profession: “…we’re used to it, that’s why we chose this job. I think it’s a natural outcome of practicing journalism in Latin America.”

The above analysis of the different levels of ideology that emerge in the interviews is a key element to understanding in a more detailed fashion the mental models that guide the work of this group of journalists; it also serves to set the stage for the concluding section of this chapter, which will discuss the search for immigrant audiences that guides the production of transnational media spaces, a process shaped by experiences in Venezuela, the act of immigrating, and the motivating ideologies of the participants.

**The search for immigrant audiences and production of transnational media spaces**

The concept of transnational media spaces that span borders and create new areas of symbolic and cultural meaning is not new. Since the arrival of globalization studies in the 1980s, media and communication have been seen as instrumental in the increasing compression of time and space that is pointed to repeatedly as a key outcome of globalization processes.\(^{58}\) The implications for traditional notions of nationality – a phenomenon theorized as being shaped and formed through communication and culture (Anderson, 1983) – brought about by instantaneous connectivity facilitated by globalized communication networks has also been written about extensively:

Nations live not only in historical time but also in *media time* (emphasis added)…Nations are also symbolic space – spaces of meanings, values, and identities. Geographic and symbolic space come together in the

\(^{58}\) See Castells, 2000; Giddens, 1990; Morley & Robins, 1995; Robertson, 1992; Scholte, 2000; Smith & Guarnizo, 1998; Tomlinson, 1999
immigration office on the national frontier. But symbolic space, while bounded, is inherently vaguer than geographical space because it refers to the points at which people pass out from under the sacred canopy of the nation: the system of meanings, values and identities which legitimate membership” (Carey, 1998, pp. 44-45)

Further, it is apparent that these new spaces created by transnational communication are difficult to define and continuously shifting, particularly among diasporic communities: “Their borders are unstable. Their territories are uncertain. They are constantly restructured in response to the presence of the media” (Dayan, 1998, p. 111). As Curran and Morley (2006) point out, “The new media space of transnational cultures is now a far more complex matter, with all kinds of new media networks layered across the old space of the national” (p. 72). This kind of layering serves as an apt metaphor for the media environment among Spanish-language audiences in Miami and South Florida.

These changes in the global cultural landscape, produced through the spread and influence of media and communication technologies and the increasing mobility of populations, and the resulting “deterritorialization of culture” (Howley, 2005, p. 30), has forced researchers to rethink traditional notions of media spaces, which were historically viewed as being nationally bounded. Global cities in particular are increasingly viewed as being a key site of transnational linkages (Smith & Eade, 2008), as illustrated by Chalaby (2005):

Since the remapping of media spaces and markets at regional and global levels, the national is only one part of an intricate set of relationships involving many dimensions. The cosmopolitan perspective can help us
think beyond a territorial and national mindset and analyze the emerging media cultures and experiences created by the transnational media (Chalaby, 2005, p. 11).

However, as has been pointed out repeatedly above, little attention has been paid by researchers of globalization to the actual production of these new media spaces that are being formed through transnational ties. Thus far in this chapter, I have discussed the deterritorialization, liminal existence, and hybrid identities experienced by the group of Venezuelan journalists in question, as well as the ideologies, formed in part by these experiences, that motivate them in their work. The concluding section of this chapter will attempt to illuminate this process of producing transnational media spaces by drawing on the experiences of these journalists as they arrive in a global city and seek out audiences for their work among fellow immigrants.

The search for a space for mediated communication among audiences in Miami and South Florida took various forms for these journalists: among fellow media producers, among Venezuelans and other immigrant communities, among those who are ideologically opposed to Chávez, and among different segments of the Hispanic market. However, in spite of this diversity, the metaphor of finding a “space” was used repeatedly by the interviewees as they were asked to describe how they began their work as journalists after immigrating. It also speaks to the fact that no matter the size or multi-faceted nature of the market in which media producers seek out a space, in the end audiences are a finite resource, particularly from an economic standpoint, and each producer is angling to find his or her particular niche in order to find the readers, listeners, or viewers that will be attractive to advertisers.
The experience of Union Radio’s Eli Bravo, who already had an established career in Venezuela before launching his career in Miami, touches on multiple facets of this process – connections with Venezuela, trying to gain a foothold in the local market and drawing on the opportunities for media production presented by the mediascape in Miami, as well as being driven by a desire to continue the journalistic work to which he had devoted his life:

I used to have a radio show that I broadcast from here, from Miami, to Venezuela…And all this time I was here, making my show for Venezuela, I never had, I would say, a foot here in this market. And I was trying to get, like some kind of program, but I would say I never found my space until Enrique Cusco, who’s the owner (of Union Radio), said, “Well, you know, you’ve been asking me a lot about why don’t we start a radio, let’s do that? There’s a chance we can rent some air time and do you want to start?” And I said, “Absolutely.” So that’s how I started. So I would say my driving force was first, because I wanted to get started in this market; second because it is what I’ve been doing all of my life, doing radio; and I always had a very good relationship with Union Radio.

Bravo’s afternoon talk show is now among the top-rated among Spanish-language talk-radio shows in Miami, and despite the economic recession and tumultuous state of the media industry at the time of his interview, Union Radio was in midst of an expansion with an audience that was steadily growing – a tribute to the fact that they had found a

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59 Cusco is the founder of Ole Communications Group, based in Coral Gables, FL; along with owning and operating the Miami outlet of Union Radio, his company is illustrative of the diversity of Latin American media produced in Miami, creating and distributing programming for History Channel Latin America, TLC Latin America, and HBO Latin America, among others.
successful niche among Spanish-speaking radio audiences in Miami. According to Bravo, this success is an outcome of the kind of programming they produce:

The way we see it, and personally I see it, is that we are filling a void between the American or English news outlet and the 100% opinion and hard line that the Cubans have made, which has been very successful and they were very successful you know, in laying the foundations for the Hispanic talk radio. But I think we are there in between, because we try to provide information not just opinion and we try to open up our editorial line to topics beyond politics.

However, at the same time, the programming on Union Radio, which is staffed almost entirely by Venezuelans, continues to have a focus on Venezuela and the Venezuelan community in South Florida, an element of the station’s programming that was confirmed not just by Bravo, but also by the two other journalists at Union Radio interviewed for this project, Lourdes Ubieta and Julio Cesar Camacho.

Reflecting on their experience as immigrants, Biaggio Correale and Militza Rodríguez, the couple who recently launched a monthly magazine, Veintiseven, saw a clear need for the type of media they hoped to produce. As Rodríguez relates, …we will always have immigrants coming over, that will never stop and when you’re a newcomer you’re kind of lost and there’s a lot of advice and information that you need and you’re not sure where to look for it, or where to find, and that’s why we try to provide information that is useful and that can be helpful for new immigrants… that’s what we try to do and that what we saw, from my perspective, as the great lack in the market.
Rodríguez, Correale, and their collaborators conducted extensive market research. In the end they hope that their magazine will, as Correale sees it, “have its space, just like the rest of the magazines and publication in the American market.” However, similar to Union Radio, and because of their connections to the community, Veintiseven has drawn heavily on the resources of Venezuelan media professionals living in Miami. This is a fact that Rodríguez admits affects the style and content of their publication, despite their goal of reaching a wider, Hispanic audience:

…if I was in Venezuela and I see this magazine, I say ok, this is a national magazine, I mean, this is done in my country…Why? Because the way the visuals are presented, they can be very similar to a high quality Venezuelan magazine and if I read the content… if I am X reader, whoever, ‘Ok, I totally understand what you say here,’ you could say that this was written by a Venezuelan.

The experience of Rodríguez and Correale illustrates the unique transnational quality of the immigrant journalism that emerged from this research: regardless of the conceptualization of an ideal audience and the desire to present information that will have a broad appeal, as Venezuelans these producers bring a particular background, media experience, and set of skills to their work that, to varying degrees depending on the intended audience, will ultimately influence the form and content of the final product.

For other interviewees, the process of finding an audience among fellow immigrants was a struggle. Alexis Ortiz, exiled from Venezuela for political reasons, launched a news magazine immediately upon his arrival in the United States, using up the little savings he had brought with him to publish Revista Hispánica, which he hoped
would become a source of critical analysis of news on Latin America, with a particular focus on Venezuela and Chávez. However, he was unable to sustain the enterprise, which failed to find commercial support from advertisers, a fact that he attributed to the incompatibility of his particular vision of journalism with local markets and tastes:

“When someone with my background, with my world view, my view of life, which is different, then it becomes difficult to find work. It becomes difficult to fit within the culture of journalism here, you know?” This inability of the more politicized, exiled journalists to find a space within the political-economy of South Florida audiences was a recurrent theme throughout the interviews, and will be more fully developed in the following chapter.

However, other journalists opposed to Chávez have been able to find a space for their particular form of ideologically driven media. Patricia Poleo, because she was well-known in Venezuelan and her departure from Venezuela received ample attention in the media, hit the ground running: “I was recognized when I got here…and right away, the media started to interview me, because mine was a case that had received a lot of attention, as well as the way in which I arrived.” Now, after five years working in Spanish-language media in Miami, and continuing to report on the situation in Venezuela, for audiences in both the United States and at home, Poleo sees the space for a media outlet with a distinctly Venezuelan focus: “I believe there here there is the need for a newspaper, one that wouldn’t have to be completely Venezuelan, but that would at least have Venezuela as a central theme…I think this is a space that needs to be filled.”

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60 Poleo fled Venezuela in a small boat in the middle of the night, arriving in Curacao after several days of rough weather at sea.
Ricardo Guanipa, exiled after his work with Radio Martí, saw a similar opening within the Miami mediascape, in his case for a television show with a focus on Venezuela. According to Guanipa, he is the only Venezuelan outside of Venezuela with a television program with this particular emphasis, and so he’s “taking advantage of this opportunity to denounce the crimes that are taking place in my country.” Because of what he perceives as the constant acts of illegality perpetrated by the Chávez government, there is always something to talk about. “Monday through Friday,” he says, “the great majority of my editorials have something to do with Venezuela.”

Beyond a cultural division, which formed in part as a result of the tastes and demands of the local market (there were complaints from several journalists about the sensationalized nature of media content in Miami), the clash of journalistic visions pointed to above by Ortiz cannot be the only explanatory factor for the difficulties faced by some of the more politically oriented journalists. The success of Patricia Poleo shows that the transfer of celebrity journalist status from Venezuela to the United States can be a determining factor in whether immigrant journalistic efforts succeed or fail. Economic resources are also essential; some of the more politicized journalists were able to find an outlet for their views while at the same time maintaining work that fit more within the mainstream in order to pay the bills.

Conclusion

The influences impacting immigrant journalism outlined above all touch on the forms of transnational media spaces discussed at the opening of this section, places where the “diasporic site becomes the cultural border between the country of origin and the country of residence” (Karim, 2003, p. 5). At the same time, it is clear that the outcomes
of this production are not uniform in nature or content. As Jurgens (2001) has noted in his writing on Turkish immigrants in Germany, “…while transnational social spaces unsettle national identities…they do not de-territorialize identity completely…transnational settings can generate numerous – though probably not historically novel – ways to reimage the relationship between identity and territory” (p. 100). What, then, are the characteristics that bind the production of these transnational media spaces together?

First, the producers draw upon their experiences as Venezuelans and immigrants to create a “symbolic space” (Carey, 1998, p. 44) that addresses the transitional, transnational nature of their audience and their need for a cultural identity that is appropriate to their new reality as immigrants living with “a foot in both worlds” (Basch, et al, 1994, p. 2). Second, there is the search for a space among immigrant audiences and in the process of seeking out that niche, finding a model of journalism that has a place of reception among its intended audience. Finally, there is the question hanging over the heads of all of these producers, who often make great sacrifices in their quest for a suitable model of mediated communication, as to whether or not the model that is eventually adopted will be economically, culturally, and politically sustainable.

In the preceding pages, I have tried to shed light on the role that the process of immigrating and the internal motivating ideologies of these journalists play in the production of transnational media spaces by immigrant journalists. However, the question still remains as to the permanence or transitional nature of the media being produced by these immigrants, which in turn speaks to larger questions about the process of acculturation among immigrant groups and the diverse, complex, and often non-linear
ways in which these communities transition into new societies (Alba & Nee, 1997; Rumbaut, 1997). And, at the heart of this research, the question as to what role mediated communication plays in this process. As a partial answer, through the course of this research, there have emerged three distinct models of immigrant media as the concrete outcomes of the work of these journalists – oppositional, market-driven/hybrid, and immigrant/community. Each model corresponds to some degree with the media producers’ conceptions of adapting to life in a new country and how the communication they produce is received by their intended audiences. These models will be formulated and delineated in the final chapter, followed by a discussion of the results and conclusion.
CHAPTER 4. THREE MODELS OF IMMIGRANT JOURNALISM

In the preceding two chapters, a case has been made for understanding the work of immigrant journalists by first viewing their particular form of journalism through the lens of larger, meta-theoretical issues of globalization, transnationalism, and the hybrid, liminal identities that emerge from the intersecting cultural flows of migration and media; and secondly, by drawing on the theoretical framework offered by the sociology of journalism, conceptualizing more concretely the motivations, ideologies, and mental models that drive this group in their work as journalists and the resulting transnational media spaces that are created as a result.

As a final level of analysis, I will make the argument here for three models of immigrant journalism that emerged from a closer examination of the interviews: Oppositional, Market-Driven/Hybrid, and Immigrant/Community. As in the previous chapter in which the different ideological models of journalistic motivations were drawn out and conceptualized, an open and axial qualitative coding approach was used to analyze the interviews in order to create these models. This process took on a fluid nature throughout the analysis, as the constant comparison method of moving back and forth between, data, categories, and findings, along with a continuing interaction and dialogue with existing literature, led to an organic evolution of theoretical findings. During this analysis, prior models were sometimes discarded in favor of new; categories and codes were merged when they were found to have overlapping or redundant meanings; and conceptualizations were further refined as new analyses emerged from the data. In addition, as a reliability check, a peer reviewer was asked to read a sampling of transcripts as well as the written description of these models in order to peer-check the
findings. The discussion between the reviewer and author that ensued led to new insights as well as slight adjustments to the models to account for differences in perception.

These models are presented with the recognition that while this group shares elements in common – profession, nationality, culture, location – there are key differences in their backgrounds and how they approach their work as journalists within an immigrant community. It is these differences lend themselves to the creation of three distinct models. The models also represent a spectrum on the part of the interviewees regarding levels of connectivity to Venezuela versus connections to their community; occupational ideologies or orientations that range from an objective, balanced approach to journalism, to one that is subjective and politically driven; and the varying immigration experiences of the participants regarding their context of departure from Venezuela, whether they were forced from the country either as a direct outcome of their work or an ideological opposition to Chávez versus a voluntary departure for reasons unrelated to politics, such as economic motivations, family ties, job relocation, etc. (see Figure 4). It is also important to note that these models should not be seen as presenting silos of separation, with little or no overlap between them; in fact, depending on the present state of the community, international versus national, regional, or local events, and needs the audiences, there is considerable overlap between the models (also reflective of the non-linear nature of immigrant assimilation in the 21st century, a fact that will be discussed in more depth in the final chapter). The three models of immigrant journalism are broadly conceptualized as follows:

- **Oppositional Model**: Journalists in this model remain heavily focused on events in Venezuela and firm in their opposition to Chávez; the reasons they give for
pursuing journalism are politically driven as well as transnational in scope, as their work is often aimed directly at, and followed closely by, audiences in Venezuela (“exile” was a phrase used repeatedly by the journalists whose work fits this description); there is also a political-economy element to their work illustrated by the difficulties these media producers have had in finding advertisers who are not scared away by their anti-Chávez rhetoric.

- **Market-Driven/Hybrid Model**: These journalists continue to draw on events in Venezuela as part of their work, aware that many in their audience still have family and business connections to the country. At the same time, there is recognition of the information needs of the community as a group of newly arrived immigrants and a desire to help their fellow Venezuelans adjust to life in a new country. They also perceive that in order to create an economic model for their form of media, a wider, Latin American immigrant, and even Hispanic American, audience must be reached, reflecting the political economy of producing mediated communication in a multicultural city where ideas of nationality must be weighed against the dangers of focusing too narrowly on individual groups of immigrants and thereby possibly ignoring potential audiences.

- **Immigrant/Community Model**: This model closely resembles older definitions of community and ethnic/minority media found in the literature on the topic,\(^{61}\) with an emphasis on covering local events, the importance of understanding the information needs of the audience, an effort to provide coverage not found in the mainstream media, and the development of a circular relationship between the...

producer and the audience; however, this model is also distinguished by its emphasis on issues relevant to immigrants (addressed first and foremost by the fact that these outlets are almost entirely in Spanish\textsuperscript{62}) and the national and cultural identity the producers draw on as a guiding reference in their day-to-day work as immigrant journalists.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{spectrum.png}
\caption{Spectrum of influences shaping models of immigrant journalism}
\end{figure}

Below, a closer reading of the interviews is presented as a means of drawing out the details and nuances that help make up each model. However, it is worth pointing out that these models are presented in a particular order, depending on their position on the spectrum that is visually depicted in Figure 4. By presenting the oppositional model first, followed by the hybrid model, and ending with the immigrant/community model, the process in which these media are developing along with the rapidly growing and evolving community will also become clear. These three models closely parallel theories of acculturation and assimilation as well as the differing possibilities for the political orientation of immigrant communities in the United States as delineated by Portes and Rumbaut (2006):

\footnote{\textsuperscript{62} Two of the outlets studied, Doral News and Ciudad Doral Newspaper, are bilingual.}
…immigrant communities may be passionately committed to political causes back home, either in support of or in opposition to the existing regime; they may see themselves as representatives of their nation-state abroad; or they may turn away from all things past and concentrate on building a new life in America (p. 120).

These authors have written extensively on issues and processes of immigration, acculturation, and the contextual factors that shape immigrant life in the United States; the present research falls in line with their earlier conceptualizations, while at the same time adds a new facet to their contributions by further defining the role of media and communication within this landscape. Additionally, the segmented, ‘silo’ nature of the models above does not mean that these models do not shift according to geopolitical events. As will be seen in the interviews drawn out below, the producers in the hybrid model in particular turn their focus to Venezuela when compelled by global events and the news cycle; at other times, they focus on the community when they see the need.

Each of the models can overlap with the others at different periods in the construction of the public sphere of this immigrant community, an outcome that follows insights from other critiques of a strictly linear model of immigrant assimilation (Rumbaut, 1997).

“A burning candle”: Oppositional model

In 2004, Paul Sfeir, who moved to the United States from Venezuela in 2001, decided to launch an Internet radio station called RadioNEXX. Sfeir’s family had emigrated from Chile to Venezuela during the presidency of Salvador Allende, when Paul was nine years old, and Sfeir grew up hearing about what his family had lost under

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63 Streamed online and listened to for free by anyone with an internet connection; there are some disagreements as to concrete definitions of Internet radio (does anyone listening to audio online become a ‘radio’ listener?); for an overview of this discussion, see Black, 2001; Coyle, 2000.
that government. By the time Sfeir moved to the United States, three years after the
election of Hugo Chávez, he had already become ideologically opposed to the direction
in which he believed the country was headed. “Look, first we left a communist
government in Chile,” he says. “And now I have to leave because of a communist
government in Venezuela.”

Sfeir had worked in the broadcast media in Venezuela and felt there was a dearth
of coverage on the situation in Venezuela, with an inability or unwillingness on the part
of other Venezuelan media outlets in South Florida to take on the Chávez governmen.

Looking for an outlet for his frustration, Sfeir launched RadioNEXX:

We noticed the need…when Chávez was attacking the communication
media and we were seeing that the people in Venezuela didn’t have any
possibilities for finding out what was happening. And so we opened the
door to a large number of people that were already here in exile because
the Chávez government was going to kill them. And it turned into the
voice of liberty. And it is called “RadioNEXX, The Voice of Liberty.”

The radio station, which for a time rented a studio space in Doral (bankrolled through the
sale of Sfeir’s family home), became popular among the exile community outside of
Venezuela as well as for Internet listeners inside the country, especially during moments
of political and social unrest, such as the constitutional referendum in December of 2007
to abolish presidential term limits. According to Sfeir, during that vote, RadioNEXX
received 4,000 phone calls and eight million website hits in a 24-hour period (Woods,
2008). RadioNEXX received a similar avalanche of attention during the closure of
RCTV in 2007. These spikes in interest and audience size are a result of the desire on the
part of Venezuelans for alternative, outside sources of information, according to Luis Ortiz, who has a news analysis program on the station: “When it was closed (RCTV), the audience dispersed...It’s like...they went into the clouds, no? And so we were transmitting 24 hours a day, continuously. Because the people needed to hear the information. In Venezuela, the information is stifled.”

The reach and impact of RadioNEXX, because it used the Internet as its platform and opened up a phone line for reports from Venezuela as well as callers in South Florida, became completely transnational in scope. This media phenomenon is reflected in the seamless transitions that Sfeir and others make in referring to Venezuelans that are both here and there. RadioNEXX’s programming and audience represented a blurring of borders that vexed Venezuelan government monitors, whose powers are territorially bound and were very interested in finding the source of these vehement opposition voices. As Sfeir relates:

There aren’t any outlets telling Chávez to go to hell. So, we became known as radicals. But later, it became even more interesting because we came to be known as “clandestines”64...because at one point, a minister (for the Venezuelan government) said that they were trying to find the antennas of the coup-plotters in Miami...Of course, we made fun of them and we said (on the air): “You are really ignorant. Very ignorant. Because Internet radio doesn’t have any antennas.”

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64 In Spanish this term is “clandestinos,” which does not have a direct translation to English; “guerillas” or “subversives” is a close approximation.
Other oppositional journalists echoed this transnational experience. Patricia Poleo, who continues to publish her column in Venezuela, often uses information from highly placed contacts in the military and government:

I have been here five years and I have continued working the entire time, every day for Venezuela…I write about things in Venezuela that are so up to the minute that they still think I’m there and continue to look for me…I think this has been, of all my professional successes, the most important. That they keep recognizing me there in Venezuela…even though I’m not physically there (emphasis added).

The simultaneity inherent in the work of Poleo and the hosts on RadioNEXX, with their use of technology, information, and communication is illustrative of the time-space compression presented throughout this research as a defining hallmark of globalization. It is also a key element in the mental models of the work of these immigrant journalists, especially those with the oppositional model of journalism. These connections appear to create an audience in the minds of these producers that exists simultaneously in Venezuela and the United States, a phenomenon reflected repeatedly in the comments offered up during the interviews. As Luis Ortíz of RadioNEXX explains, in the case of their media outlet, technology has facilitated these connections: “Why the Internet? Well, first because it is important to us that the majority of people who listen to us are in Venezuela. And those of us who are creating the programming, the majority can’t go to Venezuela for political reasons.”

However, RadioNEXX, as well as other oppositional media outlets investigated during this research, were faced with trying to negotiate a complex political economy,
efforts that are a defining characteristic of the oppositional model of immigrant journalism. Despite the station’s popularity during moments of crisis in Venezuela, Sfeir and his supporters were unable to find a sustainable economic model to keep the station functioning at full capacity. Often, advertisers were wary of aligning themselves with journalists who had such an ideological bent to their programming, conscious of the sensitivities of cross-national implications that could hurt their interests either in the United States, Venezuela, or both. Ortiz shared the following example of the complicated, transnational and ideological terrain that these journalists navigate:

I had a light program…every Friday, something to distract us. And we started talking about a shampoo in Venezuela…(and) right away the telephone rang and it was the daughter of the owner of this company…I remember that I answered the call and she was telling me that they supported us, they understood us and our cause, but please don’t name that brand of shampoo on our show because it could cause problems for them with the government. So, they support us, yes, but only up to a certain point.

Many of the media outlets in the oppositional model went through moments of popularity but were unable to sustain their audiences over the long term. Edgard Paredes, a radio announcer who for a time published a weekly newspaper in Miami called *Venezuela Sin Mordaza* (“Venezuela Ungagged”), an oppositional, politically oriented outlet, had a similar experience: “…there were clients that were telling me, ‘Hey, what a good

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65 The station continues to broadcast, but each member does so from his or her home; Sfeir and his wife, having sold their home and incurred a substantial amount of debt in their attempt to keep RadioNEXX running, now live in a small, rented condominium.
newspaper. I like it, you are doing good work, but I have businesses in Venezuela and they might be affected if I support you."

Downing (2003) has noted this problem of economic sustainability in his writing on alternative media and their audiences: “…public support is unmistakably tangible during a period of acute political contention, but misleads the activists into seeing it as more widespread and durable than it is, so that they take it for granted beyond the point they should” (p. 628). This often appeared to be the case, particularly with RadioNEXX, where the producers saw a real explosion of popularity and attention to their efforts (including profiles in The Miami Herald). The producers came away with a sense of being an important source of alternative information (an experience that undoubtedly contributed to Sfeir’s decision to sell his home in order keep RadioNEXX running), but were not able to develop a long-term strategy for audience building and economic stability.

Finally, there were elements of personal sacrifice in nearly all of the stories told by oppositional journalists, from having to flee the country, as in the case of Poleo; economic sacrifice, as with Sfeir selling his house to keep RadioNEXX running; or the experience of Roger Vivas, an exiled politician and AM Radio host, who, as he explains, makes very little for his work: “I really have to struggle here. I make ten dollars an hour and my checks are never more than $500. I live in an efficiency apartment.” Another member of this group had recently been evicted from his apartment and was sleeping on a friend’s sofa; another interviewee’s marriage fell apart during the process of seeking exile in the United States. These personal experiences combined with the underlying political
elements inherent in the work of the oppositional journalists\textsuperscript{66} help to create the particularly vehement anti-Chávez rhetoric that was the defining political characteristic binding this group together.

“Finding a balance”: Market-Driven/Hybrid Model

Following on the oppositional model, and drawing on similar elements, including an ideological opposition to Chávez and a desire to remain connected to Venezuela and the Venezuelan immigrant community, the market-driven/hybrid model is ultimately defined by these journalists’ search for a balance between focusing on Venezuela when necessary, especially during moments of crisis or upheaval, but also making sure that events in Venezuela do not become their only focus. This is an economic decision as much as a professional one, with the recognition that focusing too intently on the Venezuelan community will limit their reach among wider immigrant groups. There is an effort among the members of this group, not to avoid Venezuela politics or Chávez completely, but to place more of an emphasis on life in their new country, on what it means to be an Hispanic immigrant in the United States, and to reach out to the other immigrant groups that make up their audiences – whether they are Colombian, Ecuadoran, or Panamanian.

Three journalists from Union Radio 1020, the Miami branch of one of Venezuela’s largest national radio chains, launched in 2008 and has growing rapidly ever since, were interviewed during this research: Eli Bravo, Julio Cesar Camacho, and

\textsuperscript{66} Repeated phrases throughout these interviews included “losing/defending democracy,” “loss of freedom,” “struggle for liberty,” “censorship,” “human rights,” “dictatorship” and “totalitarian regime”; in this sense, the cultural flow created by this form of journalism fits well into Appadurai’s (1994) conceptualization of ideoscapes as “concatenations of images...(that are) often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counterideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it” (p. 36).
Lourdes Ubieta, each of them highly respected journalists among other Venezuelan journalists as well as familiar to Venezuelan immigrant audiences, who may have followed their work at home and now find their voices on the radio dial in Miami. This background has helped them in establishing solid, successful careers in the United States, securing a space among immigrant audiences that is both influential and economically sustainable. The insights they offer about working as an immigrant journalist, all of which were connected through the theme of finding a balance, are emblematic of the kind of immigrant journalism that the market driven/hybrid model represents: a reflection of the realities of working in a multicultural market with its own particular form of political economy, in which political considerations, given the influence of the Cuban community and the global nature of commerce in Miami and the transnational business connections that exists must constantly be weighed against the multinational, multicultural nature of the audiences that exist for Spanish-language media.

This group recognized that Chávez and events in Venezuela are newsworthy, and therefore an unavoidable topic for Latin American journalists working in Miami, particularly with the parallels to the experience of the Cuban community. However, an even treatment of this topic remains important for this group, as Eli Bravo points out:

...when I have something that I really want to share, I’ll write about Chavez. But I don’t feel that I have to slam Chavez in the face because that’s the way I think we should do it. ...There are spaces, media, and outlets for that, but I don’t think that’s our work.

Husband (2005) has written about this tension between professionalism and identity among ethnic media producers, noting that “for media workers within minority ethnic media the defensive carapace of ‘professionalism’ may be fractured by other strong and possibly contradictory claims; namely, a personal identity politics that commands an allegiance to an ethnic community” (p. 462).
Although he does not mention them directly, Bravo is acknowledging the existence of the oppositional journalists outlined in the previous section, and appears to be trying to put some distance between their form of strident, subjective journalism and the role that he envisions for his radio station within the community. Camacho, who is the station’s news director and former manager, reaches a similar conclusion, acknowledging the influence of the Venezuelan community in the station’s programming, but pointing to his colleagues’ and his own efforts to move beyond this group:

... (Union Radio) even though it was founded by Venezuelan businessmen, it concerns itself with all of the communities. The Venezuelans are one of the communities that we serve. Because we want to serve all of the communities represented here, in Miami, in South Florida, that are Latin American. From the Caribbean, from Central America. The Americans, that is, Hispanic Americans that also live in the United States, whether they’ve lived here for many years or are recently arrived. No? They are also informed by us.

Despite the professional/ideological rhetoric of providing an important service, there are clearly economic implications behind the decision to focus the station beyond the Venezuelan community, in trying to break out of the mold of being seen as a “Venezuelan station.” As Husband (2005) points out, “…where topography, audience demography, and relative economic privation intervene, minority ethnic media may de facto find themselves required to serve generic audiences defined in broad ethnic terms” (p. 463). This point by Husband addresses the emphases placed by Bravo and Camacho, as well as other journalists whose work falls within the definition of this model, on
reaching wider audiences; this is a calculated decision that is an outcome of the financial pressures placed on all media outlets as they seek out economic models that lead to long-term sustainability. In a multicultural city like Miami, with its multitude of Spanish-speaking groups with different nationalities and diverse information needs, these producers recognize the demands of this political economy in their efforts to branch out.

For Lourdes Ubieta, the decision to focus on local information is an obvious one, from her perspective as a journalist working within the context of a city like Miami:

…this is not rocket science or anything, it’s just because I understand that this city, first that this is not Caracas. This is a city, it’s like a melting pot of nationalities and as a woman I know what is of interest to women and I’m not focusing my show in Cuba, or in Venezuela, or in Colombia. I’m focusing my show in the news…So this means finances, jobs, local laws, local things. That’s because even though you are from Puerto Rico, or Colombia, you live here, you will have to pay taxes, and we will have to take care of our families, etcetera. So I’m focused on what is important for us as residents, as people who live here, as immigrants.

However, at the same time, Ubieta is clearly conscious of her connections to the Venezuelan community and the importance of their support: “…people know that I’m not on the side of President Chávez, not because of President Chávez but because of the way he’s behaving and the things that he is doing.”

Ubieta says she avoids joining up with the multiple exile Venezuelan groups that have been formed in South Florida in recent years, which she sees as problematic from a professional perspective. At the same time, “…when they phone me and say, We’re
gonna have this meeting, I air it. And when they say we’re going to do this collection of money, for whatever, I go (on air) and say it.” Again, inherent in the experiences working as an immigrant journalist shared by Ubieta, and key to the conceptualization of the hybrid model, is the idea that a balance must be found between maintaining a cultural connection with the Venezuelan community while at the same time reaching out to larger immigrant audiences that share similar information needs. Connecting too closely with the more politically oriented opposition-exile groups might not only alienate Ubieta’s non-Venezuelan listeners, but her station’s continued business connections to Venezuela will also temper the ideologies that emerge in her work.

These findings highlight the way that this model, when combined with the other two, represents one facet within the larger spectrum of acculturation reflected in research on immigration from other disciplines in the social sciences. A transnational existence is a foundational element in the work of these immigrant journalist, but the fact that these media models modulate between a focus entirely on Venezuela to, as will be seen in the community model, an alignment with local realities and information needs, confirms what Alba and Nee (1997) have written about the continued relevance of theories of assimilation for understanding the lives of immigrants:

…we hold that this social science concept offers the best way to understand and describe the integration into the mainstream experienced across generations by many individuals and ethnic groups, even if it cannot be regarded as a universal outcome of American life…as a social process that occurs spontaneously and often unintendedly in the course of interaction between majority and minority groups, assimilation remains a
key concept for the study of intergroup relations (p. 827).

The role of mediated communication as an important element in the creation of these interactions has been theorized as following a similar course. In their research on ethnic media production and consumption among Turkish immigrants in Germany, Arnold and Schneider (2007), have reached very similar conclusions, noting that

Ethnic media do not communicate separation nor is this the intention of ethnic journalists. We did, however, find specific functions of ethnic media that point to a specific role for integration and matters of cultural identity…On one hand, the audience is looking for orientation in everyday life; on the other, emotional aspects play a crucial role (p. 133).

This is a key insight, as emotional motivations, particularly given the turbulent nature of the situation in Venezuelan, and the underlying connections and conflicting tension with ideologies of journalistic professionalism, remained a defining issue throughout the interviews conducted during this research.

However, also relevant to the conceptualization of these models of immigrant media are those scholars on the other side of the assimilation versus pluralism debate over immigration. Their theories question the linearity of historical conceptualizations of assimilation, many of which date back to the first waves of immigrants to the United States at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth. Immigration scholar Rumbaut (1997) has criticized these views as assigning assimilation with a “certain passivity and one-wayness” (p. 924). Scholars on this side of the immigration debate between assimilation and pluralism question overly broad definitions of the ‘mainstream culture’ that immigrants are supposed to assimilate into, and see the process
of adjusting and adapting to life in a new country as happening much more in fits and starts, particularly in a global city like Miami. Studies of transnationalism are an attempt to bridge this divide, recognizing that while not linear, the process of adaptation to a new culture by immigrants is multi-faceted and often pulled in more than one direction. Additionally, in response to the question as to what is really ‘new’ about transnational migration, reference can be Rumbaut’s point that “the difference in historical contexts of immigration and incorporation must be taken far more seriously and systematically into account if we are to deepen our understanding of these processes” (1997, p. 943).

Along with the material drawn from the interviewees at Union Radio 1020, it is also helpful here to look at the interviews with Manuel Corao, publisher and editor of Venezuela al Día, and Oswaldo Muñoz, publisher and CEO of El Venezolano, as a way to further define the transitional model. Together, these two newspapers represent the oldest Venezuelan media outlets in the study, launched in 1996 and 1992, respectively. Both are emblematic of the transitional model, with a clear focus on Venezuela, particularly from a political, analytical standpoint. At the same time, both newspapers, according to their publishers, have become key information sources not only for the Venezuelan community in South Florida, but for other Latin American immigrant groups as well. As Muñoz see it, his newspaper has “a wider vision of what we consider to be important for Venezuelans that live here,” but at the same time, despite efforts to focus on the local, the goals of El Venezolano remain distinctly transnational in nature. “We are interested in what happens here and what happens there,” says Muñoz.

Corao pursues a similar model with his newspaper. In an interview in his office, as a demonstration, Corao pulls an archived edition of Venezuela al Día from the shelf,
and encourages the interviewer to do the same. Both issues are opened to the same page. In one edition, there is a story about efforts by the government to expropriate businesses in Venezuela in the name of the Bolivarian Revolution; in the other, there is a story about a health clinic opening in Miami aimed at serving the Venezuelan community. For Corao, this is a clear example of the balancing act that he performs with his publication: “...so this means that for this edition, there was more weight given to community news than national news. And in this edition, the events of the country (Venezuela) meant that there was more news nationally than from the community.”

However, similar to sentiments voiced by Ubieta above, there should be no question about the editorial line that *El Venezolano* and *Venezuela al Día* take when it comes to the situation in Venezuela. As Biagio Correale, a Venezuelan photographer who has worked for Muñoz at *El Venezolano*, as well as its community-oriented sister publication, *El Correo del Doral*, points out: “Yes, perhaps there is a partiality that is political, but that’s how it is...Let’s analyze the context: What is the name of the newspaper? ‘El Venezolano.’ And where is it? In the United States...So this immediately gives you the idea that it’s not going to speak well of Chávez.” This statement recognizes the political leanings of the Venezuelan immigrant community that has exploded in size in the United States in the past decade; while there may be various levels of opposition and attachment to Venezuela, this is a community that remains nearly 100% opposed to the government currently in power.

Similar to the oppositional model, the journalists within the transitional model also perform a political economy balancing act when it comes to the fundamentally political nature of their editorial line and the need to keep attracting sponsors who may
still have business interests in Venezuela. This often means putting distance between themselves and the more vocal exile community. As Muñoz points out, the United States “maintains commercial and diplomatic relations with Venezuela; and very good commercial relations, because it is the largest buyer, and the truth is that we can’t talk about exile. Ninety to 95% (of Venezuelans in Miami) are against the Chávez regime, but in no way can we say that we are exiled.”

However, despite claims to the contrary, even Muñoz is not immune to the influence that the Venezuelan government is still able to exert on his operations. Yolanda Medina, a journalist who has worked with *El Venezolano* for over 10 years and was interviewed several months after Muñoz, revealed that Muñoz, who in the past made frequent trips to Venezuela, had recently run into trouble with the government there for material published in his newspaper and had to curtail his visits: “No, recently he hasn’t gone…Because right now Oswaldo is being persecuted there and his friends have advised him not to go because he could be detained for no reason. We prefer that he continue here, where he can still accomplish a lot.” Muñoz’s experience illustrates the fluidity inherent in the political balancing act of these journalists as they maintain a defiant stance towards the Venezuelan government and at the same time draw on the economic connections and support of the Venezuelan community to help keep their operations afloat.

“*Turn off the switch*”: Immigrant/Community model

Finally, at the other end of the spectrum from the oppositional model presented at the beginning of this chapter, there is the immigrant/community mode. The elements that define this model are a strong emphasis on connections with local audiences, particularly

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68 Until recently, an edition of *El Venezolano* was published and distributed in Caracas.
the Spanish-speaking, Latino community, and the issues that are important to them both as an ethnic group and as immigrants. There is a stated effort by these journalists to disconnect from Venezuela. This often means a complete avoidance of Venezuelan politics and even the mention of Chávez; however, as indicated in the definition provided at the opening of this chapter, this does not mean that the fact that these outlets were produced by Venezuelan media professionals did not have an impact on the final product. However, the overall message from these journalists is that, as immigrant journalists, it is their job first and foremost to help their audience adjust to life in a new country. As Biaggio Correale, who along with his wife, Militza Rodríguez, recently launched a monthly magazine aimed at Hispanic audiences called Veintiseven, puts it: “Those of us that come to this country know how to ‘turn off the switch,’ as we say. We understand the situation and that the reality… is different. And that we have to, you know, move forward.”

The case of Ciudad Doral Newspaper, published by Luis Alcala, and Doral News, published by Carlos Herrádez are both illustrative of the immigrant/community model. For Herrádez, there is an interesting connection between the founding of Ciudad Doral Newspaper and the political campaign to incorporate Doral as a city with the county of Miami-Dade, both of which occurred in 2002. Ciudad Doral Newspaper championed the cause of the incorporation campaign, which was called “One Doral”; thus, the

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69 Alcala and Herrádez were originally partners in launching Ciudad Doral Newspaper in 2002; however, a falling out in 2008 caused Herrádez to split with Alcala and launch Doral News. Because of their shared history, the two publications have much in common, including scope of coverage and being published bilingually, with Spanish content on one page mirrored by an English version on the opposite page.

70 As of the 2000 census, the city Doral had the largest percentage of Venezuelans of all cities in the United States at 9%; although statistics for the most recent census have not yet been released, it is safe to assume that given the rapid growth of the Venezuelan population in the United States in the intervening decade, this number has increased significantly. Anecdotally, it is worth mentioning that of the 34 interviews conducted for this research, nearly half took place in Doral.
community and the newspaper shared a close connection from the very beginning. “We used the name of the newspaper as the name of the city,” Herrádez says, “and we started covering events and we wrote about the community on topics that had to do with family, religion, culture, society, businesses, commerce, students.” Herrádez sees this relationship with his fellow “Doralinos” as being at the heart of his work as a journalist, calling himself a *cronista de la comunidad* (“chronicler of the community”). He says it is this relationship to the community that makes this model work: “So, people began to care about the newspaper, because they had a newspaper that reflected in its pages the events of the city. And beyond that, it was in Spanish.” The insights from Herrádez touch on similar contributions from the literature on community media, in which the connections between media and community growth have been seen as

Alcala sees a similar formula for the success of these community media outlets, connecting their growth with larger societal changes. “The importance of community media has been a growth based practically in the necessity for local information. Communities here in the United States are big, with a lot of inhabitants,” he says. “And this creates a demand for local information.”

Alcala also recognizes the political challenges inherent in a Spanish-language newspaper that wants to be useful to the community where not everyone speaks the language: “The first six editions (of *Ciudad Doral Newspaper*) were totally in Spanish. And we got an avalanche of emails, because there is an important population of Anglos here, that don’t speak Spanish…They

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71 Alcala’s observations echo larger trends among ethnic, community outlets, as recognized in a 2005 report produced by the Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism. In “The State of the News Media 2004” there is the recognition of the “rapid growth of commercially successful independent ethnic media with a distinct local focus” (quoted in Deuze, 2006). In the 2010 report of the same title, the Project noted that while ethnic media had suffered during the current economic slow-down, they had fared better than their mainstream counterparts (Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2010).
practically demanded, protested that a newspaper of such high quality was not available to them.” Given the historic tensions that have existed between Anglos and Hispanics in Miami (Portes & Guarnizo, 2006; Portes & Stepick, 1994), this decision to include English on the part of Alcala, and later by Herrádez, was astute, both politically and economically. They saw the potential to expand the size of their audience by including two languages, while at the same time avoiding ethnic and racial divisions that could in the end actually harm their distribution and standing within the community.

This emphasis on trying not to alienate certain segments of the audience ties in with a final component of the production decisions made on the part of the journalists in the immigrant/community model, which is a complete avoidance of anything having to do with Chávez or the political situation in Venezuela. This doesn’t necessarily affect their readership among Venezuelans, as Herrádez points out: “I would say that all of the Venezuelans that come to Doral see this newspaper, all of them, even though here there is no news from Venezuela…Absolutely none. Here the news is about Doral.” There is the perception among these producers that, especially among Latin American immigrant groups in South Florida, many of whom arrive from situations of political instability, there is a fatigue that has set in when it comes to political discussions. According to Militza Rodríguez, of Veintiseven, this recognition was a key component in their editorial discussions prior to launching the magazine: “First of all, we all agreed that we wouldn’t have any political content in the magazine and the main reason for that is that we have so many nationalities here, and our countries are so in conflict because of politics, that we said, ‘Ok, people are sick of politics. Let’s try to do something different.’”

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72 According to Herrádez, one of his readers told him English speakers in Doral were feeling offended; as Herrádez acknowledges, “It was true. You’re in a country that has opened its arms to you and you have to respect the national language, which is also a way to reach the American market.”
Tosta, a journalist with 50 years of experience in both Venezuela and the United States, publishes *Conexiones*, a monthly glossy magazine aimed at the Hispanic community. He makes his distaste for Chávez very clear: “This is what we have decided. To take Chávez out of this magazine. Because he defaces it. Chávez defaces it. So we took him out. We just ignore him.”

This decision also translates into avoiding being overly focused on the Venezuelan immigrant community as well, which again is a decision that has both political and economic implications. Nataly Salaz, a television reporter in Venezuela who now works as a community journalist with Luis Alcala at *Ciudad Doral Newspaper*, sees the emphasis on the community as the most important function of the newspaper and supports the decision to seek out wider audiences:

We never touch on it, at least in *Ciudad Doral Newspaper*, focusing directly on the Venezuelan community, because even if they are a majority in Doral,\(^73\) they are not the only population. And that’s something that I agree with. I feel that a community newspaper has to be aimed at the community, not at just one segment…We’re going to see what affects the community, it doesn’t matter if it’s Cuban, Venezuelan, Panamanian, or Brazilian.

It should be noted here that although Salaz is talking about ‘community,’ she is still focused on Latin American immigrants. This is an important clue to the mental model that drives the work of these immigrant/community producers, as well as a fascinating insight into the global nature of Miami as a city. For Salaz, who immigrated to the

\(^{73}\) As of 2000, Venezuelans were *not* the majority in Doral; however, given their influence in Doral politics, media, and business, this is often the perception. It is no accident that, in the past few years, Doral has come to be known as “Doralzuela” (Ocando, 2009).
United States in 2002, the wider community does not signify English-speaking Anglos but rather her fellow Latin American immigrants. Salaz also emphasizes the fact that what separates these outlets from those serving only the Venezuelan community is their focus on the information needs of immigrants:

You look at a Venezuelan newspaper focusing on the Venezuelan community and they’re constantly coming back to repeat the things that Chávez did, or what he said, what the ministers said, what is happening there…but no. For this, I have the Internet, if I want to know what is happening in Venezuela. I want to know how I, a Venezuelan, can adapt to living in a foreign country. What do I have to do?

Ultimately, according to the interviews with these journalists, all of these decisions about content and the emphasis on a wider immigrant audience have ingratiated them with the wider Hispanic community. As Tosta explains, “We receive a lot of words of praise from people. And that is what motivates us to keep going. And we defend the Hispanic community. If someone has a problem with the Hispanic community, they have a problem with us.”

Conclusion

The three models of immigrant journalism that have been presented here are seen as the culmination of the efforts of this research. They are an attempt to not only explain the motivations and professional ideologies of these journalists and where they fit within a larger, theoretical framework, but to offer conceptualizations of concrete outcomes that recognize the complexities inherent in this form of media and that the multiplicity of influences and processes shaping the work of these journalists result in distinct forms of
journalistic production. Within a larger contextual framework, there are also implications from this type of media production for understanding processes of assimilation and acculturation and how these more traditional theories contrast and interact with newer conceptualizations of transnational migration.

These models build on, as well as move beyond, older theories of ethnic/minority media, as I have pointed out elsewhere in this manuscript. This work is a continuation of research that regards these types of media outlets as providing a voice to communities that may be left out of the discourse found in mainstream, national media (Husband, 1994; Riggins, 1992) – after all, the specific focus brought to bear on Venezuela and Venezuelan immigrants, given the background of these journalists, is not a dialogue that would be found necessarily in The New York Times or broadcast on ABC News. At the same time, these models, taken together as a whole, can also be seen as an extension of the “dual role” for ethnic media theorized by Subervi-Vélez (1986) in which he sees opportunities in the consumption of ethnic/minority media for both cultural pluralism and steps towards assimilation and acculturation regarding political orientation. These models show that within the larger framework that has been illustrated in prior work on ethnic/minority media, the motivations, ideologies, and contextual variables that influence the producers of ethnic/minority and community media lead to very particular forms of communication.

The contribution from Subervi-Vélez above underscores the wider need to recognize the multi-faceted nature of immigration and how it is a constantly evolving and changing phenomenon, dependent on factors of geography, technology, socio-economic status, contexts of departure and arrival, legal status, length of time as an émigré, etc. To
confine these processes to one or two defining characteristics is an exercise in futility. As Portes (1997) has written, immigration theory “in the contemporary world” has involved “describing the novelty and complexity of contemporary immigration, culling concepts and insights from the classic literature on the subject and, simultaneously, getting rid of the dead weight of irrelevant debates” (p. 800). It is the contention here that this research into the production of immigrant journalism contributes new insights into immigration theory by focusing on the role of mediated communication in the processes and social phenomena that are created through the confluence of media and migration.

It is also the hope on the part of the author that these models will lead to further elaboration and testing. This effort could be approached through content analyses, which could be used to test whether the insights gained from the interviews matches up with the reality of what is finally produced within these three models. Of even greater significance would be to test whether or not these findings can be applied to the media produced by journalists within other immigrant groups, an effort from which truly valuable insights might emerge, as they could be seen as helping to explain the wider social phenomena that emerge from the connections between migration and media. These ideas, as well as the limitations inherent in a qualitative research endeavor, will be drawn out further in the discussion/conclusion to follow.
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION: THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF IMMIGRANT JOURNALISM

...modern communications have drastically altered the ordinary terms of experience and consciousness, the ordinary structures of interest and feeling, the normal sense of being alive, of having a social relation (Carey, 2008, p. 1).

The idea that immigrants often maintain close ties with their countries of origin is not new. In an essay from *The Atlantic Monthly* published in 1916, Randolph Bourne addressed the implications of the massive influx of foreigners caused by World War I for the ‘melting pot’ metaphor that had already gained popularity in the United States as a way of understanding how a national identity emerges from a nation of immigrants. Concerns about the threats to the cultural integrity of the country presented by these new groups, which appeared to retain much of their national, ethnic, and cultural trappings upon arrival, were widespread. Bourne wrote:

> We found that the tendency...has been for the national clusters of immigrants, as they became more and more firmly established and more and more prosperous, to cultivate more and more assiduously the literatures and cultural traditions of their homelands. Assimilation, in other words, instead of washing out the memories of Europe, made them more and more intensely real (p. 86).

A few years after Bourne’s observations, William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki published their seminal work on Polish immigration, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918). The study is an empirical, sociological investigation into the lives of immigrants and the ties they maintain across borders. It remains one of the defining works of sociological research from the beginning of the 20th century. Focusing more
closely on the work of immigrants in the media, Robert Park (1923) wrote in *The Immigrant Press and Its Control*:

Our great cities, as we discover upon close examination, are mosaics of little language colonies, cultural enclaves, each maintaining its separate communal existence within the wide circle of the city’s cosmopolitan life. Each one of these little communities is certain to have some sort of cooperative or mutual aid society, very likely a church, a school, possibly a theater, but almost invariably a press (p. 7).

Following in the same line of reasoning nearly a century later, Portes and Rumbaut point out in *Immigrant America* (2006) that it was the intention of most immigrants during the late 19th and early 20th centuries to return to their country of origin, and therefore “they paid more attention, at least initially, to events in the sending countries than in the United States” (p. 126). The examples of transnational migration throughout the country’s history are numerous, a critiques of research into transnational migration tend to take the ‘old wine in a new bottle’ line of attack. However, as Pedraza (2006), echoing views of numerous other scholars, has pointed out, transnationalism in the 21st century is “qualitatively different. Because the new technologies allow immediate communication, immigrant can experience the world they left behind as if they were still there” (p. 423).

What, then, is the point in studying the production of immigrant journalism? What new insights into the make-up of modern societies are gained? What epistemological inroads are made? In the conclusion that follows, I argue that the outcomes of this research offer new insights into the theories surrounding the assimilation of immigrant communities within a pluralistic, 21st century context. Older linear
concepts of immigrant adaptation are further challenged by the transnational nature of the media spaces produced by the journalists under investigation, and highlight the increasingly complex ways in which immigrants can remain connected to the country they left behind. At the same time, new contributions are made to the study of the sociology of journalism, by translating the field’s focus on the internal and external factors that influence the production of journalism to a globalized, immigrant context. Finally, the grounded theory models of immigrant journalism that are a result of the investigation build a framework for future inquiries into the production of immigrant media by drawing out a number of important variables key to research into the topic: the importance of the context of departure and reception for the producers of immigrant media; the influence of the globalized immigrant and media context presented by a city like Miami; the key role that ideology plays in the work of these immigrant journalists; and the process that immigrant media producers go through as they seek out a space of transnational representation. These variables are presented here as a way of addressing the ‘neatness’ of the findings and their fit with existing theories of transnational migration, globalization, and the phenomena surrounding the production and consumption of ethnic/immigrant media.

The critiques of historic models of assimilation theories of immigration are pointed in their attacks on the linear quality of older theories and their reliance on outdated models. DeWind and Kasinitz (1997) have written that “terms like ‘assimilation,’ ‘acculturation,’ ‘pluralism,’ and ‘melting pot’ are loaded with historical baggage of questionable assumptions and values” (p. 1097). However, as early as 1986, Subervi-Vélez recognized that ethnic media have a key role to play in understanding
processes of assimilation versus cultural pluralism, noting at the time that social scientists, while recognizing the importance, had “paid little attention to the role of mass media in ethnics’ adaptation” (p. 72). The author also noted that ethnic media had also been recognized since early on in the study of immigration processes as “evidence of the persistence and distinctiveness of ethnic groups” (p. 73). Writing nearly 15 years later, Viswanath and Arora (2000), make very similar observations (p. 40). However, these authors, along with Subervi-Vélez, are more interested in the effects on the audiences for which this media is intended, and spend little or no time on the producers themselves.

The production of immigrant journalism is the central launching point for this study and the area of inquiry in which the strongest contributions to the study of immigrant life can be made. This form of journalism is ultimately envisioned as residing at the confluence of two distinct lines of social inquiry that have emerged out of the study of globalization and the growing interconnectivity of nations and cultures that defines the current era (among many others): What are the implications for nation-states presented by the movement of populations around the globe and their increasing ability to create social spaces that exist in two or more countries (Appadurai, 1996; Basch, Glick Shiller, & Szanston Blanc, 1994; Bhabha, 1994; Faist, 2000; Portes, 1999)? How is journalism being redefined by globalization beyond the prism of the nation-state through which it has traditionally been conceptualized and studied (deBeer & Merrill, 2008; Deuze, 2006; Josephi, 2005; Löffelholz & Weaver, 2008; Reese, 2001, 2010)? (See Figure 5.1).

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74 A Boolean search on Google Scholar (scholar.google.com) using the terms “globalization” AND “culture” returned 519,000 results.
As indicated in the opening quote from John W. Carey, the rapid growth of mass communication during the previous century has fundamentally altered modern life. The concepts of nation, nationality, and nationalism, all of which have played a defining role in laying out the basic societal foundations of post-Enlightenment modernity, are no exception. Immigrant journalists, as one of the key players in the creation of the globalized mediated communication that is a hallmark of these new social spaces of transnationality, deserve our attention as researchers.

Journalism is as heavily implicated in the study of the effects of globalization on modern institutions as any other. As Reese (2010) has written, “Technology-enabled connections permit a redistribution of relationships, creation of new communities, and
growth of new subnational, supranational, and transnational spaces. Journalism, the information people need to govern themselves, is changing accordingly to serve these newly constituted communities” (p. 7). Ultimately, Reese points out, “Global connections support new forms of journalism, which create politically significant new spaces within social systems” (p. 1). The transnational media spaces created by the work of immigrant journalists must be seen as one facet of these “significant new spaces.” The fact that these spaces are created on a local level also helps us to move beyond theories of the homogenizing effects of transnational media corporations prevalent in theories of cultural imperialism (Beltrán & Fox, 1979; Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1993; Nordestreng & Schiller, 1979; Schiller, 1991). It also avoids seeing all immigrants as transnational – something that describes everything ultimately describes nothing\(^75\) – but instead focuses on a particularly transnational social space, that created by mediated communication produced by and for immigrant communities. As Faist (2000) has observed, “We…need to conceptualize more clearly the different types of phenomena subsumed under the heading of transnational social spaces” (p. 190). This research should be viewed as an attempt at addressing that need.

Arjun Appadurai, in his writing on the deterritorialization of populations and the construction of new forms of locality (1996), recognizes that these are not necessarily new phenomena, “given that long-distance trade, forced migrations, and political exits are very widespread in the historical record.” However, what is new in the present era is the “disjuncture between these processes and the mass-mediated discourses and practices…that now surround the nation-state” (p. 199). This disjuncture has only served

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\(^75\) As Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt (1999) warn researchers: “Nothing is gained… by calling immigrants ‘transmigrants’, when the earlier and more familiar term is perfectly adequate to describe the subjects in question” (p. 219).
to heighten the ambiguity that has always existed in the notion of national identity, a concept that at once tries to define a particular, cathartic, perhaps even violent moment in a historical narrative (“the birth of a nation”) and yet at the same time draws on primordial notions of clan, connection, and identity (“the story of ‘us’”) to draw together disparate populations into a shared sense of belonging and dedication to a common project.

In the introduction to *Narration and Nation* (1990), Homi Bhabha recognizes this ambiguity: “Nations, like narrative, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind’s eye” (p. 1). While he admits that this image may seem “impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical,” Bhabha’s point is that the “large and liminal image of the nation…is a particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation, the *language of those who write it* and the lives of those who live it” (p. 1; emphasis added). This notion of ambivalence towards the idea of the nation and the challenges presented therein for the “language of those who write it” is reflected in the work of the immigrant journalists profiled in this research. In their efforts to both continue the narrative of nationality and at the same time address the realities of life in a new country, the Venezuelan journalists are operating on what Bhabha calls the “ambivalent margin of the nation-space” which exists in “…the international dimension both within the margins of the nation-space and in the boundaries in-between nations and people…” (p. 4). The ways in which these journalists navigate these boundaries are easily identified in the work of these journalists: Patricia Poleo, with a warrant out for her arrest in Venezuela and no foreseeable means of returning home any time soon, continues to cause irritation for the government that sent her into exile through use of the Internet
and high-placed contacts; the journalists at Union Radio, working to find a balance between drawing on the resources of their community and their background as Venezuelans, while at the same time, trying to create a viable economic model of communication that reaches a wider audience among the diverse immigrant groups in Miami; the community newspapers serving the city of Doral, published and staffed by Venezuelans, focusing on issues salient to their immigrant audiences, and simultaneously making a conscious effort not to get drawn into the polarizing politics that continue to define the Venezuelan community that they serve.

All of these examples highlight the social complexities created by the combination of two outcomes of globalization: the deterritorialization of populations and the creation of new hybrid identities that emerge from the experiences of migration and the production and consumption of mediated communication. As Morley and Robins (1995) have written:

What is…emerging is a certain displacement of national frameworks in favour of perspectives and agenda appropriate to both supra-national and sub-national dynamics. In this process, new questions are being thrown up about the interrelation of economic and market spaces on the one hand, and arenas of cultural consumption and collective identity on the other (p. 34).

The media spaces created by immigrant journalists are at once both supra-national, with their focus on two countries, and at the same time sub-national, in the way that they narrate the collective identity of a transnational immigrant community. The opportunities
for media production that confront these journalists also span the dual, and sometimes competing, forces of cultural consumption and the economic demands of the market.

The study of immigrant journalism carries with it wider implications for the study of immigration. Transnational migration has already pushed sociologists, anthropologists, geographers, and researchers from a wide range of disciplines concerned with the processes of immigration to readdress some of the fundamental theories of assimilation, adaption, and multiculturalism that make up the field. As Faist (2000) has observed, these conceptual problems often arise from outdated, historical notions of how social spaces are constructed:

Assimilation and ethnic pluralism are insufficient because they espouse a container concept of space – adaptation of immigrants within nation-states is considered to be a process not significantly influenced by border-crossing transactions. However, since growing transnationalization contributes to the plurality of avenues open to labour migrants and refugees in various nation-states, but is nevertheless always tied to specific places, the concept of border-crossing expansion of space enriches our understanding of adaptation (pp. 200-201).

The results of this study raise further questions regarding older arguments of assimilation versus pluralism, particularly given the social-immigrant make-up of a city like Miami. As the journalists in this study go about the work of narrating the experience of migration within their community, keeping a bi-national focus that varies in degree and intensity on either the home or host country, their work must be viewed as playing a role in the

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76 See Aksoy & Robins, 2003b; Bailey, 2001; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Portes, Guarnizo, & Landolt, 1999.
process of adaptation and assimilation for their audience. Nearly all of the interviewees saw at least part of their job as helping to make the process of adjusting to life in a new country smoother and less jarring for their fellow immigrants, while at the same time allowing them to remain connected to events at home. This is a concrete example of the kind of “border-crossing expansion of space” to which Faist refers, and therefore worthy of notice as it contributes to a more complete understanding of immigration in the 21st century. It is worth asking whether or not long-term exposure to the types of immigrant journalism profiled in this research will have a lasting impact on the ways and extent to which immigrant communities in the 21st century adjust to life in a new country. Given the significant amount of attention that has been paid to the ‘newness’ of the impact that communication technologies are having on the lives of modern diasporas (Pedraza, 2006; Georgiou, 2006, 2005), it is possible that immigrant researchers in the coming decades will witness a significant reevaluation of older theories of assimilation and acculturation as the implications of production and consumption of immigrant media and the resulting connectivity are better understood.

Broader implications for the study of the sociology of journalism also emerge from this research. The insights into the production of immigrant media gained through the interviews with Venezuelan journalists – the importance of the context of departure and arrival; connections with the community; notions of professionalism and the balance between objective and advocacy models of journalism; the eminent importance of ideology that drives them forward in their work; and the search for a space of reception for their particular form of mediated communication, shaped and modified by the political-economy of a multicultural marketplace – all contribute to a more complete and
A multi-faceted understanding of the different forms of journalism that can emerge within a globalized setting. As Kaplan (2006) writes, “social theories of the news start by dispensing with purely technical understandings of journalism; they highlight how the news is the creative accomplishment of people ordered through social relationships. And they consider how power and culture constitutively enter into the construction of media reports” (p. 175). In this regard, the field of new institutionalism (NI), with its emphasis on the “routines and practices that define journalism” (Ryfe, 2006, p. 138), is a useful prism for understanding immigrant journalism within a larger social context.

However, given the small-scale, community-based nature of most of the journalistic efforts uncovered in this research, the “institutional” emphasis of NI, which often favors larger news operations in its conceptualization and theoretical application, could benefit from the findings of this study with the recognition that journalism as an institution comes in all shapes and sizes. The theories of NI argue that institutions endure across time and space, a concept that drives much of the research in this field, as it provides a structure for pulling about the different way in which journalistic institutions both influence and are influenced by those that work within them. While the individual media outlets that serve immigrant communities are in many instances fleeting and ephemeral, particularly within the kind of global setting provided by the demographics and political-economy of South Florida, they should not be diminished in importance because they do not fit within traditional notions of ‘mainstream media.’ Through their work as immigrant journalists, the producers of immigrant media “participate in global networks connecting local settings, bypassing official state channels, and introducing their own logic into national spaces, including with local journalistic cultures and media
systems” (Reese, 2010, p. 6). Even though the outcomes of immigrant media emerge on a local scale, the theoretical implications of this work play out on a much larger stage. The study of immigrant journalists can ultimately deepen our understanding of how societies in the 21st century, increasingly made up and influenced by the movement of populations around the globe, are grappling with the challenges presented by globalized, transnational immigration.

There are also findings in this study that connect closely with Bourdieu’s field theory as it has been applied to journalism, conceptualized most comprehensively by Benson (1998, 2004, 2006). This approach first places journalism within its larger social field, that of cultural production through symbolic communication. It then locates journalism within its “immediate structural environment” and examines the way that the agents in this field (journalists) navigate the two competing forces of cultural and economic capital. Through an analysis of the interviews, Venezuelan journalists were found to be struggling to find a balance between the normative pressures of professionalism and objectivity, with the economic goal of building up a larger audience, and their desire to advocate on behalf of their community. According to Benson (1998), media field researchers show “how the ‘objective’ structure is related to the ‘subjective’ perspectives of individual agents. Objective structures and subjective experiences are not two competing explanations of the social world but are rather two intertwined aspects of reality” (p. 467). Most of the work of field theorists on journalism has focused on national media systems (French journalism, in the case of Benson) and how the silos created by these nation-states inflect and influence the practice of journalism within different national contexts. And while Benson has written about the media’s coverage of
immigration issues and policies (2002, 2010), little work has been done that applies this theoretical framework to media produced by immigrants, for immigrants. This research thus offers new contributions to a field theory of journalism, broadening its scope beyond the prism of the nation-state and offering new applications for the theory by examining it through the phenomenon of transnational migration. At the same time, a uniquely “Venezuelan” form of journalism emerged from the interviews, and therefore contributes to previous work on understanding how issues of nationality influence different models of journalism.

Finally, I want to address the scope of this work, issues of parsimony and validity, and the potential for engaging in a matching exercise between the existing literature and theories and the results of the interviewees. Working with grounded theory necessitates that the researcher not conduct his or her work within a theoretical vacuum. Only by first laying out the epistemological framework for approaching a particular subject or area of inquiry, as was done in Chapter One, can a researcher address issues of validity when discussing the results. This also allows the researcher to address issues of parsimony, ensuring that the results have a general sense of ‘rightness’ when viewed by other researchers and that they fit within existing knowledge while at the same time offering new and useful insights. So what is new about the research, if it fits so neatly with what is already known? Ultimately, any systematic, empirically focused inquiry, such as the one that has been carried out here, should be able to offer up new and helpful variables that can deepen understanding of the topic under investigation as well as help guide the work of future researchers. In this case, the importance of context emerged as essential to understanding the motivations and ideologies driving the work of the Venezuelan
journalists that were interviewed. Their personal and professional backgrounds, the state of Venezuelan society and the context of their departure, as well as the socio-economic realities for the Venezuelan immigrant community in South Florida – all played key roles in the ways in which these media producers viewed their work which in turn shaped the ways in which they sought out a space for their particular message and medium among the many immigrant media outlets that help define immigrant audiences in South Florida. Ideology also emerged as a key variable in the work of these journalists; this helped to define their conceptualizations of the profession that in turn shaped the three models for immigrant journalism outlined above.

The drawback to this approach is the question of what is missed by not focusing on those instances that do not fit within the models. This is a valid critique, as it is true that qualitative researchers can often learn just as much, if not more, from the ‘outliers,’ those instances that do not fit with pre-existing theories (Bengston, et al., 2005). This fits with the goals of qualitative research and its “quest for explanations which encompass complexity, subtlety and even contradictions” (Denscombe, 2007, p. 30). There are two responses to this legitimate question. Because of the preliminary nature of this research, some baseline of research first needed to be established before being able to consider contradictory cases and drawing meaning through comparisons with more easily defined cases. Additionally, as has been discussed above, the models and categories drawn from the analysis of the interviews should not be seen as silos, but permeable conceptualizations that allow room for overlap and seepage between ideas in full recognition of the inherent complexities of the subject matter.
Limitations of research

This research began through my own interests in Latin American media, the rise of Hugo Chávez to power in Venezuela, and recognition of the growing community of Venezuelans in South Florida and the resulting growth of media outlets aimed at this particular immigrant group. Combined with my own background in media production (I worked in documentary filmmaking for nearly a decade, including several years with Spanish-language production companies in Miami-Dade), a firm grounding in interview research methods gained through professional experience, and my ability to speak fluent Spanish, this research project seemed a natural fit. It also addresses an area of research - the production of mediated communication by immigrant journalists - with a dearth of prior theory-building efforts and a topic where I could make a significant contribution. In retrospect, my own process of seeking out a research topic and a place among previous literature on the topic in many ways parallels the processes that the journalists I interviewed had gone through in their own search for a space of production.

This research should be viewed as a stepping-stone to a longer-term research agenda investigating the social phenomena that emerge through the production, and consumption, of immigrant media in a global landscape. As such, the results and models set forth in the previous chapters should also be seen as preliminary and thus open to further interpretation and modification as they are either corroborated or contradicted through future research. This outcome falls in line with the tenets of using grounded theory as a methodological approach; because they are aimed at areas of research in which few explanatory theories exist, the efforts and results of such inquiries are generally expected to lead to further hypotheses testing and theory building. Also key to
these outcomes was a constructivist perspective, which recognizes that the “categories, concepts, and theoretical level of an analysis emerge from the researcher’s interactions within the field and interactions with the data” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 522).

The sampling method used was strictly non-random and qualitative in nature, which immediately places certain limitations on the scope and wider applicability of my results. I began by seeking out potential interviewees through personal contacts gained through my familiarity with Spanish-language media in the region and publicly available contact information found on media outlet websites. This in turn led to further contacts, as I soon found that many of the Venezuelan journalists I was interviewing knew one another, either from their time in Venezuela, efforts at collaboration in the United States, or both, and were usually happy to provide me with further contacts. As discussed in the methodology section, I eventually achieved a certain level of qualitative sampling saturation, as different interviewees began to offer up the same contacts and media organizations.

It should also be pointed out that at this point in the history of Venezuelan immigration to the United States, the socioeconomic status of the émigrés remains relatively high, a fact that was reflected in the sample of interviewees. All of the participants in this research had some form of higher education; they generally came from middle-to-upper class families and tended to be light-skinned and bilingual. This population clearly does not reflect the general population in Venezuela, a country with

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77 The 2006-2008 American Community Survey shows that 33% of Venezuelans in Miami-Dade county have at least a bachelor’s degree, nearly twice the county-wide average of 17%; nearly 15% have a graduate or professional degree, substantially higher than the country-wide average of 9.7%. They also have a higher employment rate than the general population (70% v. 60%) and a higher median household income ($47,226 v. $44,364). (U.S. Census, 2008).
some of the highest social inequalities in Latin America; however, they do appear to be a generally representative sample for the population in question, that of Venezuelan immigrants in South Florida. I point out these disparities as a way of indicating that the views and opinions reflected in the interviews and work of these journalists might be found to contrast significantly were the same work to be conducted with journalists in Venezuela, particularly those whose views and political leanings are more in line with the Chávez government.

Additionally, because a semi-structured interview format was used to gather the data, a choice justified by the grounded theory approach as well as by the varied backgrounds and life experiences of the interviewees, the transcripts that were generated were looser in form and content than would have resulted from a more structured, questionnaire style interview. This limitation was partially addressed through theoretical saturation, a process of constant comparison of the ‘indicators’ in the data until the “properties and dimensions” of each category have been fully explored and described (Holton, 2007, p. 281), but it is distinctly possible that different interpretations could emerge through an analysis of the interviews by another researcher. Ideally, the theoretical framework and context built for the analysis of the interviews would limit the extent of varying interpretations and the overall assumptions would hold firm (which was at least initially confirmed by the peer review test conducted and discussed in the methodological section of Chapter 1).

78 Nearly 40% of Venezuelans live in poverty; levels of urbanization are high, nearly 93%; and the wealthy 10% of the population control nearly 40% of the country’s wealth (CIA World Factbook, 2010; Hoffman and Centeno (2003) note that since 1980, the average incomes of workers has declined 30%, while the wealthiest 20% have a consumption rate that is more than seventeen times greater than the poorest 20%.
Given the limitations outlined above, the results of this research are not
generalizable. However, qualitative case studies (which are often a methodological
choice among migration researchers [Fitzgerald, 2006; McHugh, 2000]) can allow for
findings of “societal significance” as opposed to “statistical significance” (Burawoy,
1991, p. 298, quoted in Fitzgerald, 2006), in which the former “refers to the development
of ideas of theoretical and practical import and the latter refers to the finding that an
association of two variables is not the result of random variation” (Fitzgerald, 2006, p.
15; emphasis added). This element of “societal significance” carries with it particular
weight when the rationale for case selection is grounded firmly in theory and existing
literature, at which point, rather than attempt to falsify previous theories, the findings can
make a substantial contribution to a wider field of knowledge. It is my hope that the
creation of results of “societal significance” has been at least to some degree
accomplished through this research.

*Questions raised and future directions*

As with many social scientific inquiries, and because of the ground theory
approach that was taken, the outcomes of this research lead to many new questions.
Moving forward, there are clear opportunities for future research. An empirically
developed content analysis of immigrant media could add a quantitative element to this
research, with a coding protocol designed to address the following questions:

- How are the three models of immigrant journalism – *Oppositional, Market
  Driven/Hybrid, and Immigrant/Community* – related to the content of the
  media produced? What linkages exist between the interviews with the
  producers and the content that is produced through their work? Where are the
notable differences and what factors might explain any variances that are discovered?

On a larger scale, and concerning issues of potentially greater societal significance, the following questions about immigrant journalism could be asked, and approached through interviews and participant observation, as well as with a larger, random-sample survey of immigrant media audiences:

- Which of these models is sustainable over time? How do they change as the community they are serving grows and becomes more firmly established in the host country? Do the motivations of the media producers change? How does this affect the content of the media they produce?
- What are the opportunities and economic structures that lead to either the survival or failure of immigrant media endeavors? Why or why not?
- How do the findings from this particular case study of the Venezuelan community in South Florida compare with the media serving other immigrant groups - locally, regionally, and nation-wide? Can the three models of immigrant journalism proposed in this research be applied to immigrant media serving other populations? How big of an influence on the production of immigrant media is the context of departure and arrival particular to each group?

Throughout the process of conducting this research, it became increasingly clear that the media serving immigrants in South Florida present varied and numerous opportunities for future research projects. Venezuelans are only one segment of this

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79 An interesting comparison could be made, for example, between Venezuelan community media and that being produced by and for Colombians, who represent the largest group of South American immigrants in the region
immigrant population,\textsuperscript{80} which also includes Cubans, Salvadorans, Nicaraguans, Colombians, Haitians, Argentineans, Hondurans, etc. Each of these communities has unique media needs, and at the same time they are bound together through geography and the national context in which they are trying to build new lives. Beyond the sheer size and scope of these communities, I was struck by the stories of the interviewees who shared their time with me; each was unique, with elements of struggle, sacrifice, success, and failure – the full range of human experience, tied together through the desire to communicate with a wider audience. Living and working within this social milieu, I see the possibility for years of substantive and enriching research into the complexities of life in a region being transformed by varied and often unpredictable forces of globalization.

\textsuperscript{80} Florida has the fifth highest percentage of foreign born citizens, following California, Nevada, New York, and New Jersey (U.S. Census, 2008).
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APPENDIX A

Sample of Interview Questions
Tell me about your background as a journalist.

Follow up: How did you come to this career? Was being a journalist something that you always wanted to do?

Follow up: Do you view your work as “just a job” or is it something beyond that? What is your level of commitment to this profession?

Follow up: How important was the professional training and formation you received in Venezuela?

Describe to me the work that you do now.

Follow up: How do you decide what news is important? What is the audience you are trying to reach? What are your connections with your audience?

Follow up: How did you find a space for your particular form of communication?

As a media producer, what do you see as your role among your fellow Venezuelan immigrants in South Florida?

Do you find that it is more important to your audience to find out about events happening locally or what is taking place in Venezuela?

Follow up: How do you decide when to focus on Venezuela versus focusing on local issues? Are you dependent on the news cycle?

What are the most important issues for the audience that you serve? How do you know that they’re important?

Follow up: Do you see your work as more news oriented or editorial/analytical?

Is there a dialogue between you as a producer and the audience that consumes the media product you’re producing?

Follow up: How has your media been received by the community?

What are the biggest economic challenges in the work that you do?

Follow up: What is the market like in Miami and how has your particular form of media been received?

Follow up: Have you had to make personal sacrifices in order to practice the kind of journalism that appeals to you?
What are the biggest political challenges in the work that you do?

Follow up: Are their certain issues that you either avoid or feel compelled to cover?

In your opinion, what are the most obvious characteristics of the Venezuelan community here in South Florida?

Follow up: Do you see your fellow immigrants as a cohesive community or more dispersed?

Follow up: How connected do you feel personally to your community of fellow Venezuelans living in South Florida?

What media outlets do you personally use here in Miami? What is the availability for information about Venezuela? What is the quality of that information?

How long have you been in the United States?

Follow up: Was your departure from Venezuela forced or voluntary?

Follow up: Did you feel comfortable in your new country? Did it take you very long to adjust?

Follow up: Did you have a social network already in place (friends, family, colleagues?)

How connected do you still feel to Venezuela? Do you feel like events taking place there affect you both personally and professionally?

Would you like to return to Venezuela one day? What do you see for the future of the country?
Appendix B

List and Characteristics of Venezuelan Media Outlets Profiled
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Outlet</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Immigrant Media Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>Internet Radio</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Oppositional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agenda Latina</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Oppositional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela Sin Mordaza</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Oppositional</td>
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<td>Venezuelanaawareness.com</td>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Spanish/English</td>
<td>Oppositional</td>
</tr>
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<td>Patriciapoleo.com</td>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Oppositional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela en la Mira</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Oppositional</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hybrid/Market-driven</td>
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<td>Veintiseven</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
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