

Emergency Rx for Studies on the Ethnic Press: The Armenian English-Language Newspapers

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Abstract

Outdated definitions and perspectives create misconceptions and confuse theoretical models of ethnic group activity (Sollors 1986; Kivisto 1989). This paper examines these definitions and raises questions about long-standing perspectives as they apply to the activities of one ethnic group made known through one branch of ethnic media--the Armenian English-language weeklies, a rich strata of American journalism consistently overlooked in studies of ethnic media. A content analysis shows that the expectations and concerns of this ethnic group and the function of its weeklies is to incorporate with the predominant society while sustaining the memory of its history and celebrating the attributes of its culture; also, that this association is best described as *integration* rather than *assimilation* and displays cohesion with rather than *fragmentation* of, or *radical/dissident* attitudes toward the predominant society.

Introduction

Scholars of American journalism have always found a place for the ethnic press within the family of alternative media. Perhaps rightly so, for the diverse nature of the ethnic press defies definition of it beyond the explanation that it is a branch of alternative media, that is, press outside mainstream media. In fact, defining the role of ethnicity in American social life is a task fraught with problems (Hunter 1960; Steinberg 1982; Sollors 1986; Kivisto 1989). Kivisto argues that "confusion surrounding the theoretical models"

used in studies of ethnicity create many of those problems. He attributes the source of the confusion to the "diversity and complexity of American society" which "makes it difficult to construct theories adequate to the task of interpreting the shifting patterns of ethnic-group affiliation" (1989: 11-3).

Another observer feels that the "ambiguity surrounding the very terminology of American ethnic interaction" is the source of much misunderstanding concerning ethnic persons and their activities (Sollors 1986: 5). Advocates for the use of inoffensive language in descriptions of ethnic activities urge use of the words "ethnic press" rather than "immigrant press" (Wynar 1972: 9), and Weber considers the term "ethnic" as "unsuitable for really rigorous analysis" of "ethnically determined social action" (1978: 11).

The confusion that surrounds studies of the ethnic role in American social life and the ambiguity of terminology used in studies of ethnic activity apply in like manner to studies of the ethnic press. Any confusion surrounding theoretical models used in studies of the ethnic press probably has its source in the diversity and complexity of ethnic groups, as Kivisto points out, and that confusion is compounded when ambiguous terms are used to define ethnic media. In fact, the diversity of ethnic groups and their periodicals, and the differences that exist between those periodicals within a single ethnic group, obviates placing ethnic media under any one label. The outcome of doing so is a plenitude of theoretical perspectives concerning the ethnic press that confounds definition of it and precludes clear approach to its study.

This exploratory study questions these definitions and long-standing perspectives with a dual purpose in mind: first, to encourage examination of all branches of the ethnic press before generalizations are made about its functions, and secondly, to clarify terms and update perspectives as they apply to one specific branch of ethnic media--the Armenian press, particularly the 5 existing English-language weeklies, a rich strata of American journalism consistently overlooked in studies of ethnic media. The questions raised are (a) whether these weeklies aid in the *assimilation* of its readership and, at the same time, retard the Americanization process by promoting ethnic pride and ethnicity, thereby *fragmenting* American society (Park 1922; Kessler 1984), and (b) whether they demonstrate radical, dissident, or divisive tendencies (Park 1922; Kessler 1984). *Assimilation*, according to Park and others, means providing announcements in the ethnic press which direct immigrants to American resources such as English-language and citizenship classes, job opportunities, aid societies, ethnic support groups, and the like. Ethnic pride and ethnicity refer to clustering in neighborhoods, creating group networks, celebrating ethnic heritage, perpetuating the native language, all of which, according to Park's unchallenged perspective, encourage *fragmentation* of society. Fishman (1966), Kessler (1984), Kuzniewski (1987), and Miller (1987) found that the assimilating function of the ethnic press continues, and others have found that celebration of ethnic pride is a

characteristic shared by many ethnic groups, for example, the French, German, Greek, Polish, and Arabic groups (Fishman 1966; Kopan 1987; Kuzniewski 1987; Naff 1987; Perreault 1987).

Although the stereotype of the American ethnic has undergone several transformations since 1922 and continues to do so (Hunter 1960; Howe 1977; Steinberg 1982; Kivisto 1989), Park's early views concerning ethnic activities prevail to this day, compelling one observer to question, but not diminish, Park's theoretical perspective; that is, whether the ethnic press today aids in the Americanization process or retards it by preserving ethnicity (Kessler 1984).

Park (1922) also defined some ethnic press published in the 19th and 20th centuries as "radical."¹ His definition of the term is unclear, but his context infers that "radical" means disruptive behavior to express hostile sentiments against and the desire to overthrow oppressive governments in countries left behind by immigrants. While Kessler (1984) classifies the black press, women's rights press, utopian press, and the press of the larger ethnic groups as part of the "dissident" or alternative press, other representatives of the ethnic press are only briefly mentioned as being extant. The problem here is that the terms "radical" and "dissident" manifest levels of meaning that range from violent disruption to peaceful disagreement. Unless that variance is clarified when the terms are applied in any context, all meanings within the range of definitions fall into play for any one information receiver. Moreover, even those newspapers mentioned in passing become part of the ambiguity through association with those categorized as "radical" or "dissident" in alternative media. As others have pointed out, the diversity and complexity of the ethnic press, generalizations about its functions, ambiguous definitions, and mixed classifications concerning it, all these complicate rigorous analyses. Furthermore, the range in the level of any function, definition, or classification may vary within the press of a single ethnic group, let alone between groups, compounding the complications of analysis.

In recent ethnic studies, observers see ethnic expectations and concerns as having less to do with radicalism or dissident activity and more to do with sentiments and activities that characterize the ethnic person as assimilated in American society, but commanded by a "divided heart" (Sollors 1986; Holte 1988); that is, one forever aware of his/her national heritage, yet grateful to be a member of American society and loyal to its principles of democratic governance.

Miller suggests (1987: xii) that the press of any one ethnic group is the "best primary source" for understanding ethnic group expectations and concerns and has made an effort in this regard in a recent publication, *The Ethnic Press in the United States*, which provides an historical review of 27 ethnic newspapers. Aside from Hunter's 1960 review of the ethnic press, Miller's work, as far as we could determine, is the most recent study of the press of specific ethnic groups since Park's pioneer work. Miller found that

the ethnic press is still a means of expediting assimilation, that interest in the ethnic press is contingent on both U.S. immigration policy and world events, and that it also sustains ethnic pride, especially in groups with large populations in this country. Miller, like Kessler, agrees that the ethnic press serves the purpose of aiding in the assimilation process as described herein. However, both Miller and Kessler stop short of amending Park's perspective that today's ethnic press in its promotion of ethnic pride is, at the same time, retarding Americanization by fragmenting American society. Also, as in many other instances, several of what Park has called "minority nationalities" (1922: 290) were left unexplored by Miller, the Armenian press among them. To pick up the slack and in keeping with Miller's view that the "best primary source" for the study of any one ethnic group is its press, the English-language Armenian weeklies were examined to determine if ethnic pride interfered with the assimilation process of this ethnic group contributing, therefore, to fragmentation of American society.

Reaching into generations of English speaking Armenian-Americans from recent arrivals to first, second, third, and even fourth generations of the earliest arrivals, these 5 weeklies enjoy a wide Armenian-American readership. Moreover, within the body of 15 Armenian newspapers published in the U.S., the five weeklies represent the only type in their class published solely in the English language.² There are no daily, bi-weekly or monthly newspapers in the English language, and although one weekly newspaper has an English-language supplement in its Armenian-language issue, its reduced size, breadth and depth of news coverage could not be fairly compared to those published solely in the English language. It is not clear why the Armenian press has been ignored, but past directories issued by U.S. publishers show an absence of references (Kent 1983) to Armenian and Armenian English-language periodicals even though these publications have been and still remain in the marketplace. For example, four Armenian-language newspapers were published here as early as 1899, 1903, 1908 and 1912, but references about them do not appear in American directories published in that period (O'Malley 1916). The first Armenian newspaper published solely in the English language appeared in 1932, but as far as we could determine, studies on Armenian newspapers in the English language are lacking. One reason for scholarship's oversight may be because Armenians came to the U.S. in large numbers only since the 1920s. In comparison to other ethnic groups such as the Irish, Polish, German, and Italian groups, they are relatively few in number. In the main, little about Armenians³ is known by the average American. News about them is a rare media encounter so that coverage of Armenians prior to and after the demise of the Soviet Union has become the principal task of its own press. Only time will tell if brief encounters with mainstream media will generate interest in this little-known group and its media. Until that time and mindful of other neglected ethnic press, it is likely that opportunities to systematically formulate generalizations or theories about the ethnic press will elude scholars.

Method

A descriptive analysis of subject content was conducted to discover the focus of emphasis in the following weeklies: *Armenian Reporter*, *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, *Armenian Weekly*, *Armenian Courier*, and *Armenian Observer*. Details concerning the weeklies examined are presented in Table 1 on the next page. In this study emphasis is defined by the frequency of content related to definitions and perspectives concerning *assimilation*, *fragmentation*, *radicalism/dissidence* as described earlier herein. The period examined included 58 consecutive weeks of publication ending with the third week in May 1989. This was the period during which Armenians in Armenia suffered both tragic losses in the 1988 earthquake there and triumphant beginnings for freedom from Communist domination.⁴ The total of 58 weeks would have normally yielded 290 issues, but because four of the five weeklies did not publish for two weeks each, due to vacations taken in this period, the yield exempted a total of eight issues (N=282). From this pool a probability sample of 100 issues was examined. The sample was selected by taking issues of each weekly for the first week and then every third issue thereafter during the 58-week period for a total of 20 issues per weekly.

Two pretests were conducted to identify subject areas covered by the five weeklies. The pretests included issues published outside the 58-week period of the sample which included the period of January 1988 to March 1988. For the first pretest, every other week of publication by each weekly was reviewed (30). For the second pretest, three more issues from remaining weeks in each month of the pretest period were reviewed (15). Content was ascertained by reading the headline and copy of each piece. The material included general news stories, editorials, commentaries, contributions, reprints, announcements, and features (columnists, poems, letters-to-the editor). Announcements concerning births, deaths, marriages were excluded, as were features such as calendars and recipe columns. Sources of published items included international news agencies, Armenian-American organizations, churches, schools, centers of Armenian studies and research at American universities; also, submissions made by readers and coverage by a limited staff and volunteers reporting on various Armenian-American activities held in areas throughout the U.S.

Subjects covered seemed to fall into four principal groups: (A) Armenian-American activities in the U.S. concerning Armenian or American matters in the U.S., (B) American activities in the U.S. concerning Armenian matters, (C) Armenian-American activities in the U.S. concerning Armenian matters outside the U.S., (D) activities and events outside the U.S. concerning Armenian matters, but

Table 1

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not Armenian-Americans. Content covered 23 subjects which were coded under the four groups. Subject items are described in Table 2 on the next page.

Coding criteria were established since no guidelines for that purpose were available specifically for the ethnic press. An example of the type of identification criteria established for each of the subjects is best described by the following: Where a head, the lead or copy suggests more than one subject, code the principal subject; that is, an article concerning a dinner-dance to benefit earthquake victims is coded as Armenian-American aid to quake victims, but a dinner-dance sponsored by an organization where neither head, lead nor copy indicate that it is no more than a social gathering, the item is coded as an event exclusive of cultural and educational purpose, and an item exclusively about earthquake destruction is coded under that subject. Due to style inconsistencies across the five weeklies, coder training in this case was especially necessary for reliability. For example, datelines, names of contributors, or sources of reprints were missing for a number of articles in some of the weeklies, and in other instances these credits were buried in the body of the copy which only the most conscientious coder would have noticed.

Each of the weeklies was coded separately to determine subject emphases in each one. However, noting editorial choice, space allotted to certain subjects, and/or a newspaper's independence or political allegiance, was set aside due to the possibility of coding bias which was made even more likely by manifest style differences. For this study, weighting was forfeited to absolute frequency numbers. A comparison of the researcher's coding against that of the first coder showed a 76% level of agreement. A comparison of the researcher's coding against that of the second coder showed an 81% level of agreement.

After data were gathered and tabulated for each weekly, frequency was totaled across all five weeklies on each subject and the percentage computed relative to the total frequency of all the subjects to ascertain editorial interest in that subject by all the weeklies. Also, subtotals of the frequencies for each subject group across all five weeklies were obtained and the percentage computed relative to the total frequency of all the subjects to ascertain overall editorial interest in subjects within a subject group by all the weeklies. Then a subtotal was obtained for the frequencies in each subject group for each weekly and the percentage computed relative to the total frequency of all the subjects in that weekly to ascertain editorial interest in a subject group by that weekly. These computations are detailed in Table 3 page 31.

Findings

Emphasis: Subject Groups

Of the four subject groups, Group A (Armenian-American activities in the U.S. re Armenian or American matters) appeared the most often (58%). Frequencies on all subjects in this group were highest in the *Armenian Reporter* (586) which also

Table 2

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Table 3

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had the highest frequency in the final total of the four groups (1033). The *Mirror-Spectator* followed with a frequency of 514, total 794; then, *Armenian Courier* (420/762), *Armenian Observer* (371/566) and *Armenian Weekly* (282/557).

The low total frequency in the *Armenian Weekly* is partly due to its emphasis on subjects in Group D, namely events in Armenia (subject #22: 88). The *Armenian Weekly* is supported by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) of Eastern United States. This organization has been active in its effort to consolidate certain provinces near Armenia with that nation, particularly provinces such as Karabagh still heavily populated by Armenians but which Moscow had placed in control of the Muslim minority there. The ARF also advocates restoration to Armenia of former Armenian territories now under Turkish control but still inhabited largely by Armenians.⁵ The *Armenian Weekly* is published on the East coast where there is a heavy concentration of long-term Armenian-American citizens and a large contingent of Federation sympathizers. The newspaper is also distributed to a similar contingent in California, another area heavily populated by Armenians of recent migration from Armenia and elsewhere. Thus the area of main interest for the editor of this weekly concerned subjects in Groups D and C. On the other hand, the editor of the *Armenian Courier*, who has some sympathies for but whose weekly is not sponsored by the ARF, and whose editorial decisions are generally regarded as being balanced,⁶ published the third highest total frequency on subjects in these groups.

After Group A, Group C (Armenian-American activities in the U.S. re Armenian matters outside the U.S.) was next highest in terms of emphasis (15%). Group D (activities, events outside the U.S. re Armenian matters, but not Armenian-Americans) was of equal importance (15%). While Group B (American activities in the U.S. re Armenian matters) drew only 12%.

The difference of percentage value between Group A and the other groups is probably due to the overwhelming number of activities, particularly educational, cultural and social events (#7-8: 1382) covered by or reported to the weeklies. In this group, editorial interest was also high regarding tributes and achievements earned by Armenian-Americans, favorable comments from Americans concerning those honors, favorable comments about Americans in roles of community service and political leadership, and honors and tributes conferred on Americans by Armenian-Americans (#4: 478). Though Groups C and D showed equal percentages of interest, frequency of coverage was greater in the former (557) than in the latter (546). The least percentage and lowest frequency (436) for Group B may have been due to involvement by U.S. government leaders in Armenian matters only in recent months.

Emphasis: Subjects

Of all the weeklies, the *Armenian Reporter* showed the greatest interest in educational and cultural events and least was shown by the *Armenian Courier* (Group A, subject #7: 199/83). All shared nearly equivalent interest in events exclusive of educational or cultural purpose. Frequency of emphasis sheds little light on attendance at these events by Armenian-Americans, except that some articles did display attendance figures. For example, memorial services for the martyrs of the genocide were headlined as attended by hundreds, and in New York, by thousands. Sports events also drew huge numbers and cultural, educational, and social events, including American-sponsored ethnic festivals, were apparently popular among both adults and the young.⁷ Only 3% of all subjects, but 3rd highest percentage in Group A is subject #3, participation by Armenian-Americans in U.S. government, U.S. issues (129). That category includes offices held by Armenian-Americans in city, state, and federal government and participation in American and Armenian-American candidates' efforts for government office as well as involvement in voter-action committees led by American and Armenian-American community leaders. It was on this subject that the *Courier* showed the highest frequency of emphasis (40), followed by the *Armenian Reporter* (37), *Mirror-Spectator* (21), *Armenian Weekly* (16), *Armenian Observer* (15).

Some measure of how participation in the democratic process worked for this ethnic group may be seen in the fact that Armenian-American lobby groups played a part in obtaining the release of Armenian activists arrested while demonstrating for the Karabagh cause; and a citizen's group, made up largely of Armenian-American voters in Wisconsin, was responsible for a candidate's withdrawal from a senatorial race for accepting funds from Turkish-Americans and sharing Turkish views on the genocide. Following the high frequency of content regarding tributes and achievements and Armenian-American participation in U.S. government and U.S. issues, came participation in American and Armenian charity efforts (#1: 104). These projects included aid to Armenian institutions such as Armenian homes for the aged, participation in American blood donor drives, and various other American charity campaigns. Disunity in this group (#2: 37) related mainly to in-group conflicts regarding Armenian-American church and organization matters.

Of engaging interest among Group A's subjects is the absence of unfavorable comments by Armenian-Americans concerning the U.S. (#6: 0). In contrast, the presence of unfavorable comments by Armenian-Americans concerning Armenians, Armenian matters was high (#5: 43). Comments in editorials, commentaries, contributions, and letters-to-the-editor dealt mainly with Armenian attitudes, manners, opinions, violations, and disunity; or, exhorted readers to participate in the American democratic process, to attend genocide observations, to assist in earthquake relief efforts, or concerned Turkish denials of the genocide, events in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and anniversaries of various

kinds. Many of the editorials, commentaries, contributions, and the like, dealt with the shame cast on all Armenian-Americans by the misbehavior of a few. One of the incidents discussed was money laundered for drug-runners by Armenian jewelers in Los Angeles, newcomers from Beirut. Other discussions concerned the behavior of new immigrants which Armenian-American contributors to these weeklies considered inappropriate in American society. There were also discussions concerning negative American press charging Armenian-American apathy toward earthquake victims and dismay that Armenian-American efforts in this regard were denigrated.⁸

Among subjects in Group B (American activities in the U.S. re Armenian matters), the subject of greatest emphasis concerned neutral and favorable comments made by Americans about Armenian-Americans or Armenian matters (#12: 145). The subject of least importance in this group concerned unfavorable comments made by Americans concerning Armenian-Americans (#13: 45). Editors were apparently eager to communicate interest in and support or approval expressed by Americans regarding outstanding Armenian-Americans or Armenian matters; for example, Senator Dole's praise of an Armenian-American surgeon who restored Dole's arm injured in a World War II incident, President Reagan's recognition of a scientific achievement discovered by an Armenian-American geneticist, and interest shown by Congressional leaders for official recognition of the Turkish genocide. However, editors were not as eager to communicate unfavorable comments from American sources concerning misbehaving Armenian-Americans, although Armenian-Americans themselves discussed some of these incidents in commentaries and contributions as described above.

Subjects of greatest emphasis in Group C (Armenian-American activities in the U.S. re Armenian matters outside the U.S.) concerned events in Azerbaijan and its rule over Karabagh (#14: 208), followed by charity for earthquake victims (#18: 129), and official recognition of the genocide (#16: 120). Of lesser interest were matters of old territorial losses to Turkey (#15: 25). In contrast, concern in this period was centered on continued Turkish denials of the genocide and especially Turkish-American efforts to support this sentiment (#17: 75). Old losses are still important to some members of this ethnic group, particularly the *Weekly* (#15: 10). However, events in Karabagh dominated the news columns during the period these weeklies were examined. Concerning Armenian-American activities for official recognition of the genocide and their reaction to Turkish denials and counter-activities by Turkish-Americans, reports indicated efforts were limited to peaceful intervention through the American democratic process.

In close track behind this group of subjects were those in Group D (activities, events outside the U.S. re Armenian matters, but not Armenian-Americans). The greatest emphasis here concerned events in Armenia, what was formerly Kremlin policy, and Armenians in the diaspora, especially those in the Middle East (#22: 317). The next subject of interest concerned the destruction caused by the earthquake, Moscow's foot-

dragging in this regard, and its indifference to expediting available relief (#19: 111). Interest in each of these subjects indicates concern for those outside the protection of a free society and denied the most basic needs for human existence.

Of some importance, as well, were matters regarding charity from other countries for earthquake victims (#20: 47), participation by other countries in promoting the cause of Armenians and their issues (#23: 41), and immigration from Armenia (#21: 30). Editors and contributors showed a sense of pride in the interest shown to Armenians by others besides Armenian-Americans. They were also apprehensive about the growing numbers leaving the only soil they could call the home country, thus rendering it vulnerable to enemies of that state.

Summary and Conclusion

This study found that in these weeklies the *assimilation* function is present, but that it is of a different type than the kind defined in past research (Park 1922; Kessler 1984; Miller 1987); and that even though this different strategy of assimilation, which is best described as *integration*, sustains ethnic pride, it also serves as an agent of Americanization and expedites cohesion with American society rather than *fragmentation* of it. Editorial emphasis was telling in this regard, falling on content that encouraged participation in American charitable efforts, American leadership, and the democratic process. There was also a strong play on tributes and honors conferred on Americans by Armenian-Americans, tributes and honors conferred on Armenian-Americans by their own and by Americans, and criticism of misbehaving Armenian-Americans. All the foregoing dominated the news columns in these weeklies for the period of publication examined. In addition, the content failed to manifest hostile sentiments that could be characterized as encouraging *radicalism/dissidence*. Instead, reports (Group A: subject 3) showed that platforms of any form of dissension were managed through the customary American channels of peaceful democratic process, while deviation from established codes were condemned (Group A: subjects 5, 6). This study also found that content in these weeklies reflected aspects of the Sollors (1986) and Holte (1988) concept of the American ethnic (grateful to be a member of American society and its protections, but forever aware of one's national origin); and finally, that the focus of content in these weeklies is mainly on Armenian-American activities concerning Armenian matters in the U.S. rather than abroad, although relief efforts for the oppressed overseas was a major preoccupation, especially after the earthquake in Armenia.

The function of *assimilation* in these weeklies is quite different than the one usually identified in the literature; that is, notably absent were announcements of English language and citizenship classes, American social agencies, location of ethnic groups, churches, and organizations. One reason for this may be that these days many new

Armenian immigrants know how to speak English. In addition, Armenian-Americans have established their own charity infrastructure to aid old and new Armenian-Americans and many immigrants are knowledgeable about these resources and American ones, as well.

Editorial selection defines the *integration* strategy that is operating here. Editors mounted "models" of Armenian-Americans for emulation by emphasizing Armenian-American leadership in the American community, as well as tributes to, honors conferred on, and achievements made by Armenian-American adults and youth. Editors also encouraged participation in the American democratic process and participation in American community projects such as blood donor drives, charity efforts, and similar activities. At the same time, they held up examples of behavior censured by American society, criticizing the actors involved for causing the Armenian-American community shame and embarrassment. The *integration* strategy described here is not exclusive to Armenian-American editors. Kuzniewski identified an aspect of this strategy in the Polish-American press, describing it as having "facilitated status competition" among Polish-Americans to excel in American society (1987: 276). However, the strategy also sustains pride in ethnic origin as subjects in this regard in the weeklies examined indicate across all subject groups. Nor is celebration of one's heritage unique with Armenian-Americans. That sentiment is shared by other ethnic groups as indicated earlier in studies of other ethnic newspapers (Fishman 1966; Kopan 1987; Kuzniewski 1987; Naff 1987; Perreault 1987).

That these weeklies reflect the Sollors, Holte concept of the American ethnic person is best seen in the data concerning the individual subjects within the subject groups, particularly editorial emphasis on achievement and honors won by Armenian-American youths and adults, Armenian-Americans in U.S. leadership roles, tributes and honors conferred on Americans and Armenian-Americans alike, and the absence of unfavorable comments about the U.S. At the same time, there was primary emphasis on educational, cultural, and social events where Armenian-Americans could celebrate their heritage. Important, but of secondary emphasis were activities and events outside the U.S. concerning Armenians, for example, reports on charity and interest extended by other countries to Armenia, the hardships suffered by victims of the earthquake and the Karabagh conflict, and the loss of former Armenian territories to Turkey and Azerbaijan.

It is clear that content emphasis in these weeklies centered on activities and concerns in the U.S. The difference is that the actors vary and activities by them involve Armenian matters in different places. The greatest emphasis was on actors (Armenian-Americans) involved in or concerning Armenian matters in the U.S. (73%). That contrast is striking, for example, between subject groups A and C: focus on activities in the U.S. (58%) as opposed to activities in the U.S. concerning Armenian matters outside the U.S. (15%). The contrast may be attributable to the fact that news

about activities of actors in this country is somewhat more accessible than news about actors and matters occurring outside the U.S. Still, the difference indicates primary interest in events in this country. Even when Groups C and D are combined (30%), the emphasis on subjects in Group A proves to be greater. Although Group B figures in only a small part of the overall picture (12%), the fact that it is there adds some significance to the whole. Apparently, it is of some importance to Armenian-Americans that the U.S. government, its leaders, and other Americans take an interest in Armenian concerns, including the achievements of Armenian-Americans in this country. In the instance of U.S. interest in Armenian concerns, the percentage portion may be low because U.S. attention to Armenian affairs was only beginning a renewal during the period these weeklies were examined.

Results from this study indicate that the function of these weeklies, and these alone, is best described by the term *integration* rather than *assimilation*. That is, the function of these weeklies is to encourage assumption of the predominant society's characteristics and, at the same time, to sustain sensibilities of origin in order to preserve visibility of Armenian-Americans among members of the majority society. In such a context, the term *integration* suggests and content analysis displays cohesion with rather than *fragmentation* of or *radical/dissident* attitudes toward the predominant society.

But before any final conclusion may be drawn about these weeklies, or the Armenian press in general, further study is needed, including studies of other ethnic newspapers. It may not be possible to define the ethnic press as a whole because of its diversity and the problems that diversity presents, especially over time, as Sollors and Kivisto point out. However, further work may avoid blanket descriptions of America's ethnic press under labels that describe only a few of its branches and, at the same time, may generate interest in forgotten branches of ethnic media, such as the Armenian press. Moreover, further work will aid in the effort to update old definitions and perspectives inherited from the past that create misconceptions about the whole of ethnic press and its current status within the class of mass media known as alternative journalism.

It is suggested that in future research consideration be given to comparative studies regarding the Armenian English-language press, the Armenian-language press, and the Armenian-language press with English supplements, as well as comparative studies regarding dailies, weeklies, and semi-weeklies. It would be useful, as well, to consider space allocation on various subject matter and its relationship to editorial decision, to measure changes in these papers over time, or to identify influences affecting development of new publications or demise of long-term publications. It is clear there are no easy answers to questions concerning the diverse ethnic press, to explanations of its role in American society, or its place in American journalism. More systematic research of the Armenian press and other ethnic media will be necessary before any generalizations about any one press group or the whole of ethnic press can be made.

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Notes

1. In one context, Park defines radical as a "cult" whose members are "martyrs" (p. 214), but generally his context infers alienation from the majority and disruptive behavior.
2. *The Armenian-American Almanac*, Hamo B. Vassilian, editor (1985), has a fairly complete catalogue of the various media resources and periodicals of Armenian churches, schools and organizations published in the United States. Listings include 15 newspapers, 10 journals and magazines, 65 newsletters and bulletins, and 42 church newsletters and bulletins. Both the Vassilian and Wynar (1976) directories show that only five newspapers are published in English and these are weeklies. Dependent on replies from contacted sources, neither reference is, understandably, complete or current on details concerning Armenian media listed in them.
3. Armenians are an ancient peoples who speak an Indo-European language. The Greek historian Herodotus, called the "Father of History," traces their origin to Thrace. It is believed they migrated to central Anatolia and populated an area bordered by the Black Sea on the north, the Mediterranean on the west, the Syrian desert on the south and Azerbaijan in the east. They were the first people in the pagan world to adopt the Christian religion as their national religion (301 A.D.) and for this they suffered massacres by invading Persians, Arabs, Turks, and

Azeris. The Turkish massacres in the 1880s and the 1915 genocide are annually memorialized to this day by Armenians here and abroad.

4. On December 7, 1988, an earthquake in Armenia measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale destroyed 199 institutions, left 514,000 homeless, killed 25,000 (official Soviet estimate, though other estimates reported 100,000), 6,000 of whom were children and teachers, and maimed countless others. Shortly after Gorbachev declared his *glasnost* policy in 1985, the Armenian people staged peaceful demonstrations calling for an independent and democratic state. But it was not until 1989 when the rest of the Soviet republics rose to challenge Moscow's domination that the western media took note of activities in Armenia and the ensuing conflict with Azerbaijan concerning Karabagh, once an Armenian territory and occupied mainly by Armenians, but now an autonomous oblast placed under Azerbaijani rule in 1923 by Stalin.
5. Dr. Dennis Papazian, professor of history and director, Center for Armenian Studies, Research and Publication, University of Michigan-Dearborn, personal communication, August 1989.
6. Dr. Dennis Papazian, personal communication, August 1989.
7. Proceeds for many of these events may have gone toward supporting the sponsoring organization which, in turn, may have given a portion of it to charity, but where the content gave no indication of this, this subject was coded as a non-educational/cultural event rather than a charity event.
8. It is a matter of record that the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) alone contributed \$5 million. A U.S. tally of funds collected showed \$34.5 million in contributions from private agencies and a sizeable portion of it was due to efforts by Armenian-American individuals, churches, and organizations other than the AGBU. Another charge was that the funds were being held in Swiss banks rather than reaching the victims. The problem here, according to Dr. Papazian, is that the Armenian infrastructure prior to *glasnost* had no flexibility to "administer the money creatively" and is now undergoing a period of transition from Communism to a democracy. Currently, Papazian adds, housing, schools, churches, and plants are under construction with donations from Armenian-Americans.

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