

# Rethinking Broadcasting Policy in a Global Media Environment

Marc Raboy

Once upon a time, states and governments representing the public interest could – if they wished – exercise a certain constraining influence on the appetite of commercial media. Conventional wisdom has it that era is past, although a healthy synergy still exists in many parts of the world between public policy instruments and objectives in the cultural sphere. Nonetheless, in the year 2002, it is useful – indeed imperative – to situate the future of the very idea of public service media in a global context.

Great national institutions in the heartland of public service broadcasting – western Europe, Canada, Japan, Australia – continue to occupy significant space in the media landscape. In the new democracies of Africa, Asia and central and eastern Europe, the public broadcasting model is seriously examined as an alternative to its strictly commercial counterpart. Public broadcasting no longer enjoys monopoly status, is no longer clearly distinguishable from the rest, but it remains an important reminder of the social and cultural possibilities of the media, in an age when the dominant thrust is overwhelmingly oriented towards consumerism (cf. Raboy 1996).

In this new, increasingly seamless global communication environment, public broadcasting is more than an outmoded utopian dream: It can be seen as a model for public policy development with respect to media in the context of globalization, new technologies and shifting terrains of audience demographics, loyalties and behavior patterns.

This chapter explores this issue, looking at some of its theoretical foundations as well as how it is playing out in actual policy sites. My goal is to validate the idea that it is time to start thinking about transnational and global approaches to public media. I shall begin by recalling some aspects of the concept of public broadcasting.

## The Idea of the Public

In a remarkable article published in the only issue of a short-lived Canadian journal in 1960, an adult education activist named Alan Thomas explored the distinctions between three notions of the same thing: the audience, the market, and the public (Thomas, 1960). Thomas reflected that the evolution of Canadian broadcasting had been dominated by the interaction between these different ways of describing the receiving end of broadcasting.

The market, Thomas noted, is characterized by attention to things rather than people; in the name of freedom of enterprise, it is attentive to the interests of “private” operators; in Canada, the market by nature tended to be continental rather than national, “and its uncontrolled operations have been seen as hostile to the existence of Canada as a national entity” (p. 22).

The public, on the other hand, is identified with the state and the community; Canada’s problem was how to create a genuine public out of separate geographic (as well as linguistic and cultural) communities: “The whole history of Canada has been a conflict between the public which is Canadian and the market which has been predominantly American” (p. 24). There was a conflict here between the classical Athenian notion of the public and the public that had developed with the age of broadcasting.

The audience is something else again, Thomas wrote. Considered passive, the audience is made up of members of a public, as well as a potential market, when they are tuned in. Unlike the public or the market, the audience is wholly a creation of broadcasting – it does not exist without it.

The crux of Thomas’ argument was that media tend to address people as members of an audience, not a public; media *policy*, however, attempts to restore the balance in broadcasting where market considerations have outstripped public ones in their relations with the audience. Audience and market tend to create a state of equilibrium. Restoring the role of the public requires some kind of intervention to counteract that.

Around the same time, in the U.S., the critical sociologist C. Wright Mills was tying the classical notion of the public to the critique of mass society, and saw a pivotal role being played by changing forms of communication. In 1956, analyzing the rise of the American ‘power elite’, Mills wrote that it “rests upon, and in some ways is part of, the transformation of the publics of America into a mass society” (Mills 1956 [1959]: 297).

The idea of the public in a context of globalization can be viewed through a similar lens. In *The Power Elite*, Mills recalled that the most important feature of “the public of opinion” that had arisen with the democratic middle class, was “the free ebb and flow of discussion” and the possibility of ‘answering back’ through autonomous organs of public opinion, actively realized within the established democratic institutions of power. (Thomas had written that one way of enhancing the role of the public was to create stronger two-way channels between producer and audience). The image of this clas-

sical democratic public was already something of an illusion in the 1950s America of which Mills wrote.

Mills reviewed the political process through which this had come about: the arrival of mass democracy upset the democratic society of publics, by placing the sovereignty of 'the people' over that of the individual. The harmony of interests assumed by the democratic society of publics had given way to the doctrine of class struggle. The idea of rational decisions based on public discussion was bypassed by the insistence on a need for experts, and by the notion of irrational man.

Mills then made a clear distinction between the public and the mass, a distinction he tied explicitly to the role of media. Nearly fifty years later, one can read in this work an opposition of the realities of conventional mass media and the promise or potential of the best offered by the so-called 'new media'. Or, one can read it as an opposition between the ideal and the reality of conventional nationally-based public service broadcasting, as Thomas might have. Mills was not talking about public broadcasting, and we have no evidence that he was even particularly aware of it. But his text, read alongside that of his contemporary, Thomas, allows us to think about the democratic possibilities of a new public service media model, grounded in the technological and geopolitical context of the 2000s.

## The idea of public broadcasting

Today's notion of the public collides and overlaps with other contested, still useful, notions that need to be re-problematized: notions such as community, nation, citizen, and consumer (cf. Yudice 1995). These concepts are tied together insofar as they are all possible discourses of legitimation for public policy intervention in various spheres of human activity, particularly for national states (cf. Garnham 2000).

The idea of the public, however, is a particularly useful construct when it comes to legitimating policy intervention with respect to media and communication (cf. Syvertsen 1999). What are the new discourses on public media in an age of global politics and instantaneous communication (cf. Graham and Davies 1997)? Can we speak of promoting and protecting normative values with respect to new media such as the Internet (cf. Grainger 1999)? Can we translate pre-globalization notions of the public, confined within the borders of national states, to anything approaching a transnational or global public sphere (cf. Sparks 1998; also Venturelli 1993)? Can there be such a thing as cultural rights and entitlements beyond the framework of the national welfare state (cf. Calabrese and Burgelman 1998)?

National peculiarities aside, questions concerning media structures are increasingly global ones. In the new broadcasting environment, the issue of public service broadcasting can be reduced to this: What social and cultural

goals attributed to broadcasting require a specially mandated, non-commercially driven organization, publicly owned, publicly funded to the extent necessary, and publicly accountable (cf. World Radio and Television Council 2000; Tongue 1996; Atkinson 1997)?

Broadcasters, politicians, media professionals and creative people, community activists, and scholars worldwide were wrestling with this question in the early 2000s. While the diagnosis is global, the prescriptions are necessarily context-specific. When we put them together, however, we find the basis for a global portrait and a sketch of a solution in the range of models, examples and ways of framing the issues.

The context of technological convergence and the accompanying policy debates can help to further clarify the concept of public service with respect to media generally and, hence, to develop a more appropriate conception of public service broadcasting. In telecommunication, for example, the concept of universal public service has been much more clear and straightforward than in broadcasting. The principle of universality has been tied to the operational provision of affordable access (not an issue in broadcasting as long as the main means of transmission was over-the-air, but increasingly so with the addition of various tiers of chargeable services).

The displacement of universal service by subscriber-based and pay-per-view services is the strongest factor favoring a shift towards the consumer model in broadcasting and proponents of public broadcasting feel that this needs to be countered by policy measures and institutional mechanisms to promote the democratic function of broadcasting. This can only come about through a rethinking of what we mean by public service broadcasting.

For example, traditionally, public service broadcasting has been expected to represent the national as opposed to the foreign. It may be time to refocus these conceptual categories in terms of the local and the global. Global cultural industries recognize this by developing products targeted to 'niche markets'. Public broadcasting has a different role, which it seeks to fulfil principally by conceiving of its audience as a public rather than a market. Some programs may speak to a particular national public, but on any given national territory there will be less-than-national broadcasting needs to be fulfilled. National networks can no longer be expected to be forces of cohesion; they can, however, be highly effective distribution systems for programs of importance to the communities they serve. For this to occur, public service broadcasting needs to be redefined in terms suitable to a new public culture, global in scope and experienced locally.

Nothing in the idea of public service broadcasting ties it intrinsically to that of nationhood. It is, however, necessarily linked to notions of community. In order to flourish in the future, public service broadcasting will need to be reconceptualized in the context of a changing role for the still-present, still formidable nation state. As the alternative to the state becomes the market, the alternative to national public service broadcasting has been constructed as private sector broadcasting; but this parallel is logically flawed as well as

politically shortsighted. The globalization of markets is both global and local, in that global products are usually produced according to a common standard, distributed worldwide and consumed locally, everywhere. As the nation state struggles to find its way in this new environment, so does public service broadcasting. It is false to assume, however, that there is no longer a need for public service broadcasting, for this is at present the only established medium that can still be said to place social and cultural concerns before the imperatives of the marketplace.

Today, despite the rapid move towards globalization, broadcasting is still legally constituted within the confines of national borders. Every national government is at some point faced with making basic decisions about broadcasting, if only to consider the allocation of frequencies to which it is entitled by international agreements. The immediate result of these decisions is a *national broadcasting system* in every country, made up of one or more component parts.

One encounters a variety of existing broadcasting institutions in this global environment. Despite a great variation from one country to the next, however, there are only three basic types of national system. Each one, while possibly encompassing different institutions, is built around a 'core' in which a particular institutional form is dominant. I call these three main types 'public service core systems', 'private enterprise core systems', and 'state core systems' (Raboy 1997).

Most of the countries we think about when we talk about public broadcasting in the conventional sense have established public service core systems. These are the systems in which companies like the BBC (UK), CBC (Canada), ABC (Australia) and so forth have flourished over the years. These are also the countries in which the question of financing has been most difficult recently. For obvious reasons, we have all been anxiously watching the evolution of these broadcasters and their efforts to adapt to the challenges of the new environment.

Public broadcasting has been relatively underdeveloped in those countries with private enterprise core systems, such as the USA, where public broadcasting was never intended to be the central component of the system. In private enterprise core systems, public broadcasting has been positioned as a marginal 'alternative' to commercial broadcasting.

The state core systems include the 'residual' systems of countries which have not yet broken with the tradition of a single, monolithic national broadcaster, as well as 'emergent' systems which, although built around a state-owned and controlled broadcaster, are opening up to alternative commercial and community voices, such as one finds in parts of Asia and Africa where democratization is on the agenda. They also include most of the former Soviet-bloc countries, which can be described as 'transitional', insofar as they seem to be inclined towards the existing dominant models.

This said, I think the most important thing to recognize now is that, in the context of globalization, *all of these hitherto national systems are merging*

*into a single global system made up of a mix of public, private and other types of broadcasters.* As an increasingly transnational political system emerges, new cross-border public service media are beginning to emerge, buttressed by the existing national frameworks. Television services such as TV5 and ARTE are examples of this. Associations of community radio broadcasters, video makers, and progressive Internauts abound at other points of the spectrum. The point is this: In a system that is predominantly influenced by market forces, an important place should be reserved for institutions that promote the cultural development on which the quality of democratic public life depends. This is a political project that can be approached from a perspective of media policy. In the very near future we need to begin paying a lot more attention to the *global ecology of broadcasting* as a public service environment.

### Transcending the national

In light of the growing commercialization of all media, public broadcasting continues to designate a strong value of social worth, the 'last best hope' for socially purposeful media acting in the public interest. But traditional public service broadcasters are all facing pressure to diversify funding sources and increase mass-market programming at the very time that all broadcasters' market shares are inevitably in decline (due to the sheer multiplicity of channels). Competition for revenues, meanwhile, both public and commercial, is more intense than ever (cf. McKinsey & Company 1999; Graham et al 1999).

It is now apparent that, in order to survive, every broadcaster needs to find a place for itself within an overall broadcasting system that is simultaneously both local and global. There is still no substitute for independent, publicly-funded public service broadcasting organizations, as the Council of Europe acknowledged in 1994 when it identified public broadcasting as essential to the healthy functioning of the media in a democratic society (Council of Europe 1994)<sup>1</sup>. But at the systemic level there is an important shift underway: increasingly, public authorities are looking towards the capacity of national broadcasting systems *as a whole* to meet public interest goals and objectives.

The inclusion of a European Protocol in favor of public service broadcasting in the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty was an important step in this direction (Council of the European Union 1997). This was one of the first concrete transnational agreements to support non-commercial practices in the sphere of culture. It made the point that despite the emphasis on markets and trade in international agreements, national governments could still legitimately make policies and promote cultural institutions that would foster values and objectives outside the sphere of commerce. Not only did this declaration demonstrate the power of politicians to resist commercial pressures, it was the first and to this date most substantial example of a cultural

exception to the new rules of deregulation that are being negotiated and applied by transnational authorities. It is no coincidence that this occurred in the area of public broadcasting. It is both an interesting policy model and a harbinger of the possible usefulness of the public broadcasting model in developing new public media forms in the transnational, convergence-driven media environment.

The EU protocol considers “that the system of public broadcasting in the Member States (of the European Union) is directly related to the democratic, social and cultural needs of each society and to the need to preserve media pluralism”. This in itself is important in terms of legitimation of public service broadcasting at a time when its basis is under attack on both ideological and economic grounds. It links public broadcasting to the question of democracy, emphasizes its sociocultural nature as a public service, and underscores the distinctive role of public broadcasting in an otherwise uniformly commercial system.

The European Broadcasting Union remarked that this was “the first time that the role and specific nature of public service broadcasting have been explicitly recognized within the legal framework of the European Union” (European Broadcasting Union 1997: 1). The Protocol represented a political consensus and sent an important signal, according to the EBU, but “the effectiveness of this guarantee will probably depend on a clear, sufficiently broad definition being set out by each Member State of the public service remit conferred upon the public service broadcasting organizations” (p. 1).

## Multilateralism

The question of public media has also figured prominently in recent debates at the multilateral level. The World Commission on Culture and Development, created in 1991 by the United Nations and UNESCO, reported to the UNESCO General Assembly in November 1995 (UN/UNESCO, 1995). In a broad review of cultural issues ranging from ethics to the environment, the WCCD proposed an international agenda for developing global policy with respect to cultural development. Several chapters and proposals relating to mass media and new global issues in mass communication were framed by the following question: “*How can the world’s growing media capacities be channelled so as to support cultural diversity and democratic discourse?*” (p. 123-7)

The WCCD recognized that while many countries were dealing individually with various important aspects of this question, the time had come for a transfer of emphasis from the national to the international level. While many countries still needed to be incited to put in place or modernize existing national frameworks, a transfer of attention was now justified.

Can we envisage a world public sphere in which there is room for alternative voices? Can the media professionals sit down together with policy-makers and consumers to work out mechanisms that promote access and a diversity of expression despite the acutely competitive environment that drives the media moguls apart? (p. 117)

The WCCD admitted that it did not have ready answers to these questions, but that answers had to be sought through international dialogue. It envisioned “a common ground of public interest on a transnational scale...that different national approaches can be aligned, that broadly acceptable guidelines could be elaborated... that new international rules are not a pipe-dream but could emerge through the forging of transnational alliances across the public and private media space” (p. 117).

In short, “There is room for an international framework that complements national regulatory frameworks” (p. 117).

The WCCD’s international agenda contained a series of specific proposals aimed at “enhancing access, diversity and competition of the international media system”, based on the assertion that the airwaves and space are “part of the global commons, a collective asset that belongs to all humankind” (p. 278). It suggested that the time may have come for commercial media interests that now use the global commons free of charge to contribute to the financing of a more plural media system, where “new revenue could be invested in alternative programming for international distribution” (p. 278). Finally, it called for the United Nations system to explore appropriate global mechanisms analogous to national models of public service broadcasting.

One of the most crucial aspects of this question that needs to be addressed is how to avoid such a discussion becoming yet another debate among states, each representing its own national interest and those of its partners in the private sector, rather than among a global public dealing with global issues, across national borders and in quest of a global public interest.

The “Action Plan for Cultural Policies for Development”, adopted at the 1998 UNESCO-sponsored Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development in Stockholm, provided some important examples that can serve as a starting point for discussion on such matters (UNESCO 1998). The conference endorsed a dozen principles including the fundamental right of access to and participation in cultural life, and the cultural policy objective of establishing structures and securing adequate resources necessary to create an environment conducive to human fulfillment. Among the relevant policy recommendations, the conference asked UNESCO member states to:

- Promote communication networks that serve the cultural and educational needs of the public;
- Consider providing public radio and television;
- Promote space for community, linguistic and minority services;

- Adopt or reinforce national efforts that foster media pluralism and freedom of expression;
- Promote the development and use of new technologies and new communication and information services at affordable prices.

The appearance of such an action plan endorsed by 140 governments under the sponsorship of a world intergovernmental organization was certainly uplifting, but the subtext and context surrounding its adoption also pointed to the difficulties that lay ahead. It took two-and-a-half years to organize the Stockholm Conference, following the tabling of the WCCD Report on which the working documents presented in Stockholm were based. The proactive thrust of that report, based on the use of existing policy mechanisms and the extension of the national policy logic to the global level, did not survive the diplomatic horse-trading that culminated in the Action Plan adopted in Stockholm.

Furthermore, the draft version of the action plan presented at the outset of the conference was far more affirmative in encouraging member states to provide public radio and television (rather than merely “consider” their provision), and in calling for international as well as national legislation to promote media pluralism. Significantly, a proposal that such legislation foster “competition and prevent excessive concentration of media ownership” was changed to refer instead to “freedom of expression”. A proposal to “promote the Internet as a universal public service by fostering connectivity and not-for-profit user consortia and by adopting reasonable pricing policies” disappeared from the final text.<sup>2</sup>

## Globalization

As we have seen, the limits and possibilities of policymaking are cast into sharp relief by the various aspects of what has come to be known as globalization – a situation that I would define as being characterized by the following six broad characteristics: the diminishing sovereignty of national states; the increasing integration of the world economy; the technologically-based shrinking of time and space; the passing of received ideas about identity; the emergence of new geographically dispersed yet locally-based global networks; and the establishment of a new framework for global governance.

In the sphere of media and communication, public policy has historically sought to overcome the constraints of scarce resources – as in the case of radio, (and later) television air waves, for example. In today’s information environment, scarcity is no longer the problem, the problem is access. Today’s policy issues must address the problems raised by information abundance and the need to be sure that this cornucopia of information is mean-

ingly accessible to citizens and not only packaged as marketable commodities or targeted to elites.

Access to the means of communication can be defined from the point of view of the receiver or from that of the producer, as the capacity to receive everything that is available or as the possibility to bring one's messages to the audience. To the extent that market forces alone can never guarantee access, in either of these terms, governments, regulatory authorities and media institutions must develop and implement policies designed to maximize access. The need to ensure access thus remains an important justification of the need for public policy in the sphere of communication.

Regulation, too, still has a role to play in ensuring equitable access to distribution markets for producers and consumers, and in ensuring that the means of communication can be channeled towards social and cultural objectives. Regulatory frameworks may vary considerably from one context to another, but they are always, necessarily in democratic societies, part of a public policy process (Bollinger 1990). Opening up the process of policymaking, policy evaluation and regulation to broader public participation is therefore an important aspect of access to communication (cf. Raboy 1995).

Access is also one of the key operative concepts of models that see communication technologies as instruments of social and cultural development. In general, this requires mechanisms to ensure accessibility to channels of production and distribution for all those capable of rallying a minimal public, increasing interactivity in the relations between creators and their publics, and providing for feedback which can ultimately result in corrective measures.

According to classical liberal press theory, unconstrained access to the marketplace is considered to be the best guarantee for the free expression of ideas. The limitations of the market mechanism in providing freedom of information eventually generated its own critique, in light of which the idea that access to the means of communication needed legal and even constitutional assurances rapidly gained currency in the 20th century (Barron 1967).

In countries such as Canada, Australia, Japan and most of western Europe, access to *reception* was guaranteed in the charters of public broadcasting organizations, whose mandates obliged them to make their signals available throughout the territories in which they operated. To a greater or lesser degree, many of these organizations were also non-commercial and required to provide a range of diverse opinion in their programming.

With the emergence of an increasingly seamless global communication environment, critics concerned about the socio-cultural role and democratic function of media have had to refocus their attention. The new context of technological 'convergence' between established communication forms demands that we develop a new conception of access.

To illustrate, consider what happens when conventional broadcast media and telecommunication technologies converge. The notion of access has

traditionally meant different things in broadcasting and in telecommunication. In the broadcasting model, emphasis is placed on the receiver, and access refers to the capacity to choose from the entire range of content on offer. In the telecommunication model, emphasis is on the sender, and access refers to the capacity to use the means of communication to get one's messages out. Within these two models, public policy and regulation have been recognized as necessary social measures for guaranteeing access.

In the context of new media, a hybrid conception of access is necessary, and public policy will need to promote a model of communication which combines the social and cultural objectives of established institutional forms – not only broadcasting and telecommunication, but also libraries, the education system, and so on. Critically, realizing the social and cultural potential of new media requires ensuring maximum access for people to the means of communication *both* in their capacity as receivers and consumers of services *and* as producers and senders of messages (see Hanada 1999).

A policy model directed at maximizing the potential of new media should therefore address the following:

- How to ensure access to both available content and the means of communication
- How to balance universal services and costs that can be left to users
- How to guarantee free choice and fair access
- How to distinguish between public communication and private information
- How to promote both cultural and economic development
- How to situate the user as both citizen and consumer
- How to facilitate both public participation in society and quality of life

This is not merely a structural issue. At the same time as we need to develop new mechanisms, the explosion of information and communication technologies requires us to begin thinking differently about *how* and *to what end* public authorities – at whatever level – can and should intervene. In short, we need a *new paradigm* for media policy, appropriate to the geopolitical and technological context in which we are now living.<sup>3</sup>

This environment is characterized by a number of new developments. The most significant of these is that communication policy is no longer 'made' at any clearly definable location, but across a range of sites<sup>4</sup>. Specific policy issues, such as copyright or rules governing property transactions or Internet regulation, migrate from one level to another and are often the flash point of conflicts between jurisdictions. Global organizations, such as the World Trade Organization, have superseded national bodies as the supreme instance of policy definition. Exclusive multilateral 'clubs', like the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development or the G8, impose their own agenda

on the lesser economies without even being democratically accountable to their own national constituencies. International trade agreements, such as NAFTA, further constrain the capacities of participating states – while, paradoxically, the national state continues to be the main location for communication and cultural policy debate.

This complex and multifaceted general structure makes it extremely difficult to intervene effectively in the new policy environment. Something akin to a global civil society may well be emerging, but for the moment its links to power and influence are tenuous. At this point, the only actor that has been managing to pursue an agenda with anything approaching consistency is the transnational private sector and concrete policy developments at every level are still being driven essentially by economic concerns. These focus today mostly on the new information and communication technologies and particularly on areas of ‘convergence’ between new and established media forms.

New media have opened the possibility for unprecedented freedom of expression and information flow, but if we are not careful, freedom from state control will be replaced by an even more insidious form of corporate control that is now taking place. Unlike state control, corporate control is first of all structural; it is built in to the architecture of information systems, by designs intended to maximize the possibility for efficient and streamlined profit-taking, rather than effective uses (cf. Lessig 1999).

This is fundamentally and ultimately a governance issue. Traditionally, approaches to communication governance have spanned the spectrum from the authoritarian to the libertarian, with a broad middle ground covering such institutions as public service broadcasting, PTTs, and commercial media (cf. Golding 1998). In actual practice, virtually every modern communication system in the world functions within a regime that is circumscribed and characterized by some degree of national regulation.

I would then suggest that *a regulatory model for communication* governance is the appropriate policy choice for promoting a new global approach to public media. This raises the question of legitimacy for intervening at all in a sector that ought, by definition, to be ‘free’. There is not necessarily a contradiction between regulation and the value of freedom: it all depends on what is regulated and how one decides to regulate – as well as on what basis regulation is justified (cf. Hoffmann-Riem 1996; Machet and Robillard 1998).

The main justification for regulating communication is that regulation provides an opportunity for meeting non-market public policy objectives. This is especially important in a context where the meeting of such objectives has to be spread across a range of organizations within the complex world system that we have today.

In general, the role of regulation would be to determine the public interest with respect to media and communication, on an ongoing basis and with regard to specific issues. This is too fine a job to be done by governments in

the course of their general activities. It can not be left to the media organizations themselves, for they have necessarily vested interests. The marketplace is too blunt an instrument. Citizens can individually and through their collective associations articulate their expectations, but they have no power for implementing them. So what is the solution?

A regulatory model appropriate to the new communication environment created by technological convergence must build on the basic 'pre-convergence' forms that it has eclipsed. When these converge, approaches to regulation must converge as well.

To return to my starting point, none of this will soon make any sense unless the policymaking capacity that used to reside in individual national states is translated to the transnational level and made accountable to a global political constituency. This would then make it possible to begin thinking about intervening globally on a range of important issues that could include:

- Regulation of commercial activities in the public interest, to guarantee equitable access and basic services;
- Funding and institutional support for the creation and sustaining of public service and independent not-for-profit media;
- Placing limits on corporate controls resulting from transnational concentration of ownership in new and conventional media and telecommunications;
- Guarantees of access to available media channels on the basis of public interest criteria;
- Development of universal codes and standards for curtailing the spread of abusive contents;
- Facilitating networking capacity through communication technologies of not-for-profit organizations;
- Provision of public communication spaces for conflict resolution and democratic dialogue on global issues.

This may well be a utopian program. But the very possibility of channeling public media for the good of humanity makes it essential to try turning that dream into reality, even if it means pushing the boundaries of imagination in new and audacious directions.

## Notes

1. This is in keeping with other work the Council has sponsored in the sphere of cultural policy, most recently with respect to the importance of enhancing public access to the new ICTs as a way of closing the "digital divide". This work is to be distinguished from the pious statements that emanate from time to time from organizations such as the OECD and G8, which essentially seek to stake out a legitimating discursive framework for pushing

forward the agenda of the global corporate sector. Learning to distinguish between these is a highly valuable skill that scholars such as ourselves can bring to the emerging global media policy debates.

2. As this paper was being written, a World Summit on the Information Society had just been convened by the International Telecommunications Union. That event, scheduled for December 2003, will mark another stage in the evolving multilateral policy discussion in media and communication.
3. On the idea of instituting transnational and global mechanisms as an enabling framework for national policies, see Reinicke 1998.
4. For an extended discussion of this point, see Raboy 2002.

## References

- Atkinson, Dave (1997) "Public Service Television in the Age of Competition." In D. Atkinson and M. Raboy, *Public Service Broadcasting: the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- Barron, Jerome A. (1967) "Access to the Press – A New First Amendment Right". *Harvard Law Review* 80, 8, pp. 1641-1678.
- Bollinger, Lee (1990) "The Rationale of Public Regulation of the Media." In J. Lichtenberg (ed.) *Democracy and the Mass Media* Cambridge, p. 355.
- Calabrese, Andrew and Jean-Claude Burgelman (eds.) (1999) *Communication, Citizenship, and Social Policy: Re-thinking the Limits of the Welfare State*. Totowa, N-J: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Council of the European Union (1997) *Draft Treaty of Amsterdam*. "Protocol on the System of Public Broadcasting in the Member States." Brussels, August 1997.
- Council of Europe (1994) *The Media in a Democratic Society*. Fourth European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy, Prague, 7-8 December.
- European Broadcasting Union (1997) *EBU Legal Committee Information Document*, No. 10, Geneva, June.
- Garnham, Nicholas (2000) *Emancipation, the Media, and Modernity. Arguments about the Media and Social Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Golding, Peter (1998) "New Technologies and Old Problems: Evaluating and Regulating Media Performance in the 'Information Age'." In K. Brants, J. Hermes and L. van Zoonen, *The Media in Question: Popular Culture and Public Interests*. London: Sage, pp. 7-17.
- Graham, Andrew et al. (1999) *Public Purposes in Broadcasting. Funding the BBC*. Luton: University of Luton Press.
- Graham, Andrew and Gavyn Davies (1997) *Broadcasting, Society and Policy in the Multimedia Age*. Luton: John Libbey Media / University of Luton Press.
- Grainger, Gareth (1999) "Broadcasting Coregulation and the Public Good." The 1999 Spry Memorial Lecture, Graham Spry Fund for Public Broadcasting, Montreal/Vancouver. <http://www.fas.umontreal.ca/COM/spry/spry-gg-lec.html>.
- Hanada, Tatsuro (1999) "Digital Broadcasting and the Future of the Public Sphere." *Studies of Broadcasting* 34, pp. 9-40.
- Hoffmann-Riem, Wolfgang (1996) *Regulating Media: The Licensing and Supervision of Broadcasting in Six Countries*. New York: Guilford.
- Lessig, Lawrence (1999) *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace*. New York: Basic Books.
- Machet, Emmanuelle and Serge Robillard (1998) *Télévision et culture: Politiques et réglementation en Europe*. Dusseldorf: European Institute for the Media.
- McKinsey & Company (1999) *Public Service Broadcasters Around the World*. London: McKinsey & Company.
- Mills, C. Wright (1956 [1959]) *The Power Elite*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Raboy, Marc (1995) "Access to Policy, Policies of Access". *Javnost / The Public*, 2, 4, pp. 51-61.

- Raboy, Marc (1996) *Public Broadcasting for the Twenty-first Century*. Luton: John Libbey Media / University of Luton Press.
- Raboy, Marc (1997) "The World Situation of Public Service Broadcasting: Overview and Analysis." In *Public Service Broadcasting: Cultural and Educational Dimensions*. Paris: UNESCO, pp. 19-56.
- Raboy, Marc (2002) "Media Policy in the New Communications Environment." In M. Raboy (ed.) *Global Media Policy in the New Millennium*. Luton: University of Luton Press.
- Reinicke, Wolfgang H. (1998) *Global Public Policy: Governing without Government?* Washington: Brookings Institution Press.
- Sparks, Colin (1998) "Is there a Global Public Sphere?" In D. Thussu (ed.) *Electronic Empires: Global Media and Local Resistance*. London: Arnold, pp. 108-124.
- Syvetsen, Trine (1999) "The Many Uses of the Public Service Concept." *Nordicom Review* 1, pp. 5-12.
- Thomas, Alan M. (1960) "Audience, Market and Public – An Evaluation of Canadian Broadcasting." *Canadian Communications* 1, pp. 16-47.
- Tongue, Carole (1996) *The Future of Public Service Television in a Multi-Channel Digital Age*. European Parliament Committee of Culture, Youth, Education, Sports and the Media, Strasbourg, September.
- UN/UNESCO. *Our Creative Diversity*. Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development (chaired by Javier Perez de Cuellar). Paris: World Commission on Culture and Development, 1995.
- UNESCO (1998) "Action Plan for Cultural Policies for Development", adopted at the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (Stockholm, 30 March – 2 April 1998). Paris.
- Venturelli, Shalini S. (1993) "The Imagined Transnational Public Sphere in the European Community's Broadcast Philosophy: Implications for Democracy." *European Journal of Communication* 8, pp. 491-518.
- World Radio and Television Council (2000) *Public Broadcasting. Why? How?* Montreal: World Radio and Television Council / Centre d'études sur les médias.
- Yudice, George (1995) "Civil Society, Consumption and Governmentality in an Age of Global Restructuring." *Social Text* 14, 4 (no. 45), pp. 1-26.

