The techno-globalist ideology, which encourages illicit influence-peddling in the great international organisations where the new planetary order of communications networks is being discussed, also nourishes visions of a transparent and egalitarian "communication society." It further contributes to blurring the issue of power by ignoring the differentiation among societies and the existence of a balance of forces among them, and by shunning the collective interest. --Armand Mattelart (1999, p.5)

Historically, it has been argued that ever since the Bible was translated into the vernacular that a clamor began for access to message-making; now, in our current era of revolutionary information changes throughout the world, it is critical to consider the role of community media toward that process. The definitions may have been altered, but the aim remains the same. Access, for example, can refer to cable television programming that is public, educational, and/or governmental (PEG), prepared and delivered by private citizens or nonprofit groups and institutions on a first-come, first-served basis. Or it might refer to ideological, cultural, even physical individual involvement in media that could include print, broadcasting, and/or any number of existing or emerging technologies. Jan Van Cuilenburg (1999, p.185) supplies this definition of access to communications: "The possibility for individuals, groups of individuals, organizations and institutions to share..."
society’s communications resources, that is, to participate in the market of communications infrastructure and distribution (message delivery) services, and in the market of content and communication services.” Public access in its purest form operates non-hierarchically, produced by artistic, advocacy-oriented volunteers. Analogies have been drawn between Gutenberg’s invention of the printing press in the 15th century and the innovation of community media in the 20th in terms of citizen access. Describing Public Access to the Internet, co-editor James Keller (1996, pp.34-35) points out how it is "entwined in matters of technology, law, economics and, increasingly, sociology and organizational behavior. By public access we mean not only establishing physical connections to the network, but also ensuring that those connections are easy to use, affordable, and provide access to a minimum set of information resources." King and Mele (1999, p.604), redefining traditional notions of the public sphere such that local citizens, from various backgrounds, are included, state: In a medium otherwise dominated by advertisements, canned programming and audience-tested newscasting, public access offers possibilities to probe and address topics and concerns underrepresented in mainstream media. Most media activists envision public access channels as electronic public spaces where issues and concerns central to local communities are brought to the fore and resolved through discussion and dissemination. They see public access as not only critiquing commercial television but challenging it. Considering mass communication as public, Hollander and Stappers (1992, p.19) decide, "Community communication is then a form of public communication, of making public and creating a public within the context of a specific community (geographical and/or community of interest)." They identify three
Empirical research approaches: localism-cosmopolitism, integration or community ties approach, and community structure; then, they call for an integrated model that allows for the dynamics of local media interacting with local people in a community context. Dov Shinar (1994, p.1) offers this conception of spatial maps for local and community media:

1. "Economic/civil space," between, rather than in, the traditional state/market borders;
2. "Social space," between, rather than in, social networks defined by newer technologies, that are too big or too small and thus socially irrelevant;
3. "Political space," between, rather than in, the current tribal "Jihad" and global "McWorld."

Participatory action, which focuses on the social scientific method of observation and insight, can inform the process of change. Historically extended to Aristotelian notions of self-reflection, it relates to the Greek notion of "praxis," and hence is equated with the idea of critically informed practice. Philosophically, the roots for community media are grounded in John Stuart Mill's social libertarian theory; practically, the skills accrued from involvement with one's media are critical to accomplishments toward media literacy, even to empowerment (Higgins, 1999).

Community communications/media as a concept referring to how individuals and organizations involve publics in participatory means of airing issues takes many different forms, depending on time and place. Lauding its provision of access and opportunity so that citizens can help determine community development, Crispin C. Maslog (1997, p.3) cites these characteristics of community media:

1. Owned and controlled by people in the community;
2. Usually smaller and low-cost;
3. Provides interactive two-way communication;
4. Non-profit and autonomous, therefore, non-commercial;
5. Limited coverage or reach;
> 6. Utilize appropriate, indigenous materials and resources;
> 7. Reflect community needs and interests;
> 8. Its programs or content support community development.
> While it may be difficult to pinpoint when and where the notion of community media began, the phenomenon in North America, notably Canada and the United States, started in the 1970s (Pool, 1973; Gillespie, 1975; Kellner, 1992; Fuller, 1984, 1993; Engelman, 1996; Linder, 1999; Starr, 2000). It soon caught on in Europe (Jankowski, Prehn, and Stappers, 1992; Lundby, 1992; Rushton, 1993;
> Spa, Garitaonandia, and Lopez, 1999) and other pockets around the world, but still is just now catching on in developing countries. Most of the research on community media has related to television (Avery, 1993; Fuller, 1994), but other global programming efforts deal with radio (Girard, 1992; Hochheimer, 1992;
> Land, 1999), video (Alvarado, 1988; Aufderheide, 1993; Renov and Suderburg, 1995; Fontes, 1996; Ross, 1999), and other forms for delivering messages that can help develop community identity (Ramirez, 1986; Lewis, 1993; Riano, 1994).
> At root is advocacy and activism, dating to a legacy from the 1960s that continues to the present (e.g., Bobo, Kendall, and Max, 1991; ROAR, 1991;
> Ryan, 1991; Boyle, 1996; Hazen and Winokur, 1997; Wayne, 2000). It seems appropriate to give some background to how this book has evolved.
> As the author of Community Television in the United States: A Sourcebook on Public, Educational, and Governmental Access (Greenwood, 1994), I have long wanted to extend that study to include wider efforts. When Carlos Fontes, who had done his dissertation on the topic of alternative media, joined the faculty at Worcester State College, I suggested a collaboration; although he was unable to
continue as co-editor, his early ideas and continuing support have been invaluable and he is working on a chapter relative to alternative video in a global context.

Cooperation also has come from members of the Community Media Working Group of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR),

the International Communication Association (ICA), the World Communication Association (WCA), the Union for Democratic Communication (UDC), and the international division of The Alliance for Community Media. Potential contributors were encouraged to delineate the phenomenon of grassroots broadcasting/narrowcasting and video efforts in their areas, incorporating examples that included historical, economic, political, ideological, socio-cultural, and/or anecdotal case study reportage where available.

Audience, advocacy, producer, and administrative considerations were also encouraged.

Responses to the Call for Participation in this project yielded a wide range of interpretations and examples that, in the end, became an editor’s dream. By their very nature, they divided themselves into the following divisions: aboriginal/indigenous experiences, current case studies, and virtual community visions. Despite the initial plan for extending my own research on American community television to include other global efforts, it soon became clear that the state of community media around the world is in some instances in a process of evolution, in others more like revolution.

My family teased me when a reviewer labeled my work "neo-Habermasian," (see Habermas, 1965, 1990) but the notion of commitment to communications applications in the public sphere does, in fact, guide my scholarship. Many of the scholars represented here also agree on the need for access to and education about information that affects the public good. Public service broadcasting,

we
contend, should be an institutional guarantor; it is why we fear and fight
against the trend toward media ownership by a handful of moguls who want
to
mediate our messages.
What follows is a brief description of some of the chapters already
in place
for
this book, organized into the categories that inform the subtitle for
COMMUNITY
MEDIA: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES: Aboriginal/Indigenous Experiences,
Current
Case Studies, and Virtual Community Visions. Alphabetically, they include
reports on the Asian Pacific region, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium,
Brazil,
Bulgaria, Cameroon, Finland, France, Ghana, Israel, Japan, Mexico,
Namibia,
Native Americans, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, the United
Kingdom, and a number of other general areas and visions.

1. Aboriginal/Indigenous Experiences
As we enter the new millennium, replete with sophisticated
technological
advances that continue to dazzle us on a daily basis, it stops us to learn
about
communities that are just beginning to learn how to use their own media to
communicate within and amongst themselves. Distinguishing between
indigenous
and ethnic media, the former characterized by having inhibited an area or
region
and having sovereignty over it long before anyone else, Browne (1996)
makes
a
striking argument about how the dominant media distort rather than
preserve
it.
Korula Varghese (1995, p.144) argues that community access to channel
space
on
(often state-owned) broadcast networks in developing countries can provide
a
sustainable alternative for community communication needs: "The emergence
of
the alternative paradigm and its emphasis on indigenous media, along with
the
associated criticism of mass media as one-way, centralized and expensive,
contributed to a virtual delegitimatization of the potential of mass media
in participative development." Although the literature on aboriginal and
indigenous peoples working with their media is limited (Browne, 1996;
Cooper, 1998; Daley and James, 1998; Alia, 1999), chapters here represent
groundbreaking resistances to mainstream media hegemony.
Australia: Joy Morrison's "A Voice of Their Own: Indigenous Resistance to
Broadcasting Hegemony" examines the broadcasting infrastructure that the
Australian state provides to its indigenous minority of Aboriginal peoples.
Mexico: Analyzing the role played by video technologies in the
Oaxaca indigenous communities, Carmen Gomez Mont reports on interviews with video artists as
well as festivals and meetings that underscore the educational interplay
between new information technologies and local inhabitants.
Native Americans: Ritva Levo-Henriksson of Finland's "Media as a Constructor
of Ethnic Minority Identity: A Native American Case Study" goes beyond media
(mainly Hollywood) representations to report on her own first-hand experience
with Hopis and Navajos in Arizona. Discussing how Native American media has
traditionally depended on oral communication to promote native language and
culture, she concludes: "To narrow the gaps and to develop understanding
between native communities and the majority, mainstream culture, they must
find such cultural interpreters and media professionals in both cultures who
understand the nature of technology and the cultures and aims of the people
of native communities."

2. Current Case Studies
At the heart of interest in community media are lessons learned and
models for
success that might move us from theoretical to practical applications. Of particular note is a running theme on the role of language and culture, as evidenced in the chapters on Belgium, Finland, Spain, and Switzerland.

Asian Pacific region: Saule Barlybayeva and Alma Rustemova of Kazakhstan apply an important overview of "Features of Asian Community Communications," particularly as they relate to emerging technologies like cable television and satellites.

Bangladesh: "Usefulness of Television as an Agricultural Information Medium Among Farmers: An Empirical Study from Bangladesh," by M. Abul Kashem, presents a classic example of how broadcasting can be operationalized for citizen betterment.

Belgium: Frieda Saeys and Tomas Coppens tell quite a story in "The Short Life Span of Community Broadcasting in Belgium." Tracing the role of radio and television in terms of government dictums and the three Belgian cultural-linguistic communities, theirs is a critical cautionary tale.

Brazil: Rogerio Santana Lourenco, reporting on his experiences with the Brazilian Association of Popular Video, highlights the role of video production as discourse in his chapter, "Video-Identity: Images and Sounds of Citizenship Construction in Brazil."


France: "Television Channels and Regional Spaces in Europe," by Jacques Guyot, points out how regional or local dimensions have become factors as national television systems continue to be called into question. Using what
sociologist
Marc Fumaroli refers to when he says that French television is "the other wing of the Cultural State," Guyot outlines the political foundations of television in Europe and traces the roles of audiovisual groups in terms of cultural identity and democracy.
Ghana: Kwasi Ansu-Kyeremeh's "Implications of Globalization for Community Broadcasting in Ghana" examines how the nature, content, and operation of electronic media systems in Ghana indicate "foreignization," or the domination of foreign values on its broadcasting practices. Frightening as his scenario is, it nevertheless offers a powerful argument for recognizing indigenous communication.
Ireland: Sean O Siochru discusses implications for community television in "From Radio Waves to Digital Days," relative to a proposed Broadcasting Bill for Ireland.
Israel: "Vox Populi or Fox Populi?Community Television Practice and Future in View of its Implementation in Israel," by Hillel Nossek, offers a unique idiosyncratic model and lessons. What began about ten years ago with broadcasts and programs produced in Kibbutzim and then took a turn with the advent of cable television are brought up to the present.
Japan: Toshiko Miyazaki, who has long followed the emergence of community media, includes the following in her chapter "Citizens and Media: Three Case Studies on Public Access in Japan": survey research on video production by citizen groups and field research on both rural and urban community cable television stations. They demonstrate factors which lead people to or hinder them from expressing themselves in public, and how peoples' view toward society can change through experiences with media production.
Nicaragua: Humberto Abaunza, Director Adjunto of Fundacion Puntos de...
Encuentro, describes projects his organization has done, using multimedia, to promote anti-violence and empower young people.

Singapore: From a participant observational perspective, Linda K. Fuller provides a description of Singapore's first attempt toward community television, which she labels "the only example of its kind in the world." Government directed ("top-down"), its current status some four years later serves as a critical case study.

South Africa: Karen Thorne, president of Videazimut and a media consultant for the Media For Change Agency, has put together a document called "Towards a Sustainable Development Strategy," detailing South Africa's "bottom up" struggle toward community media.

Spain: "A Television to Save a Language and a Culture: The Basque Case," by Carmelo Garitaonandia, recalls the Belgian story on the role of language in community media. Radio Television of the Basque Country (ETTB), created in 1983 to serve more than two million people, supplies some 5,600 hours per year in the Basque language of "euskara," such that the media have played a key role in normalizing its use in all areas of social life.

Switzerland: "Probably the only country in the world where integration? and entertainment? are defined as main goals for radio and television in the Constitution," Swiss media is analyzed by Louis Bosshart.

United Kingdom: Dave Rushton and Sandy Stuart of the Local Television Management and Production unit at Queen Margaret's College Edinburgh present an historical and practical view of developments there.

3. Virtual Community Visions

Inspired by the work of Benedict Anderson's 1983 book Imagined Communities,
interest has escalated with the introduction of the Internet and its capabilities for actually bringing together people with mutual interests, despite geographic limitations. Appropriately, most of that literature is quite recent (e.g., Kahin and Keller, 1996; Shields, 1996; Fuller, 1997; Hauben and Hauben, 1997; Jones, 1998; Sudweeks, McLaughlin, and Rafaeli, 1998; Smith and Kollock, 1999).

A subset of this notion is the idea of community communication centers, bridging local educational, political, and social services (Bushong, 1995; Maslog et al, 1997; Chow et al, 1998). Both governments and educational institutions are learning the importance of investing not only in telecommunications infrastructure but also in citizen teleliteracy. Knut Lundby (1992, p.1) calls it a communication environment: "A socio-material and symbolic setting for communicating people."

Alliance for Community Media: Dirk Koning, executive director of the Community Media Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a model access center, has been a pioneer in this Washington-based organization that was formerly known as the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP). Active at both national and international levels, his perspective encourages us to move from early experiments with radio to sharing knowledge and context, equipment and technology, and transmissions "via cable, radio, Internet, fax, phone, , whatever."

Community Media Association (CMA): Steve Buckley, director of CMA, which is secretariat for the Local Independent Television Network, discusses not only the development of local television in the United Kingdom but also the role of community radio around the world.

Community Media Visioning Partners: Chuck Sherwood, co-partnering with another
longtime practitioner in Public Access and Community Media, Rika Welsh, describes this new venture, which they call "Bridging the Transition."

Working with nonprofit access corporations, franchising authorities, and the network of other cable franchise renewal specialists in the U.S., Sherwood sees the convergence of cable, computers, and the Internet critical to helping transitions for new means of community media, with Internet TV and web radio just the beginning.

The Internet and the Future of Community Television: John Higgins considers community television as a social movement. His discussion includes comments on the increasing concentration of information and opinion in the hands of a few powerful media conglomerates; the shrinking of the public space as areas formerly open to and sponsored by the public become corrupted by escalating commercialization; and the resultant decline in public discourse as these formerly public spaces yield to commercial speech; in short, the decline of public democracy.

Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA): John Barker, Regional Coordinator of the Campaign for Broadcasting Diversity for MISA, discusses the history, philosophy, and activities of the organization, with particular emphasis on his home country of Namibia.

Media Libre: Jeffrey Hansell and Nathalie Magnan have expressed an interest in surveying various collectives, pirate television stations, and media centers throughout France, many which operate as viable alternatives for diversity even without public access channels per se.

Open Channel: Christer Hederstrom of Sweden provides a challenging overview
national television in Europe, focusing on government ownership/public
service,
commercial aspects, and cultural imperialism. Next, he discusses the role
of
public access, tracing the development of Open Channels in Germany,
Holland,
Denmark, Finland, Sweden, the U.K., Israel, Spain, Turkey, and France.
Virtual communities: Concetta M. Stewart and Mary S. Pileggi, both
of Temple
University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, provide an invaluable framework
for
examining metaphors relative to global information infrastructure (GII)
and
their social consequences for, as they say in their chapter,
"Conceptualizing
Community: Implications for Policymaking in a Cyberage."
Visionaries: Susan Rutkowski and Bill Mosher report on their
program, out of
Suffolk University, to get students directly involved in community media
work.

COMMUNITY MEDIA: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES represents the first
time that
both
communications scholars and practitioners have come together in a single
volume
for reportage on global efforts toward understanding and acting on media
access
at the local, grassroots level. While many perspectives are included, the
overall concern is with individual rights and responsibilities toward
indigenous, participatory communities. As growing disappointment and
dissillusionment with commercial media and its centralization by key
multinational corporations combines with increasing concern over
conglomeration
in general, it behooves us to understand, appreciate, delineate, and be
involved
in our own local means of communication. Reporting on her experience with
a
televillage community project in Grand Forks, North Dakota, Lana Rakow
(1999,
p.82) states: "We can bring our expertise in the history and theory of
communication technologies to the table, along with our access to funding
sources through grant writing and our knowledge of research processes. We
can
generate public discussion of the issues of public access and
participation
> both
> locally and nationally." That is the purpose of this book.
>
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