Editorial

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This issue of *Westminster Papers in Communications and Culture (WPCC)* presents a collection of essays primarily concerned with the examination of contemporary broadcasting policies and policy-making processes amid 'globalisation trends'. These latter are very broadly understood to encompass global economic, political and cultural shifts, technological change, and the regionalisation of regulation and policy-making loci.

The reader will first of all be struck by the variety of countries and regions of the world covered in the selected articles, spanning four continents. This has been a deliberate choice of the editorial team. We were primarily interested in giving the reader a flavour (just a flavour, of course) of how globalisation trends may differently affect countries located at the opposite poles of the global political economy, and involve very different issues. Similarly, the six articles that follow differentiate themselves in a number of other ways: analytical perspectives employed, research designs chosen, issues dealt with, etc. However, despite this multi-dimensional variety, most of the analyses that follow seem to share an underlying understanding: while power may be still largely nationally-based, research on contemporary broadcasting policy cannot any longer be undertaken without taking on board the increasingly complex web of interactions between domestic and non-domestic actors, institutions and processes.

The opening piece by Helga Tawil-Souri provides an account of the history of the Palestinian television industry. The author examines the Oslo agreements (which gave Israel control over frequencies) and the policies pursued by the Palestinian Authority (with a view to maintaining political hegemony), and explains why both have curbed the potential of the Palestinian television sector. The story told is highly symbolic, so Tawil-Souri argues, of the relationship between 'media and nation-building, policy-making and political conflicts, globalization and the nation-state'. The local and global dynamics that have shaped Palestinian television have

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resulted in a glaring contradiction: on the one hand, the 'enforced localization' of broadcasting signals and programs; on the other hand, an opening up to the outside through illegally re-broadcast foreign programs, especially pan-Arab satellite stations. The author concludes that ultimately 'this local-global dichotomy has served to undermine the political battle of Palestinian nation-building'.

The second contribution by Granville Williams examines the role played by a UK-based coalition of the government, the media regulator Ofcom, and industry groups in mobilising support, through a concerted lobbying effort, against the proposed extension of the scope of the revised EU's *Television Without Frontiers* Directive (or, as it is now called, *Audiovisual Media Services* Directive) to cover 'non linear' services (i.e., audiovisual services delivered over the internet or mobile phone). Williams draws on two sets of literature – on lobbying and interests representation, and on EU policy-making – and details how the UK-based coalition led by the government was successful in influencing the Directive's current shape. According to the author, his case-study shows both the key role played by a powerful state like the UK in mobilising support for its own distinctive policy goals within a supranational regulatory structure and the vulnerability of EU policy-making to sophisticated and well-resourced lobbying, especially corporate lobbying.

The next essay by Nick Herd engages with the literature on policy domains from political science and sociology. The geographical focus here is on Australia. From about the mid-1980s, so Herd argues, the (television) cultural policy and trade policy domains have become inextricably linked in Australia 'to the point where decisions made on trade policy have substantial impacts upon cultural policy'. Herd, in particular, examines the impact on cultural policy of Australia's participation in two bilateral trade agreements, with the US and New Zealand. He identifies four key actors with a stake in the cultural policy domain – Australian commercial broadcasters, Australian television producers and workers, foreign production industry groups and foreign governments – and assesses policy outcomes on the basis of each actor's ability to exercise power (relative to the others) and interest in intervening in the policy process.

The following two essays adopt a comparative research design. Nkosi Ndlela engages with the literature on globalisation, the state and media policy to discuss current policy-making dynamics in the Southern Africa region. He examines broadcasting reforms in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe since the early 1990s and compares policy outcomes across these three countries. Despite common challenges in the context of globalisation – namely the global democratic transitions following the end of the Cold War, the ascendance of neo-liberal economic policies and the dramatic changes in technology – coupled with sustained calls from local pressure groups for broadcasting liberalisation and

democratisation, the author concludes that the three countries employed different adaptive policy responses and that domestic political factors 'seem to be the greatest factor determining the nature of broadcasting policies found in the three countries'.

Next, Ki-Sung Kwak examines the introduction of new technologies of television distribution in three Eastern Asian countries – Hong Kong SAR, Japan and South Korea. New technologies compelled the national governments of these countries to adapt existing regulatory frameworks and propelled a process of industry restructuring affecting the strategies of terrestrial broadcasters (by challenging their economic privileges) as well as of prospective entrants (primarily telecommunications companies). The comparative analysis allows the author to identify the key factors accounting for variations in national policy responses to new technologies as well as in the current industry structure. Similarly to Ndlela, Kwak stresses the importance of historical legacies, national policy styles, and domestic factors in explaining variation – i.e., NHK's legacy in the public-commercial dual structure of television in Japan, a tradition of *laissez-faire* in Hong Kong, and politicisation of broadcasting regulation in South Korea.

The final piece by Lynne Hibberd explores key policy debates on broadcasting in the nation of Scotland since devolution in the second half of the 1990s. According to the 1998 Scotland Act, broadcasting remains the preserve of Westminster jurisdiction, that is, an issue where the new Scottish Parliament cannot adopt legislation. The author first examines some of the problems that are raised by the lack of devolved broadcasting policy in Scotland and the sporadic calls for more devolution in this area. Then she moves on to consider in detail BBC Scotland's recent efforts to address a specifically Scottish audience in the light of devolution. Hibberd highlights the merits as well as the limitations of initiatives like the establishment of a Scottish soap opera, *River City*, undertaken by the broadcaster in recent times.