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Media Policy and Globalization: History, Culture, Politics, by Paula Chakravarty and Katharine Sarikakis

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Media Policy and Globalization: History, Culture, Politics, by Paula Chakravarty and Katharine Sarikakis. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 224 pp. \$69.95 cloth.

Reviewed by DAN SCHILLER

A major analytical benchmark for *Media Policy and Globalization* is the legacy of the 1970s and early 1980s movement for a new world information and communications order (NWICO). How may we understand the NWICO movement, which was anchored in the Third World political project for national self-determination and non-alignment within the bipolar Cold War world? This question is vital, Chakravarty and Sarikakis contend, because engaging it may clarify both the character of today's communications policy and the challenges facing those who would change it to advance social justice.

For nearly 20 years—that is, since the defeat of NWICO in the mid-1980s—this kind of concern has verged on an academic no-fly zone. Throughout the 1990s, revisionists loudly debunked the NWICO thesis that U.S. cultural imperialism undercut indigenous cultural production and distribution. They appealed by turns to notions of active audience creativity in decoding, evidences of contraflows in the trade of world televisual products, and increasing channel abundance based on the rollout of new communications technologies. Revisionists thereby managed to satisfy themselves that the core concerns of NWICO were or had become invalid. Structural inequalities resulting from U.S. corporate-state dominance over the international political economy of communications—and struggles to remedy this by developing redistributive policies—were conjured out of the academic mind.

All the while, of course, the power imbalances and inequalities in communications provision and consumption continued. A handful of transnational companies, almost entirely based in the developed market economies, controlled virtually every major communications industry segment. The experience of social division, far from disappearing, began to be reconfigured to accommodate digital systems and applications. And in communications policy, as elsewhere, the U.S. government continued to throw its weight around the world without regard for local preferences.

This is not to say that things remained the same—far from it. Chakravarty and Sarikakis acknowledge a dramatic reordering of the world geopolitical map. Not only is the Soviet Union gone, but the Third World political project has been wiped out. Rather than Cold War and nonalignment, today's world revolves around a newly universal capitalist market, inclusive of China, Russia, and India and, behind them, dozens of African, Asian, and Latin American countries whose options have been narrowed by acquiescence to neo-liberal policies sought by the United States, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. Nor is this all. Communications systems and applications—notably including the Internet—have ascended to become the centerpiece of economic and cultural life. Struggling to make communications policy serve social justice, finally,

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new social movements and nongovernmental organizations have thronged into international politics.

How to bring a sense of these vast, sprawling changes into an analysis of communications policy? Drawing on Nancy Fraser, the authors argue that historical alterations have occurred not only in the world of communications but, concurrently, in the identity of social justice movements that seek to change it. "Post-Fordist claims for justice are multifaceted along at least three recognizable, interrelated dimensions of *redistribution* (claims around economic equality) and *recognition* (claims around cultural difference) and *representation* (claims for democratic accountability)" (p. 147).

Referencing these three dimensions throughout, but not really attempting to reconcile or systematize them (but who has?), Chakravarty and Sarikakis encompass in their discussion not only television and the mass media, but also, much to their credit, telecommunications. They trace major policy currents across the world. Showcasing variants of neo-liberalism in the United States and the European Union, the authors also reference policy-making in Canada, China, India, Brazil, South Africa, and other countries of the South. Issues pertaining to social agency are carefully handled: To take an especially important example, the failure of the Third World political project is portrayed as a function not merely of a U.S.-based privatization juggernaut, but also of the complicity and corruption of postcolonial elites. Nuances within and opposition to dominant policy discourses are flagged while, on the other hand, the success with which transnational companies and state allies have insinuated a dominative agenda into policy discussions among NGOs and ostensibly multilateral institutions is also underlined. Pride of place is accorded the World Summit on the Information Society, a policy-making forum initiated in 2003 among other things to address what came to be called "Internet governance." The authors ask what kind of an information society WSIS and other policy forums are producing, and they show that, to date, the information society is every bit as unequal and unjust as its forebear. Finally, therefore, they ask whether the losses that attended the defeat of NWICO might be reversed by reemphasizing redistribution claims in communications policy-making.

These are questions of moment, questions that lead directly into the real world of contemporary communications policy. Thanks to Chakravarty and Sarikakis, we now possess a balanced, well-informed, and thought-provoking introduction to this realm.

The Myth of Media Globalization: Why Global Media Is Not Truly Globalized, by Kai Hafez. Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 2007. 236 pp. \$59.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

Reviewed by STEPHAN WEICHERT

The concept of globalization is trickier than originally thought. Until a few years ago, most researchers firmly believed that the catchword "globalization" represented a valid formula for characterizing our modern times, explaining more than just the cross-border

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