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Media Power and Plurality

From Hyperlocal to High-Level Policy

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Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	vii
<i>Preface</i>	viii
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	x
Introduction	1
<i>Steven Barnett and Judith Townend</i>	
Part I	
1 What Is ‘Sufficient’ Plurality?	15
<i>Thomas Gibbons</i>	
2 Diversity, Distribution, and Definitions of ‘Media’	31
<i>Lorna Woods</i>	
3 Plurality and Public Service Broadcasting: Why and How PSBs Deserve Protection	45
<i>Steven Barnett</i>	
Part II	
4 Plurality and Local Media	65
<i>Martin Moore</i>	
5 Hyperlocal Media and the News Marketplace	83
<i>Judith Townend</i>	
Part III	
6 Media Ownership and the Political Economy of Research in US Media Policymaking	101
<i>Philip M. Napoli</i>	
7 From Media Policy to ‘Big’ Media Policy: The Battle for Pluralism in Australia	116
<i>Benedetta Brevini</i>	
8 Media Plurality: What Can the European Union Do?	131
<i>Alison Harcourt</i>	

Part IV

9	Transferable Media Pluralism Policies from Europe <i>Peter Humphreys</i>	151
10	Media Plurality in France <i>Raymond Kuhn</i>	170
11	Media Subsidies: Editorial Independence Compromised? <i>Josef Trappel</i>	187
12	Putting Ends and Means in the Right Place: Media Pluralism Policies in Central and Eastern Europe <i>Beata Klimkiewicz</i>	201
	<i>Index</i>	221

List of Tables

7.1	Timeline of media ownership rules	119
7.2	Current media ownership rules	120
12.1	General recognition of media pluralism as a regulatory rationale in national media and broadcasting laws in Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia	205
12.2	Pluralism measures concerning content and services in national media and broadcasting laws in Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia	207
12.3	Structural pluralism measures in national media or broadcasting laws in Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia	210

Preface

This book draws on 18 months of research activity during 2013–14 under the auspices of a Research Fellowship project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), and based at the University of Westminster in London. The project, called Media Power and Plurality, was situated within the UK context but sought to draw on debates, experience, and policy thinking in other jurisdictions as policymakers, practitioners, and academics around the world struggle to protect diversity of voice in a hostile economic environment. To that end, we brought together leading specialists in a variety of fora, as well as conducting policy analysis and new empirical research. This book is one of the resulting products of that research and consultation process, and brings together international scholars from law, politics, and communications to examine UK, European, and international plurality policy issues from both ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top-down’ perspectives.

A number of thanks are due. First, we are grateful to the AHRC for its funding and support within a research programme which was specifically designed to allow for new and creative thinking. It is an admirable programme, and we hope this volume reflects its spirit. We are also very grateful to our contributors for their hard work and their prompt responses to our requests for drafts and changes over the Christmas period, often sent from far-flung places with little Internet access. It was a very tight publishing deadline by academic standards – partly because the issues are current and date easily – and we have been hugely impressed by everyone’s goodwill in response to our holiday emails. Thanks also to those many other scholars, policymakers, regulators, lawyers, industry executives and journalists who participated in our research seminars and helped to stimulate debate and contribute to a complex policy dialogue. Summaries of these seminars and links to all of the project outputs, as well as links to other relevant articles, reports, debates, and policy documents, can be found on our dedicated project website <http://www.mediaplurality.com/>.

We are also grateful to our Westminster colleagues for their support both in the initial application to the AHRC and then in implementing the various research commitments. In particular, we would like to thank Fionnuala Rose for her invaluable help in putting together the research proposal, Helen Cohen for her administrative support and efficiency,

and Jeanette Steemers, David Gauntlett, and Peter Goodwin for their advice and encouragement throughout. Finally, a big thank you to Felicity Plester and Sneha Kamat Bhavnani at Palgrave Macmillan for their assistance in seeing this book through from proposal to publication.

And, of course, no expressions of gratitude would be complete without acknowledgement of the patience and support of our respective spouses and families who accepted the hours spent poring over drafts and redrafts instead of wrapping Christmas presents. A heartfelt thank you from us both and we'll try to make sure it doesn't happen again, at least until next Christmas.

Steven Barnett, London
Judith Townend, Brighton
8 January 2015

Notes on Contributors

Steven Barnett is Professor of Communications at the University of Westminster and an established writer and commentator on media issues, specialising in media policy, regulation, and journalism ethics. He has acted several times as specialist adviser to the House of Lords Select Committee on Communications and was twice called to give oral evidence to the Leveson Inquiry. Over the last 30 years, he has advised a number of Government and Opposition spokespeople, given evidence to several parliamentary committees as well as the European Parliament, and has directed numerous research projects on the structure, funding, and regulation of communications in the UK and other countries. He is on the editorial and management boards of *British Journalism Review*, and writes frequently on media issues for the national and specialist press. He is author or co-author of a number of books and book contributions, including *The Rise and Fall of Television Journalism* (2011).

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Thomas Gibbons is Professor of Law at the University of Manchester. His main research is in media and communications law and regulation, with a particular interest in media pluralism. His publications include *Regulating the Media* (1998) and *Audiovisual Regulation under Pressure: Comparative Cases from North America and Europe* (with Peter Humphreys, 2012). He is a founding editor of the *Journal of Media Law*.

Alison Harcourt is Associate Professor at the University of Exeter and Jean Monnet Chair in the Information Society. Her primary focus of research is regulatory change in communications markets. She has published regularly on political problems of media ownership and market concentration. She is presently an academic advisor on the OSI Transparency of Media Ownership project and the Finnish

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Peter Humphreys is Professor of Politics and has taught at the University of Manchester, UK since 1986. He has published extensively on the theme of comparative media and policy and regulation, including *Media and Media Policy in Germany* (1994) and *Mass Media and Media Policy in Western Europe* (1996). He has co-directed two three-year ESRC projects that have been centrally concerned with media – particularly broadcasting – regulation and pluralism. Most recently, he has co-authored – with Thomas Gibbons, Professor of Law at the University of Manchester – a book drawing on these projects' findings entitled *Audiovisual Regulation under Pressure: Comparative Cases from North America and Europe*, which was published in hardback in 2012 and in paperback in 2013. Between 2006 and 2010, he served as Vice-Chair of the Communications Law and Policy Section of the European Communications Research and Education Association (ECREA). Between 2008 and 2010 he served as Vice-Chair and between 2010 and 2012 as Chair of the Communications Law and Policy Division of the International Communications Association (ICA).

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Judith Townend is Director of the Centre for Law and Information Policy at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies within the University of London. She was previously a research associate at the University of Westminster, working on an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project on media plurality and power, and a lecturer in the Journalism Department at City University London. Her main research interests lie in media, communication and information law, regulation and policy.

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(2007). Prior to joining the University of Salzburg he worked as media-policy expert for the Federal Austrian Chancellery in Vienna and the European Commission in Brussels.

Lorna Woods is Professor of Internet Law in the School of Law at the University of Essex and Visiting Professor at the Centre for Law, Justice and Journalism, City University London. She has written extensively in the fields of media and communications regulation and competition law. Professor Woods also has considerable expertise as a consultant having contributed to a number of projects for both governmental and non-governmental bodies. Formerly a practising solicitor in a City ICT practice, she has extensive experience in the field of media policy, communications regulation licensing, and freedom of expression.