This article seeks to address what we see as difficult yet necessary first steps toward meeting the challenges of analyzing the transformations in media and communication policy: defining the boundaries of what we actually mean by “global media policy (GMP),” providing a conceptualization of GMP as a domain, elaborating a consistent analytical framework, and addressing methodological implications. Our framework is part of a GMP mapping project that has been developed within the context of the International Association for Media and Communication Research, to address the issues faced by researchers and practitioners, as well as policymakers and advocates operating in this domain. In this article, we present an overview of the conceptual journey through which the GMP mapping project has evolved.

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It is now recognized by scholars, policymakers, and media activists that the environment in which media and communication policy is “made” is undergoing profound transformations. Trying to track, describe, and analyze these transformations poses a stimulating challenge, particularly to scholars who see their work as an intervention in policy debates. In recent years, an embryonic field of global media policy (GMP) studies has begun to emerge (O’Siochru & Girard, 2002; Raboy, 2002). Yet, to date, no systematic articulation of concepts and approaches has been offered.

We hope to contribute to filling this gap by addressing what we see as the necessary first steps toward meeting this challenge, providing a conceptualization of GMP as a policy domain,1 elaborating a consistent analytical framework, and

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*This article is drawn from a longer version that provides a fuller explanation of the GMP mapping project, its theoretical articulation, and methodology. The integral version, which includes a visual synthesis of the framework outlined here, is available at: http://iamcr.org/s-wg/mcpl/gmp.
identifying methodological implications to support research activities as well as policy interventions.

In this article, we present an overview of the conceptual journey through which a GMP mapping project has been developed within the context of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR). At the core of the project is the understanding of GMP as an evolving field of practice and research. Addressing the challenges deriving from such shifting reality is crucial for researchers, who need to elaborate appropriate operational frameworks and methodologies to describe, interpret, and anticipate evolutionary trends; but it is also essential for practitioners and policymakers, who need to adequately position themselves in a diverse and complex environment.

At the conceptual level, our main question is how should we think of GMP if we are to understand the plurality of processes, formal and informal, where actors, with different degrees of power and autonomy, intervene (Raboy & Padovani, 2008). We need to elaborate a theoretically sound and empirically viable understanding of GMP in order to render the diversity, dynamics, and complexity that characterize its governance landscape; one that acknowledges existing definitional attempts and yet contributes to the elaboration of a holistic approach able to transcend different terminologies and theoretical assumptions.

At the analytical level, we are confronted with the question of how to operationalize such a definition: What would be the components of a framework for investigating and intervening in GMP. This requires a better understanding of the interplay between old, new, specific, transversal, stable, and shifting issues composing the GMP agenda. Moreover, it calls for a focus on the interactions amongst actors intervening in negotiations at different levels, expressing different interests, organizational logics, and understandings of policy processes. It also implies to locate the venues and make sense of the many processes where actors’ interactions take place, leading to learning and cooperation habits but also conflicts; as well as raising issues of effectiveness, accountability, and sustainability. Finally, it focuses on the multiple connections between issues, actors, venues, and processes.

In order to respond to these questions, we first outline the definitional and conceptual challenges through a literature review of selected works. We then elaborate on the key terms—“global,” “media,” and “policy”—and propose an analytical framework to explore the interplay amongst issues and actors, the interconnections between levels of intervention, and the coexistence of more and less hierarchical modes of regulation. Finally, we offer our definition of GMP and identify some of the implications that emerge from the proposed articulation of GMP. We do this in view of developing appropriate methods to address the complexities of GMP, while exploring the potential of critical knowledge to transform existing power relations, in the perspective of a democratization of global media governance.
The complex ecology of GMP

There is growing interest in the international and global governance of media and communication among scholars and policymakers. At the same time, this field of study appears to be undertheorized and open to controversial interpretations regarding the main processes and actors involved as well as the approaches and methods through which research is being conducted.

The contemporary communication environment is seamless and apparently boundless in possibilities. Popular misconceptions about the end of regulation notwithstanding, however, activity within this environment is still based on rules and likely to remain so (Price, 2002). The rules are changing, of course, but more significantly, the way the rules are made is changing (Cameron & Stein, 2002): global institutions like the World Trade Organization have become the site of battles between stakeholders; national governments are looking for new ways to continue tweaking the influence of communication on their territories (Hallin & Mancini, 2004); corporate strategies are redefining the shape and substance of institutions (Braithwaite & Drahos, 2000). Furthermore, users, the networks they create, and the choices they make constitute a perpetual wildcard that makes it hazardous to predict how communication is likely to evolve (Benkler, 2006).

The global environment for the governance of media and communication is therefore based on the interaction and interdependence of a wide array of actors and processes taking place in dispersed policy venues. Needless to say, power is not equally distributed among actors, and some sites of decision making are more important than others. National governments still wield tremendous leverage and yet national sovereignty is no longer absolute as new strategies, new institutional models, new forms of transnational collaboration, and new networks of point-to-point communication are developing, and we are witnessing the emergence of new approaches to public policy.

Different authors have contributed to clarifying the major trends of global media and communication politics and their implication for both research and practice, starting from the early days of reflections about how to govern global transformations. In a 1991 article titled “Global Communications and National Power,” Joseph Krasner identified what was at the time the main feature of global communications as a policy domain, what we here call “multiplicity.” He stated: “There is no single international regime for global communications. Radio and television broadcasting, electromagnetic spectrum allocation, telecommunication (….) and remote sensing are governed by a variety of principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures …” (Krasner, 1991, p. 336). From Krasner’s International Relations perspective, the point was to clarify how interests and relative power capabilities of state actors, even in a globalizing context, were the key to understanding if and how international regimes for communication emerged and consolidated.

Almost 2 decades have gone by and major changes have characterized the evolution of information and communication technologies as well as the global
context within which communication technologies and networks operate. Media and communication policies have become one of the “most internationalized areas of public policy and institutional change” (Mueller, Kuerbis, & Pagé, 2004), and different trends have been outlined as characteristic features of contemporary GMP.

We have witnessed a shift from vertical, top-down, and state-based modes of regulation to horizontal arrangements, while, at the same time, governing processes have become more permeable to interventions from a plurality of players with stakes in media and communication.

As a consequence, there has been a shift from formal and centralized steering processes to informal, and sometimes invisible, policy interventions in the media and communication sector. This development explains the growing attention devoted to self- and coregulatory mechanisms, including loose interactions that have come to be analyzed as networked forms of governance.

Highly evident, and due to developments in technologies and digital convergence, has been the shift from sector-specific detailed regulation to more general and broad parameters for managing media and technology.

Finally, we have witnessed a “shifting in the location of authority” (Rosenau, 1999) by which more and more institutional arrangements to steer communication systems take place at the supranational level. This also implies a plurality of decision-making arenas where different interests, goals, and opportunities are played out.

Plurality of issues, actors, venues, and processes is therefore recognized as a major feature of a policy domain that, as we shall discuss below, has been labeled in different ways. Referring to GMP, Raboy states that we are witnessing “a complex ecology of interdependent structures” which is “increasingly the result of a vast array of formal and informal mechanisms working across a multiplicity of sites” (2002, p. 6–7). Differently stated: “What has developed over the past century and a half is a highly distributed and heterogeneous architecture comprising an array of arrangements . . . The global governance of global electronic networks is highly fragmented along multiple axes” (Drake, 2008, p. 65).

Attempts are being made to map out such multiplicity, in recognition of the centrality of media and communication systems to contemporary societies and of the constitutive status of communication-related governing arrangements in relation to other policy areas (Braman, 2004). We nevertheless see a risk that multiplicity is dealt with mainly in a descriptive and often partial manner, by identifying and listing the many actors involved and/or the multiple venues where diverse issues are addressed. Such an approach, while meaningful, does not allow one to fully grasp the deep dynamics of GMP.

Some scholars express a stronger focus on the “what” of governance arrangements, others on the processes and the ways in which such arrangements are structured. Many contributions remain focused on the national as the relevant locus of authority, whereas others mostly address supranational challenges; in some cases formal and binding mechanisms to regulate the media and communications are at the core of reflections, in other cases special attention is paid to transformations in regulatory
modes. This plurality of (partial) perspectives is reflected in the plurality of terms through which areas that relate to the governing of media and communication have been defined.

“Media policy” is possibly the most traditional formula: from Garnham’s “the ways in which public authorities shape, or try to shape, the structures and practices of the media” (Garnham, 1998), with a strong focus on the nature and role of the actors involved; to Freedman’s “formal as well as informal strategies, underpinned by particular political and economic interests, that shape the emergence of mechanisms designed to structure the direction of and behaviour in media environment” (Freedman, 2008, p. 23), expressing the author’s understanding of media policy as a “window on broader questions of power.”

“Information policy” is another diffuse label, one that Braman articulates in terms of “all laws and policy affecting information creation, processing, flows and use of information” (Braman, 2006, p. 77) conceptualizing the field by focusing on the information production chain. But information policy is also used, for example, by the International Development Research Centre to refer to “policy initiatives that promote the use and concepts associated with the ‘global information society’” (IDRC, 2001), thus including a much wider set of issues that relate to societal development.

A trendy catchword is that of “digital policy,” though it mostly refers to private initiatives that address consumer protection issues in online technologies, as in the case of the Digital Policy Forum, or develop self-regulatory programs for the online marketplace like the Digital Policy Group.

Other scholarly reflections have focused on the changing nature of the processes through which media and communication are steered. Some of them have moved beyond the very idea that media policy is about governments and state actors, and suggested a shift in terminology from policy to “governance.” Others have elaborated typologies to empirically investigate the diversified regulatory mechanisms that operate in the domain. Moreover, a specific focus on changes in the conduct of global communication politics, due to the emergent and active role of nonstate actors, has been the object of extensive scholarly as well as activist reflections in the context of the United Nations-promoted World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

There is, therefore, growing recognition of the relevance of formal as well as informal mechanisms, latent, and invisible policymaking (Braman, 2006), and of the plurality of stakeholders that play relevant roles in defining principles, norms, and practices for global communication. Nevertheless, until now few scholarly works have explicitly addressed the complexities of global communications governance.

Hamelink has possibly pioneered the field, with The Politics of World Communication (Hamelink, 1994), offering one of the first comprehensive views of what global communications were to become at the turn of the century. Bringing together historical accounts of the international regulation of diverse policy areas such as telecommunication and the protection of intellectual property, mass
communication, and culture, he indicated the need to adopt a historically aware perspective in order to make sense of the future politics of communication.

Marsden’s *Regulating the Global Information Society* (Marsden, 2000) may be considered exemplary of the several attempts made by the scholarly community to address issues related to regulation of a globalizing and globalized medium.

In *Global Media Policy in the New Millennium* (2002), Raboy considered the politics, processes, and policies of global media and communication and proposed an initial mapping exercise for the field, based on a typology that would connect institutional actors (from “global organizations” like the International Telecommunication Union and UNESCO, to exclusive “clubs” like the G8 or Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]), relevant issues (from broadcasting to media concentration and ownership), and also alternative practices.

O Siochru and Girard’s *Global Media Governance: A Beginners’ Guide* (2002), offers another attempt to respond to growing complexity in the global communication domain by articulating the who, what, and how of media governance. They do this by asking questions like: What currently are the major forms of global regulation, and how do they work? Who participates in, and who benefits from, media regulatory and governance structures? And they answer by identifying the major institutional actors, and the trends that compose the global communication landscape.

Finally, we can recall Drake and Wilson’s *Governing Global Electronic Networks* (Drake & Wilson, 2008), where a consistent framework is offered for the analysis of “the development and application of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programs intended to shape actors’ expectations and practices and to enhance their collective management capacities concerning global electronic networks and the information, communication and commerce they convey” (Drake, 2008, p. 11).

All these reflections have contributed a great deal in identifying the issues, actors, and processes involved in the global governance of media and communication. We nevertheless contend that an effort is still needed in order to move from acknowledgment of multiplicity, to approaching the complexities deriving from converging trends through adequate frameworks and methodologies. Conceptual clarity can therefore help understanding the nexus between the multiple processes through which global communications are steered and the content of such processes. It is also needed to ground the elaboration of analytical frameworks through which we can investigate the interplay among communication sectors (like broadcasting and telecommunication, Internet governance, and cultural policies) and among media-related issues (for instance, cultural diversity and digital divides, or the normative basis for regulating the Internet critical resources).

**Defining GMP**

We need a definition of GMP that avoids the traps of exclusive disciplinary legacies and opens spaces for inter- and cross-disciplinary dialogs. We also need a definition
that fully takes into consideration the major trends outlined earlier and the many challenges deriving from the different facets of multiplicity. A definition that, on the basis of a comprehensive conceptual framework, can contribute to outlining all relevant components of GMP as a domain.

The more human communications are structured in networks of interaction that span from the local to the global—with all the complexity of interacting languages, cultures, technologies, mechanisms to coordinate, steer, and regulate—the more we face the challenge of understanding this reality through what Beck (1999) has referred to as an inclusive look: overcoming the tendency to look at the world in terms of “either ... or ...” (either the state level or the global, either media or information, either regulation or governance) and adopting an inclusive approach capable of considering the interplay among actors and issues, the blurring boundaries between policy sectors and levels of authority, the evolving articulation of issues, through framing activities that are carried out by institutions as well as communities, at the supranational as well as the local level.

An inclusive approach is here proposed through the adoption of a linguistic expedient. In spite of being all too often associated with technological evolutions and trends, the term “convergence” has the potential to support our move from the recognition of multiplicity in GMP to a better understanding of the resulting complexities: Each of the terms discussed in the rest of this section is therefore articulated through the different meanings that can be associated to the idea of *cum-vertere* or “coming together.”

### The global

We do not propose here to revise a 2-decade-long debate on globalization, yet we contend it is important to clarify our specific understanding of “the global.” We do this by referring to a well-known definition of globalization: “Globalization can be thought of as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness, in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual” (Held et al., 1999, p. 2). This definition outlines the major dimensions involved in societal change: those of time, space, and velocity, that are driven by and, at the same time, foster transformations in information and communication technologies.

The idea of convergence of time and space is not new: It can be traced back to the works of geographers like Janelle (1969) or Harvey who, in 1989, talked about “time–space compression.” In our perspective, convergence is not a process that eliminates the realities of space and time; on the contrary, we contend that space and territory still inform the ways in which different actors operate. The global in GMP does not just refer to a supranational or transnational space where interactions among a variety of actors take place: It refers to the multilayered realities of communication systems, networks, and regulation. Territorial scales and their *interplay* are therefore a central component of the global governance of communication and need to be analyzed and understood in their interconnections.
In the global context, we also witness convergence as the interplay between what Castells (1996) has defined as “spaces of place,” where concrete physical experiences contribute to making sense of situations, and “spaces of flows” that are made possible through technologies. Recent developments in the governance of global communication, exemplified by events such as the WSIS and the process created in its wake, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), offer examples of this global trend. The IGF was officially mandated to be a “multistakeholder policy dialogue” and has been structured as an open space for networking. This networking not only happens in the physical premises where the yearly meetings of the IGF take place but also it is fostered in spaces of flows through technologies that allow for remote participation (through e-mail exchanges, discussion groups, and teleconferences) also in the period between the actual meetings (Padovani & Pavan, forthcoming).

Finally, the global should be conceived as the interplay among the different “scapes” identified by Appadurai—ethnoscapes, finanscapes, ideoscapes, mediascapes, and technoscapes (Appadurai, 1996)—or, in Scholte’s terms (2005), by referring to the “growing trans-planetary social interconnectedness” amongst structures of production, governance, identity, and knowledge. We therefore acknowledge the connection between media and communication systems, and economic interests, political perspectives, and broad social and cultural issues.

As a consequence, the global dimension, in our reading of GMP, reflects the multilayered, multispatial, and multidimensional processes involved in governing media and communication. These include processes that take place in local, subnational, and national contexts, as well as in the supranational settings inhabited by state-based regional groupings, multilateral, and universal intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and exclusive intergovernmental clubs such as the G8 and the OECD. But it also includes individuals and communities that are mastering their capacities to participate in both the spaces of place and the spaces of flows of global communication governance, without necessarily having their actions mediated by the state.

The media
Technological convergence is leading to convergence of communication modes, with growing interactivity and combinations of synchronous and asynchronous exchanges, as well as to transformations in social media usage, and the emergence of media-based alternative projects. We contend that all these processes relate to, and sometimes challenge, the very possibility of human interactions in a globalized context, and they force us to rethink communication processes and mediations.

We adopt as a starting point an understanding of communication as “a fundamental social process, a basic human need, and the foundation of all social organization” and suggest that, in conceptualizing the media component of GMP, we need to integrate existing definitional approaches in order to accommodate convergence in media sectors, in meaning mediation and in normative provisions that affect human communications today. To this end, we introduce below a set of
thematic clusters: They are discussed separately and reflect different ways of thinking of the media as a sector to be regulated; nevertheless they are here conceived as interconnected, to suggest how this multiplicity of media-related aspects should be reflected in a comprehensive analytical framework. Each cluster should therefore be understood as a possible “entry point” to the domain.

Certainly, the media in GMP should include the interoperation of infrastructures that offer the bases for mediation to happen. These are the physical wires, cables, and spectrum resources that create terrestrial as well as aerial and satellite networks, but they can also be logical infrastructures, such as software and codes, as well as standards that guarantee interoperability amongst physical infrastructures.

Technological developments and converging trends have stimulated scholarly reflections since the 1990s to overcome the idea of “media sectors” (broadcast versus telecommunication) in favor of a more convergence-aware approach. Yet, if we adopt a truly global perspective, we still witness the coexistence and use of different media platforms: print and publishing, broadcasting and audiovisual media, Internet, and telecommunications. Platforms are thus the second component of our analytical framework: They function thanks to the infrastructural base, and have been made more interoperable through digital technologies, which also pose serious issues in relation to the very possibility for some of them to transform or perish.

Beyond platforms, institutional forms of media systems—in terms of public service, commercial networks, community media, or state-controlled systems—have been theorized (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956) and are currently analyzed as crucial entry points to understand the role and relevance of the media in societal developments, and should therefore be part of a comprehensive analytical framework.

Media content is certainly another area that falls within the media landscape: This includes regulation of issues that relate to the different types of content, from music to film, advertising, and news; the production of content, including the cultural industries and their organizational practices; the professional practices that may be changing in the digital age, as well as the converging styles and formats, as in the case of infotainment. Content circulation and distribution in a global market raise issues that pertain to production, proprietary standards, and copyright provisions, as well as to different standards of protection for freedom of expression and individual private communications. Finally, cultural implications deriving from the transfer of content have already proven to be a major concern for several states and communities.

This takes us to an analytical cluster focused on media uses, where we include all aspects that pertain to applications and services—such as e-commerce, e-health, e-government, e-education, and the like. This reflects the convergence of social functions—personal communication, access to data and news, and cultural expressions—that are no longer served by separately identifiable industries. Moreover, convergence processes favor the emergence of alternative communication practices, of use and production: from tactical media usage to the rethinking of the media professionals’ roles.
Reference to the global market also raises questions that relate to the very principles upon which regulatory practices should be grounded, from those that have long been recognized internationally, such as “freedom of expression” or “universal access,” to recent recognition, in specific national contexts, of “broadband” or “access to the Internet” as formal rights. A specific focus on principles, norms, and rights in our analytical framework is a way to acknowledge the many efforts that have been made in recent years, to understand media and technology transformations either in the light of the consolidated human rights machinery or through more innovative normative proposals.

We also believe that the very processes through which media and communication are regulated have become, and should be considered, a distinct thematic area within a comprehensive analytical framework. The nexus between the substance of regulation in the GMP domain and the nature and changing scope of processes has become relevant to many observers.

Finally, given the constitutive nature of media and communication policy for other domains, and in view of the interplay among sectors and policy fields in the global context, it is crucial to include in a conceptual framework a number of related policy areas. Amongst them: economy, where rules governing concentration and competition policy are laid out; trade, given the relevance of supranational trade policy in relation to technology and communications; and culture, given the challenges that global media pose to cultural expression and diversity. But we also outline the relevance of GMP from the perspective of development, in creating equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups, including women and indigenous peoples, or in contributing to address global environmental and health problems.

Summing up, the notion of media should be understood, and investigated, through a set of analytically distinct and yet interrelated clusters that compose a broad framework. Aware of the pace and speed of transformation in the GMP domain, such a framework should be a flexible tool. Moreover, it should allow different entry points to the complexities of the domain, thus favoring disciplinary convergence; and it should be able to accommodate broad thematic areas and more specific topics, including newly emerging issues.

**Policy processes**
To adequately address the converging trends of GMP, a terminological clarification is needed. In the literature we have reviewed, we find a low degree of precision in the use of terms like governance and policy to indicate arrangements through which the steering of media and communication takes place. The two terms are sometimes utilized as carrying the same meaning, sometimes the difference between these concepts is recognized and yet authors, though utilizing different terminologies, mainly focus on formal decision-making processes; other times a shift in language toward governance is welcome, but then governance processes are characterized through a generic reference to the fact that the structures of public policymaking and
societal governance are rapidly changing. We therefore think it is necessary to clarify our use of the term policy.

Part of the existing conceptual confusion derives from the fact that terms like “governance” and “governing” have come to be utilized in different disciplinary fields. Public policy studies have focused on transformations in governing arrangements since the 1980s, in the light of trends like the privatization of public enterprises, deregulation, and commercialization of the public sector. Principles of “new public management” have then emerged, and theoretical reflections have emphasized the role of nonstate actors by referring, for instance, to “iron triangles” (Heclo, 1978), “policy networks” (Rhodes, 1997), and “policy communities” (Walker, 1989).

The term “governance” has then been articulated in different ways: from a focus on the extension of government both horizontally and vertically (Schmitter, 2001) and on the several ways in which governing arrangements could develop (Kooiman, 2003); to a prevailing focus on the multilevel dimension of governance processes, particularly in the European space (Marks, Hooghe, & Blank, 1996); to a more recent conceptualization of “networked governance” (Sorensen & Torfing, 2007, p. 4).

Alongside efforts to rearticulate the nexus between state, market, and societal interests at the national level, other strands of reflection have focused on the challenges posed by global transformations and the ways in which such transformations could be managed. Interestingly, it is in this supranational context that the term governance originated. As Hewson and Sinclair (1999) remind us, among international studies’ scholars different strands of reflections on “global governance” have emerged: one stimulated by the study on global change and international organizations in the immediate post-Cold War period (Commission on Global Governance, 1995); a second one in connection with international regimes theory (Kratochwil & Ruggie, 1986); and a third one stemming from the studies on globalization, with a focus on intergovernmental economic organizations such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund.

As early as 1992, Rosenau and Czempiel indicated the possibility of “governance without government,” suggesting that, contrary to conventional theorizations of world politics, systems of authority could develop at the supranational level even in the absence of a political or legal authority. This would take place through a myriad of control mechanisms, and if a number of conditions are met: the development of habits of cooperation, a tendency toward organization, collective choices, and legitimation from below. Under these conditions, a “relocation of authority” is possible. This perspective allows us to introduce the three converging trends through which we intend to characterize the global steering of media and communication.

In an introductory text to the GMP mapping project (Raboy & Padovani, 2008), we referred to policy as “all processes, formal and informal, where actors with different degrees of power and autonomy” intervene. With the aim of making that statement more precise, we should look at governing arrangements for media and communication in such a way as to include the formal structures of law making and regulation, with their binding or nonbinding outputs, as well as the less formal,
latent, and often invisible processes through which decision making is informed, such as lobbying and advocacy. Furthermore, we have come to recognize the relevance of ideational and cognitive elements in shaping the governance of communication because “no single actor, public or private, has the knowledge and information required to solve complex ... societal challenges; ... no single actor has sufficient action potential to dominate unilaterally” (Kooiman, 2003, p. 11).

Different actors, both governmental and nongovernmental, contribute different understandings and knowledge to these processes in different ways; through their interactions, they contribute to framing policy-relevant issues and promote the evolution of norms, standards, and rules that inform state-based policymaking, as well as nonstate-based standard setting and self-governing arrangements.

**Framing GMP**

We can now further elaborate our analytical framework, beyond thematic clusters, looking at convergence in terms of the intersection between continuity and change in actors’ engagement in different processes and at the codetermination between ideational knowledge and the actual production of rules for GMP.

We start from referring to convergence in terms of the coming together of a plurality of actors: What used to be multilateral arrangements amongst state actors has now turned into a highly complex landscape, where states and intergovernmental institutions share the stage with private corporations, standard setting entities, civil society organizations, epistemic, and technical communities. It therefore becomes relevant to elaborate a definition of actors that takes into consideration the different dimensions that are relevant for an adequate classification; these would include the interests they represent (public or private), the type of activity they conduct (from formal governance to technical and normative standard setting, to monitoring, and advocacy . . . ), the sectors in which they intervene (in due consideration of converging trends), and the levels at which they operate.

We therefore define organizational actors as “entities that have stakes in the issues and/or participate in global media policy-making and governance processes. Actors can be governmental, non governmental or multi-stakeholder; they can represent different interests (public or private) and can operate at different levels (national, regional, international, etc.).” These entities can be of different nature, from state governments and the institutional intergovernmental organizations, to regulatory bodies and loose groupings, such as clubs or networks, the composition of which may vary from a state-based exclusive one or multistakeholder21 to exclusive private corporation groupings or civil-society–based structures.

Alongside organizational actors, it is relevant to include individuals who can be “directly involved in or have an active interest in thematic areas and topics that are relevant to Global Media Policy or others.” A diversified set of individuals are seen as having “active interest” in our understanding of GMP: They can be policymakers, advocates, or researchers, but they can also be diplomats, educators, and media
professionals who help to shape the understanding and normative structures of GMP as a domain.

We should then be aware of the implications of this coming together of actors and consider the possible future scenarios in GMP processes and their outcomes. Here convergence can be conceptualized in terms of the codeterminant effects of centrally controlled formal decision making and “decentralized concepts (and practices) of social organization and governance” that are no longer “exclusively controlled by a central intelligence (e.g., the State)” (Kenis & Schneider, 1991, p. 26 our italics). We need to acknowledge the coexistence of diversified processes through which GMP takes place: They can be state centred as well as multistakeholder; they can take place in institutional venues but also in informal, open, and discursive settings; they can develop into transgovernmental networks (Slaughter, 2004) as well as transnational advocacy networks (Keck & Sikkink, 1998).

This complexity is certainly difficult to map as the less formal and public the processes become, the harder it is for observers to trace and investigate actors’ position, their influence and use of power resources, the interplay of contending interests as well as the evolution of habits of cooperation. We contend that, alongside qualitative in-depth investigations of specific processes, it remains nevertheless relevant to consider the actual inputs and outputs of processes that represent communication trails of such processes, and an indirect way to grasp the essence of communication governance. Policy documents are therefore relevant components of GMP as a field and include “inputs and outcomes of formal institutional processes at different levels (national, regional, international, etc.). These can be elaborated by individuals or organizational actors and include briefs, reports, policy statements, legislative and regulatory texts, conventions, etc. Such documents can be of binding or non binding nature.”

Finally, we also recognize the “complementary sources of knowledge that are relevant to render a complete picture of Global Media Policy as a field of research and practice. These can be academic publications, policy-related documents that have been elaborated outside of formal processes, research projects, repositories, web-portals, course and training materials, and conference proceedings.” This rich and diversified body of knowledge should be included in a comprehensive understanding of GMP as part of the ideational base on which policy-relevant public debates, negotiations, and decision making take place.

On the basis of this refined understanding of each component of GMP, we propose to define the domain as:

The multiplicity of configurations of interdependent but operationally autonomous actors, that are involved, with different degrees of autonomy and power, in processes of formal or informal character, at different and sometimes overlapping levels – from the local to the supra-national and global – in policy-oriented processes in the domain of media and communication, including infrastructural, content, usage, normative and governing aspects.
Through their interactions, actors may (re)define their interests and pursue different goals; contribute in framing policy-relevant issues and produce relevant knowledge and cultural practices; promote the recognition of principles and the evolution of norms that inform state-based policy-making, as well as non-state based standard setting and self-governing arrangements. Ultimately, they may engage in political negotiation while trying to influence or determine the outcome of decision-making.

We can only address the complexities of GMP if we acknowledge the interplay among actors, the interconnections among sectors, the coexistence of regulatory mechanisms and governance processes, the relevance of ideational elements, and the trails of communication through which we can trace the evolution of issues and processes. The proposed conceptualization of GMP should enable researchers to make sense of otherwise isolated phenomena. In combining the different aspects, the proposed definition offers a point of reference; nevertheless it also opens up methodological challenges.

Mapping GMP

We conclude by briefly outlining some of the methodological implications that derive from such a comprehensive understanding of GMP.

Mapping the domain is a step toward understanding the interactions, competing interests, and alternative perspectives involved in global media and communication policy in order to clarify where decisions come from, on which principles they are grounded, as well as the outcomes and consequences of policies, strategies, and actions. Mapping therefore becomes a methodology.

Mapping is certainly about connecting to existing resources on GMP, be they the growingly rich and yet fragmented scholarly efforts, or the number of web-based repositories and monitoring initiatives that deal with media and information technologies. Mapping is also about the collection and organization of data concerning specific issues as well as broader thematic areas, concerning actors’ attributes as well as their interactions, concerning specific processes or general trends, and concerning the evolution of scientific knowledge and the challenges of transdisciplinary exchanges.

Furthermore, mapping recalls the immediateness of charts, maps, and visualizations: tools through which humans have always attempted to position themselves in the world, get orientations, and offer interpretations for events and situations. We can therefore think of looking at, investigating, and acting upon GMP through different visualizations: We can map GMP geographic territories, but we can also visualize conversations and controversies, as well as the interconnectedness of concepts that are used in policy discourses. Moreover, we can visualize themes that compose those discourses, as well as networks of interaction and spaces of flows, among people and themes.
Alongside visualizations, more conventional critical scientific analysis and an articulated research agenda are crucial to understanding the GMP domain: A combination of scientific reflection, knowledge production, and collaborative generation of policy-oriented recommendations could develop into a cognitive mapping of the field.

We hope that the framework presented in this article offers a useful point of reference to ground future GMP mapping activities both theoretically and empirically, toward the collective elaboration of a critical “atlas of GMP.” An atlas could be the outcome of the encounter between conceptually consistent data collection and organization, technology-based visual maps, and high-level scientific interpretive elaborations: an evolving tool to call into question ingrained acceptance of the global order of contemporary communications and its governance.

Such a mapping project could become a collective effort to focus on power relations in the global environment, on issues pertaining to interest formation and configurations of actors involved in GMP processes, on issues of equality, participation, justice, and democracy that emerge within and as a result of relevant global arrangements. In this light, our attempt to frame and define GMP is a contribution toward more inclusive and participatory governance of media and communication.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1 Knoke provides a useful definition of policy domain as a “complex social organization in which collectively binding decisions are made, implemented and evaluated with regard to specific topics . . .” (Knoke, Pappi, Broadbent, & Tsujinaka, 1996, p. 9).
2 Initiated by the IAMCR’s Global Media Policy Working Group, the project is hosted and supported by an academic consortium led by Media@McGill, a research and public outreach hub based at McGill University, and including McGill University, University of Padova, and Central European University, in collaboration with the IAMCR. The goal of the project is to build capacity for policy intervention by channeling fundamental information as well as research outcomes on the economic and political, social, and cultural dimensions of media and communication policy; this is done through a resource data base that provides inputs for visual maps as well as for expert analytical interpretations. See http://iamcr.org/s-wg/mcpl/gmp.
3 One of the earliest attempts to explore the transposition of communication politics from the national to the transnational occurs in a short essay by Monroe Price (1994). The market for loyalties: agenda setting for a Global Communications Commission, InterMedia 22 (5): 14–21. See also Price (2002).
For interesting historical accounts and periodizations of the transformation in media and communication regulations and governance over the last 150 years, through which the peculiar features of contemporary global communications can be identified, see Van Cuylenburg and McQuail (2003) and Braman (2006).


Braman clearly states that “Media policy creates the communicative space within which all public and decision-making discourses take place” (2004, p. 169).

A more elaborated attempt to conceptually clarify the interplay of the different policy fields that relate to media and information can be found in Mansell and Wehn (1998) who distinguish information and communication technology (ICT) policy from media policy, telecommunication policy, technology policy, and industrial policy, clarifying the respective features and also stressing the need to integrate national ICT strategies with the other overlapping four domains.

This is the case of work conducted at the University of Zurich that has been publicized through seminars (see “Media Governance—A New Concept for the Analysis of Changing Media Policy?” on the occasion of the 2008 IAMCR Conference) and refined in publications like Donges (2007) and the special section of Communications 2007/32.

Latzer et al. (2003) look at “regulation remix” in what they call the “mediatonic sector” offering a detailed focus on self- and coregulation at play in the communications sector.


Systematic efforts have been made in this direction, to which we refer for summaries and synthesis; in particular: Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton (1999), Held and McGrew (2003), and Scholte (2005).

The 2005 Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/6(Rev. 1)-E, in setting up the IGF, called for a “forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue” (para 67).


It goes beyond the scope of this article to review and discuss the rich and highly specialized literature that would help to shed light on the peculiarities of each of the identified analytical clusters. Our goal here is to justify this conceptualization of the media component in the context of GMP.

This is currently the case in Estonia, Ecuador, Switzerland, and Finland.

See Padovani and Pavan (2009).

It is beyond the scope of this article to account for the historical evolution of scholarly works that have dealt with these transformations and articulated the features, potential, and shortcoming of governance modes. We focus our contribution on the terminological implications that emerge when investigating the global realities of media and communication.

Multistakeholderism has been widely discussed in the context of media and communication governance, especially in connection with developments made evident on the occasion of the WSIS. See Kleinwächter (2004) and Padovani (2005a). For a more general discussion on the concept, see Hemmati (2002) and Hockings (2006).

An initial list of such repositories includes the UNESCO Observatory on the Information Society, the Communication Initiative Network, the IT for Change Information Society Watch, the Global Media Law and Policy Website, and the Nordicom Monitoring of Media Trends.

Different techniques and tools are available to produce visualizations. In the context of the GMP mapping project, we are particularly interested in software that allows one to retrieve and reorganize in visual forms digital information, including data that are dispersed in the web-sphere. Useful classifications of existing tools have been provided by the Digital Method Initiative (http://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolDatabase) and the MACOSPOL project (http://www.macospol.com/; see resources http://www.demoscience.org/resources/index.php).

References


Mapping Global Media Policy


Este artículo busca considerar lo que vemos como difícil pero necesarios pasos hacia el encuentro de los desafíos de analizar las transformaciones en la política de los medios y la comunicación: definiendo las fronteras de lo que significa “la política global de los medios” (GMP) actualmente, proveyendo una conceptualización de la GMP como un dominio, elaborando un encuadre analítico consistente, y tratando las implicancias metodológicas. Nuestro encuadre es parte de un proyecto de mapeo de la GMP que ha sido desarrollado dentro del contexto de la Asociación Internacional de los Medios y la Investigación en Comunicación, para tratar los asuntos que encuentran los investigadores y los practicantes, así como también los hacedores de políticas y los defensores operando en este dominio. En este artículo, presentamos un panorama del viaje conceptual a través del cual el proyecto de mapeo de la GMP se ha desarrollado.
了解全球媒体政策：概念、框架和方法
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【摘要：】

本文试图走出既困难但又必要的第一步，分析媒体和传播政策的变革：定义“全球媒体政策(GMP)”的范畴，为GMP作为一个领域概念化，构思一个有连惯性的分析框架，以及解决方法方面的问题。我们的框架是GMP计划项目的一部分，该项目已在国际媒体与传播研究协会的背景下发展起来，以解决研究者、从业人员以及在这一领域工作的政策制定者和倡导者所面临的问题。在本文中，我们总体浏览了GMP计划项目概念的演变过程。
Schématiser les politiques médiatiques mondiales : concepts, cadres, méthodes

Marc Raboy & Claudia Padovani

Cet article traite de ce qui nous semble les premiers pas, difficiles mais nécessaires, d’une réponse aux défis de l’analyse des transformations dans les politiques des médias et des communications : définir les limites de ce que nous appelons les « politiques médiatiques mondiales » (global media policy, GMP); conceptualiser les GMP comme un domaine; élaborer un cadre analytique cohérent et traiter des conséquences méthodologiques. Notre cadre s’inscrit dans un projet de schématisation des GMP développé dans le contexte de l’International Association for Media and Communication Research, afin de traiter des enjeux auxquels font face chercheurs, professionnels, décideurs et militants qui œuvrent dans ce domaine. Dans cet article, nous présentons un survol du trajet conceptuel le long duquel a évolué le projet de schématisation des GMP.
Ein Aufriss globaler Medienpolitik: Konzepte, Rahmenbedingungen und Methoden

Marc Raboy & Claudia Padovani

Dieser Artikel befasst sich mit einem ersten notwendigen aber schwierigen Schritt, der getan werden muss, will man den Herausforderungen, die bei der Analyse der Transformationen von Medien- und Kommunikationspolitik entstehen, begegnen: eine Definition der Grenzen von dem, was wir mit „globaler Medienpolitik“ eigentlich meinen, das Herausarbeiten eines Konzepts von globaler Medienpolitik als eine Domäne, Ausführungen zu einem konsistenten analytischen Rahmenkonzept und die Diskussion methodologischer Implikationen. Unser Rahmenkonzept ist Teil eines Projekts zu globaler Medienpolitik, das im Kontext der International Association for Media and Communication Research mit dem Ziel entwickelt wurde, Aspekte anzusprechen, die Forscher und Praktiker aber auch politische Entscheidungsträger und Fürsprecher, die in diesem Bereich arbeiten, beschäftigen. In diesem Artikel präsentieren wir den konzeptuellen Werdegang, aus dem das Projekt entstanden ist.
Mapping Global Media Policy: Concepts, Frameworks, Methods

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미디어와 커뮤니케이션 정책이 만들어 지는 환경은 상당한 정도의 변화를 경험하고 있다는 것이 미디어 학자들, 정책결정자들, 그리고 미디어 행위운동가들에 의해서 인식되고 있다. 이러한 변화를 추적하고, 기술하고, 그리고 분석하는 노력은 도전을 자극하게 되는데, 특히 그들의 작업이 정책논쟁의 개입에 있다고 믿는 학자들에게 더욱 그리하다. 본 논문은 이러한 도전에 있어 가장 어렵지만 첫번째 움직임이라고 할 수 있는 것을 논의하려 한다. 이들은 글로벌 미디어 정책(GMP)이라는 것의 실제 의미가 무엇인지를 밝추좌하고, 하나의 영역으로서 GMP의 개념화를 시도하고, 지속적인 분석적인 개념을 공고히 하고, 그리고 방법론적인 의미를 논의하는 것이다. 우리가 시도하는 개념적 틀은 IAMCR의 문맥내에서 발전된 GMP 지도화 프로젝트의 부분으로, 이 영역에서 활동하고 있는 정책입안가들과 지지자들뿐 아니라 학자들과 실행가들에 의해 적면하는 여러 이슈들을 토론하고 있다. 본 논문에서, 우리는 이에대한 개요를 논의하고 있다.