

IAMCR Working Group on Global Media Policy  
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**Mapping Global Media Policy**  
Stockholm, July 2008

***Context, challenges and goals of the project***

Contemporary societies are characterized by an increasing relevance of communication processes, where the interplay of traditional and newer technologies has a profound influence on societal transformations as well as on the political processes through which such transformations are governed.

In this context, the politics of communication become a strategic component of broader governance arrangements, while policies that aim at steering, influencing and regulating the different but converging sectors of mass media, telecommunication and information and communication technologies (ICTs) more and more witness a “shifting in the location of authority” (Rosenau 1999) towards supranational sites of debate and decision-making. At the same time, the national and regional setting remains a critical arena for policy-making.

The evolution of multi-level and multi-dimensional governance arrangements for infrastructures, content and services in the field of communication, and the complex mediation of publics – from the individual to the community, the nation and beyond – are contributing to the consolidation of media and communication policies as a comprehensive policy domain.

**In this sense, what we refer to as “global media policy” includes all processes, formal and informal, where actors with different degrees of power and autonomy define and express their interests, produce relevant knowledge and cultural practices, and engage in political negotiation while trying to influence the outcome of decision-making in the domain of media and communication.**

The complexity of this situation poses a set of new challenges to researchers, to policy-makers and to a wide variety of actors who have interests and stakes in both mediated communication and broader governance processes.

At the theoretical level, a first challenge is to define the boundaries of the media policy domain, develop appropriate conceptual frameworks and methodologies, and analyse emerging trends in media policy where – among other aspects – the relationship of content to process seems to anticipate features of future (possibly more participatory) governance arrangements.

A second challenge is to establish an empirical base from which to observe the interplay between actors, issues, levels and sites of media and communication policy making, taking account of corporate globalization,

multilateral politics, the changing role and nature of the national state, and the emergence of civil society organizations as actors on the world stage.

Thirdly, the multi-level, multi-sector and multi-actor dynamics that characterize the global media policy domain pose more practical challenges to all of the actors concerned (policy-makers, economic interests, civil society organizations, and relevant institutions).

Policy-makers and governing bodies face a need to deal with ever-changing technological environments on the basis of necessary knowledge (that is very seldom available in an accessible and meaningful way), a comprehensive understanding of policy implications, growing issues of legitimacy and effectiveness in implementation.

Non-governmental actors who have stakes in media and communication governance arrangements – be they private sector exponents or public interest advocacy groups (and especially those networks of social mobilization that have recently gained visibility in trans-national spaces) – find themselves more and more in the situation where opportunities to influence political processes emerge, as recently shown by the World Summit on the Information Society, and the WSIS-initiated Internet Governance Forum. These actors not only need accessible and transparent information on the political process; they also need access to relevant research findings, academic reflections, and critical analyses of global trends, on the basis of which to position their interventions.

In addressing the above mentioned challenges, **the overall goal of the Global Media Policy Mapping Project is to build capacity to understand and act in the ever-changing media policy environment by: fostering access to relevant information and reflections; enhancing actors' capacity to effectively intervene in relevant policy settings; and reducing barriers to meaningful participation in the processes orienting future knowledge and communication societies through democratic practices.**

The distinctive character of this project is threefold: (1) it is truly global in scope, in that it integrates national, regional and international dimensions across an open-ended range of issues and incorporates the perspectives of an exhaustive and multi-stakeholder set of actors; (2) it rests on a unique methodology comprising project-based and user-generated data collection and organization, accessibility, and knowledge production; (3) it proposes added value in the form of scientific analysis of global media policy as a coherent object of study.

## ***Mapping as methodology and the conceptual framework*** ***Reducing complexity and building necessary knowledge***

This project aims to address the challenges and overall goal described above by means of a methodology that conceives “mapping” - map generating, map interpreting and map usage - as an approach that allows to reduce the complexities of the global media policy environment, while offering directions for interested actors’ understanding, deliberation and action.

The project builds on previous scholarly efforts to map the field of global media policy as well as on existing resource bases and monitoring initiatives on information and communication policy processes. Yet this project goes beyond such efforts, by proposing an articulated methodology which rests on the possibility to integrate a number of relevant resources into the same strategy.

From data collection and organization, to their elaboration and diffusion in response to the specific needs of different stakeholders, different forms of knowledge (from the more theoretical to the more practically oriented, from the more scientifically based to the technical) can be collected and made available; innovative uses of information technologies can contribute to make such knowledge accessible in different forms; existing scholarly communities from different disciplinary fields can be invited to dialogue and cooperate, existing relations among interested stakeholder groups can be strengthened. Thus, the project aims at responding, through a coherent and comprehensive (hence “global”) approach, to both theoretical and practical challenges.

Overall the added value of the mapping project stems from the possibility, through the articulated structure of the project, to not only generate maps of the global media policy environment, but also to rely on relevant resources that allow to then make those maps useful in different ways: for explanatory aims, for prediction concerning specific trends, for making normative contributions and, finally, towards the elaboration of sound policy recommendations.

“Mapping” is here understood as a series of operations through which a certain “territory” – be it geographically defined, based in virtual space, cognitively elaborated or metaphorically conceived – can be described, named, and interpreted. It means to develop appropriate conceptual and methodological tools to identify relevant components of the territory of global media policy and to organize a set of activities which allow effective interventions to understand, steer and regulate the territory, its boundaries and its inhabitants’ roles and functions.

To conceptually ground its methodology, the project has developed a multi-dimensional framework, with multiple entry points to mapping the global media policy environment. This means that collected data will be organized (and tagged) into a database according to the dimensions of the framework

and its components; subsequently queries within the database should allow users to retrieve relevant information on the basis of those tags, and their intersection, in order to respond to specific information and knowledge needs. The basic dimensions of the framework are: ISSUES, ACTORS, LEVELS of POLICY MAKING and SITES of POLICY-MAKING.

In order to deal with a technical, policy and socio-economic environment that is changing over time and to be able to integrate new knowledge, the framework needs to be flexible and open-ended: this means that new dimensions could be included eventually, but also that new components for each dimension could be inserted, as our knowledge increases and becomes more comprehensive.

An example of how the different dimensions are integrated into the framework is offered by the bi-dimensional grid that connects issues that pertain to the global media policy environment (organized into broad policy areas such as: mass media, telecommunication, ICT, Internet Governance, trade related issues etc) with actors that inhabit that space (structured around a typology that allows to focus on both governmental and non-governmental actors, as well as “hybrid” or mixed actors’ arrangements, also defined as “multi-stakeholder”). The initial grid (table 1), still to be refined, is shown at the end of this document.

The project aims to make relevant knowledge available to different publics, in different forms, at different degrees of specialization, thus addressing the challenge of creating the conditions through which more transparent, accountable and participatory practices can develop in the domain of media policy as well as to contribute to wider public awareness on the complex realities of media policy and their implications for the exercise of basic citizens’ rights.

***Project plan: resources, objectives, activities***  
***Data gathering, interpretation and knowledge diffusion***

Mapping as described above is a collective activity, where different contributions and different kinds of knowledge can be integrated to produce meaningful understandings of the global media policy environment. Consequently, the project is intended to activate cooperation and synergies among interested individuals and organizations, especially within the scientific community but not exclusively.

At the level of scientific production, through the contribution of researchers, scholars and media policy “practitioners”, differently integrated at the different stages of the overall project plan, it will be possible to activate a fruitful dynamic of world-wide scientific cooperation, reduce the existing fragmentation in knowledge production and contribute to a collectively generated understanding of the realities of the media policy domain

(including domain boundaries, main trends and challenges, under-investigated areas).

Moreover, the project aims at fostering cooperation and partnership in actual policy-making practices. Beyond mapping the complex field of global media policy in terms of different stakeholders' visions, approaches and positions in the domain, the project will also deploy activities to better identify stakeholders' needs, foster reciprocal knowledge and favour multi-stakeholder dialogues.

Finally, consistently with the goal of fostering access to relevant information, enhancing actors' capacity to intervene in relevant policy settings and reducing barriers to actors' effective participation, the project is grounded on an understanding of necessary knowledge as a common good; a crucial resource that should be easily, equally and transparently accessible to all interested stakeholders. Therefore the project adopts a "creative commons" approach to the knowledge that will be generated.

### ***A "layered" approach***

The mapping methodology is deployed in the project through three different *layers*, each characterized by its own rationale and a series of objectives and activities: *layer 1*: map generation, *layer 2*: map interpretation, *layer 3*: map use. The structure of the project and interconnectedness among layers is described in the following paragraphs and then synthesised in Figure 1. The timeline of activities is then presented in Table 2 below.

#### ***Layer 1 – Map generation***

At this initial level, the project aims at developing a comprehensive information resource where different kinds of relevant data are gathered, organized and made available through a database that is structured according to the multi-dimensional framework described above. Each point of the grid can be conceived as an entry point to the database, and can be used to generate "maps" that may be of relevance to researchers as well as other interested actors.

At this level, maps will be basically sets of relevant information structured around the kind of available data, and will reflect/reproduce the grid components of the framework; data will be structured around dimensions such as issues, actors, levels of governance, sites of decision-making and sites where problematic issues are discussed and solutions proposed.

The kind of information to be collected and made available at this level include:

- basic data regarding actors, institutions, policy documents...

- research analyses (scientific articles, papers, power point presentations, conference proceedings, bibliographic references),
- knowledge resources (specialized research centres, observatories, specialized expertise, individuals and epistemic communities ...).

Such information, once collected, organized, tagged according to the framework dimensions and integrated into the structure of the database, will be retrievable on the basis of specific queries. This way different “information maps” could be generated, concerning actors involved on specific issues, levels at which relevant governance arrangements are made etc.

Human resources: A team of people with varied competence and functions would be in charge of this layer of the project: the technical infrastructure of the data base in layer 1 would be ideated and managed by a technical team headed by a member of the Project Steering Group (PSG). Content would be developed under the leadership of an editorial board, which would identify and maintain contact with a diversified group of individual “cell managers”, each responsible for “filling in” a portion of the framework under the direction of a member of the editorial board. The chair of this team would also perform a liaison function with teams at layers 2 and 3.

The specific (and measurable) objectives of layer 1 are:

- Articulation and refinement of a comprehensive yet flexible open-ended, theoretically grounded framework,
- Development of the necessary software to set up and maintain the database structured according to the logic of the project framework,
- Collection of relevant data and information, according to component typology as described above (basic data, research analyses, knowledge resources) and insertion in the database,
- Gradual opening of the data base to contributions by users, in order to eventually create a continuously up-dated and self-sustaining knowledge resource (“wikimediapolicy”<sup>1</sup>).

### ***Layer 2 – Map interpretation***

This is the level at which data and information available in the database are elaborated into more sophisticated visual and cognitive maps, which allow for more in depth interpretation of the realities of global media policy. To this end the project envisions two different kinds of separate

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<sup>1</sup> The project aims at combining in an effective manner the need for clarity in addressing global media policy issues, based on common understanding of terminology, issues and approaches, and the need to create a cooperative platform where contributions can be voluntarily and autonomously brought by different people. Thus the plan foresee a gradual opening of the database space from a project-directed content management system to an open platform of content generation – a proper “wikimediapolicy” space.

but interrelated activities, to take advantage of both the potential of digital technologies and of high level scientific and academic expertise. A first kind of activity is completely web-based as it consists of automatic mechanisms for producing visual maps; the second activity involves high level scientific reflection, knowledge production and the generation of policy-oriented recommendations, through a collaborative intellectual effort that can be understood as “cognitive mapping” of the field.

***a) Automatic map generation and visualization***

A first kind of map generation-&-interpretation is made available through innovative usages of information technologies: in-built mechanisms in the software for the management of the database will allow the generation of maps on the basis of the data and information available. These maps will allow immediate visualizations of the connections existing either among components of the framework (issues, actors, etc.) or among the knowledge resources available in the database. Thus, visualizations can facilitate an understanding of the existing interconnections in the field of global media policy, as well as easier access to available information and knowledge for experts as well as non-expert stakeholders.

System software would allow any interested user to autonomously create maps of three different kinds, starting from their specific interest:

- *Geographically-oriented maps* – to develop an understanding of global media policy in the world context, by referring to traditional geopolitical opportunities and constraints. These maps would respond to questions pertaining to where issues, actors and policy practices are based in the “real world”.
- *Web-based maps* –to track and reproduce the interactions taking place in the web sphere such as, for instance, those deploying among different nodes of issue networks on the web, through which discursive practices concerning global media policy take place. These maps would respond to questions pertaining to where issues, actors and policy practices, broadly understood, are based in the web space.
- *Semantic maps* – that allow visualization of the cognitive and semantic connections among materials available in the database, or authors/institutions that have produced such materials, always on the basis of the conceptual structure of the project framework. These maps would respond to questions pertaining to how knowledge relevant to global media policy can be organized according to key words, issues, actors, etc.

Human resources: The people responsible for this level of activities in layer 2 would be mainly the same technical staff working on layer 1, in cooperation with the PSG.

The specific (and measurable) objectives of layer 2, as far as automatic visualizations are concerned, are:

- Development of software to generate automatic maps on the basis of the information collected in the database,
- Development of an easy-to-use methodology (and instructions) for usage of such mapping tools,
- Production and collection of different visualizations on different aspects of global media policy, to be consolidated into an evolving “atlas” which will become part of the database<sup>2</sup>.

These objectives would be met through a series of activities, to be deployed over time, in the course of the project (summarized in the timeline table below).

### ***b) High level scientific critical analysis***

The highest added value of this project is situated at this second level of activity in map interpretation. Here expert scholars will address a number of controversial issues and problematic trends in global media policy, making use of the information available in the database while building on their expertise as well as on specific knowledge that may well come from different disciplinary fields, scholarly work and epistemic communities.

Human resources: This set of activities would be ideated, discussed, conducted and results disseminated by a core group of committed scholars who are either directly involved in the project or may take part on an ad hoc basis, depending on the specific issues and themes to be addressed.

The selection of issues and cases to be analysed in depth and critically assessed will be made by the PSG, on the basis of: suggestions from the members of the core group of experts in layer 2, emerging trends in global media policy, external research groups looking for cooperation, policy-oriented actors asking for specific analyses and advice. The chair of this group would also perform a liaison function with teams at layers 1 and 3.

Guidelines for the operation of this core group of experts would include: a critical approach to the realities of global media policy; a specific focus on power relations in the global media policy environment; a focus on issues pertaining to identity formation and transformation in mediated

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<sup>2</sup> The ATLAS concept is central to this project, and will be further elaborated as the project evolves: the idea is that all information collected, visualizations and knowledge produced, concerning different aspects of global media policy, could be systematically organized to form the “pages” of an Atlas, where different representations of the global media policy field – made from the perspectives of those who will make use of the project and its resources – are then made accessible to other users.

context; changes in identity and interest formation of actors involved in global media policy processes; issues of equality, participation, justice and democracy that emerge within and from global media policy arrangements.

The specific (and measurable) objectives of layer 2, as far as high level knowledge production on specific aspects of global media policy, are:

- Constitution of a multi-representative high level think tank for the conduct of critical analysis of trends in global media policy,
- Promotion of cooperation within the scientific community, through outreach activities and the involvement of high level experts in ad hoc reflections and research activities,
- Production of high quality scientific and policy-oriented knowledge on specific issues and trends.

These objectives would be met through a series of activities, to be deployed over time, in the course of the project (summarized in the timeline table below).

### ***Layer 3 – Map use***

The third layer of the project is possibly the most challenging since it opens the project to the “outside world” and calls for different actors in the global media policy environment to assess and evaluate the project’s usefulness through their very participation in the methodology.

At this level, not only will different stakeholders’ needs be identified through user feedback and consultations (focus groups, interviews, questionnaires, “comments” space on web site), but the direct engagement of stakeholders is envisioned in order to: promote a space for dialogue between the scientific community and different actors engaged in global media policy, develop ideas and activities for outreach through the cooperation between various stakeholders, foster a better understanding and enhance the usefulness of the project towards the media policy environment as well as towards the broader public, allow for a stakeholder-based validation of the project.

Workshops, training sessions, documentation production and media policy kits will be integral parts (activities and outcomes) of this third layer, all to be developed, organized and evaluated in partnership with different stakeholders.

The specific (and measurable) objectives of layer 3 are:

- Identification of specific information and knowledge needs of different stakeholders in relation to global media policy,
- Creation of occasions for multi-stakeholder dialogue within the project (and self-reflective practices to develop specific competence in this direction on the basis of direct experience),

- Activation of cooperation initiatives to make the project better known to media policy actors and the general public,
- Ensure the sustainability of the project through the creation of a Global Partnership on Global Media Policy<sup>3</sup>.

Human resources: A multi-stakeholder group under the direction of the project leadership would be involved in the activities of layer 3 in order to meet the objective of creating an understanding and favourable conditions for multi-stakeholder dialogue to emerge, within the project and outside. Exponents from the governmental sector, as well as private and public interest “representatives”, academia and media exponents, will compose a team with the task of organizing activities in this layer and promote conditions for subsequent sustainability. The chair of this team would also perform a liaison function with teams at layers 1 and 2.

These objectives would be met through a series of activities, to be deployed over time, in the course of the project (summarized in the timeline table below).

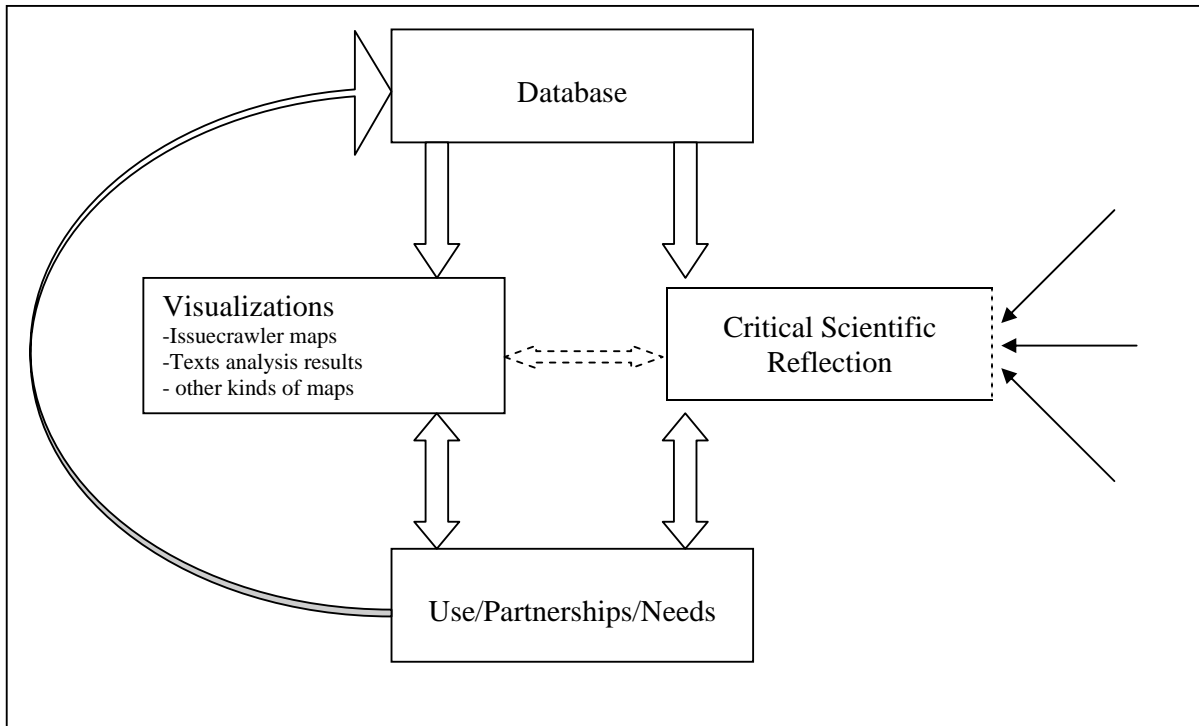
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<sup>3</sup> The Global Media Policy Partnership is another concept to be further elaborated. The final idea and a full proposal for its development would be one of the outcomes of multi-stakeholder dialogue to take place during the course of the project. At this stage, the Partnership is conceived as an element that would guarantee sustainability of the Project and its goals over time.

**Table 1: Two dimensional grid issues-actors (To be refined)**

	TYPOLOGY OF ACTORS □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □						
	Governmental actors				Hybrid structures	Non-governmental actors	
POLICY AREAS □ □ □ □ □ □	Universal & Multilateral IGOs	International “clubs”	Regional IGOs & entities	National entities	& multi-stakeholder (initiatives processes)	Business oriented (individual actors & collective)	Public interest oriented (NGOs, TANS, coalitions...)
Mass media							
Telecommunication							
ICTs							
Internet governance							
Trade related issues							
Development related issues							
Culture related issues							
Transversal and homeless issues...							

**Figure 1: Overall structure of the mapping project**



## **Table 2: Timeline for project activities**

### Year One:

Develop the web site; Create the structure of the data base; set-up of editorial board; identify cell managers

High-level seminar to refine problematic of gmp: scientific program launch (field, boundaries, framework); composition of “core group”

Focus groups with stakeholders on what would make the project useful (needs identification)

### Year Two:

Fill in the cells (exclusively by the project); refine data base and ensure ongoing operability in connection with other layers

Initial visualization exercises; high-level seminar focused on a topic (using the data base for reflection and analysis)

Feedback questionnaires on usefulness of data base (usability testing)

### Year Three:

Open the cell-filling to outside users

Open visualization exercises; high-level seminar (trying to use maps); the state of the field (book)

Multistakeholder workshop on usefulness of maps; on process of contribution; and on awareness tools

(Mid-term assessment)

### Year Four:

Continue... modify data base as necessary

Visualization continues; high-level seminar on topic

Building a global partnership; project sustainability; produce outreach tools

### Year Five:

Continue... modify data base as necessary

Produce the atlas; high-level conference on gmp, presentation of atlas + book

Launch of outreach toolkit. Launch of global partnership and sustainable activities

(Final evaluation)