

[Topic]
***Civil Society Media* at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS): The Challenges of Policy Intervention.**

Gabriele Hadl* and Arne Hintz**

Abstract: Global summits present opportunities for non-commercial/non-governmental actors to create alliances, clarify objectives, gain recognition and intervene in policy. The United Nations' World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) was an important convergence point for civil society groups working on communication issues, and specifically for diverse groups of 'alternative media,' 'community media,' and 'tactical media.' The authors have previously suggested to commonly refer to these as 'civil society media' (Hintz 2003, Hintz and Milan 2004, Hadl 2004). This paper further corroborates the need for such an umbrella term, by analyzing three spaces of the summit in which these groups were active: the *Media Caucus*, the *Community Media Working Group*, and *WSIS? WE SEIZE!*, the alternative event outside the summit. The authors identify three main challenges in these spaces: marginalization of non-commercial media, narrow discourse and membership base in the 'community media working group' and lack of a common vision for different approaches (protest or participation). They argue that these actors could have benefited from a common umbrella term such as 'civil society media' to resist co-option by commercial and governmental media and to evolve a common agenda. The final section of the paper draws on existing discourses on community, alternative and tactical media to develop a detailed definition of civil society media as texts, technologies and organizations by and for civil society, with civic means and goals.

Keywords: Global communications governance, World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), *civil society media*, alternative media, community media, tactical media, democratization of communication, media reform, media democracy, Media Caucus, Community Media Working Group, *WSIS? WE SEIZE!*

1. Introduction

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) was the first United Nations (UN) summit around information and communication. Along with governments and international organizations, civil society¹ and the private sector² were also invited to "actively participate" in this summit.³ A great variety of civil society actors, from communications researchers to women's radio activists, from development NGOs to indigenous people's rights groups, used

* Ph.D. Candidate, Graduate School of Sociology, Ritsumeikan University

** Ph.D. Candidate, Research Centre for Media and Politics, University of Hamburg

the summit to participate and intervene in policy making, to network and to develop their own vision of information and communication societies.

The civil society sector at the WSIS was an important space for discussing the “democratization of communications” and “communication rights” (Calabrese 2004, CRIS 2005, Ó Siochrú 2004a, Raboy 2004a). Within this broad vision which includes mainstream media reform, people’s right to knowledge and privacy, and more, media “of, by, and for the people”⁴ play an important role (Leon 2003, CRIS 2005, Hamelink 1996, McChesney 1999, MacBride et al. 1980). They are considered essential for “liberating people’s initiatives” (MacBride et al. 1980: 113), foster alternatives to mainstream media, empower marginalized and disenfranchised people, support cultural diversity, enable citizens to “maintain autonomy” (Stein 2002: 126) and are “one of the conditions for democracy” (MacBride et al. 1980: 55). Many have argued convincingly that they should be taken into account in media policy.

However, how precisely to refer to these media in a global policy context is far from clear.⁵ This paper shows how urgently this question needs to be resolved, and how it can be. For this purpose, we will focus on a certain segment of the civil society sector at the WSIS, consisting of community radio associations, public access television, alternative media centers, non-profit publishers, individual media activists, culture jammers, social movement journalists, citizens’ video makers and myriad others involved in making media not for the profit motive or the purpose of nation-building, but for social benefit. We have suggested to refer to these collectively as *civil society media* (Hintz 2003, Hintz & Milan 2004, Hadl 2004). Based on three years of fieldwork by each of us⁶ and as part of our ongoing doctoral research projects, this case study further elucidates our choice of this umbrella term.

In the first three sections of this paper, we analyze three spaces⁷ at the WSIS where these groups were active: the *Media Caucus*, the main organizing space for broadcast and print media policy input, the *Community Media Working Group*, and *WSIS? WE SEIZE!*, the alternative space outside the official summit. We found that these ‘third media’ faced a number of challenges in creating a space for their demands and deliberations, crafting language inputs, forming networks, and in creating a common discourse. Analyzing the dominant discourse of each space and how it ‘framed’ the third media sector, we show that all of these challenges can be traced to problems of conceptualization. In the final sections, we explore the concept *civil society media* as a tool to address these challenges. Drawing on existing research on ‘community,’ ‘alternative’ and ‘tactical media’ we evolve a multi-level definition of civil society media that can be used to empower these new policy actors in global policy intervention.

2. Setting: The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

2.1. Trends in Global Communications Governance

United Nations organizations and international agreements were long the primary platforms for global communications policy. In this context, the only recognized policy actors were governments.⁸ Since the 1980s, however, business and civil society actors have emerged

as policy actors and increasingly intervened through lobbying, public pressure and emerging forms of 'multi-stakeholder governance' (Ó Siochrú 2004b: 332, Padovani & Tuzzi 2004: 361-2). Since the late 1990s, the UN has begun a concerted effort to re-define and expand its relations with civil society (Cardoso et al. 2004). Global summits in particular have been a place where civil society has been active, both inside and outside the venues (Ó Siochrú 2004b).

Civil society organizations⁹ working on communications issues have used these openings in global policy to intervene on policies that affect media ownership concentration, digital divides, homogenization of media content, lack of locally relevant content, control of communication infrastructure by private corporations, marginalization of women, digital divides, privacy invasions for commercial and anti-terror purposes (CRIS 2005). In addition to specific issues, many civil society groups also attempt to influence the overall policy discourse, especially the *neo-liberal paradigm* in communications. This, currently dominant, paradigm emphasizes free trade, the market, technology, and globalizing economies (Girard & Ó Siochrú 2002) and is increasingly seen by a part of civil society actors as a cause of the issues currently faced by the world, from the growing gap between communication *haves* and *have nots* to the continued problematic representation of women in media.

Large networks and umbrella organizations such as the World Association of Christian Communication (WACC), the Association of Progressive Communications (APC) and the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC) have been involved with UN-level policy making and formed platforms such as Communication Rights in the Information Society (Suzuki 1999, 2004).

However, many grassroots groups, especially *civil society media* have few chances to intervene directly in UN level policies and discourses that affect them.¹⁰ Many struggle with precarious legal status, funding, organizing, and the day-to-day work of media production. In addition, most grassroots media groups are suspicious of elite gatherings like global summits. In any case, bureaucratic hurdles¹¹ have so far prevented all but the best established and funded NGO networks and umbrella organizations from participating even as observers in UN summits and meetings. The WSIS lowered some of the access hurdles, and promised civil society an important role in deliberations. As a result, an unprecedented number and range of *civil society media* groups saw this as an opportunity to intervene. The challenges they faced will be the focus of this paper. Before we zoom in on these, however, we need to clarify the context in which these issues arose.

2.2. WSIS Structure and Themes

The WSIS was the first United Nations (UN) summit dealing exclusively with information and communication. Its aim was to develop a common understanding of the information society and a common response to its challenges such as the digital divide. It was also to assess the role that information and communication technologies (ICTs) can play in helping UN members achieve the Millennium Development Goals, a set of development benchmarks (ITU 2005a). Though an intergovernmental event, it encouraged all relevant stakeholders,

including civil society, to “contribute to and actively participate in” summit processes (UN 2001: Art. 5). This was hailed by organizers as a new step in UN-civil society relations.

The first phase culminated in the Geneva summit in December 2003, after a preparatory process stretching over almost two years.¹² Summit procedures recognized four different kinds of actors — governments, private sector, UN family and civil society. Each of these had their own accreditation procedures, organizing structures, spaces and scope of participation (ITU 2005b), as illustrated in Fig.1. The process revolved around the drafting of two official summit documents: the *Declaration of Principles* (WSIS 2003a) and the *Plan of Action* (WSIS 2003b). These were adopted by the UN member states at the Geneva summit.

The themes treated in these documents ranged from Internet governance, education, and cultural diversity to security. At the meetings, major conflicts also arose around finance mechanisms for bridging the digital divide, Internet governance, free/open source software, human rights, media governance and information security. The regulatory framework reflected in the final documents emphasizes market-friendly, liberalized environments, with public-private partnerships as a primary strategy, though several sections also argue the importance of public services and the public domain (WSIS 2003a: para. 23 and 26). Conspicuously absent is any reference to the growing role of media and communications policy in trade agreements and the World Trade Organization, in spite of the possibility that these policy tools will override whatever is decided at the WSIS (Hamelink 2004: 284).

2.3. Dominant Discourse: ‘Information Society’

The summit was organized by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), a UN *specialized agency* concerned primarily with information technology and infrastructure. Its

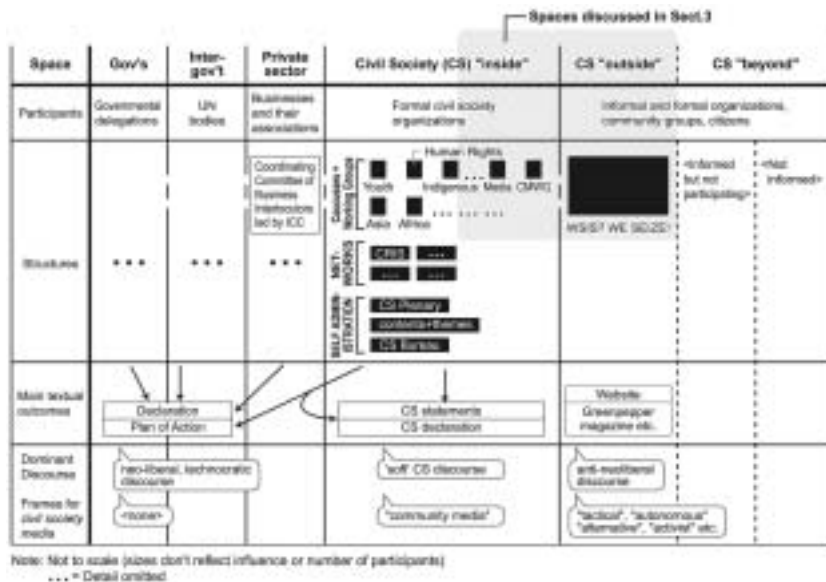


Fig.1: Frames for Civil Society Media

members include states and private companies, large businesses, national communications regulators, communication carriers, equipment manufacturers, and professional associations. This set the tone for an ‘information society discourse’ based on techno-determinist and neo-liberal agendas (Ó Siochrú 2004a). This discourse, especially as it was reflected in the early drafts of the documents, clashed with the ‘communication society’ perspective of many participants (Ó Siochrú 2004a), in particular UNESCO, civil society and some governments, such as Brazil. These actors lobbied to integrate aspects of development, human rights, culture and participatory communication into the WSIS agenda. These efforts succeeded at “damage control” (Raboy 2004a: 346), limiting the most one-sided business and security-related advances, though unable to advance their own ‘communication society’ vision.

Within the dominant ‘information society discourse,’ print and broadcast media did not play a central role. They appear only toward the end of the *Declaration of Principles* (WSIS 2003a: Art. 55) and the *Plan of Action* (WSIS 2003b: Art. 24). Yet among governments, these articles created major friction. Governments interested in controlling media content – particularly China – opposed emphasis on Article 19 (freedom of expression) of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR). The Swiss delegation, supported by a vocal media and journalistic lobby, supported the independence of media organizations from governments. Governments with strong ties to national media corporations, led by El Salvador, opposed measures limiting media concentration and any mention of community media.

Still, the final version of the *Declaration of Principles* reaffirms freedom of the press and information, and calls for pluralism and diversity in media. However, it does not suggest concrete policies, such as limiting ownership concentration or supporting non-commercial media. References to community media were deleted at the final stages, except for a call to “give support to media based in local communities” (WSIS 2003b: Art. 23j). The focus of the final documents is on new information communication technologies, with states and business considered the most prominent actors. In this inter-governmental vision of the information society, the economy and national interests drive development and civil society is relegated to a supporting role.

2.4. Civil Society Participation

The summit organizers prided themselves on being the first to officially invite civil society to a summit (Ó Siochrú 2004b: 333), and defined it widely, as “cover[ing] the entities of the third sector (distinct from the State and from the private sector) that are engaged in non-profit activities.” However, cumbersome registration procedures, and lack of funding, language support, outreach and facilitation by the summit organizers hindered the participation of many. As a result, only a fraction of ‘global civil society’ was aware of the process, let alone able to participate. Those who managed to come to Geneva had to struggle with lack of access to important venues and people, governance processes, cultural and economic divisions between them and difficulties in influencing the overall process. Some governments, notably China, Russia and Pakistan, resisted the idea of civil society participation from the beginning and fought to limit their role to observer status or less. Still,

those groups present at the preparatory conferences initiated a culture of debates around the WSIS themes, set up administrative and lobbying mechanisms and organized a variety of events at the summit itself.

Civil society participants organized themselves into caucuses and working groups,¹³ with regional and thematic focus areas such as *Asia-Pacific*, *Indigenous Peoples*, *Human Rights* or *NGO Gender Strategies*. These prepared input into the *Declaration* and the *Plan of Action*, drafted text for civil society statements, discussed strategies for lobbying governments, nominated speakers for addressing governments, organized summit side events and issued position papers and press releases. Their common decision-making body was the *civil society plenary*, which met daily during conferences and summits.¹⁴

While tactics for these interventions evolved with the moment, there was some space for debating strategies. In the course of the preparation process, civil society participants grew increasingly critical towards the governmental WSIS agenda and reluctant to lend it legitimacy. Two months before the Geneva summit, they decided to withdraw support from the *WSIS Declaration* and the *Plan of Action* and largely stopped contributing to the official process. Instead, civil society caucuses and working groups produced an alternative declaration, *Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs* (WSIS Civil Society Plenary 2003).

This *Civil Society Declaration* is largely a compilation of caucuses and working groups' contributions,¹⁵ issues and perspectives that they had lobbied for, but found not "adequately reflected" in the final *Declaration* and *Plan of Action* (WSIS Civil Society Plenary 2003: 2). Their common vision for "people-centered, inclusive and equitable [...] communication societies" (ibid.) stands in contrast to the dominant market-centered discourse at WSIS, though it stops short of a direct critique of the economic neo-liberal paradigm. Some have commented that this vision is not even and consistent, instead revealing the contradictions and struggles in the WSIS civil society sector, whilst expressing a common agenda of "social justice" (Calabrese 2004). It also dedicates a full section to *community media*, including a proposal for a *Community Media Fund*. However, references to other non-governmental/non-commercial media are lacking. This reflects many of the struggles and limitations of who got to speak 'for' and about them, and how.

3. Challenges for *Civil Society Media* at WSIS

Within the civil society space, some *civil society media actors* participated in the *Media Caucus* and the *Community Media Working Group* (CMWG). Others joined different caucuses and working groups, or stayed unaffiliated. Others, especially those from *alternative* and *tactical media* backgrounds,¹⁶ refused to participate in summit processes. Instead, they organized *WSIS? WE SEIZE!*, a series of alternative/counter-events around the Geneva summit. The areas of WSIS we focus on in this section are shaded in Fig.1.

3.1. Marginalization in the *Media Caucus*

Among the civil society caucuses, the *Media Caucus* was the main body for media policy

issues, especially broadcast media and journalism. Despite being set up within a civil society space, its founding members were not civil society organizations, but commercial broadcasters' unions. They were joined by public service broadcasters, commercial networks (radio and TV), industry associations such as the *World Association of Newspapers*, media-related NGOs such as the *Media Institute of Southern Africa*, press freedom organizations such as *Article 19* and the *World Press Freedom Committee*, professional associations such as the *International Federation of Journalists* and individual media researchers. Delegates from AMARC brought a strong voice of community radio into the caucus debates, complemented by a few activists from *indymedia* and other alternative and tactical media groups. However, the caucus remained dominated by the interests of commercial media associations.

The *Media Caucus* emphasized the rights and freedoms of media organizations and journalists, as the primary producers and distributors of content. It called for worldwide implementation of UDHR Article 19 on the freedom of expression. Further objectives included media pluralism, universal and affordable access, cultural diversity, and the protection of the rights of online media workers. Criticism of media concentration was vague, failing to advance specific anti-monopoly laws. For all its concern about rights, the responsibilities of media organizations and journalists were given scant attention.

Community media were recognized in principle but were confined to the edges and niches of the media sphere, "serving traditionally disadvantaged groups" and requiring "legally established ... non-profit" status (Heinrich-Böll-Foundation 2003b: para.14). Concrete proposals for supporting community media were blocked, particularly by the *International Association of Broadcasting* (IAB). The IAB's purpose was to protect their members' broadcast activities from regulation of ownership and content, which it framed as threats to freedom of expression (IAB 2002). This group used the human right to freedom of expression as a tool to resist regulation and limit accountability of media organizations and professional journalists. This interpretation of 'freedom of expression' has a long tradition in liberal thinking¹⁷ and is part of the economic neo-liberal paradigm.¹⁸ This understanding was at odds with the efforts by many civil society groups, including from community media, to limit media concentration, protect citizens against corporate censorship, open up traditional media for citizens' participation and to make media more responsive to society at large (Hintz & Milan 2004: 24, Raboy 2004a: 152, CRIS 2005).

However, since some governments tried to weaken human rights in the WSIS documents, key CMWG members including AMARC decided to support the *Media Caucus* and its anti-state notion of 'freedom of expression.' The wider civil society network at WSIS accepted the *Media Caucus* structure and ideology, opting to be inclusive rather than insisting on clear boundaries against state and business interests.¹⁹

The *Media Caucus* problem had of course some practical causes, such as the unequal distribution of power between mainstream media and community media, and the common need to resist authoritarian governments. However, lack of theoretical clarity was a major factor. By leaving the *Media Caucus'* civil society status uncontested,²⁰ civil society actors implicitly endorsed the notion that 'the Media' are a homogenous sector that should be

included in civil society.²¹ Second, it was not made clear enough that ‘freedom of expression’ means one thing in the hands of corporate media and another when used by citizens.²² In either case, addressing the problem requires differentiating clearly between *civil society media* and non-civil society media.

3.2. Limited Range of the Community Media Working Group (CMWG)

With their voices marginalized in the *Media Caucus*, several *civil society media* actors, led by AMARC, formed the *Community Media Working Group* (CMWG). The CMWG relied heavily on AMARC’s and other community media associations policy experience and networks. Activists from European *indymedia* groups (<http://www.indymedia.org>), the Korean public media center *mediACT* (<http://www.mediact.org/>) and the US-based grassroots satellite TV network *Deep Dish* (<http://www.deepdishtv.org/>) temporarily diversified the group. Due to the key members focus on community radio, CMWG statements emphasized poverty eradication through “community-driven communication initiatives, developed in response to local needs and under community control” (Heinrich-Böll-Foundation 2003a: para. 2). It also proposed a *Community Media Fund* to support new community radio development and community media content, particularly for disadvantaged communities (CMWG 2003). Criticizing the summit’s focus on new technologies, the CMWG highlighted the need for traditional media, especially radio, as the main access channels to information for large parts of the world population. It called for the broad legalization of community media and for the reform of radio and satellite spectrum allocation (CMWG 2003). It had less to say about other media technologies, even though many *civil society media* depend heavily or wholly on print or web-based distribution.

Since key members of the CMWG collaborated with commercial and public service media in the *Media Caucus*, its critique of the market-dominated media system was cautious at best. Rarely did its statements reflect wider media democratization demands, such as limits to media concentration and monopolization of knowledge, and support for the media of social movements.²³ *Civil society media* concerns beyond community radio, such as interactive information exchange, non-hierarchical structures, critical content and participation of non-professionals were occasionally mentioned in CMWG statements, but given little priority. The working group’s focus on local radio and community/peer-group communication made it easy for commercial media in the *Media Caucus* to cast them as marginal. Neither did this umbrella term²⁴ succeed at mobilizing a wide range of groups. Participants from organizations such as the *Feminist International Radio Endeavour* (<http://www.radiofeminista.net/>), *mediACT*, *indymedia*, *Deep Dish* and *Adbusters* (<http://www.adbusters.org>) took the bulk of their actions to other spaces.²⁵ At the *Community Media Forum*, a summit side-event co-organized by the CMWG, these groups were relegated to the last session²⁶ with little speaking time and no interpreters.

In spite of its limitations, ‘community media’ was used as an umbrella term for non-commercial/non-governmental media in governmental and civil society documents, including the *Civil Society Declaration* (WSIS Civil Society Plenary 2003). Thus many opportunities

were lost to challenge governments to recognize and support citizens and civil society groups as producers and owners of media in a diversity of forms and contents.

3.3. Missed Opportunities for Collaboration: Inside/Outside the Summit

A number of discursive spaces were created in Geneva for *civil society media* to discuss and intervene in summit processes from outside. Most notable was *WSIS? WE SEIZE!*— a series of events fostering alternatives to the hegemonic view of ‘the information society’ that dominated the official summit (Geneva03, 2003). A loose network of autonomous media groups, *indymedia* collectives, hackers, shareware developers, and grassroots campaigners, formed a temporary association called the *Geneva03 Collective*. They set up a conference, video stream and media laboratory in the city center, organized protest events in the streets and overall served as a space to voice radical critiques of global summit politics, neo-liberal global governance and business-led information/communication policies.

Geneva03 rejected the WSIS’s ‘rhetoric of inclusion’ as a ‘smokescreen’ to ‘mystify the continuing use of information to protect and advance the interests of global capital’ (Geneva03 2003). *WSIS? WE SEIZE!* participants celebrated a culture of non-hierarchical association, non-commercial creativity, experimenting and skill-sharing. Rather than trying to influence the official process, they opted to work on communication concepts ‘from below.’ Thematic discussions focused on critical issues left off the WSIS agenda: information wars and propaganda, exploitation of information workers, surveillance and information control, the privatization of ideas through trademarks and copyrights and the links between freedom of communication and freedom of movement.

Yet the parallel summit was not a mere counter-event. *Geneva03* members sought to bring their perspectives into the summit through associates inside the summit compound. Also, civil society participants inside the summit created events drawing *civil society media* actors from within and without. The *World Forum on Communication Rights* (<http://www.communicationrights.org>) and the *Community Media Forum* (http://www.communicationrights.org/BFA_flyer.pdf) assembled activists and advocates, providing public spaces to discuss their experiences and propagate their views. *Geneva03* activists connected to these events through common publications and personal exchange. This was a promising starting point for coordinating multi-level strategies for intervening in future summits.

However, this attempt to work across the inside/outside barrier left much undone. The actual degree of exchange was limited, and the various side-events were not sufficiently coordinated. Few participants of the *Community Media Forum* participated in *WSIS? WE SEIZE!* activities and vice versa. The radio stream set up by community radio activists inside the summit building was not connected with the tactical video stream from *WSIS? WE SEIZE!*. Many opportunities for cooperation between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ *civil society media* actors could not be maximised. Apart from the practical obstacles, such as limited time and distant venues, there was also a conceptual divide that made work difficult. *Community media* operated inside the WSIS process and the physical summit compound. *Tactical* and *alternative media* were largely active outside. There was no umbrella term to create a sense

of unity, and little theoretical conceptual common ground to formulate a common agenda.

3.4. Towards a Common Framework

Many factors hampered the policy interventions of *civil society media* actors at the WSIS. Over most they had little control. The policy paradigm at the WSIS favored information technology over communication media, industry and state interests over social justice. In this unfavorable summit environment, they had to build strategic alliances, some of which forced severe compromise. Further, as among the other types of civil society actors, differences in cultures, political approaches and financial resources caused fractures. Under circumstances such as these, what can be done to expand the arena for action and argument, while optimizing structures and opportunities already in hand? Lack of conceptual clarity was a partial root of the challenges discussed above. It thus follows that better theoretical framings are needed to address them. Therefore, the current framings of ‘the Media’ as part of civil society on one hand (in the *Media Caucus*) and the use of the ‘community media’ umbrella term to cover all non-governmental/non-commercial media on the other proved problematic.

4. Developing the *Civil Society Media* Concept

We attempt to create this common ground with the concept *civil society media*. There are several reasons for this choice. One is that the concept ‘civil society’ is supported by a rich body of theoretical work. We have explored this aspect at an earlier stage of this research (Hintz 2003, Hadl 2004), and will revisit it at the next. In this paper, we focus on another, more pragmatic reason: The new “global governance paradigm” (Raboy 2004a) has a space for ‘civil society.’ It is therefore expedient to tie into this terminology in order to frame these grassroots communication practices for global governance.

In an earlier part of this research we showed that the concept *civil society media* can be used as a tool to tackle the *Media Caucus* challenge (Hadl 2004). This helps to correct the conceptual mis-framing that leads to the inclusion of ‘the Media’ (including media corporations) in the civil society space. Discarding the *public* vs. *private* media frame, it reveals that media systems actually consist of three overlapping spheres, called *market*, *governmental* and *civil society media*. In the following, we will develop the concept so it can address the lack of connection among ‘community media’ groups and other non-governmental/non-commercial media as well. First, we need to understand the intellectual traditions that informed the discourses and self-definition of different types of *civil society media* participants. We will then mine these traditions for elements for a comprehensive definition that shows in more detail the “media for and by members of civil society, with civic content” (Hadl 2004: 80).

4.1. Three Theoretical Discourses: *Community, Alternative and Tactical Media*

Among what we suggest to call *civil society media* participants, we can roughly distinguish between three types- *community*, *alternative* and *tactical media*. These terms are

often used interchangeably as umbrella terms for non-governmental, non-commercial media. They correspond to three of Carpentier, Lie and Servaes' (2003) approaches to community media: "as serving a community" (3-9), "as alternatives to mainstream media" (9-13), and "as rhizome" (20-24).²⁷ We argue, however, that these are not, as Carpentier et al. suggest, different academic descriptions of a single kind of social phenomenon, *community media*. They are historically grown discourses that tie into different sets of practices. Our concern is with the role these discourses played in the challenges described above, and what they can contribute to our proposed solution, a comprehensive definition of *civil society media*.

Community Media Discourse

This discourse focuses on the media organization's purpose and audiences. *Community media* are "the means of expression of the community, rather than for the community" and "media to which members of the community have access, [...] when they want access" (Berrigan 1977: 18). The concept is strongly connected to broadcast media, especially radio, and gained international currency through AMARC (Lewis 2002). Originally focused on local radio, the concept has expanded to include other technologies, and refers to *communities of interest*, including the media of social movements and globally networked projects. Marginalized and economically weak communities are considered especially important as audiences and producers of community media. Their *participation* and *empowerment* are considered essential, though these concepts can have divergent meanings. For example, in the context of a development discourse, participation can be a means to achieve a development goal set by a donor organization. Dervin and Huesca (1997: 46-7) call this the "participation-as-means" approach and criticize it as basically un-democratic and top-down.²⁸ On the social movement end of the spectrum, participation implies the media project is initiated and sustained by all parts of the *community* it serves. Emphasis is also on *dialogue* and *communication* as a two-way process (Carpentier, Lie & Servaes 2003: 9). This concept owes much to the field of development communication, and has been supported with significant research grants from UN organizations, especially those concerned with development and poverty alleviation. Examples of 'typical practices' connected to this discourse are the community radio stations described by Gumucio Dagron (2001) and Girard (2001). This was the dominant discourse of the CMWG at the WSIS.

Alternative Media Discourse

The key element in defining *alternative media* is content, which should express "an alternative vision to hegemonic policies, priorities and perspectives" (Downing 2001: v). Another criteria is alternative organization, with horizontal or non-hierarchical relationships among the producers, a blurring of roles of readers and writers, and independence from state and market. These media are considered expressions for social movements, minorities and/or sub- and countercultures (Downing 2001, Rodríguez 2001, Gumucio Dagron 2004, Atton 2002). The distinguishing feature of this approach is the 'alternative vs. mainstream' dichotomy, which recent research has shown to be limiting (Rodríguez 2001: 11-21), self-

marginalizing (Carpentier, Lie & Servaes 2003: 13) and theoretically weak (Downing 2001: ix).²⁹ Examples cover a wide range, from indigenous video projects to political graffiti. This discourse has also informed the global network of independent media centers (IMCs or *indymedia*) (Richardson 2002).

At the WSIS, groups and people connected to this tradition had no platform of their own, but participated in the CRIS campaign, the CMWG, and other caucuses. Others engaged in *WSIS? WE SEIZE!*.

Tactical Media Discourse

Tactical media discourse emphasizes the interactive and contextual nature of communication. With a strong 'new technology' focus, it also considers issues beyond the usual 'media' horizon, such as intellectual property rights, open software, surveillance and biotechnology. It also takes into account the ideology built into communication technologies. A "contentious umbrella of a term under which can be found critical, antagonistic, parasitic, heterogenous, dissenting media practice and theory" (Garcia 2004: 421), this is a relatively young discourse, originating from the Amsterdam-based *Next 5 Minutes* festivals in the 1990s (Garcia 2004). The concept 'tactical' is used to "disrupt and take beyond the rigid dichotomies that have so long restricted thinking in this area," including "alternative vs. mainstream" (Garcia & Lovink 1997: para. 9). The purpose of *tactical media* theory and practice is to infiltrate, appropriate and pervert mainstream messages and technologies (Richardson 2004). The 'producers' are usually individuals and small ad-hoc alliances, the 'texts' ambiguous and provocative. 'Canonical' examples quoted in research include "billboard pirating by Adbusters, plagiarized websites by the Italian hackers, 0100101110101101.org, RTMs mock websites for G. W. Bush and the World Trade Organization" (Richardson 2002: para. 4). This was the main discourse at *WSIS? WE SEIZE!*.

Though these discourses clearly overlap and intertwine, they have nonetheless their own cultural contexts and spheres of influence. Their key terms 'alternative media,' 'tactical media' and 'community media' are therefore not interchangeable. Nor can one of them be used as a umbrella term covering all of them, as happened at the WSIS. This said, they do share certain characteristics. Their audiences and producers (insofar as this separation applies) are parts of civil society - communities, social movements, informal associations and individual citizens.³⁰ Their common bottom line is that media and communication should not be dominated by state and market interests. They also share the values of a wider movement for the democratization of communication.³¹ Therefore, the umbrella term *civil society media* could be used as a platform for these diverse practices and traditions.

4.2. Towards a Multi-level Definition

If *civil society media* is to be a legitimate umbrella term encompassing the above, it needs to synthesize the chief identifying characteristics of these traditions: *community media* concern with the organization, *alternative media* focus on mainstream critical content and *tactical media* focus on creative and critical technology use. Further, we need to take

seriously the important points raised by all of them regarding audience-production relationships and purpose.

In short, *civil society media* can be defined as media (texts, technologies and organizations) by and for civil society, with civic means and goals. What this means in detail can be determined by considering the criteria in Table 1. The table synthesizes lists of characteristics by Carpentier, Lie and Servaes (2003: 11), Downing (2001: ix-xi), Servaes (2003: 156), Riaño (1994: 6) and Atton (2002: 27), and key concepts from the three different discourses (in footnotes).

Applying and Weighing the Criteria

Of course, no project will fulfil all of these criteria. As Downing (2001) notes about radical alternative media, “they break someone’s rules, although rarely all of them in every respect” (xi). In fact, we noted that civil society is no panacea. Neither are ‘real life’ *civil society media* wonderfully democratic, or superior in every way to commercial and public service media. Instead, we suggest that a project should *predominantly* display the above characteristics in order to fall under the *civil society media* umbrella term.³⁸

For example, based on this definition system, *civil society media* does not include, for

Table 1: Multi-Level Definition Criteria for Civil Society Media

Organization/Production

- Internal organization: horizontal (collective decision-making), egalitarian, democratic, decentralized, non-discriminatory, transparent (Servaes 2004, Indymedia 2001, Downing 2001)
- Owned/controlled by a part of civil society³²
- Participatory³³
- Experimental and emancipatory technology use³⁴
- Critical of mainstream codes of production and distribution (Atton 2001)

Audience

- Audience-producer communities (Atton 2001)
- Actively and creatively producing meaning (Servaes 2004)
- Members of civil society (not consumers or voters)
- Especially un-represented and underrepresented groups (Carpentier, Lie & Servaes 2003)

Content

- Anti-hegemonic and critical of mainstream contents, codes, aesthetics (Downing 2001, Atton 2002)
- Dialogic,³⁵ not didactic (i. e. propaganda or selling of ideas)
- Contributes to a *communication commons* (not the commodification of ideas) (Kidd 2003)

Purpose

- Social benefit (e. g. social justice, human rights, cultural identity, environment)
- Empowerment³⁶
- Democratization of communication³⁷

example, a paper with 'alternative content' but owned by a corporation, run for profit, and not allowing audience participation.³⁹ Neither does the umbrella term include non-profit media organizations that produce content indistinguishable from commercial media and with a hierarchical and professional organization structure. Nor the "repressive radical media" (right-wing media or Stalinist propaganda) that Downing (2001) describes. Their content may be counter-hegemonic, but their chief characteristic is its purpose to destroy or usurp civil society, not to promote dialogue or debate.

On the other hand, the multi-level definition *includes* an organization like the Korean public media center MEDIACT with public funding and hierarchical internal structures, but shares the purpose, audience and content criteria. A radio station such as FM Waiwai based in Kobe, which is registered as a business, is responsive to minorities, and run by media non-professionals, is squarely in the civil society zone. While we have noted some examples we are familiar with, the criteria needs to be checked carefully, case-by-case, taking into account the cultural and historical context. The status may change overtime. What was once a *civil society media* organization may become a government-market hybrid, maintaining few of its civil society characteristics.⁴⁰

5. Conclusion

Civil society media can thus be conceptualized as a distinct group of media organizations, with common goals and characteristics. With this multi-level definition we can address the conceptual causes of the challenges encountered at the WSIS.

First, it can help solve the *Media Caucus* problem, which arose out of an insufficient distinction between different types of media. The concept *civil society media*, put into practice in future global policy venues, could help to ensure commercial media do not colonize civil society spaces. For example, by strategically naming the main space for media issues in the civil society sector *Civil Society Media Caucus*, it would be easy to deny access to media actors who do not meet the aforementioned criteria.

Second, the multi-level definition helps resolve the 'community media umbrella' problem – the problem of insufficient connections between different discourses. This issue arose out of the attempt to use 'community media' as an umbrella term for all non-governmental/non-commercial media. Our analysis of the three different traditions shows that this approach privileges groups who identify with the *community media* tradition and fails to integrate the wide variety of civil society media practices. The *civil society media* umbrella term is a tool to solve this dilemma as well. In policy practice, a CMWG would work with alternative, tactical and other media groups in a *Civil Society Media Caucus*. Relieved of the responsibility to be a platform for all *civil society media*, the CMWG could focus on the issues most important to its members, and broader concerns could be worked on by all *civil society media* together. Though we stress the need for a common agenda, "one should never assume that the needs of civil society can be articulated with a single well tempered voice" (Calabrese 2004: 328). This is especially true for *civil society media*. Therefore, the multi-level definition of *civil*

society media is designed to reveal the diversity of the projects it unites.

Last, the *civil society media* concept could be used to reach across the inside/outside divide. The definition clearly includes groups 'outside,' including those without legal status. This explicates that those participating in multi-stakeholder governance processes are only one part of a bigger group of *civil society media* engaged in such processes and events. However, completely merging the inside and outside agendas is neither desirable nor realistic. The modalities of the two approaches are essentially different. *Civil society media* 'inside' have to work under conditions not of their own making. Their ability to intervene in policy depends on making alliances with other political actors and to challenge some but not all of the dominant discourse. In this process, it becomes difficult to keep sight of strategy, and means and ends often become tangled.⁴¹ These groups need critical perspectives from 'outside' to avoid being instrumentalized by the big players and to develop and maintain an agenda independent of their inside allies.

The 'outside' *civil society media*, on the other hand, can create their agenda more autonomously, but they have few channels to influence policy directly. They need more than a few sympathizers or go-betweens, but a common platform and space for dialogue. Here too, the multi-level definition of the concept can serve to create unity without compromising diversity. It can help diverse *civil society media* groups to evolve a common agenda, while they may disagree about the best means to realize it. These scenarios suggest how *civil society media* actors could take challenges such as those at the WSIS in better stride. Of course, on the ground, policy processes are fluid and pragmatic, and application of the concept will depend on concrete situations. It will have to be adapted or re-thought for other contexts. The key is to remember the challenges these actors faced without the *civil society media* concept, and to work on the conceptual tools to address them.

The definition of the *civil society media* umbrella term developed here can serve as a starting point. However, the evolution of a theory for *civil society media* will depend on how well it can be connected to theories of civil society, radical and deliberative democracy, and communication rights and media democratization. This task cannot be achieved by *civil society media* researchers and activists alone. It needs the cooperation of political scientists, media theorists and political philosophers. Appropriate theoretical tools will empower not only *civil society media* advocates, but all concerned with media and democracy in order to re- envision media policy. Rather than being relegated to a niche group, *civil society media* will then be able to take their place as an important media sphere in society, and realise their democratic potential.

References

- Adams, B. (2002). The United Nations and Civil Society. In P. Hajnal (Ed.) *Civil Society in the Information Age*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Atton, C. (2002). *Alternative Media*. London: SAGE.
- Barber, B. (1996). Three Challenges to Reinventing Democracy. In P. Hirst & S. Khilnani. *Reinventing Democracy*. Cambridge: Blackwell, 144–156.

- Benson, R. (2003). Commercialism and Critique: California's Alternative Weeklies. In N. Couldry & J. Curran (Eds) *Contesting Media Power: Alternative Media in a Networked World*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Berrigan, F. (1977). *Access: Some Western Models of Community Media*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Buckley, S. (2004). Community Media and the Information Society. Retrieved 6 April 2004, from <http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/55412/>.
- Calabrese, A. (2004). The Promise of Civil Society: a Global Movement for Communication Rights. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 18(3): 317-329.
- Cardoso, F., Bagher, A., Dahl, B., Dulany, P., Erdős, A., Mayr, J., Mehra, M., Naidoo, K., Racelis, M., Ratilal, P., & Traoré, A. (2004). *We the Peoples: Civil Society, the United Nations and Global Governance. Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations*. Retrieved 7 May 2005, from http://www.un.org/reform/a58_817_english.doc.
- Carpentier, N., Lie, R., & Servaes, J. (2003). Making Community Media Work. In J. Servaes (Ed.) *Approaches to Development: Studies on Communication for Development*. Paris: UNESCO Communication and Information Sector, Chapter 15.
- CCBI (Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors) (2002). What are the contents and themes that business supports for the summit? Retrieved 15 November 2005, from http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsispc2/c/S03-WSISPC2-C-0035!!PDF-E.pdf.
- Centre for Civil Society (2004). What is Civil Society?. Retrieved 15 November 2005, from http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm.
- Clark, J. (2003a). Introduction: Civil Society and Transnational Social Action. In *Globalizing Civic Engagement: Civil Society and Transnational Social Action*. London: Earthscan.
- Clark, J. (2003b). Conclusions: Globalizing Global Civic Engagement. In *Globalizing Civic Engagement: Civil Society and Transnational Social Action*. London: Earthscan.
- CMWG (Community Media Working Group) (2003). Community Media in the Information Society. Statement on the Draft Declaration and Action Plan. WSIS Precom 3. Geneva: 15-26 September 2003. [Pamphlet].
- CRIS campaign (2005). *Assessing Communication Rights: A Handbook*. Retrieved 17 November 2005 from http://files.planetgrey.org/cris/crisinfo/CRAFT_en.pdf.
- Dervin, B. & Huesca, R. (1997). Reaching for the Communicating in Participatory Communication. *The Journal of International Communication* 4(2): 46-74.
- Downing, J. (1984). *Radical Media: The political organization of alternative communication*. Boston: South End Press.
- Downing, J. (2001). *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*. London: SAGE.
- Enzensberger, H. (1974; 2002). Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien. In K. Pias, J. Vogl, L. Engell, O. Fahle, & B. Neitzel (Eds.) *Kursbuch Medienkultur*. Düsseldorf: DVA.
- Freire, P. (1970; 2000). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Garcia, D. and Lovink, G. (1999). The ABC of Tactical Media. Retrieved 20 August 2005, from <http://www.waag.org/tmn/abc.html>.
- Garcia, D. (2004). The Tools and Tactics of a Festival. Looking back at N5M4. *Sarai Reader 2004: Crisis/Media*, 421-423.

- Geneva03 (2003). WSIS? WE SEIZE! an open platform for interventions in, outside of, counter to and as an alternative to the agendas and organization of the WSIS. Retrieved 19 December 2004, from <http://www.geneva03.org/>.
- Girard, B. (Ed). (2001). *A Passion for Radio: Radio Waves and Community*. Retrieved 6 July 2005. www.comunica.org/passion.
- Girard, B. & Ó Siochrú, S. (2002). *Global Media Governance*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Göhler, G. (2004). Macht. In G. Göhler, M. Iser & I. Kerner (Eds.) *Politische Theorie. 22 umkämpfte Begriffe zur Einführung*. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Gumucio Dagron, A. (2001). *Making Waves: Stories of Participatory Communication for Social Change*. New York. The Rockefeller Foundation.
- Gumucio Dagron, A. (2004). The Long and Winding Road of Alternative Media. In J. Downing (Ed.) *The SAGE Handbook of Media Studies*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Hadl, G. (2004). Civil Society Media — Tools for Decolonizing the Lifeworld. *Ritsumeikan Social Sciences Review* 40(4): 77–97.
- Hamelink, C. (2004). Did WSIS Achieve Anything at all? *Gazette: The International Journal for Communication Studies* 66(3-4): 281-290.
- Hamelink, C. (1995). *World Communication. Disempowerment and Self-empowerment*. London: Zed Books.
- Heinrich-Böll-Foundation (2003a). Civil Society Initiative on Community Media. Retrieved 14 November 2005, from <http://www.worldsummit2003.de/en/web/229.htm>
- Heinrich-Böll-Foundation (2003b). Civil Society Working Group on Media Challenges. Contribution of the Media working group to the PrepCom-2. Retrieved 14 November 2005 from <http://www.worldsummit2003.de/en/web/231.htm>.
- Hintz, A. (2003, May 6). Media Actors at the Dividing Lines of Information Society: Civil Society Media at the World Summit on the Information Society. Paper presented at the Euricom Colloquium *Information Society Visions and Governance: The World Summit on the Information Society and Beyond*, Padova/Venice 5-7 May 2003.
- Hintz, A. & Milan. S. (2004, July 28). Towards a new vision for communication governance? Civil Society Media at the World Social Forum and the World Summit on the Information Society. Paper presented at the 25th IAMCR Conference, Porto Alegre, 26-28 July 2004.
- Hirst, P. (1996). Democracy and Civil Society. In P. Hirst & S. Khilnani. *Reinventing Democracy*. Cambridge: Blackwell, 97-116.
- IAB (International Association of Broadcasting) (2002). Position Regarding the World Summit on Information Society. WSIS Document WSIS/PC-2/CONTR/22-E. 6 December 2002. Retrieved 15 November 2004, from http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsispc2/c/S03-WSISPC2-C-0022!!PDF-E.pdf
- Indymedia (2001). Draft Principles of Unity. Retrieved 10 November 2005, from Indymedia Documentation Project <http://doc.indymedia.org/view/global/principlesofunity>.
- ITU (2005a). Basic Information About WSIS: Frequently Asked Questions. What are the MDGs? Retrieved 15 November 2005, from <http://www.itu.int/wsis/basic/faqs.asp>
- ITU (2005b). Basic Information About WSIS: Multi-stakeholder Participation. Retrieved 14

- November 2005, from <http://www.itu.int/wsis/basic/multistakeholders.html>.
- Kaldor, M. (2003). *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Keane, J. (1991). *The Media and Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Keane, J. (2003). Ethics Beyond Borders. In E. Brix & P. Kampits (Eds.) *Zivilgesellschaft zwischen Liberalismus und Kommunitarismus*. Vienna: Passagenverlag, 149-184.
- Kidd, D. (2003). Indymedia.org: a new communications commons. In M. McGaughey & M. Ayers (Eds.) *Cyberactivism: Critical theories and practices of On-line activism*. New York: Routledge.
- Kidd, D. (1999). The Value of Alternative Media. *Peace Review*, 11 (1); 113-119
- Leon, O. (2003). Democratization of Communications and the Media. In W. Fisher & T. Ponniah (Eds.) *Another World Is Possible: Popular Alternatives to Globalization at the World Social Forum*. London: Zed Books, 195-201.
- Lewis, P. M. (2002). Radio Theory and Community Radio. In N. Jankowsky & O. Prehn (Eds.). *Community Media in the Information Age. Perspectives and Prospects*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 31- 46.
- MacBride, S., Abel, E., Beuve-Mérie, H., Ma Ekonzo, A., Garcia Marquez, G., Losev, S. Lubis, M., Masmoudi, M., Nagai, M., Omu, A.F. I., Osolnik, B., El Oteifi, G., Pronk, J.P., Somavia, J., Vergese, G. B., & Zimmermann, B. (1980). *Many Voices, One World. Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow. Towards a new more just and more efficient information and communication order*. Paris: UNESCO Press.
- McChesney, R. (1999). *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*. New York: The New Press.
- McClure, K. (1992). On the Subject of Rights: Pluralism, Plurality and Political Identity. In C. Mouffe (Ed.) *Dimensions of Democracy*. London: Verso, 225-239.
- Mouffe, C. (1992). Democratic Citizenship and the Political Community. In *Dimensions of Democracy*. London: Verso, 225-239.
- Ó Siochrú, S. (2004a). Will the Real WSIS Please Stand Up? The historic encounter of the 'Information Society' and the 'Communication Society.' *Gazette: The International Journal for Communication Studies* 66: 3-4, 203-224.
- Ó Siochrú, S. (2004b). Civil Society Participation in the WSIS Process. Promises and Reality. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 18: 3, 360-380.
- Padovani, C. and Tuzzi, A. (2004). The WSIS as a World of Words: Building a Common Vision for the Communication Society? *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 18: 3, 330-344.
- Rajagopal, B. (2003). *International Law from Below: Developments, Social Movements and Third World Resistance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Raboy, M. (2004a). The WSIS as a Political Space in Global Media Governance. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 18: 3, 345-359.
- Raboy, M. (2004b). *La communication au cœur de la gouvernance globale*. Retrieved 6 April 2004 from <http://www.lrpc.umontreal.ca/smsirapport.pdf>.
- Riño, P. (1994). Women's Participation in Communication: Elements of a Framework. In *Women in Grassroots Communication: Furthering Social Change*, Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 3-30.
- Richardson, J. (2003). The Language of Tactical Media. *Sarai Reader 2003: Crisis/Media*, 346-351.

- Retrieved 5 January 2006 from <http://www.sarai.net/journal/reader3/html>
- Richardson, J. (2002). What is tactical media? Retrieved 5 January 2006 from http://www.nyu.edu/fas/projects/vcb/definingTM/richardson_joanne.html
- Rodríguez, C. (2001). *Fissures in the Mediascape. An International Study of Citizens' Media*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Servaes, J. (1996). Linking Theoretical Perspectives to Policy. In J. Servaes, T. Jacobson & S. White (Eds.) *Participatory Communication for Social Change*. Dheli: SAGE, 29-43.
- Servaes, J. (2004). Human rights, participatory communication and cultural freedom. In P. Lee (Ed.) *Many Voices, One Vision. The Right to Communicate in Practice*. Penang: Southbound Press, 149-162.
- Shinohara, H. (2004). *Shiminno seijigaku- tougi demokurshi to wa nani ka (Citizens' Political Science- What is Deliberative Democracy)*. Tokyo: Iwanami.
- Stein, L. (2002). Democratic 'Talk', Access Television and Participatory Political Communication. In N. Jankowsky & O. Prehn (Eds.) *Community Media in the Information Age. Perspectives and Prospects*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 121-140.
- Suzuki, M. (1999). Johokashakai ni torikumu kuristoshatachi-WACCno katsudou to sono jissenrinri o chuushin ni (Christians taking on the information society- WACC and its applied ethics). In T. Kuribayashi (Ed.) *Sekai ni ikiru (Living in the World)*, Tokyo: Nihonkristokyodan Shuppanyoku, 265-285.
- Suzuki, M. (2004). 'Johokashakai: Digital Divide o chushin ni (Information Society: Focus on the Digital Divide)', in S. Inoue, J. Sasaki, H. Tajima & H. Yamamoto (Eds.) *Yokuboshakai*. Tokyo: Nihonbyorishakaigakkai, 55-72.
- UN NGLS (United Nations Non-governmental Liaison Service) and Sidhu, G. (2003). *Intergovernmental Negotiations and Decision Making at the United Nations*. New York: United Nations. [Available at <http://www.nsystem.org/ngls>].
- UN (United Nations) (2001). UN General Resolution 56/183 of December 2001. Retrieved 14 November 2005, from http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/background/resolutions/56_183_unga_2002.pdf.
- Worldsummit2005.org (2005). WSIS as a case of information capitalism? Critical Perspectives at Incommunicado Conference. Retrieved 5 July 2005, from <http://www.worldsummit2005.de/en/web/755.htm>.
- WSIS Civil Society Plenary (2003). *Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs. Civil Society Declaration to the World Summit on the Information Society*. Retrieved 29 November 2004, from <http://www.worldsummit2003.de/en/web /573.htm>.
- WSIS (2003a). *Declaration of Principles. Building the Information Society: a Global Challenge in the New Millenium*. Retrieved 10 August 2005, from http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsis/docivilsociety03-wsis-doc-0004!!msw-e.doc.
- WSIS (2003b). *Plan of Action*. Retrieved 10 August 2005 from http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsis/docivilsociety03-wsis-doc-0005!!msw-e.doc.

Notes

- 1 In the description of WSIS, we use ‘civil society’ primarily in its policy sense, as an umbrella term for ‘third sector’ political and social actors (Clark 2003a). In the second half, we also allude to its social scientific sense, as that of a social sphere. See Centre for Civil Society (2004).
- 2 Businesses and their associations.
- 3 UN Resolution 56-183 (December 2001).
- 4 A movement slogan, see Kidd (1999).
- 5 Some existing approaches have been discussed in Hadl (2004) and will be further elaborated at another stage of this research.
- 6 WSIS summits, preparatory conferences and related conferences and meetings.
- 7 We use the word “space” in the sense of “area provided for a particular purpose” i.e. the *Media Caucus* was the area provided by summit organizers for discussing broadcast and print media and journalism, the *WSIS? WE SEIZE!* was an area provided by the Geneva03 collective to discuss the WSIS critically, etc.
- 8 Though note that NGOs were recognized as important partners since the inception of the UN. See UN NGLS (2000: vii-x), Ó Siochrú(2004b: 331-3) and Adams (2002) for history of UN-NGO relations. With a much wider perspective, Rajagopal (2003) argues that Third World social movements have been a major influence on the development of international law since the 1960s.
- 9 In the UN context, entities of ‘the third sector (distinct from the State and from the private sector) that are engaged in non-profit activities.’ WSIS, Civil Society & NGO open ended bureau proposal, January 30, 2003.
- 10 Except if they are members of formal associations.
- 11 Such as those for ECOSOC accreditation, see UN NGLS (2003: 53-4). It requires two years of recognized legal status, a democratic decision making structure, and being primarily funded by members.
- 12 Below, we use the term WSIS to refer to the Geneva phase, focusing on (but not limited to) the summit itself. The Tunis phase (2004-5) was conducted with different goals and organizing parameters and is not considered here.
- 13 Listed at <http://www.wsis-cs.org/caucuses/html>.
- 14 See Raboy (2004a, 2004b) for civil society structures.
- 15 The *Media Caucus* drafted the Section ‘The Role of the Media’, the CMWG the section ‘Community Media’ and so on.
- 16 These terms are discussed below.
- 17 See Hirst (1996) for the history of liberalism and the common ‘anti-state-ism’ of post-marxist and economic neo-liberalism.
- 18 “Freedom of expression, narrowly defined, is largely compatible with corporate media dominance especially in jurisdictions where corporations are deemed, just like people, to have the right to freedom of expression” CRIS (2005: 30). This issue is discussed in detail in Section 4.1 of this paper.

- 19 Reflected in the Civil Society Bureau's description of the 'Media family.' See Hadl (2004: 87) for a detailed discussion.
- 20 Labelling it as a multi-stakeholder caucus, as were the *Youth* and the *Gender Caucusses*, would have made the distinction clearer.
- 21 This issue has not received sufficient attention in theories of civil society. See Hadl (2004).
- 22 This is why many democratic media advocates prefer the concept of 'communication rights.' This issue is discussed in detail by CRIS (2005).
- 23 For lists of demands see Leon (2003), McChesney (1999), CRIS (2005), Hamelink (1996).
- 24 In the sense of 'collective noun' as used in political science (Centre for Civil Society 2004).
- 25 *Indymedia* and *Deep Dish* focussed on *WSIS? WE SEIZE!*, *mediACT* on the *Asia-Pacific* Caucus and CRIS, the Feminist International Radio Endeavour on the *Women's Caucus* and *NGO Gender Strategies, Adbusters* on CRIS.
- 26 See program pamphlet at http://www.communicationrights.org/BFA_flyer.pdf.
- 27 Their fourth approach is 'as serving civil society.' However, their discussion is based on a different civil society model than the one used here. This will be discussed in another paper.
- 28 See Riaño (1994) for an equally critical assessment of *empowerment* from a feminist viewpoint.
- 29 Rodríguez consequently suggests replacing it with the concept *citizens' media*.
- 30 In the sense of Mouffe (1992) and McClure (1992).
- 31 For a succinct history and description of this movement, see CRIS 2005.
- 32 As defined by Center for Civil Society (2004).
- 33 In the sense of Dervin and Huesca's (1997) 'participation-as-end' and Riaño's (1994) 'alternative' and 'feminist' view of communications.
- 34 In the sense of Enzensberger (1974).
- 35 In the sense of Freire (1970).
- 36 In the sense of gaining *power-with* or *power-to* not *power-over*. See Göhler (2004) for a succinct explanation. Note that this excludes groups who are already in power or who seek to gain or maintain hegemonic control.
- 37 As described in MacBride et al. (1980), Hamelink (1995), CRIS (2005) and Leon (2003). Also see Stein (2002) on 'democratic talk.'
- 38 Specific examples and applications will be discussed in a separate paper.
- 39 As some of the 'alternative weeklies' described by Benson (2003).
- 40 The Korean news site OhmyNews may be a recent example of such a transformation.
- 41 For example, the CMWG's collaboration with commercial media on 'freedom of expression' was originally a tactical response to the pressures of the moment in Geneva. In the Tunis phase, it became its primary goal, largely without discussion. See the only documented instance of internal debate on this issue at <http://mailman.greennet.org.uk/mailman/private/cm/2004-November/000347.html> (retrieved 15 November 2005).