

**"Bringing Blue Skies Down to Earth: Citizen Policymaking in Negotiations for
Cable Television, 1965-1975"**

Bill Kirkpatrick, Denison University (billkirkp@gmail.com)

Appeared in print as:

Kirkpatrick, Bill. "Bringing Blue Skies Down to Earth: Citizen Policymaking in Negotiations for Cable Television, 1965-1975." *Television & New Media* 13:4 (July 2012), 307-328.

Abstract

The introduction of cable television in the U.S. represented an unprecedented opportunity for citizens to exercise media policymaking power, but required that they translate general federal guidelines into specific solutions tailored to local conditions. This moment thus provides an example of bottom-up, "vernacular" policymaking that challenges top-down approaches to policy. Taking the experience of Madison, Wisconsin as its case study, this essay explores the processes of local policy translation, including metaphors of outcomes, constructions of community identity and power, and struggles over locally dominant understandings of the community within local political-economic conditions. It also draws conclusions about the conditions within which a media-minded public can emerge and organize itself for reform, the relative power of utopian and dystopian rhetoric in citizen policymaking, the conflict between citizen activism and bureaucratic governmentality, and the mechanisms by which citizens might secure policy advantages relative to economically and politically more powerful parties.

Introduction

In 1926, as the pay-for-airtime advertising model was becoming increasingly entrenched in American broadcasting, *The Independent* expressed deep concern about potential misuse of the airwaves: "[A]ny drunken sailor with \$5 to spend could, for sixty seconds, fill the air with noises whose only limitation would be indecency or incitement to violence" (Anon. 1927, 58). This quotation and thousands more like it speak to abiding fears of truly public media: what would happen if just *anyone* were allowed to broadcast? What kind of drunkards, subversives, perverts, and vulgarians would take to the air? Indeed, one of the effects of the federal licensing system was to make the broadcaster "knowable" and accountable to the government, thereby providing a mechanism for protecting the public from, effectively, itself.ⁱ

If the public's access to the airwaves had to be controlled from a content perspective, the public's role in policymaking was similarly contained and circumscribed. There were frequent citizen-led policy initiatives at the local level in the early days of wireless, usually seeking to reduce noise pollution and interference, but these early policy efforts were largely superceded by the Radio Act of 1927, which placed most regulation of broadcasting into the hands of federal officials once and for all.ⁱⁱ Despite this federalization of media policy, the public continued to have a nominal role in broadcast regulation under the system of local trusteeship established by the Federal Radio Commission (FRC), as guarantors of the trustee's performance: it was the citizens' job to alert regulators if a licensee was not broadcasting in the public interest, making local listeners the ostensible arbiters of appropriate content. However, even this watchdog role for the public was largely illusory since, first, citizens had no standing before the Commission to challenge license renewals prior to 1966, and second, the ultimate decision about whether

broadcasts were in the public interest remained with regulators in Washington, not with the local community itself (Classen 1994, 79; Kirkpatrick 2006b, 104).

In light of this long history, it is nothing short of astounding that, in the late 1960s, a window opened in American media for ordinary citizens to take significant control of both content *and* policy for the first time in decades. This was the social, economic, political, and technological rupture known as community-antenna television (CATV) or, more commonly, cable (Le Duc 1987, 37; Streeter 1997). Thanks to changes in federal policy pertaining to the negotiation of rights-of-way in local jurisdictions around the country, the public now potentially had a say in the terms and conditions of local cable television franchises. Although this power was still structured by FCC constraints, it provided an important new role for citizens in shaping media policy by identifying and negotiating for local communicational needs and desires. Additionally, the provision of public, educational, and government access channels on those local cable systems permitted individuals and groups to produce their own television programs free of prior restraint and free of the censorship of federally authorized licensees.

One of the earliest localities in which this new citizen control was tested was Madison, Wisconsin, a relatively compact city of around 175,000 in the early 1970s and the seat of both the state government and the main campus of the University of Wisconsin. This essay examines the original negotiations for cable television in Madison; while the story of cable has been well told from several vantage points (e.g. Streeter 1997; Engelman 1996; Boyle 1997; Linder 1999; Mullen 2008; Parsons 2008), I wish to use this moment of media policy negotiation specifically to contribute to the paradigm of critical cultural policy studies. Following Justin Lewis and Toby Miller's call (2003, 2) for more explorations of "the ways in which cultural policies have traditionally been deployed, and a disciplined imagining of alternatives," this case study allows

us to expand our idea of what "media policy" is and how it gets produced at multiple levels. Thus, while I hope that scholars with a particular focus on the history of community media will find the Madison example interesting—and it is worth mentioning that close case studies of local cable franchising from this period are rare in the literature, making this study valuable in that regard as wellⁱⁱⁱ—my primary focus is not on public access television per se but on policy formation "from below," what we might call popular or vernacular policymaking. My argument is that this moment of policy translation between the federal and local levels illustrates some of the possibilities, risks, and limits of citizen involvement in media policymaking. Furthermore, this case study reveals a rhetorics of policy translation, involving metaphors of outcomes, constructions of community identity and power, and tensions between utopian and dystopian discourses; I argue that a better understanding of the rhetorics at work in this case can contribute to the project of empowering contemporary citizen-activists relative to state and private-economic interests.

Policy Translation in Critical Cultural Policy Studies

The present study is broadly situated within the field critical cultural policy studies, an area that builds on a long history of critical approaches to communication policy analysis (Lewis and Miller 2003). Many contemporary iterations of this tradition draw on poststructuralist theory, especially Michel Foucault's ideas about "governmentality," to analyze the ways in which cultural policy is not merely about encouraging and supporting a vibrant cultural life, nor simply protecting cultural markets, nor shielding citizens from harmful or dangerous culture, but also about maintaining social control and producing governable citizens, ideally those who govern themselves in the last instance (Foucault 1991; Bennett 2003; Packer 2003; Ouellette and Hay

2008). Cultural policy, including media policy of the kind at issue in broadcasting and cable, is at least partially about making citizens knowable and, ultimately, manageable: the "conduct of conduct." (see for example Packer 2003) From this perspective, we need to look past the "face value" of media and cultural policies to better understand how they manage not just communication but also the population by organizing individuals and localities within a modern, bureaucratic, efficient state populated by ultimately self-regulating citizens. Yet much work remains to be done within this paradigm in understanding "popular" forms of policymaking, as well as the ways that policy concerns and decisions move up and down hierarchies of local, regional, and national politics. In particular, is citizen policymaking of the kind seen in local cable franchising and regulation able to alter the dynamics of governmentality that critical cultural policy studies has found in other, more top-down instances of cultural policymaking? To what extent and under what conditions are citizen-policymakers empowered by a bottom-up or "vernacular" process, and with what implications for content?

My goal in this study, then, is to use the Madison example to think through the process of what I will call "policy translation," that is, how media policy, formulated at one level with one set of concerns, political constraints, and cultural considerations, gets "translated" into policy and media production at another level, one potentially with markedly different concerns. While local cable franchising is still official policy in many ways, since it is sanctioned by the FCC, undertaken under the auspices of local governments, and conducted in and through structures and procedures authorized by the state, it is also vernacular policy in that citizens are expected to participate in the policymaking process as negotiators and decision-makers, roles far beyond the commenting and complaining that usually count as citizen participation at the FCC. Furthermore, these citizens are expected to know and speak for a broader local public—a problematic

expectation in many ways (Mayer 2011; Anderson and Curtin 1999), but nonetheless a relatively rare opportunity to bring popular perspectives into policy formation. Local negotiations for cable thus represent a strange moment of media policy creation, one occurring at the interface of two jurisdictional authorities, involving empowered actors theoretically unencumbered by federal viewpoints and responsibilities and ostensibly uncaptured by a notion of the media industries as a prime constituent. Therefore, despite their quasi-official status they permit an alternative vantage point on the formulation of policy at the intersection of culture, politics, economics, and law, translated between the federal and local levels, and among the political, civic, and economic realms.

By using the term "policy translation" I am attempting to get at the ways in which local enactment of federal policy, such as in early cable franchising, deviates from the rather clean and unproblematic process conjured by the more top-down term "policy implementation." Implementation has been one of the ruling metaphors of policy studies since Lasswell (1956) and continues to operate as a privileged term in both the literature and the institutional structures that influence public policy discourse (e.g. the Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation at American University). More important than terminology, however, is the top-down perspective that the metaphor encourages, as seen in the definition offered by one study: "Implementation is the *carrying out of a basic policy decision ... [and] the compliance of target groups with those decisions*" (Mazmanian and Sabatier 1989, 20-21), emphasis added). Considerations of policy implementation also often locate the primary source of agency with authorities, characterizing policy as primarily something officials *do* and measuring success by their ability to effect change: "Policy implementation is what develops between the establishment of an apparent intention on the part of government to do something, or to stop

doing something, and the ultimate impact in the world of action" (O'Toole 2000, 266). Particularly in those rare cases where ordinary citizens enjoy substantial influence, policy "implementation" implies at least three elements that are, in fact, usually absent in policy negotiations: a clear, shared vision of the desired policy outcome (the teleological problem); a clear, shared consensus on rules and procedures (the deontological problem); and sufficient executive authority to achieve and maintain a desired policy outcome (the power problem).

While even top-down-oriented scholars recognize that turning policy statements into practices and behaviors is usually a messy process, some public policy scholars have recently begun to argue that a better metaphor is needed; as one study put it, "[P]olicy implementation has too often been practiced as a top-down or governing-elite phenomenon ... [I]ts study and practice would be much better served were its practitioners to adopt a more participatory, more directly democratic orientation. orientation" (P deLeon and L deLeon 2002, 467). The metaphor of "translation," I suggest, more effectively captures the kinds of adaptations that must occur whenever ideas move among cultures, whether it is a poem shifting from one linguistic community to another or, as in the present study, a vision of the media system shifting from the federalized bureaucratic culture of the FCC to the localized activist culture of an individual community. Policy translation describes a less predictable and more culturally inflected process than "implementation," which is especially appropriate to early cable franchising: the FCC did not simply deliver a plan for cable that local communities should put into action, but established broad guidelines that vaguely described how a final outcome might look, and it was up to citizens to interpret those guidelines against the backdrop of locally dominant understandings of the local community and within local political-economic conditions.

To that end, the remainder of this essay analyzes the negotiations for cable in Madison, Wisconsin from 1965 to 1975 in order to learn how a local public coalesced around cable issues, how that public organized itself, how it sought to translate federal policy into locally workable media structures, and how the results of these negotiations were translated back to the federal level. Madison makes an appropriate case study for this process for many reasons, not least because its citizen-policymakers received national attention for their efforts and its policy solutions were singled out by the FCC as a particularly noteworthy interpretation of the Commission's intentions, subsequently serving as a test case for activist visions of public access and as a model for other cities. It thus represents a "successful" translation from the point of view of the official federal policy sphere, yet a somewhat more ambiguous victory from the perspective of the vernacular policymakers involved. As a result, several features of this case may prove helpful in understanding the experience of other localities and the processes of policy translation more generally.

By studying such acts of policy translation and beginning to identify their discursive characteristics, citizens might better turn such moments to their advantage, resulting in a more democratic policymaking process and, hopefully, a more democratic media system. I also argue that the rhetorics of policy translation identified in this study can function as the beginnings of an explanatory—and perhaps normative—framework for scholars of media policy. The negotiations described below obviously do not allow us to understand the processes of vernacular policymaking or policy translation once and for all, but certain features of this case seem both significant enough and generalizable enough to suggest avenues for further exploration and discussion.

Toward a Federal Policy for Cable

As by now is well known, the growth of cable in the late 1960s and early 1970s was partly driven by a utopian "blue skies" discourse that united a wide range of social formations behind a push to expand cable (Streeter 1997; see also Parsons 2008). Abundant channels promised more viewer choice at a time when many were growing frustrated with the narrow range of content available on the networks, and various scenarios for interactivity promised to improve modern life through home shopping, home schooling, videoconferencing, and more. The anticipated social effects were equally rosy: a better-functioning public sphere; wider representation for marginalized groups; and greater understanding between neighbors and strangers alike leading to a more cohesive, less divisive society.

Central to this discourse was the promise of public, educational, and government (PEG) access television channels. American cable access television grew out of a range of initiatives and experiments in Canada and the U.S. in the 1960s and early 1970s. As described in detail by Ralph Engelman (1996), the Challenge for Change project in Canada played a key role in demonstrating the political potential of putting film and television cameras in the hands of ordinary citizens. One of the participants in this project, George Stoney, subsequently founded the Alternate Media Center in New York; beginning in 1971 the AMC took the lead in producing and distributing citizen-produced television, training the public to make video, and assisting other localities in establishing public access centers through apprenticeships and other programs. By 1972, thanks to the confluence of a wide range of progressive and establishment interests in promoting access channels for cable television, this nascent infrastructure succeeded in seeding vibrant access movements around the country that were central to the social promise of cable.

Less well appreciated, however, is the fact that this blue skies discourse was accompanied by strong dystopian undercurrents. In particular, observers frequently raised the threat of "adult" material entering people's homes, especially when cable operators began offering R-rated pay-per-view movies such as *Klute*, a film that was not only more explicit than network fare but that also, as one prostitute claimed, inspired her and thousands of her colleagues to enter the business (qtd. in Carmody 1973). This concern was particularly acute when it came to public access channels bypassing the gatekeepers who controlled the rest of the media, and the question of liability for access programming arose repeatedly: few claimed to want to censor content, but who would be responsible if, say, an access user violated obscenity laws? The threat of nudity particularly exercised (and titillated) critics. The *New York Times*, for example, carefully catalogued the risqué content on Manhattan's public access station: the man smoking a joint in the tub; the transsexuals who, "carried away with enthusiasm," displayed the "specific physical results" of their sex-change operations for the camera, etc. (O'Connor 1973; Buckley 1973). Public access advocates sought to reassure critics that access did not pose as great a danger as some feared (see for example Gent 1971); nonetheless, in an era of increasing nudity on the stage and screen, and when "topless radio" and similarly risqué broadcasting often exercised moralists, the risks of uncontrolled public access inevitably formed an important backdrop to negotiations over cable television. The anti-establishment political orientation of many early video "guerillas" merely added to the perceived threat (Boyle 1997).

In March 1972, the FCC released its *Third Report and Order*, which established various minima and maxima for local cable franchising authorities to adopt, including technical specifications and maximum franchise fees. The FCC was certainly responding to the blue skies rhetoric with this decision, but its approach was tinged with trepidation, particularly when it

came to letting citizens control content. For example, FCC Chairman Dean Burch repeatedly characterized public access as experimental and potentially dangerous, invoking fears of the unregulated speaker: "We recognize that open access carries with it certain risks. But some amount of risk is inherent in a democracy." The FCC saw itself inaugurating a bold and risky venture with public access, and believed that "only with experience will we be able to tell what further general rules, if any, are called for" (Burch 1971, 35-36). By adopting such a stance, the Commission left it up to local systems to translate a vague conception of access into workable policy. This paucity of guidance was accompanied by assurances that cable operators would be protected from the dangers unleashed by PEG channels:

Many cable operators are concerned about potential civil and criminal liability resulting from use of these public access and leased channels. There is little if any possibility of a criminal suit in a situation where the system has no right of control and thus no specific intent to violate the law (1971, 37-38).

Cable policy at the federal level, then, was effectively little more than a vague vision backed by tenuous promises and the hope that individual municipalities would work it all out. The FCC's cable policy was thus subject to significant local interpretation and negotiation, as demonstrated by the history of cable franchising in Madison.

Cable Television in Madison: Struggles Over Policy

Cable negotiations for Madison, Wisconsin in the early 1970s, although playing out against a political backdrop that was in many ways *sui generis*, allows us to consider bottom-up policymaking within a sharpened context of strong citizen activism, a powerful community identity, and a visceral understanding of the stakes of a dysfunctional political culture. Madison

was, after all, one of the epicenters of U.S. antiwar activity, including various forms of violence, from police brutality to the 1970 bombing of the Army Mathematics Research Center on the University of Wisconsin campus. This is not to suggest that there was a singular "Madison identity": like everywhere else and certainly every city of any size, Madison was divided by class, politics, geography, race, ethnicity, age, gender, and more (Anderson and Curtin 1999; Curtin 2000). Nonetheless, there was a somewhat coherent *dominant* identity sustained during this era: Madison as a progressive success story that had effectively unified left-wing politics and the cosmopolitan good life. Radical activist Robert Gardiner skeptically described this dominant self-image in this way:

The city of Madison prides itself on its liberality, tolerance and cleanliness. To those middle-aged liberals living in beleaguered little communities surrounded by reaction, Madison appears to be a utopia. Madisonians and the *Capital Times* uphold this image. They like it here. They enjoy battling the forces of the evil right. They can't do without them, because it reinforces their image of themselves. They are cosmopolitan, moral and open-minded. The University of Wisconsin is the cornerstone upon which the progressive image was built (qtd. in Maraniss 2004, 429).

This dominant identity can be seen at work in the negotiations for cable, with key citizen-activists invoking or reacting against it at various moments.

Although there were efforts in the early 1950s to bring cable television to Madison, no homes had been wired by the early 1970s when the FCC began encouraging the development of cable. A company called Complete Channel Television (CCT) had been hastily awarded a slapdash franchise in 1965 but had repeatedly delayed construction. In the meantime, various cases

of failed and corrupt cable regulation, including franchise trafficking and bribery, were making news around the country, leading several Madisonians to look more critically at the city's cable prospects (Levine 1976, 11). They quickly became dissatisfied with both Complete Channel and the ordinance it was operating under: the 1965 franchise was unfavorable to the city in terms of franchise fees, and there was no provision for public or government access channels (Research/Action Collective 1974, 6).

Complete Channel soon found itself under attack from various quarters. In the summer of 1971, the first of three highly influential citizen's groups, Better Television for Madison (BTM), turned its attention to cable. BTM was predominantly a group of public-spirited professors at the University of Wisconsin; broadcast historian Lawrence W. Lichty took the most active role in cable issues. In early August, Lichty drew up a list of criticisms of the 1965 franchise and prepared a call for a moratorium on construction by Complete Channel until the issue could be studied.

The efforts of BTM, combined with several harsh editorials in Madison's local newspapers, began to arouse wider citizen interest in Madison's cable future, with several raising the possibility of cutting out CCT entirely through a municipal franchise (i.e. the city would build and operate the cable system itself). In what would soon become a pattern, Complete Channel invoked the potential of public access to fend off criticism, promising "neighborhood broadcasts" as part of its eventual cable service. In an illustration of how unformed the concept of public access still was even in late 1971, this plan, modeled on the community newspaper, envisioned small broadcast studios in "every" Madison neighborhood for residents to produce programming that would then be cablecast only to that neighborhood. In announcing the proposal, CCT's president Roger Russell explicitly employed one of the major themes of the blue

skies discourse, the ability of technology to strengthen community bonds: "Within the framework of this concept, the public will have ready access to truly local activities, whether social, political, athletic, or cultural" (qtd. in Anon. 1971a). Still, CCT's opponents were not swayed by the "neighborhood broadcast" maneuver. The *Wisconsin State Journal*, for example, candidly wrote that "one probable reason" for the announcement was to convince the city that CCT still deserved the franchise (Anon. 1971a), and on September 7, BTM officially proposed a construction moratorium. A week later, a resolution to withdraw CCT's franchise failed to pass the Common Council by a single vote.

With franchise-revocation defeated but the threats of a moratorium and a municipal system still alive, panicky representatives of Complete Channel met with Better Television for Madison in September, 1971. It is interesting, especially for a study of citizen involvement in policymaking, that CCT chose to meet with a citizen's group instead of with government officials to work out differences between itself and the city. BTM certainly enjoyed a great deal of local credibility and was even singled out by *Variety* as "one of the more aggressive broadcast protest groups in the midwest" (Anon. 1971b). CCT's decision may have been part of a strategy to cultivate links with the "weak public" of citizens as a way to apply pressure on the "strong public" of the Council.^{iv} But perhaps more importantly, Complete Channel may have felt it would get a more sympathetic hearing from a group of respectable middle-class broadcast specialists than from the more oppositional citizens involved with the video guerilla movement or even the Common Council, several of whom were "tainted" (from more conservative perspectives) by New Left affiliations.^v In contrast to "firebrand" alders like Paul Soglin, the former student protest leader who took the strongest interest in cable issues on the Council, BTM and CCT shared certain assumptions about "appropriate" policy discourse and the nature of the

well-ordered society more generally. This shared corporate-liberal perspective made for relatively smooth negotiations and can be seen in the exchange between BTM and CCT, providing useful insight into the struggles to translate federal guidelines and blue skies rhetoric into actual cable policy:

First, BTM requested guaranteed production facilities and training for citizens, preferably at no cost; Complete Channel responded that "this request could be severely abused," invoking fears of "irresponsible" users. The two parties compromised around the suggestion that CCT could charge a "reasonable" fee for access resources, and agreed that "there should be a realistic limit on how much advice and equipment and time should be provided free" (Lichty 1971).^{vi}

* Second, BTM requested one staffed mobile studio per 30,000 subscribers, and Complete Channel agreed to this. Given the subsequent history of access in Madison (which never received a single mobile studio from any of its cable providers), it cannot be assumed that CCT ever intended to honor this provision: future concessions on public access were an easy way to deflect criticism and demonstrate civic-mindedness in the here and now. This request also provides insight into early conceptions of access; as Lichty (1971) put it, "the analogy is to bookmobiles, although the purpose is input, not output." The plan foresaw the studios traveling around, allowing citizens to speak their piece for a few minutes, and then cablecasting the results. Importantly, this was a highly circumscribed vision of access, allowing for significant control by studio operators (e.g. when, where, and for whom they would open up the mobile studios) rather than a truly open communications medium.

- * Third, BTM called for "such public access, educational, or governmental channels as the city may require," and stipulated that a full twenty-five percent of channel capacity be dedicated to "public service" and administered by the city. CCT agreed to the PEG provision but rejected the "public service" set-aside, voicing concerns about too much governmental control of the media. Significantly, the professors of Better Television for Madison shared CCT's expressed trepidation about government control, stating, "BTM is concerned over excessive content domination by the franchise-holder *and* by government. All of this argues in favor of an independent review board" (Lichty 1971).

These provisions and the analogies on which they are based—bookmobiles, community presses, the soapboxes of the public square—are best understood in light of the tensions among blue skies discourses, corporate power, and longstanding fears of unregulated/unfiltered public access to the media. BTM wanted cable to provide tools for empowering citizens and strengthening community bonds (which broadcasting was widely thought to weaken) but preferably in an orderly and "responsible" fashion. Furthermore, this vision of cable as a potentially unifying force in the community—enabling greater but also greatly regulated civic participation in the public sphere—relied not on a revolutionary transfer of communicative sovereignty to the individual citizen but rather on a more modest redistribution of power within a corporate-liberal framework, i.e. a conviction that government and business should work together toward a "reasonable" effort to provide somewhat greater tools of expression to the "reasonable" citizen. At the same time, when this conviction was translated into actual policy suggestions, it had to be negotiated from a position of relative disempowerment: as university professors, BTM had high enough status and a compatible enough conception of legitimate

political discourse to be taken seriously as a negotiating partner by both the city and the franchisee, but lacked the authority to alter the franchise ordinance or hold CCT to its exorbitant promises. Also, CCT was able to exploit class concerns about both government-controlled speech and abuse of the communications media to minimize the number of channels available to the public: fears of both over-regulated *and* under-regulated speech, shared by BTM and CCT, structured the negotiations over public access.

Despite these discussions between CCT and BTM, a consensus was growing that the original 1965 franchise ordinance was beyond repair, and an entirely new one would have to be written (Levine 1976, 83). An Ad Hoc Cable Committee was appointed in January, 1972, with Lichty as secretary, to draft the new franchise.

In the meantime, in December, 1971, a new company called the Community Communications Corporation applied for a second franchise for Madison. Yet again, Complete Channel invoked blue skies notions of public access in order to defend its position with the city: it argued that a second franchise would not be in the public interest, since a "split system" would dilute the already small audience for access programming. Churches, for instance, would not know on which system to put their programs, and neighborhoods would be divided rather than unified by cable. Complete Channel was effectively claiming that the realization of cable's utopian potential required nothing less than an unchallenged local cable monopoly. This argument, together with a reluctance to award a new franchise under a seriously flawed ordinance, led the city to reject the second bid, a fateful decision (Ad Hoc Cable Committee 1972). With the competition out of the way, and Complete Channel's responsiveness to BTM having weakened the push for a construction moratorium, CCT began construction on Madison's west side in August, 1972.^{vii}

In September, the second of three major citizen's groups, the Citizen's Cable Council (CCC), began working to publicize cable issues to community groups and also to pressure the city to consider community needs while drafting the new ordinance. While BTM was primarily interested in fostering "quality television," the CCC tapped more directly into the progressive political commitments of many Madisonians by emphasizing community viewing centers, free cable hookups for schools and libraries, and sliding cable rates for the poor. The group soon represented more than 100 local organizations and, as did BTM before it, quickly earned legitimacy with city officials and Complete Channel alike (including gaining a respectful notice in the national *Broadband Communications Report* (1973)).

From the perspective of bottom-up policymaking, the emergence of the Citizen's Cable Council illustrates some of the complexity of citizen involvement and the varying degrees of "outsiderness" it can represent. It goes without saying that presumption to speak for "the public" deserves critical scrutiny; as shown by a vast body of work on democratic participation in general and citizen media activism in particular, rhetorics of citizenship and publicity often mask class division and other structures of privilege and difference (Anderson and Curtin 1999; Howley 2005; Perlman 2007). These structures help produce, limit, or shape the legitimacy and effectiveness of citizen activism. In the specific case of Madison, Better Television was a relatively disempowered citizen's group but nonetheless approached the issue of cable with something of a top-down, even elitist, perspective, and worked to achieve insider status by embracing the rhetorical markers of public rationality and the bureaucratized procedures of the official policy world. Its professional-class members were comfortable (and effective) working within the legitimated institutions of local government, federal policy constraints, and the like—even more insiderish than some of the elected government officials themselves. In contrast, the

Citizen's Cable Council represented a tradition of grassroots coalition-building that sought to derive its legitimacy in part from the distance it could claim from authorized, institutional power. The ideological framework within which it understood itself included a strong acceptance of a citizen-consumer binary in which participatory citizenship was antithetical to the workings of capitalism (and only partially integrated into the workings of the state). The difficulty came when the CCC, upon entering the debate, was forced to adopt the corporate-liberal procedures of the official policy sphere (e.g. franchise ordinances negotiated between the state and the incumbent franchise-holder); the tensions produced at this intersection of popular and official understandings of policymaking quickly colored the negotiations.

Although many issues were discussed during these ordinance-revision negotiations, three questions concerning the public access channels primarily motivated organized citizen participation. The first was the *administration of public access*, including whether the city could oversee the use of the channels: to what extent could local government regulate access content? In May, 1973, a compromise was reached whereby citizen boards would handle policy matters and coordinate access, with city officials acting solely as advisors (Citizen's Cable Council 1973).

The second major issue for the Citizen's Cable Council was the *financing of access*. The FCC, in its 1972 cable regulations, had set a maximum franchise fee of 3% of subscriber revenues (up to 5% with FCC approval); at the same time, the CCC was pushing for guarantees of access equipment and training in the new ordinance, guarantees that would obviously require funding from somewhere. Negotiators settled on a 5% franchise fee, of which 40% would be dedicated to supporting access. Although this proposal faced several difficulties, including FCC

authorization, it was adopted into the recommendations for the new ordinance (Walsh and Thole 1973).

The third main issue was *liability*. Complete Channel continued to express deep concern about its potential liability for access content. As the blue-sky possibilities of cable were translated into policy, this concern took on increasingly legalistic forms as CCT asserted a right to control public access programming through prior restraint. The company proposed that requests for access airtime be submitted ten days in advance and wrote:

It shall be [our] policy ... to exercise no control over the program content on any of the designated access channels ... provided, however, that this policy shall not prevent Complete Channel TV from taking appropriate steps to insure compliance with these operating rules and any rules of the federal government, state and municipal authorities, and federal laws (Complete Channel TV 1973a).

The Citizen's Cable Council responded angrily to this assertion of a right of content control, as well as CCT's overall tone, and the statement merely aggravated an ongoing culture clash between passionate advocates for progressive change in the media system and the attorney-consulting businessmen on whom that change, at this particular juncture, seemed to depend. Complete Channel, for its part, dismissed the CCC as unreasonable (despite the CCC having on its side both legal precedent and the FCC's reassurances that cable companies would not be held liable for access programming). CCT ended up changing the ten-day rule to five days but left its assertion of a right of prior restraint intact (Complete Channel TV 1973b). In other words, Complete Channel effectively disregarded the CCC's concerns, again demonstrating that these struggles were conducted within a political-economic framework as well as a bureaucratic culture that increasingly favored Complete Channel. Municipal ownership of Madison's system

was looking ever less likely, and the city had rejected the bid for a second franchise; clearly CCT felt less compulsion to demonstrate great cooperation regarding citizens' desired outcomes, especially that progressive-activist segment of the citizenry that CCT regarded with open suspicion and hostility.

Extrapolating beyond the specifics of the Madison case, these struggles begin to illustrate the range of competing discourses and the complex web of power relations that had to be negotiated in order to translate blue skies rhetoric into actual policy. On the one hand, a workable vision of cable television, including viable if imperfect provisions for public access, was slowly being realized thanks to the power of utopian rhetoric to inspire citizen action. On the other hand, the prioritization of access meant that other aspects of this blue skies rhetoric were simultaneously being *contained*, even abandoned, during these negotiations. Issues that could have been construed as in the public interest were effectively "lost in translation," e.g. municipal ownership of the cable system, sliding cable rates for the poor, two-way cable, etc. Municipal ownership, for example, when it was discussed at all, was advocated solely in the context of public access as a way to improve use of the channels, not as a broader challenge to the private corporate-commercial structure of the television industry.^{viii} Thus, while the remarkable degree of public involvement demonstrates the power of utopian discourses to engage citizens in bottom-up policymaking, the preeminence of public access as motivation for that involvement reduced the most radical visions of cable's potential to what was often regarded as a highly-regulated electronic soapbox, thereby enabling cable to develop closer to the commercial model of broadcasting than the revolutionary communitarian model envisioned by many progressives.

By spring, 1974, revisions to the franchise ordinance were well underway. Cable service had begun on Madison's west side, and several video cooperatives had begun producing access

programming. Relations between Complete Channel and access users were predictably tense, with each side complaining bitterly about the other.^{ix} Negotiations between the local and national levels also continued to shape policy translation. Most significantly, the city consulted with the FCC on how best to finance PEG access: either a 5% franchising fee or a contractual “extra services package” to be offered by the franchisee. The FCC did not deny the request for 5% but indicated that it preferred the extra services option; based on the FCC's response, the city drafted a provision asking the franchise applicant to specify “any additional funding, facilities, equipment or personnel beyond those required elsewhere” it would provide to support access. This turned out to be another fateful decision, a road not taken. Translated into local policy, this provision meant that Madison was trading ongoing funding for the duration of the franchise for a one-time gift—a gift, furthermore, entirely dependent on the largess of competitors for the franchise.

Importantly, Complete Channel had already indicated its displeasure with the "extra services package" provision, complaining that it "tends to encourage the inducement to engage in blue sky promises and could be viewed as a subtle threat to potential bidders" (Complete Channel TV 1974b, 74). Setting aside the fact that the company, two years earlier, had been happy to engage in blue sky promises (such as a fleet of mobile studios) when its Madison franchise was at stake, it is revealing that a simple, clear statement of citizens' desires would be interpreted by CCT as a "subtle threat." CCT's statement also reveals the extent to which cable companies recognized and actively resisted the utopian rhetoric of the day (or, more precisely, sought protection from competitive market forces by seeking to exploit or undermine that rhetoric as the situation required). In this regard, it is worth noting that much of the "gold rush" mentality in the cable industry of 1970-1972 had dissipated by this point in 1974: the economic

outlook for cable in late 1973 and early 1974 had grown somewhat bleak, with system construction slowed by rising interest rates, falling faith among investors, well publicized cases of corruption, and ongoing regulatory uncertainty at the state and federal levels (Parsons 2008, 314ff.). Madison had picked a bad time to depend on a competitive marketplace and corporate generosity to kick-start its access channels.

Of course the key problem here was not Madison's timing, but rather the FCC's failure to imagine the difficulties that the effort to translate its federal policies into local action would almost inevitably create. Specifically, the FCC was reluctant to allow cities to force cable companies to finance PEG channels, but it also failed to foster greater local competition for franchises and overbuilds in order to allow market forces to achieve the same end. As Megan Mullen has pointed out, "Had the FCC truly wished to have local programming play a role in cable's future, much larger structural changes in the industry would have been necessary" (2008, 99). The FCC's unsurprising reluctance to undertake more sweeping changes left citizens with no obvious source of guaranteed funding for access and, in most communities, not enough competition for franchises to lead the market to generate that funding on its own, especially once investment dollars for new cable systems dried up. In the case of Madison, in the absence of a second bidder for the franchise, only the threat of a municipally owned system presented a realistic alternative to whatever terms Complete Channel might offer; if CCT could contain or even shut down that possibility, the company could promise only FCC legal minima and pocket the difference.

In September, 1974, the Common Council approved the new ordinance, and a public hearing was held to gather community input on the extra services provision. At this meeting, the

third major citizen's group, a coalition of independent video producers and access proponents under the name Madison Community Access Center (MCAC), proposed a three-part plan:

1. The city would provide a central facility for access production.
2. The franchise-holder would provide \$80,000 in porta-paks and other equipment as part of its extra services package.
3. MCAC would actually run the center, relying on donations to cover operating expenses.

This plan significantly reframed the debate on access support by providing a coherent and plausible model of public access within the limits established by the FCC. Ultimately, it became the proposal to which all franchise applicants would be expected to respond. The MCAC plan also revealed a slightly different vision of public access from previous conceptions, defining a public access infrastructure analogous to a community center: a dedicated studio in a central location that would offer production classes, serve as a recreational space for the community, and foster local interaction and discourse. The plan can also be read for its negotiation of the power relations within which blue skies rhetoric would be translated into policy. The MCAC plan hoped to draw on the resources of the city government and the business interests of the franchisee in order to establish a sphere for access users where they would be relatively free from the interference of both. Consistent with the decision to go with an extra services package, this vision foresaw much less control and regulation of access users than previous plans, but also less ongoing support, essentially requiring public access to fend for itself after the initial start-up. The plan drew on previous experiments, notably New York's Alternate Media Center, but was nonetheless considered both novel and "well-reasoned" enough to receive special commendation

from the FCC. Commenting on Madison's application for a Certificate of Compliance, the FCC noted:

We find that the Madison extra service package is particularly noteworthy. The cable company, the City, and the citizens planned together to evolve a proposal that would best serve the needs of the community. The financing was arranged so that the burden would be shared by all of these interested groups. ... In sum, the Madison proposal appears to be exactly the well-reasoned type of service package experiment we envisioned.... (Federal Communications Commission 1975, 1372).

With the MCAC proposal on the table, municipal ownership became even less politically viable; as one insider put it, after three years of the franchisement process "the whole city was just sick and tired of it" (qtd. in Levine 1976, 138). If correct, that statement suggests yet another dimension of bottom-up policymaking: fatigue and burnout. Citizens in this process were volunteering their time and energy, and if after three years they lacked the will to fight for municipal ownership, that simply reveals a further political-economic weakness that the public faces in policy negotiations with the tireless and potentially immortal legal fictions that are corporations.^x The self-understanding of Madison shared by many of the participants may have also encouraged acceptance of a less-than-optimal deal from Complete Channel, in the belief that Madisonians could make it work. As one of the key citizens involved in the negotiations put it:

Madison is a unique community, with a history of active citizen interest and participation. There is a great deal of excitement about the potential of access programming, and a large pool of talent available to make it work. There is a

very strong feeling that if access programming is going to become effective anywhere, it will be in Madison... (Smoller 1974).

When the bid application deadline passed in February, 1975, Complete Channel was the only applicant for the franchise. Presumably aware that this would be the case, the company had offered substantially less equipment in its extra services package than the MCAC plan had foreseen (worth about \$50,000 instead of \$80,000). Without a viable competitor in the form of a second bidder or municipal ownership, CCT no longer had any incentive to offer more support for access, much less to engage in promises of two-way cable, sliding rates for the poor, and the like. Many activists, especially those most committed to public access, were outraged. Significantly, though, the two most important citizens groups remaining in the process, MCAC and the CCC, recommended approval of Complete Channel's application despite reduced access support, calling it "the best we're likely to get." This schism within the citizenry finally killed the last remaining possibility of municipal ownership, and on March 18, 1975, a strongly divided Council voted 14-8 to grant Complete Channel a fifteen-year franchise.

Conclusion: Toward a Rhetorics of Policy Translation

I have detailed the ins and outs of Madison's experience in the belief that a fuller understanding of bottom-up policymaking and the process of policy translation can emerge from such close analysis. Some of these details, while telling in themselves, are specific enough to this case as to make broader application difficult. Nonetheless, several salient and possibly generalizable features of the rhetorical features of policy translation stand out.

First, a single media-minded public did not spontaneously emerge when the prospect of cable television arose. Instead, the public that organized itself around cable issues drew from a

range of pre-existing publics with different agendas tangentially related to the specific issue at hand, such as video artists, community organizers, and media professors concerned with "quality" television. This "cable public" emerged slowly and with some difficulty; different groups approached policymaking with different priorities, assumptions, and rhetorical strategies, and an important part of the process of successful policy translation would have been the harmonization of the relations within this citizen movement and between citizen-activists and elected officials. Ultimately, these groups failed to overcome their political and cultural differences, allowing the cable operator to achieve just enough "buy-in" from just enough citizens to get its way on franchising issues. One can, counterfactually, imagine several scenarios that would have favored greater harmonization of interests: a single citizens group as the primary negotiating partner rather than several, an *a priori* strategic agreement among activists not to take municipal ownership off the table until negotiations with the private sector were completed, and greater dialog between more "establishment" actors like Better Television for Madison and oppositional actors like the video guerillas in order to defang the discourse of the "irresponsible" access user. In the absence of such harmonization, CCT was able to divide this cable public through a series of well timed promises and threats.

Second, an important stumbling block to the harmonization of citizen interests within this cable public was the channeling of bottom-up participation into top-down legal and bureaucratic procedures. In other words, citizens had to play in a corporate-liberal arena regardless of their own desires or commitments, and official policy at both the federal and local levels made it difficult to imagine an alternative process. Again—and in a lesson for localities considering public solutions to wireless internet infrastructure today—perhaps a stronger citizen push for a municipally owned system might have empowered citizens differently and opened up new

possibilities for vernacular policymaking procedures. Nonetheless, the Madison experience seems to suggest the possibly inescapable workings of a bureaucratic governmentality. This was not policymaking waged on the level of the popular, nor using the ideologies and procedures favored by the citizen-participants; rather, it was policymaking that had been pre-stamped with market ideologies of property and economic power, pre-molded into legal and administrative forms, and thus to some degree pre-determined in its range of possible outcomes. The "conduct of conduct" here was overdetermined by the larger discursive constraints of official top-down policy, constraints that deemed alternative understandings of processes and outcomes illegitimate (or "unreasonable"), even if those understandings emerged from the local bottom-up policymaking process that the FCC was ostensibly fostering.

Third, although utopian discourses animated public involvement in these policy questions—especially the democratic potential of public access television—it was dystopian discourses that more forcefully structured that involvement. In other words, translating federal policy into local workability became less about maximizing positive visions of cable television than about minimizing fears. In particular, dystopian rhetoric about governmental control of the means of communication worked to delegitimize municipal ownership, while dystopian rhetoric about "irresponsible" access users helped the cable operator divide citizens and maintain control over equipment, facilities, and programming.

Fourth, these fears were exacerbated by a corporate-liberal conception of citizens as the *beneficiaries* of regulation, not its creators, suggesting that years of exclusion from policymaking and media production had led citizens to imagine themselves in opposition to, rather than embedded in, a state-market regulatory apparatus. As Vicki Mayer writes of her experience on municipal cable boards in the 1990s and 2000s, "In local regulatory circles, the most powerful

claims were also the most personal, representing the individual citizen who seemed to lack equal opportunity in the marketplace. Whether we invoked the public need for better customer services or inveighed against the company's transportation or communications infrastructure, our demands incorporated us into the cable corporation as consumer-citizens" (Mayer 2011). In the Madison case, Complete Channel's impatience with citizen-negotiators and public access users, which was often revealed in its patronizing or dismissive tone and frequent assertions of a right of ultimate content control, suggests the difficulties that bottom-up policymakers face, most immediately in the rhetorical realm, in creating empowered identities for themselves as media regulators.

Fifth, the key galvanizing issue for public involvement in local policy struggles simultaneously became the upper limit of what could be attained. Specifically, to the degree that the promise of public access motivated the public's interest in cable issues, the scope of the public interest essentially got reduced to that demand. This allowed the cable provider to make promises about access—exorbitant at first, weaker as its position strengthened—in order to progressively advance its interests in negotiations. As a result, other possible features of cable technology that figured prominently in the blue skies rhetoric of the era, such as two-way cable, were increasingly marginalized as negotiations progressed. This process was partially enabled by the fact that the form and structure of public access television was still somewhat undefined while these negotiations were occurring. For instance, when credible opposition to CCT arose, and franchise revocation and municipal ownership were still realistic alternatives, citizens could secure promises of multiple access points, mobile studios, and more. As CCT became entrenched and its hand strengthened, citizens fell back on defensive and significantly less

ambitious visions of the future of public access television—compromises that arguably have hampered the effectiveness of public access ever since.

Sixth, these features of Madison's experience provide larger insights into the struggle for democratic media generally. While there are limits to the conclusions one can draw from a particular historical moment, let alone a specific case study, Madison's negotiations speak to the conditions within which a media-minded public can emerge and organize itself for reform; the relative power of utopian and dystopian rhetoric; and the mechanisms by which citizens can secure (or lose) policy advantages relative to economically and politically more powerful parties. Madison's experience validates the power of citizen involvement to affect policy formation, but also illustrates the risks and pitfalls of the policy translation process for progressive media reform.

Finally, as an elaboration of the critical cultural policy studies approach to media and cultural policy—and at a moment when the struggle for network neutrality, strategic anonymity, and other features of a robust popular political culture on the internet are up for grabs—it helps us better understand bottom-up policymaking and the ways in which hopes for a more democratic media system—and with it a more just society—can all too easily get brought down to earth.

Bibliography

- Ad Hoc Cable Committee. 1972. Minutes. February 28. Box: 2 (“President’s Office”), Folder: “MSN Committee Jan 74 to Sep 74.” Lawrence Lichty Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisc.
- Anderson, Chris, and Michael Curtin. 1999. “Mapping the Ethereal City: Chicago Television, the FCC, and the Politics of Place.” *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 16 (3-4): 289-305.
- Anon. 1927. “Drunken Sailors on the Air.” *The Independent*, July 17.

- Anon. 1971a. "Neighborhood Broadcasts are Promised for Cable TV." *Wisconsin State Journal*, August 25, sec. 1.
- Anon. 1971b. "Petition Vs. Madison, Wis., Setup." *Variety*, September 15.
- Bennett, Tony. 2003. Culture and Governmentality. In *Foucault, Cultural Studies, and Governmentality*, ed. Jack Z Bratich, Jeremy Packer, and Cameron McCarthy, 47-63. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Boyle, Deirdre. 1997. *Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Broadband Communications Report. 1973. *Broadband Communications Report (trade newsletter)*. August 9.
- Buckley, Tom. 1973. "A Hint of Scandal Focuses Attention on Cable TV." *New York Times*, March 21.
- Burch, Dean. 1971. Statement Before Congress. August 5. FCC 71-787/63303.
- Carmody, John. 1973. "Airwave Pollution?" *The Washington Post*, February 23, sec. B.
- Citizen's Cable Council. 1973. Newsletter, May 30, 1973. In *Community Action Handbook*, 50-51. Madison, WI: Citizen's Cable Council.
- Classen, Steven Douglas. 1994. "Standing on Unstable Grounds: A Reexamination of the WLBT-TV Case." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 11 (1) (March): 73-91.
- Complete Channel TV. 1973a. Cable Channel Access Rules (First Draft, February 9, 1973). In *Community Action Handbook*, ed. Citizen's Cable Council of Madison and Dane County, Wisconsin, 91. Madison, WI: Citizen's Cable Council.
- . 1973b. Cable Channel Access Rules (Final Version, April 23, 1973). In *Community Action Handbook*, ed. Citizen's Cable Council, 4-5. April 23.
- . 1974a. Description of Proposed Operation. Box: 2, Fldr: 2. People's Video Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.
- . 1974b. Reactions to the Third Draft of the Proposed Broadband Telecommunications Franchise Enabling Ordinance for the City of Madison, WI. Box: 2, Folder: "MSN Committee Jan 74 to Sep 74." Lawrence Lichty Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisc.
- Covert, Catherine L. 1984. "We May Hear Too Much": American Sensibility and the Response to Radio, 1919-1924. In *Mass Media Between the Wars: Perceptions of Cultural Tension, 1918-1941*, ed. Catherine L Covert and John D Stevens, 199-220. 1st ed. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press.
- Curtin, Michael. 2000. "Connections and Differences: Spatial Dimensions of Television History." *Film & History* 30 (1) (March): 50-61.
- deLeon, Peter, and Linda deLeon. 2002. "What Ever Happened to Policy Implementation? An Alternative Approach." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 12 (4): 467-492.
- Engelman, Ralph. 1996. *Public Radio and Television in America: A Political History*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Evans, Carole, and George Wood. 1987. "Cable Access in New Orleans." *Journal of Film and Video* 39 (3) (June): 28-34.
- Federal Communications Commission. 1975. *Memorandum Opinion and Order*. September 17.
- Foucault, Michel. 1991. Governmentality. In *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality: With Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, 87-104. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Fraser, Nancy. 1992. Rethinking the Public Sphere. In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig J Calhoun, 109-142. Studies in contemporary German social thought. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Gent, George. 1971. "Public Access TV Here Undergoing Growing Pains." *New York Times*, October 26.
- Grubisch, Thomas. 1970. "Reston to Begin Cable TV." *The Washington Post*, June 18.
- Howley, Kevin. 2005. "Manhattan Neighborhood Network: Community Access Television and the Public Sphere in the 1990s." *Historical Journal of Film, Radio & Television* 25 (1) (March): 119-138. doi:Article.
- Janes, Barry T. 1987. "History and Structure of Public Access Television." *Journal of Film and Video* 39 (3) (June): 14-23.
- Kirkpatrick, Bill. 2006a. Localism in American Media, 1920-1934. Ph.D. diss., Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin--Madison.
- . 2006b. "Localism in American Media Policy, 1920–34: Reconsidering a 'Bedrock Concept'." *The Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast and Audio Media* 4 (1-3): 87-110. doi:10.1386/rajo.4.1,2,3.87_1.
- Lasswell, Harold Dwight. 1956. *The Decision Process; Seven Categories of Functional Analysis*. College Park, Bureau of Governmental Research, College of Business and Public Administration, University of Maryland.
- Le Duc, Don R. 1987. *Beyond Broadcasting: Patterns in Policy and Law*. New York: Longman.
- Levine, Larry S. 1976. Scrambled Signals. M.A., Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin--Madison.
- Lewis, Justin, and Toby Miller. 2003. Introduction. In *Critical Cultural Policy Studies: A Reader*, ed. Justin Lewis and Toby Miller, 1-9. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Lichty, Lawrence. 1971. Better Television for Madison to Mayor Dyke and the Common Council. October 17. Box: 3, Fldr: "1st Draft." Lawrence Lichty Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisc.
- Linder, Laura R. 1999. *Public Access Television: America's Electronic Soapbox*. Westport, Conn: Praeger.
- Maraniss, David. 2004. *They Marched into Sunlight: War and Peace, Vietnam and America, October 1967*. 1st ed. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.
- Mayer, Vicki. 2011. *Below the Line: Producers and Production Studies in the New Television Economy*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Mazmanian, Daniel A, and Paul A Sabatier. 1989. *Implementation and Public Policy*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Mullen, Megan Gwynne. 2008. *Television in the Multichannel Age: A Brief History of Cable Television*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Murray, Matthew. 1997. Broadcast Content Regulation and Cultural Limits, 1920-1962. Ph.D. diss., Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin--Madison.
- O'Connor, John J. 1973. "TV: 'Permissiveness' Linked to Audience Size." *New York Times*, January 19.
- O'Toole, Laurence J. Jr. 2000. "Research on Policy Implementation: Assessment and Prospects." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 20: 263-288.
- Ouellette, Laurie, and James Hay. 2008. "Makeover Television, Governmentality and the Good Citizen." *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 22 (4): 471-484. doi:Article.

- Packer, Jeremy. 2003. Mapping the Intersections of Foucault and Cultural Studies: An Interview with Lawrence Grossberg and Toby Miller. In *Foucault, Cultural Studies, and Governmentality*, ed. Jack Z Bratich, Jeremy Packer, and Cameron McCarthy. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Parsons, Patrick. 2008. *Blue Skies: A History of Cable Television*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Perlman, Allison. 2007. "Feminists In The Wasteland." *Feminist Media Studies* 7 (4) (December): 413-431. doi:10.1080/14680770701631612.
- Research/Action Collective. 1974. *History of Cable Television in Madison: 1951-1974*. Madison, WI: Research/Action Collective. Box 1, Fldr. "History of MSN Cable." Lawrence Lichty Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisc.
- Smoller, Merry Sue. 1974. To Howard Gan. June 21. Box 2 ("President's Office"), Folder "MSN Committee Jan 74 to Sep 74." Lawrence Lichty Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisc.
- Streeter, Thomas. 1997. Blue Skies and Strange Bedfellows: The Discourse of Cable Television. In *The Revolution Wasn't Televised: Sixties Television and Social Conflict*, ed. Lynn Spigel and Michael Curtin, 221-244. New York: Routledge.
- Walsh, David, and Rod Thole. 1973. To Joseph Fischer. July 9. Box: 4, Fldr: "MSN Aug 72 – Dec '73." Lawrence Lichty Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisc.

Notes

ⁱ For more on early fears about who would broadcast, see (Covert 1984) and (Murray 1997), especially pp. 40-45). For more on the FRC's tendency to evaluate the character of the broadcaster and jealously guard the knowability of the licensee, see (Kirkpatrick 2006a, 205-207).

ⁱⁱ Several early cases confirmed the FRC's sole jurisdiction over radio, most notably *Whitehurst v. Grimes*, 21 F.2d 787 (1927).

ⁱⁱⁱ (The few notable case studies of local cable negotiations include Evans and Wood 1987; Howley 2005; Janes 1987).

^{iv} These terms are from Nancy Fraser (1992), who distinguishes between "weak publics" with only opinion-formation powers, and "strong publics" with decision-making powers. Although a full discussion of Habermasian public sphere theory is beyond the scope and concerns of this essay, including the reasons why Fraser's terms may be problematic, the point here is that CCT may have been thinking in analogous ways about the kinds of power and relative importance of citizens groups and elected officials.

^v (For more on the guerrilla video movement, see Boyle 1997)). For the shared class understandings often operating among professionals and citizen regulators, see Mayer (2011, Chapter 5).

^{vi} Lichty, in addition to being a knowledgeable and dedicated public intellectual, was also a lousy typist. I have taken the liberty of silently correcting his many typos in this other documents.

^{vii} Despite its slightly lower housing density, the west side of Madison was chosen primarily for its proximity to CCT's head end on the (then) far west side of the city, but also for its relative affluence compared to the concentration of students on the isthmus or the working-class neighborhoods of the east side.

^{viii} This was also the conclusion of Levine (1976, 117).

^{ix} See for example Complete Channel TV (1974a, 74) in which the company complains about users' "haphazard approach" to access, as well as various letters from access users to CCT in People's Video Papers: Box: 2, Folder: 1.

^x In this context, the failure of Dale City, Virginia's early access experiment was widely attributed to citizen burnout in the face of insufficient funding and political support (Grubisch 1970, 89).