Co-Regulation: A New Model Of Media Regulation

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Introduction

MediaWatch Canada is a national, not-for-profit, feminist organization working to eliminate sexism in the media. We seek to transform the media environment from one in which women are either invisible or stereotyped, to one in which women are realistically portrayed and equitably represented in all our physical, economic, racial and cultural diversities. These changes are fundamental to altering the current social climate in which gender inequality and violence against women are pervasive. MediaWatch promotes change through consumer action, research and the public policy process. Our programs include gender and media literacy training, research on the portrayal of women and girls in the media and industry/media monitoring, consumer advocacy and participating in the regulatory process.

MediaWatch is the only organization that works exclusively to promote the realistic and positive portrayal of women in the mass media. We were instrumental in the creation of Canadian gender portrayal and violence codes and guidelines in the early 1980s. Since then, we have been mandated to work with government, the self-regulatory system and members of the public to ensure that media industries adhere to these codes.

Canada is fortunate to have been on the leading edge of media regulation over the past decade. The past few years have brought unprecedented change in the media environment. Globalization, cross-media ownership and concentration of ownership have raised serious questions about the diversity of perspectives available to the public. Women's and other equality seeking groups have expressed alarm at being excluded from decision-making positions within this powerful social institution, arguing that the gatekeepers of media have become an increasingly homogenous group.

This paper takes the view that the self-regulatory system in Canada which focuses on portrayal issues, needs to be updated to address changes brought about by globalization and a rise in social movements including the new wave of feminism. We hope that the issues discussed, and the regulatory model proposed in this paper, may give rise to discussion and debate in other jurisdictions in the global media marketplace.

Background

Broadcasting in Canada is recognized as a privilege granted by the Canadian public to private broadcasters. As a result, all broadcasters must apply for a licence to use Canadian public airwaves. Our media environment in Canada has always been shaped by our close proximity to the United States. From the early days of radio broadcasting to the present, Canada has studied and expressed alarm at the influx of American programming on Canadian airwaves. With a smaller population and economic base with which to finance high quality programming, Canada has had to develop a policy of public ownership, control and operation of the airwaves. As a result, various regulatory authorities were set up in order to develop policies that ensure a culture and society distinct from our neighbour to the south.

In 1976 the present regulator, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) was established. The Commission is an independent agency vested with

administrative and quasi-judicial authority, operating at "arms length" from government and reporting directly to Parliament through the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

As the regulatory system was evolving, so too was concern about gender portrayal in Canada. A large body of research conducted in the1970s gave rise to increased concerns about the continued and pervasive under representation and stereotypical portrayal of women in the media.

In 1979 the CRTC, under pressure from the public, convened a task force on sex-role stereotyping in the broadcast media. The results confirmed that women were significantly underrepresented on air and behind the scenes and were stereotypically portrayed. As a direct result of these findings, MediaWatch was formed with a mandate to work for change.

The broadcast industry responded to public pressure and the threat of regulations by establishing voluntary industry codes and guidelines on sex-role portrayal. These codes are overseen by the industry sponsored self-regulatory agency the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC). The advertising industry did the same through its industry body, Advertising Standards Canada (ASC).

Although some progress was made in terms of sex-role portrayal, additional research showed that the industry had not made enough progress in this area. The CRTC responded by making compliance with sex-role stereotyping guidelines mandatory, and a condition of licence for radio and television licensees.

During the 1990s, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission essentially delegated much of its power and authority over media standards including compliance with sex-role stereotyping guidelines to self-regulatory organizations (SROs) such as Advertising Standards Canada and the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council. This devolution of control took place along side growing corporate mergers and a globalizing marketplace. The shift has had significant impact on citizens and civil society organizations such as MediaWatch, yet it has largely been a silent one, attracting little policy analysis. MediaWatch commissioned a study, "**Watching the Watchers[i]**" to map this devolution of responsibility for media standards in Canada and abroad and to assess its implications on policy and social governance.

The goals of this study were to:

- Ascertain how policy can be used to integrate public and community values into the media;
- Determine how organizations like MediaWatch can address gender and other human rights issues in this post-modern media arena of globalization; and
- Configure a new regulatory model of co-regulation that is open, transparent and accessible to the public.

The underlying conclusion driving the report is the realization that self regulatory bodies are increasingly important in modern regulation and they are acting as extensions of the policy system. Indeed like the 'grey economy', they function as the 'grey government' often invisible

but with quasi democratic representative functions. Yet in this 'invisible' regulatory regime, public accountability has been edged out of the process. MediaWatch calls for current regulation to transform into models of **co-regulation** with industry, government, and the public and civil society organizations all playing a role.

International Comparison of Self Regulatory Organizations

MediaWatch undertook a comparative analysis of the regulatory systems of Canada, Britain, New Zealand and the US. Each differ in how they legislate, enforce and adjudicate the regulatory codes.

Mandate, Authority and Power

The amount of power given to regulatory agencies by the government varies greatly. The broadcasting authorities in Britain and in New Zealand have statutory powers. Elsewhere, power comes from influence and incentives. With the exception of the American boards, the official mandates of the SROs are structured around two prerogatives: social responsibility to protect human rights and fair, ethical business practices within the industry.

Accountability and Transparency

As a whole, the regulatory boards do not meet a strong test of accountability to the public. They are not democratically constituted. The balance of power is skewed to industry or to the government, according to this study. There is no formal process that compels SROs to justify their choice of council members. There are very few formal avenues for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to co-ordinate efforts with the SROs. While some SROs compel fines, none pay damages to the offended citizen.

Monitoring and Public Outreach

In the regulatory process, boards may include research into prevailing community standards of taste in the adjudication of codes. Except for the American SROs, most do this to some extent. Generally, the onus of monitoring the media and filing formal complaints falls on the public.

A complaint-based system has little relevancy if citizens are unaware of the boards' existence and not informed of their right to complain; if the complaints process is inaccessible; or if citizens are not educated about critical issues in the media. All the boards fall short in educating the public about the complaints system.

The MediaWatch report argues that none of the British, New Zealand or American systems as yet successfully construct a regulatory model that operates at the intersection of government, industry and civil society. But important examples of best practices may be found with each of the boards.

Assessing the Canadian Model

In Canada, each industry developed codes and guidelines pertaining to such issues as violence, gender portrayals, advertising to children, and false claims. These codes were developed with some input from subject matter experts and CSOs, and in the case of broadcasting, approved by the CRTC. On the surface, it would appear that this is an exemplary model of civil society as it functions at the intersection of government, industry and the public. However, on closer examination, it becomes clear that there are discrepancies in the balance of power among the three stakeholders; government, industry and the public.

Mandates, Authority and Power

The mandates of the Canadian boards are structured around a sense of social responsibility that is balanced by market objectives. Theoretically, the CRTC has absolute power over broadcasters since it grants and renews broadcaster licences. The powers of the CBSC and ASC are based mainly on influence and incentives.

Accountability and Transparency

Both advertising and broadcasting regulatory agencies lack a publicly-accountable member selection process. No formal directives exist to ensure councils are regionally, ethno-racially or gender balanced.

Monitoring and Outreach

Like the broadcast regulatory bodies of Britain and New Zealand, the Canadian regulatory agencies place the responsibility of media monitoring and lodging complaints on the public. Each Canadian board differs in the amount of support it gives to the public complaints process but as a whole, they fall short in educating the public and industry, researching community standards and tracking citizens' awareness of the regulatory process.

CSO representatives consulted for this study believe that the complaints system is a closed bureaucratic one that is difficult to monitor, time consuming and one that yields few results. There is skepticism among equity seeking groups that self-regulation is a good tool to combat systemic sexism, racism or homophobia. Links between CSOs, the CRTC, and SROs are not strong. There is a concern that access to the regulatory system is diminishing

Examining Canadian Consumers' Attitudes towards media content and Regulation

Research conducted in Canada in the 1980s determined that fewer female than male characters appeared in Canadian television (41% compared to 59%). In prime time television women were usually only about 34% of characters whereas women of colour made up only 4.2%. Recent studies however, have shown that at least in Canadian English-language drama, gender parity appears to be close.

Current international research such as the Global Media Monitoring Project co-ordinated by MediaWatch in 1995 and the World Association for Christian Communication in London in 2000, assesses the portrayal of women in the news. The data reveal that though there have been improvements in the presence of women on the air, there is still not gender parity. The statistics remain depressingly static over time: while women are fairly represented as journalists at (43% versus 57%), women as interviewees remain low at 17%.

In an effort to persuade decision-makers that public attitudes support better representation of women, MediaWatch conducted studies of public concerns about the media and awareness of the regulatory system. Results indicated that approximately 40% of Canadians reported encountering offensive media content. More women (45%) than men (32%)were offended by offensive TV content. Generally concern was expressed about violence, bad language, graphic sexualized violence against women and racism (63% of those reporting offensive or 35% of all English Canadians surveyed).

When offended, Canadians switch to another channel (62%). Only 6% to 8% lodge a formal regulatory complaint. Many (20%) citing a belief that complaining will not be effective, that they did not know where to complain (7%) or lack of time (15%). In May 2002 another poll commissioned by MediaWatch indicated that the Canadian public is ready for better representation of women at decision making levels. A strong majority (75%) of Canadians support the idea of promoting women to decision-making levels and appointing them to boards so that they have more influence on media policy[ii]

Finally, the data show that a majority (69%) of Canadians polled support the notion of an independent citizen organization that upholds and monitors community standards and values in the public media. In a policy sense, this level of support suggests that the federal regulator the CRTC could work in concert with the self regulatory organizations and civil society organizations like MediaWatch for the creation of an independent media monitoring institute, with third-party funding, to achieve a regular monitoring mandate through original research.

Gender, Justice and the Media

MediaWatch takes the view that Canada has a strong tool in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to pursue equality rights in the media. However we believe that Canada is beginning to fall slightly behind in media regulation, given changes in the social climate of tastes concerning sexual expression. Canada's international leadership on gender equity in the media needs renewal, especially in light of social movements' interest in conventions to protect cultural diversity internationally.

A review of offensive contents before the Canadian Supreme Court, the CRTC, the CBSC, ASC and other regimes begins to outline prevailing standards of jurisprudence with regard to gender.

In summary, we found that the CBSC should be lauded for having a Sex-role Portrayal code and a system of jurisprudence with clear reasons behind its decisions. The ASC, on the other hand should also be commended for having specific guidelines referring to gender.

Unfortunately, the two boards actually fall flat in upholding their standards on gender. This occurs for many reasons including:

- Substantive concerns about ethics, human rights and violence are the most prevalent complaints and decisions with gender complaints are in decline;
- Humour as an acceptable defense is gaining ground;
- In the decisions of the SRO boards there is little explicit reference to the equality rights set out in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
- Norms of sexualization have changed with a new generation of women who are demanding power from their sexuality. And defining what constitutes 'gratuitous' sexploitation is becoming increasingly difficult as current television shows push the envelope.

MediaWatch argues that the 'sex-role portrayal' frame for media self-regulation is mistitled, archaic and out of date, especially in light of the recent trend of concern in Canada with the negative portrayal of men. The codes need to be updated to be more inclusive of other forms of offence such as systemic sexism, racism or overall tone of a televised program. Codes should be re-titled "gender portrayal codes". The legal frame needs to shift to human rights and away from portrayal issues which are weak and rely on interpretation. Feminism also needs to reframe its position on the portrayal of gender to be inclusive of new directions in feminism and adopt the rhetoric of human rights.

Equity seeking SROs in the media are based on the assumption that freedom of expression is not licence for offense. Freedom is limited by responsibilities. What are the limits to free speech and how are they to be balanced against other values?

Norms of sexualization have also changed, especially in the rock video and other cultural industries. The media ownership group CHUM, which has been singlehandedly blazing a trail for liberalization of sexual depiction in content in Canada, has argued that the sex-role portrayal guidelines do not at all help it to develop an ethical code of conduct, and has pressed for the removal of such explicit clauses in any specific conditions of licence. CHUM is reflecting the way social attitudes towards public nudity or scant clothing are changing in Canada, especially among youth. Positive forms of sexualization (speaking to female empowerment and rights to express sexual identity) are widely recognized, if not easily decoded by young women today.

In an interview, Terry Hermano, Director of Women's Programme of the World Association for Christian Communication, indicated that while the Beijing Statement of Principles concerning the depiction of women was a significant achievement, implementation has been weak. The failure seems to be in finding wide acceptance of a clearly articulated, widely accepted set of standards and tools to measure compliance. The minimal worldwide consensus seems to be that pornography, if it incites violence against children and women, is the biggest basis for a coalition on communication rights and gender equity.

However, pornography has been one of the biggest fracturing grounds of feminist coalitions in the West. Liberal civil libertarians (sometimes allied with the gay and lesbian movements) have been ardent opponents of censorship, yet responsible censorship has been the

very basis for part of MediaWatch's implied mission. Socialist feminists have ardently supported censorship.

The challenge facing all stakeholders in co-regulation is to develop a test for determining offence, and to base it on wider research. Failure to do so, reinforces the worldview of those who create the media; a profession which still largely excludes women.

Arguably, there is a revival of concern internationally about human rights which helps frame discussions about communication rights, women, social justice and the media in which MediaWatch and other CSOs can re-assume a leadership role. By reframing its position on the portrayal of gender to be inclusive of new wave feminism and adopting the rhetoric of human rights, and by forming alliances with other CSOs locally and internationally, MediaWatch can become a major player in feminist circles.

Canadian Context for Human Rights

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms includes limits to the right to freedom of expression. The Charter sets out freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression – including the freedom of the press and other communication media—as fundamental human rights, but makes them subject to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. Equality rights (without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability) do not preclude any law, programme or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups. The Canadian Broadcasting Act further reinforces these values.

- Is public morality or human rights the better basis for feminist media regulation?
- Is explicit content or potential harm a better basis?
- Can SROs work within a system of co-regulation to combat systemic sexism?
- Is 'undue exploitation' solid ground to determine the basis for intervention?
- What are the most robust "tests" of interpretation?

Setting the Stage for a New Model of Regulation

Systemic sexism

Canadian democratic pluralism raises questions about potential to cause harm as a limit to freedom of expression. Traditional concerns about harm turn on the questions: Does there need to be concrete empirical proof? Is this too high a test? Others argue that mere demonstration of widespread risk is sufficient. Legal theorists like Sumner in the US argue that harm is more than a test of the existence of intolerance or the extent of its diffusion. It may also be a moral category. The problem is how to define it.

Harm as a category necessitates being able to define both specific examples of media content that may cause harm but also more systemic, subtle portrayals of discrimination against specially protected groups that pervade the media.

A second contribution to discrimination as endemic to the Canadian media is that it is impossible to lodge a complaint about a show's overall tone. Instead complaints must refer to specific instances that a show violated the codes. This difficulty is supported by MediaWatch's experience with the regulatory boards. MediaWatch launched a challenge to radio station CILQ-FM re the notorious "shock jock" Howard Stern, an American radio personality imported to Canadian airwaves. In its challenge, MediaWatch argued that volunteer monitoring has found continued infractions despite the stations efforts to edit prior to air. MediaWatch was not able to lodge a formal complaint charging that the Howard Stern show is sexist, racist and extremely derogatory; instead it had to refer to specific instances that violated the Sex-role Portrayal Codes. Little change to the media environment has resulted.

Finally the fact that complaints are reactive means that CSOs can only get involved in after the sexist, racist or homophobic content has been aired. This has little proactive impact on media content or influence on the standards. Very few measures are taken by the regulatory boards to pre-clear such content. In the Howard Stern case, CILQ-FM was forced to use a time delay of several minutes to pre-screen the show.

Harm is an important area for feminist and 'critical' race scholars, since it may cover continuation of systemic racism and sexism. Power imbalances in the abilities of individuals or groups to speak and be heard are often ignored in debate over censorship of certain speech acts, though harm may involve questions of substance: Who is speaking? What are they saying? In what context of power relations? Harm may be interpreted as harm to an individual's privacy or reputation, to a society, to a community or to feminist groups. Important to this idea is whether the explicit codes or standards of conduct used in self-regulation define their ambit widely enough to address systemic discrimination.

Advancing a New Model of Media Regulation

In the past year, MediaWatch has been proposing a new model of regulation we call **co-regulation.** This model argues for greater coordination and public debate over its efficacy in advancing diversity of expression while maintaining high standards.

The recent transformation of the media environment to a globalized marketplace calls into question the relevancy of policy that is defined by clear geographic borders and which places more power in the hands of industry. Yet, it is within this globalized and commercialized space that self-regulation is expanding as the main means of governance.

In this new era of media and media governance a detailed critical analysis of the process of standard setting and of self-regulation from the perspective of Canadian citizens has been overlooked. Clearly, there is a need to question the impact of this shift in the balance of power from government to industry within the structure of the new media environment.

Before continuing, it is important to establish the central observations that have framed this discussion. The first observation is that Canadian civil society organizations such as MediaWatch, argue that the self-regulatory model has failed to challenge the systemic racism, sexism and homophobia of the Canadian media. Of course, this is a highly contentious allegation

but a valuable illustration of the fact that CSO representatives feel that self-regulation has not proven effective in overcoming these biases. The question becomes threefold: are CSOs justified in making such a claim? Secondly, how do consumers feel about the complaints process? Thirdly, how should policy decision makers create or reinstate confidence in SROs?

Defining Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is a regulatory system that operates, on some level, independent of government control. This independence may be at the stage of devising codes or standards, enforcing the codes or in the adjudication of potential violations of the codes.

Although self-regulation takes various shapes in different countries and industries, a core set of functions and ideals frame a cohesive definition of the process.

Self-regulation begins with members of an industry establishing a regulatory body to achieve shared goals that could not be met by any individual member. The central tenet of self-regulation is that it is a voluntary process in which industry establishes a code of conduct that is to be beneficial for all members.

In its simplest form, self-regulation is collaboration on, and adherence to, a set of practices or codes, without direct government intervention. It has two key characteristics:

- It is independent of government control.
- Members of the industry are involved in the regulation.

Ideally, self-regulation does not privilege one member over another but reflects the collective interests of that particular sector of industry.

The greatest amount of self-regulation occurs at the legislative phase with industry groups establishing a set of voluntary codes or practices. In many cases, the government or agency participates in the creation of these codes, but they are a product of consensus and negotiation. This is particularly true for the broadcasting and advertising industries in Canada, both of which have established codes of practice and partake to some extent in enforcing and adjudicating those codes. In both cases, industry consulted with non-governmental agencies in the creation of the codes. Media codes cannot be considered 'standards' in the technical or market sense, but they are certainly forms of social regulation. They set out acceptable 'norms' of safety, privacy, fairness or other concerns in media contents (Purchase, 1996).

As a process, self-regulation potentially has many benefits to industry and there are numerous reasons for an industry to seek it, including:

- Gaining credibility and consumer confidence
- Preventing consumer collective actions
- Avoiding adverse political interventions or promoting positive interventions
- Controlling trade (Purchase 1996).

It should be noted that each of these reasons is ultimately underwritten with the anticipation of some form of commercial benefit. This is a particularly important point which any recommendation for change to the system must take into account if it is to be supported by industry. A primary benefit of self-regulation is that it has mitigated much of the bureaucratic hassle of government regulation.

Governments often support self-regulation as it alleviates financial and administrative pressures on them. Adjudication of the codes alone, outside the setting of a formal courtroom, eliminates the need to spend a large amount of public resources. Governments can reinforce industry self-regulation either through formal legislation or by acknowledging the SRO. It has been argued that self-regulation works best independently but in harmony with the law, which provides a legislative framework that sets and enforces the boundaries of what is unlawful (Purchase, 1996). Clearly, this relationship between government and SROs is complex and takes many forms, making for a complicated system of code administration and development.

A further complication in the concept of self-regulation is the role of the public. In order for a SRO to gain the public's confidence, it must have some fair and effective means for consumer redress. How SROs do this and to what extent the public is involved in the regulatory process differs amongst the various boards. In the cases of broadcasting and advertising, the public's role is to monitor the media, which requires various degrees of support by the SRO to the public.

Within these loosely established parameters of self-regulation there is great diversity in the roles played by industry, government, civil society groups and the public. Instead of a simple cohesive definition, there are multiple models of self-regulation. What is needed is a fuller picture of its role in the overall process of media governance today.

It is in the context of the abovementioned parameters of media regulation, that we propose the following proposal for a new model of regulation we call **co-regulation**.

Defining Co-Regulation

The conventional picture of regulation, which is equated with intervention or interference, has always been partly fictional. Regulators have always had to negotiate with those they regulate about the approach to be taken, about specific decisions and about compliance. A better model than "capture" for this complex, decentralized private/public system of public policy management may be "co-management," where governments and industry negotiate the rules of the game for those in the sector.

It is our contention that the current regulatory climate calls for a concept of communication policy governance that is broader and more inclusive than mere co-management as defined above. Co-regulation involves government, independent regulatory agencies, industry, independent self-regulatory agencies, civil society groups and citizens/consumers in an overlapping set of relationships.

Co-management, then, must transform itself into models of co-regulation, which look at the centre of the overlaps among 'quasi-government,' 'quasi-private' sector and civil society.

Recommendations

The challenge for this report is to set out recommendations to strengthen the regulatory system in Canada by better acknowledging and integrating SROs and ultimately creating a model of co-regulation that is open, transparent and accessible to the public.

It will frame recommendations for change that will:

- Use policy to integrate public and community values into the media;
- Determine how CSOs like MediaWatch can effectively challenge the quality of content in media

We have argued:

1. Self-regulation is not an inclusive process. It serves a very small segment of the public prepared to make a complaint. CSOs express frustration with the difficulty and opaqueness of the system, and the sense that intervention is more costly to the public or CSOs than it is worth. Experts, academics and researchers from the regulatory process have not scrutinized much of this 'private' realm of standards. The self-regulatory boards need to assert themselves as an important component of the public democratic policy process, since each is, in effect, a "quasi-public governmental agency."

2. As a regulatory model, self-regulation has shifted the onus of monitoring the media from the government and the media industries to the public, without fully supporting the public or CSOs in this endeavour. This shift needs to be recognized and supported by the various stakeholders in regulation. A complaints-based system of regulation is not enough, and other channels of public criticism are needed (Gallagher, 2001). Our international survey indicates greater coherence in co-regulation is found where there are:

   - Public broadcasters involved on equity issues, responsive and programming to these issues;
   - Assertive feminist professional organizations;
   - Umbrella agencies like MediaWatch actively networking with other CSOs;
   - Strong regulatory oversight and follow-through on equity;
   - Open SROs.

3. Feminism is currently undergoing a shift in philosophy. The Sex-role Portrayal Code of the CBSC and the ASC guidelines were constructed on a feminism framed around issues dealing with portrayal (diversification of roles or equal share of voice-overs, for example). While portrayal is important, a shift is needed to a more inclusive feminism that addresses broader issues of gender equality in the context of human rights.

4. At the centre of this paper is the notion that the regulation of the media is hinged on a delicate balance of collective human rights and individual freedom of speech. Both are integral values that society holds dear and are often in tension with one another. The real essence of the regulation of the media is defining this balance. A co-regulatory model would

include tripartite co-ordination of government, industry CSOs and academics in defining and co-ordinating this balance.

5. All levels of governance have to push forward with initiatives to effectively institute change. The pressure for change must first come from a networked coalition of CSOs which have serious concerns with the failure of the regulatory bodies to institute serious change. To begin this drive, MediaWatch needs to reinstate itself as an innovative, visionary organization and it needs to mobilize itself on regulatory reform and chart a course for action.

Worldwide, is very little interaction among self-regulatory bodies. There is no global networking of regulators, nor is there global networking of CSOs on media self-regulation issues, as there is at present in the WTO movements.

Underlying all these recommendations is the need for formal inclusion of public values and sentiments in the regulatory process to make it more accountable. Many of the recommendations contribute to this, from incorporating research on community standards into the regulations to consulting with CSOs on appointments to the CBSC. Although this may seem like a basic argument, it is key to implementing a co-regulation model.

There is an urgent need to mobilize now. Increasingly, the trend is to more self-regulation without public debate on its feasibility.

Of course, when thinking about media and weak regulation, the Internet comes to mind. It exists without regulation in Canada and elsewhere. Surrender to technological determinism is death to social regulation.

Unfortunately, regimes for self-regulation have historically arisen either at the behest of the industry itself (telephone or radio era) or at the threat of government regulation (press councils, CBSC). For that reason, they have been industry-specific and isolated from one another, despite a fiduciary concern with similar social values and ethical principles. As Internet speculation is reshaping our media landscape through concentration of ownership, leading to bigger entities more concentrated vertically and horizontally, why should SROs stay small and their work isolated from each other? Should Canada be on the cusp of a merged SRO entity like that proposed in Britain's white paper? Or have we had one all along in the CRTC, which merely needs to return to its roots in social regulation?

The great challenge of the next decade will be to make technical convergence a ground for gender equity, and advancing social justice in the media in a world where deregulation and the privatization of consumption allow wide ambit to illicit private pleasures. To quote Margaret Gallagher, gender-setting must be big public business. To achieve this, MediaWatch, like citizens and consumers around the world, must find a new rallying cry and new tools to "watch the media watchers" who have been delegated as our democratic protectors.

ENDNOTES

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[i] Coulter, Natalie & Murray Catherine (2001). "Watching the Watchers: Gender Justice and Co-Regulation in the New Media Marketplace," Simon Fraser University Centre for Policy Research on Science and Technology.

[ii] NFO Cfgroup, (2002) "Diversity Study" R0805/MCS/WL