The Media and the Neoliberal Transition in Chile

Democratic Promise Unfulfilled

by
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Reflecting on the possibility that Chile's ruling Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia might have lost the close 2000 presidential runoff election between its candidate Socialist Ricardo Lagos and his right-wing rival Joaquín Lavín, the video producer Hermann Mondaca voiced a frustration common among journalists and other media producers who had risked their lives to create the impressive array of independent media that so tenaciously fought the Pinochet dictatorship (interview, Santiago, August 9, 2000):

> If we had lost the government, what would we have been left with? We would have had much less than we had in 1989. In '89, we had organized social movements, mobilized with demands and strategies, and in '99, we didn't. . . . More than that, we had a systematic voice on the radio, in the press, in the mass media and micromedia, and also in the audiovisual area, and in '99 we no longer had those media. Coldly putting it like that, one has to ask, "What was it we worked so hard to achieve?"

The decline of both media diversity and social mobilization during the Chilean transition are interrelated manifestations of the limitations of neoliberal democracy. Although the Chilean media no longer face the overt repression that killed or disappeared 40 journalists and communication workers, sent another 300 into exile, and left approximately 1,000 more unable to find work (Uribe, 1998: 31), the dramatic decline of media diversity since 1990 highlights the Concertación's failure to treat the media as a crucial democratic site whose openness to all sectors of civil society should be actively supported by public policy. Instead, the Concertación's embrace of the neoliberal conception of media democratization has facilitated national and transnational corporate control of the principal means of public expres-

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sion and consolidated a consumerist, entertainment model incompatible with the democratic need for a diverse and vigorous public sphere.

This article will compare the Concertación's market-based conception of media democratization with the public-sphere model proposed by democratic media theorists and will examine the Chilean case of what Robert McChesney has termed the "rich media, poor democracy paradox" characteristic of neoliberal media systems in which "the corporate media explosion" is intimately linked to "a corresponding implosion of public life" (1999: 3). Based on research conducted in Chile in 1998, 2000, and 2002, including extensive interviews with media professionals, grassroots activists, and policy makers, it will consider the changing legal framework for the Chilean media, trends in media ownership, and the evolution of specific media sectors, including grassroots, community-based media.

MEDIA DEMOCRATIZATION: THE FREE-MARKET VERSUS THE PUBLIC-SPHERE MODEL

Prompted by the global restructuring of converging media and telecommunication industries, the worldwide corporate assault on public service media, and the simultaneous wave of political transitions from authoritarian regimes that have required the creation of a new media institutionality, media theorists have returned to issues of the media and democracy that were previously raised during the "media imperialism" debates over a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) in UNESCO and the Non-Aligned Movement during the 1970s and early 1980s (see Nordenstreng and Varis, 1974; Schiller, 1969; 1976). Although the NWICO's primary emphasis was on challenging U.S. domination of international media flows, its advocates also asserted the necessity of democratizing national media structures and promoting participatory forms of media that empowered social actors at the grass roots.

The Chileans Juan Somavía and Fernando Reyes Matta were important NWICO theorists who argued that in countries such as Chile the full democratization of society was impossible without democratization of the media: "Repression is not only torturing or killing people; it is also silencing them" (Somavía, 1981: 21). Democratic media would end the "minority social monopoly" of media control by economic elites and ensure "majority social representation" (Somavía, 1981: 17–22) in which the "problems, expectations, points of view, and interests of large social sectors" were readily expressed rather than excluded, marginalized, or distorted as they were in existing commercial media (19). This democratization of social expression

was incompatible with a highly commercial, market-driven media system, especially one dependent on transnational advertising and media content. Democratizing the media would also involve creating mechanisms that allowed civil society to participate in "decisions on the contents and nature of messages, and to influence decisions regarding communication policies" (Reyes Matta, 1981: 90). In Chile, Armand Mattelart (1980: 51–52, 189–213) critiqued the Unidad Popular's media policies for their excessive verticality—reliance on increasing the supply of professionally produced media and insufficient efforts to alter the relations of media production and reception. He advocated providing resources and basic training to "make the organized masses the producers of their own messages" that arose directly from their social struggles, pointing to the artisanal newspapers of the *cordones industriales* (industrial belts)[1] and militant poblaciónes (shantytowns) as models.

Although the drive for the NWICO foundered under the combined attack of Western media organizations and the Reagan and Thatcher governments, which financially crippled UNESCO by withdrawing in 1985, the importance of media democratization increased in the 1990s as ten "top-tier" transnational conglomerates succeeded in establishing corporate control over communication networks of unprecedented scope, leaving even well-established European public service media systems reduced to adjuncts of their commercial competitors (see Herman and McChesney, 1997; McChesney, 1999; Thussu, 1998; 2000).

Central to recent democratic media theory is Habermas's (1994) concept of the public sphere as the social space for the articulation of the concerns of civil society—that is, all the physical and mediated venues within which open discussion about matters of public interest and debate over policy alternatives can freely occur (see Bailie and Winseck, 1997; Corcoran and Paschal, 1995; Jakubowicz, 1995a; 1995b; Maxwell, 1997; O'Neil, 1998; Paletz, Jakubowicz, and Novosel, 1995; Splichal and Wasko, 1994; Waisbord, 1998). As the media have increasingly become the primary arena of the public sphere, democratization of the media has been recognized as a fundamental component of full political democratization (see Garnham, 1994; Keane, 1991). Garnham argues that "the institutions and processes of public communication are themselves a central and integral part of the political structure and process" (1994: 361), and Bennett stresses that during political transitions, "the design of communication processes is as crucial as the design of political, economic, and social institutions" (1998: 206) despite their being given scant attention by many of the best-known theorists of transition (see O'Neil, 1998). Similarly, McChesney asserts that in response to media concentration, conglomeration, and transnationalization, "how the

media are controlled, structured, and subsidized should be at the center of democratic debate" (1999: 7).

In this privileging of the media as a public sphere, democratic media theory conceptualizes the media user above all as a citizen. In contrast, neoliberal theory reduces citizens to consumers and media democratization to the expansion of market choices. This neoliberal conflation of market choice with democracy is at the heart of the Concertación's communication philosophy and policies. Eugenio Tironi, director of the Secretariat of Communication and Culture in the Aylwin administration, although critical of the dictatorship's repressive policies, lauded it for initiating a needed "modernization" of the Chilean media culminating in a privatized, commercial system centered on television (Tironi and Sunkel, 1993). According to Tironi, the commercial media are democratic because as profit-seeking businesses, they must satisfy the needs of advertisers who, in turn, respond to audience preferences. He acknowledges with apparent approval that in such a market environment media that "continue to be oriented by the ideological criteria of the highly politicized Chile of the past have little chance of survival" (Tironi, cited in Otano, 1991: 19).

This market model of media "shoppers" exercising indirect democratic control via the responses of advertisers to their consumption choices is rejected by democratic theory. In fact, media markets are oligopolistic, with high barriers to entry in which "'free' choice is severely limited by constrained supply" (Splichal, 1995: 56–57), owners' and advertisers' own political and economic interests can outweigh users' preferences, advertisers value the "votes" of affluent users over those with less purchasing power, and, at best, the "democracy" of the market promotes a "winner-take-all" system in which the entertainment preferences of the majority drive out more socially relevant content. Thus while free-market proponents such as Tironi recognize only state power as a constraint on media freedom, critics such as Waisbord stress that concentrated economic power is equally "antithetical to the idea that communication media should promote an informed citizenry, pubic debate, and critical reasoning" (1998: 41). Bennett's description of East European advocates of unregulated media markets could just as easily be applied to Chile: they "at best operate with a naïve fantasy of freedom and at worst may dissemble the rhetoric of freedom to gain economic and political advantage in chaotic political contexts" (1998: 206). McChesney points to Chile as a prime example of how the media as "global marketing networks" serve as "ideological agents of neoliberalism," generating "a passive, depoliticized populace" that seeks privatized satisfaction in personal consumption rather than pursuing fundamental social change, which is portrayed as neither possible nor desirable (1999: 111–113).

What McChesney sees as the media's role in depoliticizing the economy, with its corresponding "hollowing out of democracy," is also recognized by Tironi, who characterizes the process in more benevolent terms. He claims that during the transition the media "continue serving the process of democratization, but no longer as promoters of political change but as agents that contribute to the stability of the system and the reconstitution of a climate of democratic normality" (Tironi and Sunkel, 1993: 242) by "creating a basic consensus around pluralist democracy and an open market economy" (216).

However, in *Marketing Democracy*, Paley argues that in Chile, "'democracy' is a term to which a multitude of meanings have been attached as it has been strategically used by a range of actors to different ends" (2001: 117). Considerable ideological work has been required to make the linkage of democracy and markets appear as natural as it does in Tironi's formulation. In particular, the Concertación has succeeded in redefining social activism that challenges the inequities of market outcomes as a threat to democracy rather than as the exercise of democracy, thereby legitimating social demobilization as a democratically desirable outcome.

In contrast, the democratic media theorists Sparks and Reading (1995) argue that the empowerment of civil society should be the goal of media policy. Keane (1995) agrees that public policy "should always attempt to 'level up' rather than 'level down' citizens' non-market powers of communication. It should seek the creation of a genuine variety of media which enable little people in big societies to send and receive opinion in a variety of ways" (1995: 265). According to Jakubowicz (1995b: 132), democratizing communication requires

> going beyond the concept of freedom of speech and espousing that of the right to communicate. This would put the concomitant obligation on the democratic society to provide ways and means for exercising this right, that is, by assisting, supporting, or subsidizing in various ways the foundation and the operation of newspapers, periodicals, broadcast media, and so on, by organizations, minorities, and groups unable to finance the establishment and operation of their own media. In other words . . . the creation of a "civic" sector of the mass media—noncommercial undertakings devoted to speaking to and on behalf of various social groups, allowing them . . . "to speak with their own voice."

Since a democratic model is also a participatory model (see McQuail, 1987), this civic sector would consist not only of mass media but of decentralized, grassroots media. Just as "small media"[2] constitute important sites of resistance to authoritarian regimes and serve as agents of civil society "in the making" and "on the march" (Jakubowicz, 1995a: 33–34), once democracy is achieved they contribute to the "distribution of communication power

among social groups (political, economic, ethnic, cultural, religious, and others)" and play a specialized role by expressing the "attitudes, needs, interests, and aspirations" of these social sectors at the local level (Vreg, 1995: 60–61).

In addition to public subsidy of the independent civic media sector, democratic theorists such as McChesney, Garnham, and Keane emphasize the necessity of vigorous antitrust enforcement to limit media concentration and cross ownership. They also stress the need to regulate the extent to which transnational media giants can gain control of media distribution systems, especially those fundamental to the emerging global digital information infrastructure.[3] Other public policies advocated to promote media democratization include greater legal protection for political speech, particularly for media in the civic sector, limits on advertising, especially to children, and the active participation of representatives chosen by civil society in making media policy. Additional proposals, such as funding the civic media sector by a tax on advertising and spectrum use, requiring broadcasters to cede control of a daily programming block to representatives of civil society or designating them as common carriers that are required to carry citizens' messages as well as those of advertisers, and granting journalists and other media workers a major role in the management of media enterprises represent a vision of media democratization that is far from realization anywhere in the world. To measure Chilean media policy against these standards would be unrealistic. However, it is clear that during the first decade of the transition, the Concertación's adoption of the market model of the media influenced a series of policy choices that have contributed significantly to the debilitated public sphere decried by Mondaca in this article's opening quote.

LEGAL RESTRICTIONS ON THE MEDIA

In 1998, Human Rights Watch reported that "freedom of expression and information is limited in Chile to an extent possibly unequaled in any other democratic society in the Western Hemisphere" (1998: 49). (For detailed discussion of legal restrictions on media during the dictatorship, see Baltra, 1988; Human Rights Watch, 1998; Munizaga, 1984; Prenafleta et al., 1992; *Represión y Censura*, 1976. For a chronology of the transition, see Lagos and Ravanal, 2000.) It was not until May 2001 that President Lagos finally signed the Law on Freedom of Opinion and Information and the Practice of Journalism, generally known as the Press Law, that eliminated many of the legal weapons the dictatorship had wielded against the opposition press. The first legislative proposals to dismantle the legal apparatus of media repression had been introduced by the Aylwin administration in 1993, and Human Rights

Watch charged that progress in revising repressive legislation had been so slow in large part because "the government has preferred to keep its political capital intact on behalf of political objectives it considers more important" (1998: 51).

The new law eliminated the frequently invoked section 6b of the State Internal Security Law, which prohibited anything that would "defame, libel, or slander the President, government ministers, members of Congress, superior court judges, and the commanders in chief of the armed forces." This sweeping provision had been used by the junta to prosecute opposition journalists, and, while reform legislation languished in Congress, it continued to be used by Pinochet, other military officials, and government figures to impede investigative journalism during the transition. The new law also revoked the provision allowing the prosecution of civilian journalists in military courts and replaced the Abuse of Publicity Law dating from 1967, which recognized offenses against honor and privacy as a valid reason for prohibiting the circulation of a publication. The statute had been used in 1993 to ban the book *Impunidad Diplomática* by Francisco Martorell, which contained embarrassing allegations about Julio Dittborn, a leader of the far right party the Unión Democrática Independiente (Independent Democratic Union–UDI), and other prominent political and business figures (see Human Rights Watch, 1998: 186–193). Also eliminated were provisions allowing judges to ban reporting on pending cases, a broad power that had been used to keep information about several major human rights cases out of the press for years.

All pending cases under article 6b were nullified, including the charges brought by former Supreme Court Justice Severo Jordan against the journalist Alejandra Matus for her book *El libro negro de la justicia chilena*, detailing corruption in the judicial system and its complicity in the human rights abuses of the dictatorship. The book had been banned the day after its publication in 1999, and Matus herself had fled the country to avoid arrest, leading to international condemnation of Chile's failure to enact reform. However, the new law does not eliminate all "insult" offenses from the penal code, and Jordan was able to refile his case against Matus under civil law. The appeals court ruled that the book would remain banned while the case worked its way through the courts. Its sale within Chile was finally authorized in December 2001. Nonetheless, in January 2002 another "insult" case revealed the continuing inadequacy of legal protections for free speech. Using Article 26 of the State Security Law and Article 263 of the Penal Code, by unanimous vote the Supreme Court itself filed charges against a television commentator who had described the Chilean justice system as "immoral, cowardly, and corrupt" (in reference to the case of a woman who was proved innocent of murdering her son after serving three years in prison) and called the failure to

apologize to her a *mariconada* (an insult roughly translated as "acting like a fag") ("Procesan a Panelista," 2002). The conviction was recently overturned by the appeals court. Chilean journalists will continue to risk prosecution as long as "insult" laws that criminalize criticism of public officials remain in force.

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

Ironically, legal protection for journalism was bolstered only after the publications that had won international fame for their fearless reporting and political independence during the dictatorship had disappeared. According to the Freedom of Expression Project of the University of Chile's School of Journalism, this "dangerously regressive" tendency of declining diversity has resulted in an impoverished public sphere with an "overwhelming predominance" of neoliberal, socially conservative media that "in no way represent the full range of the ideas and tendencies of the population as a whole" (Otano and Sunkel, 1999: 1).

This truncated media spectrum differs dramatically from the situation before the coup and in the later years of the dictatorship. Under Allende, five pro-UP daily newspapers, including papers owned by the Communist (*El Siglo*) and Socialist (*Última Hora*) parties, had a daily circulation of 312,000 compared with 541,000 for the national circulation dailies of the opposition headed by *El Mercurio* (Uribe, 1998: 29). In addition, the UP publishing house Quimantú produced a wide range of magazines for women, children, and other social sectors. During the dictatorship, the opposition gradually built up an impressive information infrastructure combining thousands of clandestine and semiclandestine newsletters and other micro- media with nationally circulated magazines and newspapers that reclaimed the right to open dissent (see Bresnahan, 1999). The magazines *APSI* and *Análisis* led the way, publishing as early as 1976 and 1977, and were followed by *La Bicicleta*, *Hoy*, *Cauce*, *Fortín Mapocho*, and *Pluma y Pincel*. By 1987, Chilean progressive readers were also served by two daily newspapers, the center-left *La Época* and the more combative *Fortín Mapocho*, which had evolved from a weekly to a daily.

In these independent newspapers and magazines, the incoming Concertación inherited a major democratic resource. However, the Aylwin administration's policies toward them ranged from indifferent to hostile, the magazines in particular being viewed more as potential critics than as allies in rebuilding Chilean democracy. Not only did the government fail to support

the independent media during the transition but in some cases it actively contributed to their demise.

In 1990, although politically vigorous, the independent magazines were financially insecure and faced major challenges in adapting to the new conditions and the changing interests and priorities of readers. They needed to replace the foreign funding that had subsidized their publication with revenue from advertising, but Chile's advertising market remained highly politicized, a publication's political position being more important to many potential advertisers than its circulation and demographics. Moreover, it was to be expected that readership would decline as more information became available from television and radio, the worst abuses denounced by the anti-Pinochet press were eliminated, and many Chileans turned their attention from politics to more personal concerns.

As they began their adaptation to these new conditions, the independent magazines quickly felt the adverse impact of Concertación policy. In its single most devastating decision, the Aylwin government blocked funding that the Dutch government had offered to *Análisis* and several other magazines to assist them in weathering their own transition to a purely market environment.[4] *Análisis* editor Juan Pablo Cárdenas (interview, Santiago, August 30, 2000) asserts:

> It's a lie that *Análisis*, *APSI*, and the other publications died because the circumstances changed or they had poor circulation. . . . The government of Aylwin killed them. It was a political decision. . . . I don't know if there was a secret agreement with the military to close the media that had been hostile to them. It may have been a heavy-handed, mistaken political decision that these media that until now have been friendly are going to become enemies during the transition and they're going to pressure us to resolve the human rights issue, to change the [neoliberal] economic model, and to keep other democratic promises that remain unfulfilled today.

Whatever the intent, the effect was to impoverish public discourse and limit debate over the pace and direction of the transition. Of the independent leftist magazines, only *APSI* lasted several years, discontinuing publication in 1995. Until 1998, magazines representing opinions critical of the Concertación from the left were limited to small-circulation publications identified with Marxist parties and organizations, principally the Communist party's weekly *El Siglo* and the biweekly *Punto Final*, still identified with the Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (Movement of the Revolutionary Left–MIR)[5] even after its former parent organization dissolved.

While the Concertación did not actively hasten the demise of the independent newspapers, neither did it act to assist them, even when they found

themselves in financial jeopardy, as it might have by assigning them a larger portion of state advertising and providing credits on favorable terms. In contrast to the junta, which had subordinated neoliberal doctrine to political interest by rescuing the *El Mercurio*[6] and Copesa[7] chains from financial collapse in 1989 (see Otano, 1995: 238–248), the Concertación did not deviate from its official position equating media democracy with unfettered market forces. *Fortín Mapocho* was forced out of business in July 1991, while *La Época* limped from crisis to crisis for eight difficult years, even entering into a temporary joint operating agreement with Copesa and sacrificing journalistic quality in its quest for solvency. Its closure symbolized the dramatic failure of the new politico-economic environment to sustain a pluralist press and was considered a devastating blow to Chilean media diversity even by critics who lamented the paper's failure to realize its full potential as an independent voice during the transition (see Benavides, 2001). Left with only the quasi-government paper *La Nación*[8] as a competitor, the *El Mercurio*-Copesa duopoly once again dominated the national daily press as it had for most of the dictatorship. In addition to its prestige national daily, the *El Mercurio* chain includes the tabloids *La Segunda* and *Últimas Noticias* as well as 14 provincial papers. Copesa claims the capital's daily-circulation leaders, the tabloids *La Tercera* and *La Cuarta*, morning and afternoon free dailies distributed at subway stations, and the influential news magazine *Qué Pasa*.

A revival of party media has not been an alternative to fill the void on the left. The greatly weakened Communists can afford to publish only a weekly version of *El Siglo* and, according to editor Claudio De Negri (interview, Santiago, September 6, 1998), even this is possible only because most of its staff works as volunteers. The party has still not been compensated for the junta's confiscation and destruction of its printing facilities and, even if compensated in full, would not be able to resume daily publication, given the party's precarious political and financial situation. Nor could a revived daily *El Siglo* meet the need for expression of the full range of social sectors critical of the Concertación from the left or overcome the widespread public skepticism of party organs.

The Concertación's failure to value the independent press proved shortsighted in terms of its own long-term interests. During the unexpectedly close Lagos-Lavín presidential contest, with only the government-affiliated *La Nación* to counter the array of right-wing daily papers supporting Lavín, the Concertación found itself so outgunned that it temporarily revived the defunct *Fortín Mapocho* as the campaign newspaper *El Nuevo Fortín*, discontinuing it once its immediate political mission had been accomplished.

If the death of *La Época* in July 1998 marked the low point for the independent print media, the arrest of Pinochet in October stimulated a revival of

independent journalism, most notably the satiric biweekly paper *The Clinic* (named for Pinochet's place of detention in London), which won a wide readership, especially among young people, for its skewering of hypocrisy across the political spectrum and willingness to take on issues from human rights to sexuality. Other progressive publications that appeared shortly after Pinochet's arrest include *Rocinante*, a political-cultural monthly directed at a well-educated, up-scale audience, and *La Firme*, a twice-weekly antineoliberal, populist "mini-newspaper." More recently, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *La Huella*, and *El Periodista*, edited by Francisco Martorell, have strengthened the presence of independent magazines. However, these publications face a common challenge—to survive commercially in what *The Clinic* editor Patricio Fernandez (interview, Santiago, September 6, 2000) describes as a "fascist" advertising market where politics overrides other considerations for big business. For the moment, the progressive periodicals scrape by financially by relying on unpaid contributors and ads from small businesses such as bookstores and restaurants.

In July 2002, *La Nación* began a Sunday edition that engaged in aggressive investigative reporting[9] using a separate staff of journalists that included Alejandra Matus. In its attempt to expand the boundaries of what could be expressed in an official medium, *La Nación Domingo* faced greater political than economic constraints. On May 25, 2003, the paper refused to publish an article by Matus detailing corruption in the agricultural development agency INDAP, and the staff resigned in protest, accusing management of giving in to political pressure and announcing plans to publish it in the next edition of *The Clinic* ("Renuncia Equipo," 2003). The government insisted that it had played no role in suppressing the story, and *La Nación* decided to publish it two days later. Even if the Sunday edition's journalistic independence survives this incident, it will disappear as a critical voice if the right wins the next presidential election and with it control of the paper. The former *La Nación* journalists started a new newspaper, *Plan B*, in mid-August, with Matus as editor. The new venture will be run by its journalists, all of whom agreed to work without pay for six months while the paper seeks to secure long-term funding.

Although *The Clinic* and other new periodicals energized Chilean independent journalism, they could not fill the void created by the lack of an independent daily newspaper. The most significant challenge[10] to the *El Mercurio*-Copesa duopoly has been the emergence of two daily papers published only electronically. The first, *El Mostrador*, financed by a group of investors willing to sustain the paper from their personal resources for a year or more until it became established, went online in October 1999. According to its director, Federico Joannón (interview, Santiago, August 28, 2000), *El*

Mostrador is committed to "information pluralism . . . and rescuing the watchdog role of the press." A number of its founders are lawyers who took full advantage of their court connections to scoop the print dailies repeatedly with insider information on the Pinochet immunity case in July 2000. The following month, the paper was about to launch an advertising drive based on its 60,000 average daily logons,[11] which far surpassed *El Mercurio*'s weekday circulation. Joannón was optimistic that the political obstacles to obtaining advertising would be overcome once the paper became "the undisputed market leader." However, in November 2001, having failed to attract sufficient advertising, *El Mostrador* implemented a subscription system making most of its content, including access to its archive of past stories, reserved for paid subscribers only. A limited number of daily news stories remain available to the general public. The subscription rate is 3,600 pesos (approximately $6) per month or a slightly reduced 38,880 pesos per year. This is about half the cost of buying a daily paper and may not be a major deterrent to readers who already can afford a computer and Internet service, but it does constitute an economic barrier that is likely to reduce readership, especially among those who are not daily users.

In September 2000, a second online paper, *Primera Linea*, was inaugurated under the direction of former *Análisis* editor Juan Pablo Cárdenas, who had obtained the backing for it from the same public-private corporation[12] that owns *La Nación*. However, by January he had been removed as editor. Cárdenas (personal communication, September 25, 2001) attributes his ouster to pressure on the board from government officials close to the president. The paper continued to be an important progressive voice until January 30, 2003, when it was closed and replaced by the online version of *La Nación*. In their final statement, the *Primera Linea* journalists lamented "the cruelty of the market toward the newspapers and magazines that lost their bet on critical thought" and deplored "the political indifference toward the disastrous monopoly of information" ("Otro Adios," 2003).

RADIO

Although they owned no radio stations prior to Allende's election, leftist parties, sectors, and supporters succeeded in creating a significant radio presence after the UP victory (see Munizaga and de la Maza, 1978: 22–27; Lasagni, Edwards, and Bonnefoy, 1985: 33–37). It was on Socialist Radio Corporación and Communist Radio Magallanes that Allende was able to address the Chilean people several times on the morning of the coup. After

bombing the transmission towers, the military confiscated the stations. Including affiliates outside Santiago, 40 stations were expropriated.

The Santiago radio stations of the Christian Democrats (Radio Balmaceda and Cooperativa) and the Catholic Church (Radio Chilena) were allowed to remain on the air and became the most significant media for the expression of limited dissent in the early years of the military regime (see Munizaga and de la Maza, 1978: 24–27).[13] After mass protests erupted in 1983 (see de la Maza and Garcés, 1985), Radio Cooperativa, whose reports were also carried by provincial stations throughout the country, became the most widely respected national news source.

In 1987, the Methodist Church's Radio Umbral revolutionized prodemocracy radio by featuring music of the New Song movement (strongly identified with the political left and the Allende government) and daring to conduct live interviews with representatives of the Organization of the Families of the Disappeared and other opposition organizations. Umbral even played tapes secretly produced in jail by women political prisoners and smuggled out by program director Manuel Ordenes in his underwear (interview, Santiago, September 11, 2000). The station also organized concerts, in part to raise funds but also to promote cultural resistance to the dictatorship. Radio Umbral became the model for politically active radio that grassroots activists sought to emulate at the community level after 1990. However, despite its soaring ratings, advertisers avoided the station, and its operating costs had to be subsidized by the church.

Radio has traditionally been Chile's most decentralized medium, and from 1990 to 1996 the number of stations more than doubled, from 326 to 864, 802 of them outside of Santiago (Secretaría de Comunicación y Cultura, 1997: 9). This expansion of provincial stations had the potential to revitalize radio as a source of local news and a forum for local expression. However, the simultaneous expansion of Santiago-based radio chains and the increasing role of transnational investors and owners, including Radio Caracol[14] of Colombia, U.S.-based Hicks, Muse, Tate, and Furst,[15] and the Cisneros Group[16] of Venezuela (which has also invested in Chilean television), transformed many local stations into mere repeaters of Santiago-based programming transmitted by satellite (Baltra, 2000: 2; Secretaría de Comunicación y Cultura, 1995: 7–8; Barahona, n.d.: 16).

As commercial radio prospered, social activist Radio Umbral faltered. Despite its large audience, the station went off the air in 1993, when the Methodist Church could no longer afford the subsidies and sold it. Umbral's Ordenes shares the anger of many other opposition media producers at the lack of support from the Concertación. "All these people that we had helped get elected, who took advantage of our microphones, in the end turned their

backs on us" (interview, Santiago, September 11, 2000). Even during the election campaign, the station received almost no campaign ads from Concertación candidates. After Aylwin's inauguration, Umbral sought advertising from state agencies that advertised in other media but was offered only a loan that it could not afford to accept.

In the optimism of the early transition, three new activist radio stations did add diversity to radio in Santiago. However, all have struggled to become financially self-sufficient and have resorted to leasing up to 12 hours per day of their on-air time to other broadcasters, primarily religious organizations, to fund their operations. None of them have received significant advertising from government agencies.

Radio Tierra went on the air as the first feminist radio station in Latin America in 1991, a project of the women's nongovernmental organization (NGO) La Morada. In its first decade, the station has undergone several changes in leadership and level of political activism (interview with Maria Eugenia Mesa, Santiago, August 4, 1998; interview with Rosario Puga, Santiago, August 15, 2000). To attract a broader audience, the station quickly abandoned its "feminist" designation in favor of a more palatable identity as a station for women, leading to the departure of founder Margarita Pisano, a leading lesbian feminist theorist and activist (interview, Santiago, September 9, 1998). Inspired by the World Social Forum, the station now describes itself as "the voice of civil society" and provides air time to groups such as the families of the disappeared, the organization of draft resisters, and gay and lesbian groups (interviews with María Pía Matta and Rosario Puga, Santiago, September 9, 2002).

Radio Canelo is a project of the environmental NGO El Canelo de Nos, which bought the station in 1994. Radio Umbral pioneer Manuel Ordenes is the program director, and he sees parallels between the two stations in both content and financial pressures. The station's 20 volunteers greatly outnumber its 4 paid staff members. Programming features Latin American music and provides air time to social organizations.

Radio Nuevo Mundo, a station with close ties to the Communist party,[17] is the least attractive to advertisers. To cut costs, the program director and station manager work without compensation, and the other 20 part-time employees receive low salaries. The station has an active fund-raising program that includes voluntary monthly contributions from about 1,000 listener-members and activities by local clubs of listeners. The station also organizes cultural events and sells tapes of its educational and cultural productions such as tributes to Pablo Neruda and a series on neoliberalism. The station's programming emphasizes news, discussion, and cultural programs (interview with Hernán Barahona, Santiago, August 25, 2000).

University radio also offers possibilities for alternative views. Noteworthy is Radio University of Chile, under the directorship of the former *Análisis* and *Primera Linea* editor Juan Pablo Cárdenas since 2000. Programming has been expanded to more than 60 weekly shows including news and political and cultural discussion, some with live audiences. The station is also available over the Internet.

As Chile entered the transition, it appeared that community radio might provide an important outlet for diverse voices and social demands that would offset the increasing homogenization of commercial radio. In January 1990, the Agrupación Nacional de Radio Popular (National Organization of Popular Radio Stations—ANARAP) was formed to promote the growth of stations, operated by "unions, community groups, ethnic groups, youth, women, cultural centers, NGOs, and all entities that seek to democratize radio for the benefit of average people," especially in the poblaciónes (shantytowns) (ANARAP, 1992: 69).

The inauguration of the first few ANARAP stations provoked a ferocious public campaign by the UDI, Renovación Nacional (National Renovation—RN) and the Radio Association of Chile, which denounced their political activism and leftist rhetoric and demanded their closure. When the RN brought an impeachment action against Subsecretary of Transportation and Telecommunications Germán Correa, the Aylwin administration promised ANARAP that if the stations shut down voluntarily it would speedily enact legislation allowing them to reopen legally. The ANARAP affiliates agreed and voluntarily ceased transmitting on July 21, 1991 (Gallegos, 1992: 33).

The outcome was not what ANARAP expected. The legislation was divided into two parts. A sanctions law was enacted quickly in November 1991, providing fines, jail terms, and confiscation of equipment for unauthorized radio broadcasts (Secretaría de Comunicación y Cultura, 1994: 320). The proposal legalizing community radio was held up for two years in the right-dominated Senate until it had undergone major modifications. What finally emerged in December 1993 was significantly titled the Law of Low-Power Radio (rather than Community Radio). Any legal entity (churches, political parties, local governments, and so forth) could apply for the single license to be awarded in each *comuna*.[18] The application process favored institutional applicants with greater resources, since licenses were awarded on purely technical criteria based on an engineering report that was difficult for grassroots groups to pay for. The potential of community radio was further weakened by limiting licenses to three years, reducing maximum power from 20 watts to 1 watt and prohibiting advertising (Yañez and Aguilera, 2000: 48), although in practice the latter two conditions are frequently violated.

By 2000, approximately 100 licenses had been awarded, almost half to mayor's offices, churches, or other institutions rather than grassroots organizations (Yañez and Aguilera, 2000: 13). Some politically active community stations have chosen to broadcast without licenses, either because their applications were rejected or because they refused to apply.[19]

In the current political climate, grassroots radio will not recapture the political impetus of 1990. However, government action could make the existing stations more effective. In 2000 a study of community stations affiliated with ANARAP's successor organization the Red Nacional de Radios Comunitarios[20] (National Network of Community Radio Stations—RENARCOM) found that most are staffed by people who see themselves as "sociocultural promoters" but are severely hampered by lack of funds. The study recommends extending license terms to 25 years, eliminating the prohibition against advertising, and creating competitive government grants for equipment, Internet access, and training (Yañez and Aguilera, 2000). Although the Lagos administration has expressed its intention to provide greater support for regional radio, it is not clear that significant funds will be made available to community rather than commercial stations. By 2002, limited progress had been made (interview with Leonel Yañez, Santiago, September 3, 2002). Several government agencies were funding announcements and programs on community stations and some legislators had agreed to support increasing license terms to five or ten years.

TELEVISION

At its inception, Chilean television boasted a unique university-based model designed to buffer it from direct state influence while preventing purely commercial considerations from determining its development (see Hurtado, 1989). In this respect, in contrast to television in most of Latin America (see Fox, 1988), Chile rejected the U.S. model in favor of a system more akin to European public service broadcasting. Before the coup, channels were operated by the government (Televisión Nacional—TVN), the University of Chile in Santiago, and the Catholic Universities of Santiago and Valparaiso. To promote pluralism, the university channels had representative boards, and all the stations were funded by a mix of government subsidies and advertising. Although television content offered considerable entertainment programming, much of it imported, public affairs were also given a high priority and political debate flourished, especially on TVN.

Under the dictatorship, television was more strictly controlled than any other medium. Although superficially the university-based television system

was retained, its governing structure was changed, with delegate-directors appointed by the military assuming responsibility for its administration (Fuenzalida, 1988: 52). Moreover, government funding was ended, forcing the stations to become entirely dependent on advertising.

The transition initiated a period of major transformation, with the introduction of privately owned commercial broadcasting and cable television. The advent of these new outlets consolidated a U.S.-style commercial model, stimulated cross-media ownership, and opened Chilean television to foreign investors for the first time. By 2000, Chilean television had been integrated into the globalizing structures of transnational communication conglomerates.

No longer a luxury for the affluent, by 1992, television had become nearly universal (95 percent penetration nationally and almost 99 percent in Santiago) (CNTV, 2001a: 1), with an average of one set per household (Sunkel, 1997: 5). Cable has expanded the almost 40,000 hours of annual programming offered by broadcast stations to 1 million hours (CNTV, 1998: 23), with cable content consisting mainly of imported films and syndicated series. However, according to the regulatory Consejo Nacional de Televisión (National Television Council—CNTV)[21] only 2 percent of this is cultural programming (*Santiago Times*, July 5, 2000).[22] The CNTV notes that, with stations competing for the US$300 million in annual advertising, it is not surprising that Chilean television is criticized for its "eminently commercial character, its interest in capturing large audiences with simplistic language, its lack of innovation, and its insufficient contribution to the education of children." The limited government funding (US$400,000) available for cultural programming "obviously is not enough to make an effective contribution" (1998: 35–36). Although the CNTV explicitly deplores the lack of cultural programming, it does not highlight the main weakness of neoliberal television—that commercialization and the triumph of the entertainment model have undermined its potential to invigorate the public sphere during the transition. This failure is especially significant because television has recovered from its low credibility during the dictatorship to become the most relied-upon and trusted news source (Sunkel, 1997: 5–7).

At least Chile has avoided one of the features of commercial television most criticized by democratic media theorists—paid political advertising. Chilean law provides for a free political *franja* (block of air time) for 30 days prior to elections. However, time is allocated by the CNTV according to a formula that favors the largest parties. In the 2001 congressional elections, the Christian Democrats qualified for the longest daily slot, 7 minutes and 49 seconds, while the Liberal and Humanist parties received just 3 seconds each

(Dávila, 2001). To be meaningful, a minimum time should be established that allows all legal parties to present more than a slogan or a single image.

Broadcast television is highly centralized, with five Santiago channels, including two privately owned channels established after Pinochet's defeat in the plebiscite, transmitting to the rest of the country. Although the first investors were drawn primarily from the ranks of Chile's major economic groups, including individuals closely associated with the dictatorship, most have gradually been displaced by transnational media conglomerates based in other Latin American countries or the United States. Although the dictatorship took the initial steps to establish privately owned broadcast and cable, the process of expansion and consolidation has been overseen by the Concertación.

The first private commercial license was awarded to the business magnate, ex-Pinochet official, and Opus Dei member Ricardo Claro[23] for Megavisión, which went on the air in October 1990 (Secretaría de Comunicación y Cultura, 1994: 44). In 1991, Claro sold a 49 percent interest in Megavisión to the Mexican media giant Televisa, which he bought back in 2002. La Red followed Megavisión onto the air in May 1991 and represented the entry of the newspaper chain Copesa into television (43). The link with Copesa was strengthened when La Red signed an agreement to acquire news from Copesa in 1992 (175). In 1998, Mexico's TV Azteca bought a controlling 75 percent interest in La Red with a plan to emphasize sports and news. Another major Latin American communication conglomerate entered the Chilean broadcast television market in 1993 when University of Chile's channel 11 responded to ongoing losses by leasing its frequencies to Venevisión of the principal Venezuelan media conglomerate, the Cisneros group, which renamed the station Chilevisión.[24] Thus, while the University of Chile remains the legal license holder for channel 11, in practice it has become just another private commercial channel (41), albeit a less conservative one.

The most positive development during the transition has been the transformation of state-owned TVN. According to January 1992 legislation, TVN is governed by an appointed seven-member board whose members must reflect diverse political views. Lagos's appointments are the most progressive to date.[25] The channel carries high-quality cultural programs and has trod on politically sensitive ground by airing documentaries on human rights abuses during the dictatorship. However, there are political limits to its programming. Even after ten years of transition, the director of cultural programming was still unable to obtain authorization from the executive director to show *The Battle of Chile*, Patricio Guzmán's epic account of the Allende years (interview with Augusto Góngora, Santiago, August 10, 2000). In 2001, the head of the news division was fired for political reasons and the Lagos

administration pressured the director of the TVN board to resign, to be replaced by one of the president's closest political advisers.[26]

The predominance of commercial television was reinforced by the expansion of cable and satellite television. Approximately 20 percent of Chilean households (or 787,961 subscribers) currently receive one of the pay services (18 percent cable and 2.6 percent satellite) (CNTV, 2001b: 6). Cable began with hundreds of local companies operating independently, but the industry consolidated rapidly. Today, just two cable providers, Metropolis Intercom and VTR, control 95 percent of the national cable market, making cable Chile's most concentrated medium (CNTV, 2001b: 5). After several changes in ownership, control of Metropolis Intercom is now equally divided between Megavisión's Claro and U.S.-based Liberty Media.[27] VTR, the leading cable provider, began with substantial participation of Chile's powerful Luksic[28] group but is now a wholly owned subsidiary of UnitedGlobal Com (UGC), the largest international provider of broadband services, with operations in 25 countries in Europe, Asia, and the Pacific. The company is now in the process of fusing with Liberty Media to form New United Globalcom in which Liberty will be the largest stockholder. This gives Liberty a substantial interest in both of Chile's major cable providers. According to a Liberty official, this does not raise antimonopoly concerns because Liberty's interest in VTR is indirect; its stock is to be voted by UGC's founding shareholders rather than by Liberty (Mike Erickson, personal communication, August 28, 2001).

Although Liberty's investments are not considered problematic by Chilean authorities, cable ownership is one of the few areas in which Chile's Antimonopoly Commission has acted to prevent an anticompetitive merger. In 1997, VTR and the Chilean Telephone Company (partly owned by the Spanish telecommunications giant Telefónica, which at that time was also part-owner of Metropolis Intercom) announced merger plans, but the commission refused to allow the cable subsidiaries to merge, a decision that derailed the parent companies' fusion. After conflicts with Claro over corporate strategy, the Chilean Telephone Company subsequently sold its interest in Metropolis Intercom.

Recognizing the future importance of converged digital services, both VTR and Metropolis Intercom have invested heavily in fiber optic cable to become full-service broadband providers, hoping to entice customers to combine telephony and Internet access with cable television service.

Satellite television is also a transnational venture, led by SKY-Chile, a consortium of Televisa, Brazil's Globo, and Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, which control 90 percent of the market with DirecTV, the satellite arm of VTR GlobalCom, supplying the remainder (CNTV, 2001b: 7).

From a public-sphere perspective, cable television, with its expanded channel capacity, could become an important democratic resource if a number of its channels were reserved for use by civil society. However, Chilean policy makers chose to introduce cable television without providing for the public access channels that are customary in the United States and Europe. This decision proved fatal to Canelo TV, which described itself as an "ecological, citizen, and cultural" channel and represented the most serious effort to diversify television content.[29] VTR had agreed to carry the channel, featuring socially conscious programming from Chilean video makers and other noncommercial sources such as the University of Chile, the National Commissions on the Environment and AIDS, UNICEF, Greenpeace, and Amnesty International. In April 1996, Canelo TV began its technical trial, but in May the test run was cancelled by VTR, which justified its action by saying that corporate policy now called for emphasis on international programming (Maureira, 1996). However, the channel's director Hernán Dinamarca contends that the reason was political discomfort with program content (interview, Santiago, August 6 and 18, 1998). After the cancellation, Canelo TV and its supporters tried to mobilize political pressure to require the creation of "local and citizen TV channels" (Dinamarca et al., 1996). The government rejected the public access proposal and cable operators remain free from public service or public access requirements to this day. When interviewed on August 23, 2000, Bernardo Donoso, Lagos's first appointee as head of the CNTV, indicated that no change in this policy was likely during the Lagos administration.

VIDEO

As with radio, there was an upsurge of grassroots video production as the transition got under way. Grassroots video groups formed in poblaciónes, inspired by the work of ICTUS, Teleanálisis, Proceso, and other independent video producers that had circulated hundreds of videotapes semiclandestinely through grassroots social organizations during the dictatorship (see Bresnahan, 2000). The development of grassroots video was encouraged by workshops organized in poblaciónes by members of Proceso and Teleanálisis as well as the communication NGO Educación y Comunicación (Education and Communication—ECO) and several university professors of communication (interviews with Fernando Acuña, Santiago, August 24, 2000; Cristián Galaz, Santiago, August 18, 2000; Hermann Mondaca, Santiago, September 7, 2000; Jorge Moraga, Santiago, August 6, 1998; Leonel Yañez, Santiago, August 17, 2000). In 1994, more than 30 grassroots

producers formed the Red Nacional de Video Popular y TV Comunitaria (National Network of Grassroots Video and Community TV). Their statement of principles affirmed "the need of broad social sectors, especially at the grassroots, to express themselves on their own, to seek and develop their own forms of communication, autonomous, independent, without intermediaries," in order to "stimulate hopes; share the struggles and desires for justice, a clean environment, and the overcoming of discrimination and oppression; and promote dreams and aspirations" (Red Nacional de Video Popular y TV Comunitaria, 1995). The work of grassroots producers is shown primarily at the neighborhood level using the *pantalla grande* or *pantallazo*, an outdoor screening in a public place such as a plaza or street corner using a video projector and screen that may be simply a white bed sheet hung on a wall or strung across a street.

Members of the network produce video in a variety of formats, from community news magazines to original short dramas to music videos that typically range from 5 to 30 minutes in length. Many deal with unemployment, drug addiction, and other social consequences of neoliberalism in the poblaciónes that one producer called "Chile's back yard," but they also show the resilience, solidarity, and creativity of their residents (interview with Arturo Quezada, Santiago, August 30, 1998).

Like community radio, grassroots video is the type of decentralized, participatory medium that public policy should encourage during a process of media democratization, especially given the commercialization of national broadcast television. Video is less dependent on public policy than radio, since it does not require enabling legislation. However, public policy can stimulate its development by providing training, funding, and distribution outlets or hinder it by failing to do so. Members of grassroots groups interviewed in 1998 and 2000 repeatedly cited lack of funding and inadequate outlets for completed work as obstacles that cause many grassroots producers to abandon their efforts (interviews with Javier Bertín, Santiago, September 6, 2000; Adrian Leal, Santiago, August 17, 1998; Evelyn Ojeda, Santiago, August 30, 1998). Although the national government funds some video production through its competitive FONDART grants, there is no separate category for grassroots producers, who find it difficult to compete with professional video makers with university training and more sophisticated equipment.[30] To increase distribution options, the network holds an annual video festival and supports the creation of public access cable channels, although, as one of the network's founders points out, this is only a partial solution to the distribution problem, since cable is a luxury that the majority of población residents cannot afford. Furthermore, cable cannot provide the

interactive relationship with the audience that grassroots video makers value (interview with Javier Bertín, Santiago, July 27, 1998).

It would be logical to fund grassroots video at the local level and some local governments have done so. This support is, however, very dependent on the political disposition of the current mayor. One of the most serious efforts to promote grassroots video occurred in the middle-class comuna of Ñuñoa while it was governed by a Humanist party mayor. The municipal government provided equipment and training and even negotiated an agreement for a municipal cable channel with Metropolis Intercom. However, when the mayor lost the subsequent election, the new administration canceled the program and locked up the equipment (interview with Carlo Messina, Santiago, August 17, 1998). The Santiago comuna of El Bosque has also actively supported community video and sponsors an annual competitive video festival (interview with Jorge Moraga, Santiago, August 6, 1998). However, this level of support is the exception rather than the rule. The video network has joined with organizations of documentary and feature film producers, film and video students, and others to create the Plataforma Audiovisual (Audiovisual Platform), a coalition that has proposed legislation to promote the audiovisual arts by creating a National Institute of the Audiovisual Arts and Industry and an Audiovisual Development Fund and by "promoting cultural diffusion and the protection of the national audiovisual heritage" through "subsidies and direct programs in association with public and private entities that are active in this field" (Plataforma Audiovisual, 1999: 4). In a positive development, the video network is working with the Division of Culture of the Ministry of Education in a training program for high school teachers and students, adapting methods the network has employed in población workshops (Bertín, 2000; Ministerio de Educación, 2000). However, the ministry lacks the resources to implement a policy as comprehensive as that called for by the Audiovisual Platform (interview with Ignacio Aliaga, Santiago, August 6, 1998).

CONCLUSION

The struggle against the dictatorship produced an impressive array of independent media closely linked to grassroots social movements and employing participatory forms of production and distribution. These alternative media became important voices of dissent even before mass protests began in 1983, and their role expanded as mass opposition grew, some of them attaining impressive national and international circulation despite ongoing legal harassment and repression of journalists. As the first

Concertación administration took office, the public sphere was energized by an upsurge of new alternative and participatory media. Had the incoming elected government adopted a public-sphere perspective on the role of the media in the consolidation of democracy, it would have actively supported the existing independent media and fostered the development of the emerging community media. Instead, it opted for a market model responsive to the needs of transnational investors and consistent with its own political interest in curtailing or eliminating media that could serve as voices for human rights advocates, opponents of the neoliberal economic model, and other progressive sectors. As a result, the hard-won media diversity of 1990 did not survive the first decade of transition. Despite some significant advances, such as the Press Law, the Concertación has repeatedly chosen policy options that have weakened rather than strengthened the public sphere. Overall, its communication policies have seriously eroded mass media diversity and limited the development of community-based, participatory media. Since the arrest of Pinochet in London, some promising initiatives for rebuilding a progressive independent media sector have been launched, but these remain financially precarious endeavors whose future is uncertain.

NOTES

1. The industrial belts were organizations coordinating the factory-based political and self-defense activities of workers in several highly industrial areas of Santiago (see Silva, n.d.).

2. The term "small media" was employed by Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi (1991) in their study of the Iranian revolution of 1979. In the Iranian case, it referred principally to audiocassettes and leaflets, but it can be used to describe a wide range of popular media, from political graffiti to the newsletters and videotapes that were important in the Chilean case.

3. Garnham argues that when vertically and horizontally integrated transnational media control global distribution systems and provide a majority of their content, no concept of media democratization can remain at the national level (1994: 361, 371–372). "We are thus forced to rethink this relationship [between communication and politics] and the nature of citizenship in the modern world. What new political institutions and new public sphere might be necessary for the democratic control of a global economy and polity? . . . The problem is to construct systems of democratic accountability integrated with media systems of matching scale that occupy the same social space as that over which economic or political decisions will impact. . . . If market forces are global in scope, any effective political response has to be global." This places the movement for media democratization in direct opposition to U.S. trade policy, a fundamental goal of which is to bring the media and telecommunication fields under free-trade rules. This policy has already achieved significant success in telecommunications with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) Annex on Telecommunications and the Fourth Protocol on Basic Telecommunications Services, bringing many international telecommunications activities under the jurisdiction of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The effort to include the media has encountered resistance from Western European countries and Canada, which have long-standing policies to

protect their cultural industries, but weaker states have been less successful in resisting the pressure of the United States and the major transnational media conglomerates. For example, under NAFTA, Mexico has opened its media industries to foreign investment (see McAnany and Wilkinson, 1996).

4. This charge has been denied by the government officials involved. The directors of the publications other than *Análisis* have not taken public positions on the issue.

5. The MIR was one of the two organizations that engaged in armed resistance to the military dictatorship. It fragmented and dissolved after 1990, although a tiny splinter group continues to use its name. *Punto Final* was the MIR's magazine before the coup. It was revived and is currently published as an independent leftist magazine by its former editor, Manuel Cabieses.

6. The *El Mercurio* chain is the main enterprise of the Edwards family, one of Chile's most important economic groups before the coup, whose economic weight has declined since 1973. It acted as the "ideological organizer" of the right during the destabilization of the Allende government with CIA financial and technical support. Its papers also acted as disinformation channels during the dictatorship, as in the "Case of the 119" disappeared who were reported by *La Segunda* to be abroad or to have "exterminated each other like rats" in sectarian violence.

7. Copesa represents the media power of economic groups that rose to prominence during the dictatorship, including the important Infisa holding company of Alvaro Saieh and the Abumohor group and Ecsa, headed by Pinochet's former treasury minister, Sergio de Castro. For details, see Fazio (1997: 343–360).

8. The Chilean state owns 60 percent of the corporation that publishes *La Nación,* and the paper serves as the news organ of the administration in power.

9. Many of the cover stories focus on figures identified with the right. For example, the August 25, 2000, edition reported that the supermarket magnate Nicolas Ibáñez, who is well-known for promoting "family values," had been accused of domestic violence by his wife. He then ordered his employees to buy up all available copies of the paper. Other stories have been embarrassing to the Concertación. The September 8, 2002, edition revealed that a secret military organization, the Comando Conjunto, had been responsible for presenting false information on the fate of the disappeared to the Concertación-sponsored human rights round table. The round table had been created after Chilean courts recognized disappearance as ongoing kidnapping, a crime that was not covered by the amnesty law. Amid calls from human rights organizations for prosecution of those responsible, the round table promised them immunity in exchange for revealing the fate of disappeared individuals. The Comando Conjunto story bolstered critics of the round table, who charged that it was a charade devised by the Concertación to restore impunity to military human rights violators.

10. Another conservative daily, *El Metropolitano,* entered the market in 1999 but never became profitable and closed in 2002 (see de Castro, June 12, 2002). In 2000, a Swedish company began distributing a free daily at subway station entrances.

11. The paper currently claims a daily base of 45,000 logons, with peak use of up to 100,000.

12. The state names four members of the board and private investors the other three, who, despite being a minority, have a type of veto power over the decisions of the government's majority in that no action opposed by all three private board members can be adopted. Shortly before *Primera Linea*'s inauguration, Cárdenas expressed his confidence that this system would allow him to engage in independent journalism that would be free to criticize the Concertación without fear of being removed. He noted, "I came here not because the government's directors invited me. I was invited by the private directors" (interview, Santiago, August 30, 2000). One of the private directors voted with the state members to remove him.

13. Radio Balmaceda was closed by the military in 1977.

14. Radio Caracol is Colombia's leading radio chain with more than 1,600 stations (Sunkel and Geoffroy, 2001: 68).

15. Chairman and CEO Thomas Hicks and his brother Steven have been important contributors to the campaigns of George W. Bush.

16. The Cisneros Group is the fourth-largest media conglomerate in Latin America, with interests in 70 companies in 39 countries including joint ventures with major U.S. transnationals. Cisneros's Venezuelan media have actively participated in the efforts to oust President Hugo Chávez.

17. The Communist party will have difficulty claiming compensation for the ten stations it lost, since the ownership documents for its provincial stations were lost or destroyed and the licenses were awarded to other owners, some with close ties to right-wing politicians. Furthermore, the military eliminated the frequency used by the party's flagship station, Radio Magallanes in Santiago, and, according to Concertación officials, if there is no current license for that frequency, there is no legal basis for a compensation claim.

18. In large cities such as Santiago, a comuna corresponds to a borough with its own mayor. In the countryside, it encompasses an area similar to a U.S. county.

19. For more detailed discussion of grassroots radio, see Bresnahan (2002; 2003).

20. In 2001, after an internal dispute, RENARCOM divided into two groups, the majority of the stations joining the new Asociación Nacional de Radios Comunitarios y Ciudadanos de Chile (National Association of Community and Citizens' Radio Stations of Chile—ANARCCICH).

21. The CNTV's legal role is to "oversee the correct functioning" of television, defined as "permanent respect, through its programming, for the moral and cultural values of the nation; for the dignity of individuals; for the protection of the family; for pluralism; for democracy; for peace; for the environment; and for the spiritual and intellectual formation of children and youth within this framework of values" (CNTV, 1998: 25). It issues warnings and can impose fines for violation of standards, principally for excessive violence and too explicit sex. Its role in restricting televised films has been most controversial. A 1998 CNTV report recommended a shift to greater industry self-regulation based on the neoliberal principle that regulation "should flow from codes of conduct the channels agree to among themselves" (1998: 47) and the needs and desires of "the television viewer with his remote control in hand" (24).

22. *The Santiago Times* is a daily electronic news service in English providing news about Chile from newspapers and other sources available by subscription at www.chip.cl.

23. Claro owns Chile's largest steamship company and has been accused of allowing the military to use company ships in disposing of bodies of the disappeared at sea (see Fazio, 1997: 329–332, for detailed discussion of his other business interests). His role in Megavisión became very controversial when he appeared on a public affairs program in 1992 while the RN presidential hopeful Sebastian Piñera was being interviewed and played a tape of a conversation that had been illegally recorded by the military telecommunications command. On the tape, Piñera is heard planning dubious campaign maneuvers against his far-right RN rival, Evelyn Matthei, a candidate more to Claro's liking. As a result, Piñera was forced out of the race for the presidential nomination. Claro continues to use the channel to promote his conservative views, recently hiring the fervently pro-Pinochet Catholic priest Raúl Hasbun as a public affairs commentator after Hasbun left Catholic Channel 13 in the wake of widespread criticism of his comments on human rights cases.

24. Chilevisión is currently owned by the Claxson group, a consortium of Cisneros, Hicks Muse, and elsitio.com.

25. Lagos has appointed the respected cultural activists Nissim Sharim of the ICTUS theater group and Faride Zerán, editor of *Rocinante* and director of the University of Chile's School of Journalism.

26. Christian Democrat and rightist board members joined forces in July 2001 to remove the Christian Democrat Jaime Moreno Laval because of a November 2000 documentary on CIA support for *El Mercurio* during the destabilization of the Allende government (Rodriguez, 2001). Moreno was replaced by the Christian Democrat Gemma Contreras, who is considered to lean toward the right. A month later, the board director Jorge Navarrete submitted his resignation under pressure from President Lagos, who was angered by Navarrete's role in Moreno's ouster as well as subsequent campaign coverage that was seen as favoring candidates of the right over those of the Concertación. Navarrete was replaced by Lagos confidant Marco Colodro.

27. Liberty Media is one of the top ten global media conglomerates with interests in video programming (e.g., USA, Discovery, Starz!, MacNeil Lehrer Productions, and Telemundo), cable and telephony, satellite communication, Internet, and other communication products and services.

28. The Luksic group is Chile's most important banking group and one of the country's top five economic groups, with major interests in mining and manufacturing (see Fazio, 1997: 133–169).

29. Canelo TV was a project of the same NGO that operates Radio Canelo.

30. Commercial films with export possibilities receive the greatest government support, and film production has increased noticeably during the transition, from 1–2 features a year to 17 in 1999 and 2000. At the present time, the Ministry of Education is prioritizing the high school video workshops over community workshops.

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