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THE *CREATIVE CONTENT PROGRAMME* AND AUDIOVISUAL E-PLATFORM: AN INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS OF UNESCO'S INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDEPENDENT DOCUMENTARY CONTENT AND PRODUCTION PRACTICE

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Vernon Smith. Thank you for your support, patience, encouragement and everything else in my life.

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INTRODUCTION

Distributed across the Internet, a connected medium that invites mobility and immersion, the digital media content and local production practice promoted by the United Nations Education and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) presents an opportunity to examine a formalized international governance approach to shaping media production culture. While there are numerous UNESCO programs to examine in this regard, the *Creative Content Programme* (CCP) and the supporting Audiovisual E-Platform website are unique for the focus on supporting media production and the distribution of endogenous human rights-related documentary[1] video content. UNESCO supports these activities to promote local representations of human rights internationally. At different points or sites of interaction, UNESCO's policies and practices influence and shape media production to suit institutional objectives. At the same sites of interaction, media producers resist institutional pressures and local approaches to race, class and gender are evident.

This research project is an institutional analysis of the UNESCO's *Creative Content Programme* and Audiovisual E-Platform conducted by examining the relationship between policies and resulting production practices at three sites forming the substantive chapters of this dissertation. The purpose of the study is to reveal the constitutive policies underlying UNESCO's relatively recent interest in supporting local production practice and the establishment of an international distribution system for independent media producers. These policies and practices serve to create a system of power. This system aggregates, adopts and promotes local creative talent for the

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[1] This program also promotes fiction and animated content.

purposes of serving institutional objectives. Further, UNESCO's policies and program activities influence the production practices and content of media producers targeted by the *Creative Content Programme* for the purposes of serving this system. Therefore, the primary research question focuses on what media practices and representations of lived experience of race, class and gender are sanctioned for institutional support and distribution through the E-Platform. The analysis of these texts is conducted in order to clarify how institutional policies and practices influence the output of production activities within a system of rules where women do not share equally in the means of production. This question is applied to three interrelated but unique sites within UNESCO's influence, including the film submission process on the E-Platform, women's documentary films in the E-Platform, and a UNESCO-supported community media center in Jamaica, representing Chapters 2 – 4.

The thesis is that discourses of race, class, and gender are present in the production practices and content. Further, the banal and everyday life influencing local practice and content perseveres through institutional pressures and functions both interdependently as well as independently of industry media production practices, and the policies and practices of funders and distributors. Examining these local discourses in the context of the media is crucial to understanding endogenous media as representative of an "emerging new millennium of political media that exemplifies infinitely expanding spheres of discourse" that are redefining civil society and circumventing corporate mass media gatekeeping through the UNESCO global information network (Hess and Zimmerman, 154).

The themes of gender and access further determine production practice and culture in the context of an international media institution and frame this research. The approach is to examine these themes at institutional entry points or along boundaries where independent media producers are visible and most evidently engaged in a synergistic relationship with UNESCO. Contained by these themes, I focus my multi-method approach on analyzing the composition of programs and practices of the *Creative Content Programme* and the E-Platform, the video content on the E-Platform that is deemed representative of institutional values, and production practice supported at the local level. The chapters of this study each represent a focused examination of these entry points.

The *Creative Content Programme* provides a framework for supporting local media development in targeted developing communities. The Audiovisual E-Platform, an online distribution and marketing catalogue, supports the CCP as a media distribution system and serves as a social networking hub for independent filmmakers and broadcasters from the global South targeted by the CCP. Designed to promote and support media development, these nested activities are instruments to promote gender equity, cultural diversity and pluralism and integrate marginalized communities into civil society. Designed to support the production of local media in a commercially dominated media world, *Creative Content* media is credited by UNESCO with promoting human rights and the values of the United Nations to international television distributors.

UNESCO states that the *Creative Content Programme* is designed to support the development and promotion of content produced by "disadvantaged communities of the developing world" ("UNESCO's new initiative"). In the broader context, the *Creative*

Content Programme supports the development of content focused on "major societal and development issues" and is utilized in development activities such as improving women's capacity to use communication technologies to represent their everyday experience ("Content Development").

Once represented by UNESCO, the resultant media is neither fully dependent on development programs, nor is it necessarily the autonomous media resulting from a collective need to become active around social justice issues and identities (Hackett and Carroll 187). This need to activate around key issues, resulting in the independent creation of media, is defined as critical in the fight for the democratization of public communication by the media democracy movement, and a measure of the health of civil society (Hackett and Carroll 12). Attempting to examine access to media tools, documentaries, and grassroots production practice as forms of independent media culture in the context of global governance presents a paradox, as independent media is generally the voice of dissent in civil society against the state and institutions of power.

Support from the institution is dependent on the local producer adopting narratives that adhere to a predefined list of themes set by UNESCO within the confines of media industry practices (Hackett and Carroll 12). As such, the resultant media products – those directly supported and/or chosen for dissemination within the *Creative Content Programme* and E-Platform distribution framework are situated in overlapping and often competing institutional contexts: global governance, development communication practices, feminism, and Western filmmaking ideologies. The resulting contradictions between policy and local production practice are inherent in the media

content and the E-Platform website. They reveal an opportunity to examine whether the promotion of women's and marginalized men's rights via the production of media designed to "systematically alter representations about the past and present" coexist with demands for independent media as a vital part of a civil society (Price 141). This project seeks to examine these sites or locations where the institution and media producers come into contact or engage in different forms of negotiation over production content and practice.

Independent media producers often examine society from the margins and depend on low-cost and accessible media to produce and distribute their video content as well as to coalesce with like-minded communities. Social networking hubs and user-created media archives provide an opportunity to distribute media. Documentaries are widely interpreted as filling a role of critically examining the citizen's relationship with the state. While they often have been used to universalize state messaging (early documentarist John Grierson made documentaries for the British Empire Marketing Board, an organization designed to promote trade interests throughout the Commonwealth), they also question universal claims, standards, and systems of power (Guynn 83). Community media centers provide opportunities for marginalized and subaltern populations to engage and participate in a public sphere. Yet this public sphere is constructed and buttressed by rules established by the international community in a process that is often exclusive of marginalized populations.

Exploring the *Creative Content Programme* and the E-Platform alongside the informal global struggle for social justice through media democracy in a field of rapidly declining divergent voices provides an opportunity to address different approaches to

the development and support of the public sphere beyond the field of media development. Discussed in depth in the literature review, the growing scholarly attention to media industry studies (as well as media production and production culture studies) over the past three decades arising from established media industries in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. establishes a precedent for this work. Further, theoretical, methodological, cultural and contextual studies provide a framework for approaching this topic alongside applicable feminist and post-colonial theoretical scholarship.

Scope of Dissertation

Representing the institution's relationship with media producers, the influence of policies and practices, as well as production practices, this vertically integrated study is divided into three levels of analysis, moving from a broad top-level to a focused grassroots level. Tracing the organizational structure of chapters, the three research sites examined in this dissertation are the publically accessible *Creative Content Programme* and E-Platform websites, documentary videos catalogued at the E-Platform, and the UNESCO-supported *Container Project*. This includes examining the policy composition of the *Creative Content Programme*, the submission functionality for the E-Platform website, three documentary videos and one community-media production project supported by UNESCO.

These activities, documentary films and community media center where chosen for their focus on everyday experience of social justice and human rights. These independent or amateur media producers' struggles for access to distribution, production practice and content reveal everyday social struggles that are relevant but curiously deviant from the perception of peace and conflict in developing countries, and

the resultant imagined civil society most often privileged by mass and politically-committed media. Examining these local discourses in the context of the media is crucial to understanding endogenous media as representative of local interpretations of human rights. Further, these discourses that are specific to culture and gender but globally relevant are circumventing gatekeeping through the UNESCO global information network and represent different approaches to civil society (Hess and Zimmerman, Transnational Digital Imaginaries 154). This research is relevant in the current climate as the global economic crisis increases the threat of civil unrest as millions of people lose faith in their governments to address growing unemployment, food insecurity and economic instability.

The theoretical framework centers on women's and marginalized men's approach to documentary production practice in the context of their lived experience, basic needs, and systems of knowledge. This study is conducted within an institutional analysis that traces women's limited inclusion or absence from the foundational documents contributing to the composition of the *Creative Content Programme*. Distribution, content, and production is examined in consideration of the tensions within the nation-state (social and economic), as well as those emerging because of transnational and corporate interests (Roach 288; Sinclair 343).

This vertically integrated study opens with an analysis of the E-Platform and the film submission process. This is followed by a textual analysis of a small corpus of transnational documentary media and interviews with the filmmakers. This analysis of content leads to observing real-life experience of institutional policies through active participation in media production at a community site. This organization allows for

reading back and forth between these three disparate systems. The approach is focused on gender and access and the chapters organized as follows. Following a literature review in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 is a feminist analysis of the composition of programs and practices of the *Creative Content Programme,* the E-Platform and the composition of the film submission process. Chapter 3 is a textual and discourse analysis of video content, scripts, and interviews with women producers of documentaries, conducted in the context of an institutional analysis. Chapter 4 is an examination of production conducted during fieldwork carried out at a UNESCO-supported community media center, the *Container Project,* which included participating in and observing community-media production practice in Jamaica.

This project accomplishes the goal of identifying how the configuration of the video content in the *Creative Content Programme* and catalogue website represents the disparity between the international institutional media programs and practices and the expectations of the independent and local media production stakeholders. Ambiguity regarding ethical issues such as those surrounding copyright; access issues surrounding who receives institutional support; the unclear definition of what defines an independent filmmaker, a good film, a quality production, or program success in the prescribed context are also examined.

As discussed from the outset, examining these discourses alongside and counter to institutionally sanctioned production practice is critical to understanding how particularized struggles are universally relevant. In each case, whether intended by the media producer or not, the seams of the production culture are evident and remind us that we are watching constructions of meaning whether we examining access to the E-

Platform, the documentaries distributed through the E-Platform, or the community media center.

Chapter Descriptions

Chapter 1 is a review of literature organized to represent the research approach to the three levels of the analysis of UNESCO as a media industry, the media content, and media producers and production practice. Moreover, to establish an approach to UNESCO's mission to establish standards in human rights media representation (along with policy priorities) and how standards manifested through the materiality of the E-platform and supporting programs that promote local documentary media and production practice at community media centers. The literature addresses the thesis that the institutional policies universalize the video content and production practice according to international practices while local media producers fight for individual voice in their approaches to issues of race, class, and gender.

Chapter 2 examines what institutional policies and practices influence production culture. This chapter traces the role that media producers and their content play in the institution's public relations with the international community via the website. To reveal the symbiotic relationship evidenced by the archives, promotion of content, and control of entry, this chapter then focuses on the film submission process within the E-Platform. This examination is completed by comparing the E-Platform with Witness, an independent non-profit human rights video website and social network. Witness takes the approach of direct engagement with human rights abuses and policy as documented by grassroots individuals. The E-Portal is different in that the CCP project officers screen the films promoted to this site and only those films deemed appropriate,

are uploaded to the site. In contrast, the Witness site provides filmmakers with the power to immediately upload and engage those with common interests in their video content.

Supported by these findings, this chapter identifies how the configuration of the video content in the CCP and E-Platform catalogue website represents the disparity between the international institutional media programs and practices, and the needs of the independent media production stakeholders. This chapter establishes the institutional context of the documentary films discussed in Chapter 3, and the media site discussed in Chapter 4 by outlining the role and development of UNESCO as a media institution.

Chapter 3 examines three Diaspora woman-produced documentaries supported through the E-Platform online archive and distribution system at a period of time when women and gender are pushed to the forefront of UNESCO's policy agenda. In each example, the media producer's documentary is critically analyzed in the context of their relationship with UNESCO. Each film is a sanctioned formation of identity supported by local partnerships with UNESCO, promoted via the E-Platform and made available for television distribution through UNESCO's *Creative Content Programme*. The documentaries include *Welcome Mr. Postman* (Madeleine Bondy, Mexico, 2004), *Ladies Special* (Nidhi Tuli, India, 2003), and *Chronicle of a Dream* (Mariana Viñoles and Stefano Tononi, Uruguay, 2005).

These documentaries emerge from communities that have the infrastructure and security to support independent grassroots media and reveal the themes of race, class, and gender in the contexts identified by Chandra Talpade Mohanty in her book

Feminism Without Borders as being pertinent to a global feminism including community, home, sisterhood, and experience. Struggles over these themes in these contexts are integral to the construction of civil society and self-construction as personal and political transformation (McNay 99).

Chapter 4 examines through participant-observer research digital video production at the *Container Project* in Jamaica – an award-winning community-based multimedia center. The *Container Project* is a community-media center and grassroots led initiative that serves a marginalized community by providing access to information technology as a means to gain skills, explore creative talents and as a hub for community interaction. Repeating the approach to examining media production in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 brings us closer to production practices sanctioned by UNESCO and examines an institutionally supported community media center. Here, media producers' production practices are examined in the context of their local and national identities and their relationship with UNESCO.

To reveal the connections between production practice and UNESCO, the *Container Project* is explored from the perspective of the creators and the media producers as a means to better understand how video, documentary (in its broadest interpretation) and social justice are being intertwined and used transnationally to connect communities. Secondly, the *Container Project Stories*, produced in 2003 during a digital story-telling and train-the-trainer workshop are analyzed. As a form of amateur media, these shorts are the result of a creative skills development project and provide an opportunity to explore new forms of civil discourse. Chapter 4 connects to Chapter 2 and demonstrates how UNESCO supports and appropriates successful local media

production practices at the *Container Project* to support the *Creative Content Programme.*

CHAPTER 1 LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation is an examination of how UNESCO media policies and practices influence production and how producers resist. Moreover, this study looks at what content the institution supports and the form resistance takes in terms of production practices. To accommodate this idea, the following literature review traces the research framework underpinning this examination of UNESCO, an international media organization; the media producers and practices it supports; the content it promotes; and the website that facilitates the interaction between policy and practice. This research draws from four broad areas including media industry and production studies, documentary film, new media, and development communication intertwined with feminist and post-colonial theory.

Media Industry Studies

Media industry studies are the examination of the creative and cultural industries that produce media. This field incorporates the electronic and digital mediums of radio, television, film, newspaper, Internet, as well as art and architecture. As such, it is an ideal field of study for examining UNESCO's recent foray into the media industry as a digital video producer and distributor of video content to international television broadcasters. Further, the increasing body of scholarship in the field serves to legitimize the value of examining UNESCO's media production related activities as a source for cultural development.

The study of media industries is underdeveloped despite their unprecedented growth, transformation, influence on culture and centrality to our political, economic and everyday life (Holt and Perren 2009; Kellner 2009). Media industries function

internationally. The geopolitical priorities and economic pressures arising out of the Second World War have driven scholarship towards large commercial media institutions mainly emerging out of the United States. As such, early scholarship is organized into broad groupings of institutional analysis based on increasingly inaccurate economic-national boundaries of the first world, second world, and third world (Schiller 2006). Dominant English-speaking American-based commercial industries – specifically Hollywood television and film industries in Los Angeles – represent the bulk of the scholarship topics. Industry studies of Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States as representative of the "heartland of global capitalism" are another group pivotal to media industry studies based on their influence at United Nations agencies including UNESCO and the World Trade Organization in addition to Hollywood (Hackett and Carroll 2006). As a result of the historical precedents, Canada, the U.K. and the U.S. are often examined in the context of the changing role of mass media as a public service in relation to commercial priorities in the context of positive and negative influences on democracy and civil life (Hackett and Carroll 2006; McChesney 2000).

From the macro (national) perspective, McChesney reminds us that public service communication is the result of extensive government (including intergovernmental agencies such as UNESCO) policymaking (2000). Further, cultural policy is designed to create cultural citizens and overlaps UNESCO's broader prevue for cultural and social development at the international level (Lewis and Miller 2003). By dominating the policymaking agenda for public communication, governments and corporations have effectively controlled the public sphere; providing for recognition and representation but limiting access to the fulfillment of rights and redistribution (Hackett

and Carroll 2006). Also focused on macro concerns with emphasis on public media in relation to democracy, Hackett and Carroll draw from political theory, critical media, and sociology of social movements to interrogate the battle between capitalist pressures on public media and the demand for democracy in media (2006). Lewis and Miller, as well as Schiller take a broader look at global power dynamics between more and less powerful nations evolving out of World Trade Organization economic policies and UNESCO cultural policies (2003; 2006). National to regional studies examine media industries in Latin America, the Caribbean, and other post-colonial nations in response to global media institutional policy, resultant media imperialism or theft of cultural artifacts by dominant countries (Miller 2003). Historic precedents for criticism of UNESCO cultural policy developed by powerful member countries identify the underlying bias against less powerful countries' sovereign rights to local culture. Criticism of UNESCO's cultural policies has uncovered (but not necessarily addressed) persistent colonial ideologies of foreign and local elites. With the increasing global influence of media industries, concerns of marginalized populations, including women and subaltern men, continue to be negated. Access to digital media provides people at the margins with an autonomous voice transmitted across the Internet. In the hands of local producers, macro concerns become personal stories revealing pockets of activism as well as institutional and media producer conflict.

Often disregarded as amateur but also speaking to democracy and civil life, alternative or autonomous media studies remain somewhat marginalized and are often discussed only in relation to established mass media or as a parallel industry that is still experimental. Alternative and autonomous media can evolve into an alternative social

and political force (Hackett and Carroll 2006; Jenkins 2006; Kidd 2003; McChesney 2006). Media activists argue that public communication is a public service that should contribute to the constitution of a democratic public sphere. Media should serve the public by stimulating diversity, promoting equity, and providing a means by which citizens can participate in shaping cultural institutions and accessing the distribution of wealth and knowledge (Hackett and Carroll 2006). Autonomous media and producers are the subject of this research and form a connective tissue of communication between local culture and the institution.

Political Economy

The study of political economy, cultural industries, and cultural studies of media industries were treated as distinct fields dividing the focus between consumer and corporate media, and political and public interest media (Garnham 2006). Scholars have increasingly blended media political economy and British cultural studies influenced by the Birmingham School. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Birmingham School combined the study of representation including the ideologies of race, class and gender, with the study of cultural citizenship (Hall 1996). Incorporating Gramsci's model of hegemony and counter hegemony, media studies increasingly linked criticism and practice to social transformation in line with social activism (Gramsci 1971; Hall). Hall promoted his theory that audiences are active participants in meaning making and do not simply absorb corporate media messages (1996). Rather than passive observers, they encode and decode media in a manner based on personal ideologies and knowledge and accept those aspects that support their personal identity (Hall 1990). Applying this to the composition of UNESCO policies and practices helps to reveal

historic gender and race inequities in program delivery through the examination of the relationship with media producers.

By the 1980s to 1990s Douglas Kellner argued that cultural studies were increasingly depoliticized, focusing on texts, audiences and reception of pop culture and consumerism, leaving much of the active criticism and theory behind (2006). Media industries produce news, information, and entertainment, yet, the consumer culture created as a result of advertising and entertainment media has contributed to an economic force dominating the focus of film and television research (Kellner 2009).

Parallel bodies of scholarship in media political economy emerged in North American and the Global South and are both critical of how a few (generally U.S. based) media corporations have grown to be global media conglomerates homogenizing media around the world (McChesney 2000; Schiller 2006). This perspective is interpreted as too simplistic but still influential when examining how local media producers adapt to the popularity of foreign-produced media. Appadurai's theory that global flows are not simply a matter of imperialism but are a result of local cultural values, inequities and local economies and are resistant to internal and external pressures (Appadurai 2006; Hesmondhalgh 2009; Venegas 2009). This theory is valuable to understanding how UNESCO-supported media production and content can be both recognizable and resistant to institutional influence.

Globalization of Media

Post-colonial scholarship has developed in parallel to dominant academic perspectives and, once converged with cultural studies, reveals that media flows are not simply defined by Western media (Appadurai 2006; Venegas 2009). The new global

cultural economy is complicated by local values, cultures and media practices (Appadurai 2006). Further, distinctions between national versus cultural identity becomes the subject of value resulting in a cultural identity where the individual sees no improvement in their material circumstances (Eisenstein 2004; Kivikuri 1999). This serves to privilege the subordinate identity that fits the goals of promoting a consumer culture and development. However, this negates those aspects of identity that are deemed obstacles to change such as spirituality and gender perspectives (Castells 2004; Spivak 2001; Steeves 2001).

Media industry studies are examined from a number of vantage points relevant to this study, including the top-down approach examining organizational and industrial structures and the bottom-up approach examining media labor practices, conditions, and experiences (Holt and Perren 2009; Napoli 2009). These two perspectives are applied to differing degrees in each chapter. Media industry studies are complemented by the political economy and cultural studies approach that organize the research into critical policy studies orientated by events defined by the post-Second World War period of global media policy development including the establishment of UNESCO (Cmiel 2002; Holt and Perren 2009; Miller 2003; Roach 1990). These studies divide off into areas of social justice and human rights (Bradley and Petro 2002; Cmiel 2002; Hesmondhalgh 2009; Miller 2003). These issues are examined from the perspective of the Global South whose media industries do not equally compete with dominant global media institutions, but which are still influential within a given country and are increasingly international (Cmiel 2002; Schiller 2006). While often examined in isolation, economics and aesthetics of media can be bridged with justice and human rights

concerns and must be when examining the fight between public, private, and commercialized media organizations within countries and internationally (Napoli 2009). This research positions UNESCO as a media industry as a means to examine often overlooked institutional policies and structures that influence practices of their local media partners.

Media Industry Studies Scholarly Origins

The scholarly origins of media industry studies lay in the theorizing emerging out of European emigrants' experience of American media culture during and after World War II. During this period, technological developments influenced media production practices increasing the power of film and television to transform culture to a commodity. Members of the Frankfurt School including Adorno and Horkheimer contributed to the discussion of political economy of media complementing British cultural studies textual analysis (Kellner 2009). Adorno and Horkheimer were concerned that media as cultural production were no longer uniquely the work of the artist and a response to life but commodities that were standardized and consumed in a homogeneous manner (2003).

Current research acknowledges Adorno and Horkheimer's insight into the power of media industries and their effects on culture (Hilmes 2009; Mayer 2009). However, in retrospect their elitist attitude towards the arts assumed an unchanging division and value structure where high art (symphony, painting, and theatre) was superior to low or art for the masses (broadcasting and film). Hilmes and Mayer further point out that Adorno and Horkheimer were unable to foresee the fragmentation of the market. They did not consider that workers within the studios dissented from the described factory

system and that audiences would produce and consume media in increasingly different ways (2009; 2009). Both these perspectives (high art and art for the masses) contribute to the analysis of the E-Platform submission process in Chapter 2 as well as to documentary content archived at the E-Platform in Chapter 3.

The bottom-up approach to examining media labor practices, conditions, and experiences is rooted in the earliest studies of the filmmaking process and filmmaker community in Hollywood conducted in the 1940s and 1950s (Caldwell 2003). Research conducted at this time is characterized by the lack of access to production decision-makers and an uncritical approach to research interviews. In the 1970s, the pioneering methodologies of interviews and participant observation of Rosten (1941) and Powdermaker (1950) were revisited as a means to examine news production and entertainment programming in the U.S. and British media systems (Lotz 2009). Todd Gitlin's early research into prime time television is notable for the researcher's access to prominent actors and interrogation of represented stories and power relationships with cultural theory (1983). In contrast, Horace Newcomb and Robert Allen's research conducted around the same time is less critical of interview responses (1983). John Caldwell built upon these earlier models by applying a critical interview process to examine the media production workers' experience in the digital age (Caldwell 2003, 2008; Diamond 2008; Lotz 2009).

Media industry studies are challenging because industries have carefully crafted practices, codes, language, and hierarchies that rebuff scrutiny (Ortner 2009; Sullivan 2009). Early scholars Rosten and Powdermaker employed ethnographic methods to Hollywood and the production process (Sullivan 2009). Claimed by production studies

scholars and media industry scholars, their work is indicative of how closed the Hollywood community is to scrutiny. Amanda Lotz examines the insider knowledge gleaned in Gitlin's 1983 *Inside Prime Time*, and the challenges of organizing and methodologizing industry studies (2009). Scholars are increasingly including critical analysis of issues of access to media industries in their scholarship (Caldwell 2006; Ortner 2009). This approach is relevant to explaining UNESCO's limited response to requests for interviews for this research and serves to frame the scripted responses provided during interviews.

Production Studies

Production studies are the examination of media production as a culture created by worker practices and power negotiations. This area provides an established framework for examining issues of gender access and culture of UNESCO-supported production culture and practice. It is the study of media from the ground up and between the layers of labor and industry-defined categories. Production studies are important to this dissertation as it focuses on independent filmmakers and media producers, who often direct, write and produce their own work with the help of a loosely defined crew; they function in an industry context with its own set of rules and standards. Production studies help to identify and frame those practices that are considered industry standards and those practices that deviate from familiar standards.

The activities of production that occur within media industries and the representative cultures have received greater scholarly attention in response to the cultural influence and capitalist objectives of Hollywood. This is partially a result of the shift in the relationship between media producers and their audiences because of the

Internet and the popularity of social networking as a means to market media products. For example, independent producers are increasingly receiving attention because of open distribution systems and personal publishing sites such as Youtube, common-issue hubs such as Witness.org (examined in Chapter 2 in comparison to the E-Platform) or Indymedia.org, and social networking sites such as Facebook or Flickr (Mayer, Banks, and Caldwell 2009). Production studies are growing in stature, as the public is increasingly able to produce and engage in media, including marginalized communities examined in this research and commercial media. Nichols portended the refocus from the fetishization of the object (the film) to a fetishization of the process (production) with the advent of new media technologies (1988). This shift towards production-related concerns is evident across new media production scholarship and reveals opportunities to examine emerging production cultures subjected by UNESCO (Manovich 2001; Mayer, Banks, and Caldwell 2009).

Production studies share origins with media industry studies within the international media power structure. Rosten and Powdermaker used interviews and observation to understand the power relationships within the industry (Holt and Perrin 2009). These early studies were much maligned as these researchers were considered outsiders, ignorant of the insider culture and language. Their studies were also defined by what limited access they had to film executives and decision makers. As noted earlier, access or lack thereof is more openly discussed as a characteristic of the industry in recent scholarship and acknowledged as an aspect of researching production industry hierarchies (Ortner 2009; Sullivan 2009). Rosten's and Powdermaker's studies are also reexamined by production studies scholars from a

cultural perspective that focuses on power and gender relationships embedded in production practices (Banks 2009; Caldwell 2008; Mayer 2009).

Scholars re-examine Rosten's concerns regarding media labor and subjectivity to get a clearer understanding of the power dynamic among executives driven by profit concerns, producers whose talent and creativity is valued individually, and the laborers whose work is considered craft (Caldwell 2008; Hartley 2009; Mayer 2009). Mayer notes that increased interest in the processes of production naturally includes examining aspects of labor (2009). Over time, work in the technology sector of production is becoming feminized, increasingly unpredictable, exploitive and restructured around the characteristics of traditional female jobs (Green and Jenkins 2009; Haraway 1991). The description of the transformation of media labor is a valuable filter for examining UNESCO's policies to improve women's access to media. This perspective illuminates the disjunction between UNESCO's stated policies to promote gender equity in the support of local media production and the media content and media producers that are supported and distributed by the institution.

New media production technologies can provide a means for producing and sharing solidarity while maintaining a legacy with modernist labor and social justice struggles. Here individuals can mold their relationships with the public sphere as creator or primary subject and engage in social production. However, the space is shared between forces for citizenship and activism and commercial pressures. Similar to the relationship between established media industries and marginalized women documentary producers as examined in Chapter 3, the network or production framework

reproduces the logics of capitalism and often dominates production processes (Kahn and Kellner 2006).

The emerging field of production studies is often situated in Hollywood or other major media industries. This may be the result of the newness of this area of study, the recognizability of the existing practices in Hollywood, and the concentration of media production sites. In contrast, production studies outside of Hollywood are often examined in relation to specific texts such as Cornea's examination of showrunning in the "Dr. Who" franchise (Cornea 2009). Production studies are also examined in the context of other areas of study such as Grossman and O'Brien's collection examining the intersection between transcultural migration and documentary practice (2007). Alternative production is examined in contradistinction to commercial media as in Freeman's examination of the public access television movement in the U.S. (2004). As almost an afterthought in the scholarship that examines professional production studies, scholars predict the influence of video on personal production in terms of literacy and community organizing, but limit its influence on dominant cultural industries stating that amateur video is a source of creativity or authentic style that can be co-opted by the cultural dominant (Dovey 2004; Ellis 2004). This research aligns UNESCO-supported production practice and culture as a comparable area of study subject to the same theories, criticisms, and discoveries.

Production studies of video and film incorporates the examination of the aesthetic resulting from various modes of production and filmmaking styles (Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson 1985; Caldwell 1995). Modes of production and style are also examined from the cultural and political perspective of documentary filmmaking within and outside

of Hollywood with the renewed interest in documentaries and documentary scholarship (Bruzzi 2006; Channan 2007; Renov 1999; Winston 2000). With the evolution of the anti-corporate, do-it-yourself (DIY) ethos and accessibility to the tools of production, new theorizing is coming forward about the aesthetics of film within the maturing culture of punk (Rombes 2005). Kidd's work focuses on autonomous activist media with emphasis on production as part of the act of dissent against social and economic oppression through media collectives at the grassroots level (2004). In their edited collection of loosely connected essays, Langlois and Dubois, argue that alternative media sources and practices of production challenge media monopolies (2005). Again, specific styles and aesthetics have emerged and are recognizable, attributed to a range of independent production cultures, and often easily co-opted by hegemonic forces arguably resulting in a failing counter culture (Heath and Potter 2004). The examination of the documentary media in Chapter 3 and the independent media production in Chapter 4 are examined from these perspectives. Alternative media practice theory validates media producers' referencing of familiar production practices in their work and reveals unique and local practices.

Documentary

As much of this dissertation focuses on documentary production, content and practice, the following examination serves to uncover the theoretical framework and historical context for this study. The history of the actuality film can be traced back to the late 1890s (Lumierè Brothers and Eeadweard Muybridge) but it was not until the 1920s that documentary film emerged as a unique form with the films of Robert Flaherty (Barnouw 1993). An explorer, Flaherty filmed the Eskimos (*Nanook of the North* 1922)

in order to document a disappearing way of life, a relationship between human and nature that was changing with the advent of industrialization. His films established a basis for early English-language documentary films and documentary scholarship. These early films emerged out of four traditions: romanticism that rejects scientific rationalism and banal reality in favor of aesthetic experience, the newsreels of historic events, propaganda, and a democratic approach to foreign relations (Ellis and McLane 2006).

Another major influence on this early aesthetic and on the political agenda of documentary film was Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov who envisioned film as a tool to reconcile human and machine in the industrial age and described *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) as an "active process of social construction" (Feldman 42, 1944; Nichols 1991). Merging the subjects of nature and the individual with social concern and propaganda established a practice whereby social actors were categorized as victims or agents of change and privileged subject matter in the discourse on social reality (Barnouw 1993). These traditions, along with argument strategies, were used to organize the text and define a standard by which documentary films were examined, and to varying degrees, they are still evident in contemporary scholarship (1993).

Flaherty's relationship as a documentary filmmaker with the British government helps to explain the influence of UNESCO's support and distribution of documentary content that it deems as representative of institutional values. Much of the traditional thinking on documentary film practice is traced back to a newspaper review of Flaherty's second successful film *Moana* (1926). In his review, Scotsman John Grierson defined this new form of filmmaking as the documentary. The documentation of daily life through

composing authentic and factual records in such as way as to educate and facilitate the support for social democracy was short lived although is often touted as a hallmark of traditional documentary practice (Ellis and McLane 2006). As a social critic, Grierson envisioned the documentary medium as a means to bring social concerns to the attention of the public. However, by 1933 he had established a production unit within the British Empire Marketing Board (EMB), an organization designed to promote trade interests throughout the Commonwealth (Guynn 1998). In this institutional role, Grierson drew from Flaherty's and other filmmaker's cinematography skills to transform local and colonial "industry and labor into proper aesthetic objects," thereby also promoting the interests of the EMB and establishing the basis of English-speaking documentary practice (Guynn 85, 1998). Winston argues that this signaled a break from the documentary as a social good to tool of government and private interests (2000).

The convergence of colonialism with the development of the camera and state promotion of travel shapes documentary by promoting popular interest in the representation of the exotic in the 1920s and 1930s (Hershfield 1998). Colonization and the inherent power structure between the ruling elite and the mass of poor laborers normalized a clear delineation between those who did the looking and those who are looked at, promoting a culture of unconscious class and race voyeurism. Rony argues that it was at this time that oppositional binaries between colonizers and the colonized manifested a savage versus civilized dynamic, where race was inscribed through scientific study and filmic representation (1996). She describes films such as *Nanook of the North* as an exercise in "ethnographic taxidermy" that preserves "the other" in a form created to be looked at and saved as a souvenir (1996).

Defining the Field of Documentary Film

Documentary film has been loosely organized using differing strategies by the founders of documentary theory whose early work represents themes of history, discourse, and politics (Rich 2006). Given that women are historically omitted from UNESCO's policy documents it is relevant to note that Barnouw's classical historical perspective on documentary[2] glosses over the role of women as both writers and social actors in documentary, organizing filmmakers by male-dominated function (such as prophet, explorer, and reporter) and historical events (Waldman and Walker 1999; Barnouw 1993). Nichols' early work establishes codes and discursive organizational patterns that follow a linear progression drawing from post-structural, post-modernist, feminist and post-colonial film criticism (1991; Ellis and McLane 2006). Thomas Waugh, writing in the mid 1980s on the politically committed documentary practice, reorients the foundation of documentary as a social tool from Flaherty and Grierson, to the political films of Dziga Vertov then moves directly to contemporary practice delineating differences between films in the West and the "Third World" (1984). In terms of the relationship between theory and practice, Waugh contributes to a foundation for current practice and theoretical approaches that work to deconstruct the boundaries between producer, spectator and social actor (1984).

Up until the development of direct cinema, documentary film was considered the poor cousin of narrative film and a pale competitor to the dreamlike visions of reality emerging from Hollywood. Nichols, who would become one of the most influential English-language documentary film theorists, responded to this emerging form of

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[2] *Documentary : A History of the Non-Fiction Film* originally published in 1974.

filmmaking in the late 1970s, defining many of the theories of documentary film for current practice and the previous 50 years of documentary film (1991). Questioning the role of the filmmaker in the construction of reality, the ethics of documenting social actors, the structure of the text, and the viewer's expectations, he established documentary film as unique from fiction in its treatment of reality. Further, Nichols helped to define the study of documentary film as the analysis of "representation allied with rhetoric, persuasion and argument" (111, 1991). He described a framework in which English-language documentary film is interpreted. This framework remains useful for revealing different approaches to documentary production. As such, many of the theoretical debates and developments emerge in response to his seminal texts. One of the major arguments posed is in response to the definitive nature of his work by which documentary is considered. Theoretical debates over the years have questioned Nichols' definition of documentary forms, which have organized documentary into specific historical contexts (Bruzzi 2006). The historically linear perspective does not allow for the consideration of overlap or hybrid practices that would account for unique approaches to ethics of representation, the style or moral point of view of the filmmaker including the role of the authorial voice, objectivity of the filmmaker, and subjectivity of the social actor (2006). These arguments provide a means of examining documentary production practice and content found in the first-time documentary films examined in the context of community media in Chapter 4.

Evolution of Form, Style and Ethics in Documentary Film

Nichols' modes of documentary representation were originally limited to specific historical contexts and the films produced during those periods. These modes have

been used to create taxonomy of documentary film and are one method through which to trace the evolution of style and form. The modes of representation, while exclusionary, do provide a framework in which to study the evolution of style and moral point of view of the filmmaker in the study of women's documentary on the E-Platform in Chapter 3. They also are another level of documentary organization that provide for the opportunity to test critical approaches and highlight questions in regards to the filmmaker in relation to the subject and the ethics of representation (Ellis and McLane 2006). Stella Bruzzi argues that documentary production is much more fluid than Nichols' modes of representation indicate and argues that the canonization of these modes in academe and the institutionalization of documentary practice does not account for different practices that have emerged historically or for new theoretical perspectives that may emerge at community media centers as examined in Chapter 4 (2006). The modes have since been expanded and it is acknowledged that films overlap boundaries and may fit into one or many categories to differing degrees.

Other practices continue to emerge from direct cinema that are relevant to the political intentions of filmmakers interviewed in this study and explain their approach to social justice topics. The convergence of 1970s political documentarist Emile de Anotonio's didactic collages of political interviews with newer forms of corporate media piracy have resulted in the re-use of corporate media for the purpose of subverting simulated lifestyles. Activists subvert the media simulated lifestyle by aggregating images of divergent media into "mash-ups" designed to create new forms of meaning from hegemonic media to support counter-hegemonic positions (Waugh 1985). Scholars have noted that using this method, activists are able to exploit fair use

guidelines to disrupt the persuasive tendencies of commercial media messaging that helps facilitate the uninterrupted flow of capital (Ginsburg 2006; Rich 2006). By reassembling corporate media to reiterate a glossy sales pitch to the perspective of labor and social justice, injustice may be exposed (Hess and Zimmerman 2006). Advances in technology provide a medium by which the Left can create a truth of self and the correct way of seeing this truth as well as engage in the act of identification, construct a sense of self-understanding and a tool of recruitment (Waugh 1984; Rabinowitz 1994). However, these characteristics can easily be appropriated to serve the objectives of institutions and reveal an aspect of UNESCO's motivation for screening and supporting content and practices that are determined to represent institutional values discussed from three perspectives in this project (Heath and Potter 2004).

Scholars agree that documentary as a film form brings together technology, aesthetics, and an ethical approach to every day experience. In Jean-Louis Baudry's and Maya Deren's discussion of the camera, they argue that cinematography is the "creative use of photography" (Deren 219, 1999). The filmmaker approaches their documentary subject from a pre-defined moral point of view based on an established history of expertise or professionalism. This forms the basis for the consideration of a definition of documentary that deals with real-life issues such as those addressed throughout this study (Nichols 1991). Winston centers his work on the study of ethical, technical and aesthetic choices that are made in pre-production, production, and post-production (2000). He argues that each text is unique and the apparatus and structure play a role in determining the form (2000). This project seeks to reconnect the

filmmakers' moral choices with their production choices as a source of value and justification for UNESCO's *Creative Content Programme.*

The Evolution of Subjectivity in Documentary Film

The following discussion reviews different aspects of documentary film literature to identify how media producers resist institutional policies through production practice. Further, as this dissertation focuses on documentary production practice and culture, the following scholarly perspectives illuminate those issues over which media producers coalesce and what makes their media content recognizable.

Traditional documentary represents momentous events and the everyday in a classical realistic style whereby members of an audience may realize their individual responsibility through the representation of social action and the construction of common sense (Nichols 1991). Trusting in the unobtrusiveness of the apparatus and the transparency of the process, many filmmakers and scholars derived authority from the belief that the filmmaker is hidden by the conventions of direct cinema. They assumed objectivity based on the principal that documentary is a form of minimal intervention, without understanding their authority and privilege in the process of filmmaking. Thus, ethical considerations became subjective to suit the moral intention of the filmmaker (Deren 1999). Bruzzi argues that the direct cinema filmmakers ignored this form of intervention, where the social actor becomes subjugated to the desires of the filmmaker and transitions into a performer (2006). Michael Renov argues that documentary film reshapes history under the pressure of creativity, and elements of cultural specificity are destroyed in the "plucking and re-contextualization of profilmic elements" as is the normal self-presentation of the social actor (7, 1999).

Diverse documentary movements and histories converged in the 1970s to contribute to the study of documentary. Already a part of feminist and post-colonial political practice, documentary film theory became charged with theoretical influences that consider the text in a redefined historical context. In response to the assumption of a worldview of common sense evolving out of the documentary tradition in the English-speaking patriarchal world, post-colonial and feminist theory foregrounds issues of subjectivity and reveals the lucidity of everyday as an expression of social life and identity (Nichols 1991; Renov 2004; Rony 1996). These movements have resulted in gains in the range of work done in documentary theory and have expanded the language as well as broadened notions of text and textuality.

Feminist Film Theory and Documentary Film

Women in the late 1960s and early 1970s began to create documentary films defining the emergence of the feminist documentary. In the late 1970s, Julia Lesage defines the feminist film as a means to educate women about women in the public sphere, to make inroads to the private sphere, and to challenge power and patriarchal roles (1990). She argues that filmmakers are so focused on the individual that they neglect to make connections to collective organizing as a process leading to social change. However, these films demonstrate the re-use or reforming of direct cinema for use in resistance by representing women taking back discourses previously appropriated by the patriarchy in mass media including sexuality, healthcare, relationships, and work. Feminist documentarists use the talking head soundtrack of direct cinema to represent women having "self-conscious, heightened, intellectual discussion of their role and sexual politics" in such a manner as to remind us we are

watching women become politicized in a specific format outside of mass media (234, 1990).

The generation of feminist, queer, and post-colonial theorists engaged in thinking on issues of subjectivity of the social actor and responsibility to the audience that arose prominently with the proliferation of direct cinema. In attempting to address the hidden discourse between gender and race, Jane Gaines links feminism to race in her discussion of the formation of feminism as a function of ideology where gender is the starting point (1994). The framework of feminism being developed from the perspective of white privilege did not take into consideration other perspectives and identities derived from experiences characterized by race, class, gay or sexual identity. Furthermore, she argues that feminism is structured in such a way to keep women from seeing other structures of oppression such as colonialism experienced by marginalized communities within Western democratic countries and in former colonized countries (1994). As such, post-colonial theorizing (as did queer theorizing) emerged as a distinct practice from feminist theory.

Post-colonial Theory and Documentary Film

As discussed earlier, Grierson's work with the Empire Marketing Board led the way to establishing the basis of documentary film. Coupled with the public interest in faraway places, Grierson and Flaherty contributed to the construction of the colonial image. Hershfield argues that the colonial image in documentary was made possible because of the "'authorized pleasure of seizing ephemeral glimpses of its margins – through travel and tourism'" and that post-colonial theory revealed this practice a misuse of power (Hershfield quoting Ella Shohat and Robert Stam 57, 1998). From

another post-colonial perspective, the encounter between the indigenous subject and foreigner is described as manufactured based on the goals and desires of the dominant (Fregoso 1999; Rony 1996). Post-colonial theory demonstrates that the power between filmmaker and the social actor is not negotiated; rather the power to subjugate remains with the filmmaker. One of the contentions in post-colonial theory is whether canonical traditions are applicable to deconstructing systemic racism and hegemony (Rony 1996).

Activist Documentary

Waugh states that in the 1950s a number of distinct events involving technology and social change synthesized and sparked a renewed interest in documentary (1985). These events include the enfranchisement of "Third World" countries in geo-politics, the emergence of the "New Left" in the West that articulated the goal of civil rights through social activism, and the proliferation of direct cinema resulting from advances in film technology including mobile equipment and sound synching (1985). Additional technological advances in digital video provided those outside of the West and the film industry an opportunity to engage in the production process. Video became available to the consumer in the late 1970s and video practice was marginalized but accessible to local communities through cable. In the hands of marginalized communities, video was used as an extension of direct cinema for the purposes of "reproducing experiences of subjectivity," deconstructing negative identities and creating counter-hegemonic positions (Dovey 557, 2004).

Waugh approaches the documentary film from a more narrow perspective and one that traces Grierson's and Vertov's goals of pursuing economic or radical socio-political transformation through the production and distribution of documentary

preceding and following the world wars (1985). In response to the re-emergence of the documentary, he argues that the convergence of world politics, the social justice movement and technological advances in film equipment resulted in the further articulation of three categories of committed film that have their roots in the work of Grierson, Vertov and other pioneer filmmakers. This work includes films designed for agitation and resistance where the audience is situated within the same pre-revolutionary political context as that depicted; films of information and international solidarity depicting pre- or post revolutionary situations for audiences outside of the context depicted; and films of information and exhortation for audiences within the same post-revolutionary situation depicted (1985).

Renov engages in discussion on the bonds between fiction and non-fiction films, drawing from historiography and postmodernism theory, questioning how history has shaped documentary and the visual reshaping of the historical world through documentary. He cites documentary filmmaker and post-colonial theorist, Trinh Minh-Ha who questions the "adequacy of a representational system as a stand-in for lived experience" in a digital age where most documentary has little relation to the lives of the majority of the world's people (7, 1999; Ginsburg 2006). Traditional documentary films (representing universal values) converge or divergence with the practice and policy of the institution within a globalizing technology system (Minh-Ha 2008). She also argues that digital storytelling is based in local identify and therefore, local ideology and cannot be appropriated (2008). Zillah Eisenstein positions documentary films of history and past atrocities as sanitized mass-marketed versions of the past, evoking nostalgia rather than a framework of memory of the past (2004). In contrast, Soviet filmmaker

Dziga Vertov envisioned film as a tool to reconcile human and machine in the industrial age and described *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) as a process of active social construction (Feldman 1984; Nichols 1991).

Scholars in sociology, cultural studies, and postcolonial studies have addressed documentaries for the purposes of examining the role of the amateur alongside the professional producer as a means of interrogating experiences of modernism and migration (Barthes 1981; Boltanski 1999; Grossman and O'Brien 2007; Guerin and Hallas 2007; Naficy 1999). The representation of human rights in documentary is frequently studied as evidence of the need for a framework in which to study this form of documentary process as critical cultural work (Bradley and Petro 2002; Grossman and O'Brien 2007; Hinton 2002; Naficy 1999). This includes the study of documentary as forms of evidence, testimony to suffering, and historical archives of human experience (Gaines and Renov 1999; Sarkar and Walker 2010).

As a genre, documentary has since morphed into multiple formats, and is referred to documentary *and* non-fiction film. In response to these unimagined developments and the dramatic theoretical reorientations resulting from the technological revolution, an argument emerges that the canons of documentary film must be reconsidered in order to reconnect academe thinking with practice and consumption beyond traditional boundaries (Burton 1990; Ellis and McLane 2006). In our consideration of emerging forms, styles, ethics and politics it is also useful to revisit earlier debates about documentary's relation to the real and its role in representing history.

Transnational Documentary

As a result of globalization, all aspects of documentary are gaining attention as scholars from outside traditional disciplines increasingly engage in the development of critical analysis of the representation of human rights and social justice (Guerin and Hallas 2007; Mahon 2000). Transnational documentary scholarship traces human rights as a product of the convergence of the globalization of media and the resistance to neo-colonization and homogenization of cultural specificity, in an era characterized by the decline of the sovereignty of the nation (Ezra and Rowden 2006, Hess and Zimmerman 1999). New media technologies provide filmmakers with opportunities to connect over common issues as well as to archive and circulate their videos (Sarkar and Walker 2010).

Unlike films of the earlier period, emerging transnational documentaries do not assume nationalism as a unified entity and subvert the notion of nation in favor of creating a pluralized concept (Hess and Zimmerman 2006). In this manner, transnational documentaries "explore how cultures, nations and identities are constructed, how they evidence all sorts of contradictions, hybridities and combustions and how new social spaces are always in volatile, contentious development;" they are reformist rather than revisionist (104, 2006). John Hess and Patricia Zimmerman, in the spirit of Haraway's theorizing on the convergence of human and machine and in reconsideration of Habermas' public sphere, argue that transnational documentary offers an opportunity to connect through race, gender and class across borders in a space that is malleable and fluid (2006). Transnational documentary revisits the canonical approaches of Grierson, whose vision for documentary was to help unify

citizens, by providing a nationalistic interpretation of the world. This practice leverages these early persuasive and argument strategies and traditional methods, but emerges with the purpose to "subvert the notion of the nation as well as identity politics and searches for the self within the nation" in order to pluralize the concept of nation (Fraser 2007; Hess and Zimmerman 2006). This perspective helps to understand experiences of home and homeland represented by independent media producers interviewed in Chapter 3 and 4.

New Media

There are three issues defining new media scholarship, which are increasingly important to digital technology with the advent of the Internet. These are surveillance and self-surveillance, the change to human interaction and socialization, and the mobility or rhizomatic characteristics of power in a capitalist system (Wardrip-Fruin and Montfort 2003). All three areas of study are used to examine the variable means by which UNESCO may support local media production and appropriate those characteristics that represent institutional values. Further, new media and the Internet are tools of control and power. Theorists influenced by experiences of totalitarian rule argue that public debate about the role of technology in society is lacking and technology is greatly under-studied (Manovich 2001; Winner 1986). In contrast, early theorists coming out of the United States posit that emerging technology offers a techno-utopia where full disclosure will result in perfect community (Kelly 2007; Poster 2004). Kelly argues that technology is becoming increasingly biological as we become more dependent and surrender personal information to the organizational machine that is the Internet (2007). Kindred spirit and theorist Mark Poster offers a similar vision of

utopia where innovation is unproblematic and leads easily to the production of new products and mediums of commercialism (2004).

The burst of the dot-com bubble at the close of the 1990s signaled a significant change in the perception of human interaction with digital media (Manovich 2001). Contradicting popular opinion at the time, Lev Manovich argued that the new media revolution has its origins in older technology but demonstrates a greater reach (2001). Citing how the invention of the printing press and photography spurred new media revolutions in terms of mass reproduction and distribution, he argued that the current media revolution affects each stage of communication from creation, to production, to acquisition, to storage, and all forms of media (2001). Digital media emerges as a site where the intertwining, fragmentation and disjointed links between capitalism, globalization, history, cultural studies and political economy can be traced (Baudrillard 2003).

Approaches to new media and Internet studies draw from existing and traditional theories and ideologies and reveal opportunities to enable new forms of participation and democracy (Haraway 1991; Manovich 2001; Sobchack 1996). New media has a fragmented legacy consisting of destabilized but recognizable grand narratives drawn from civil society, religion, politics and history. However, much of the theorizing of digital media up until the late 1990s was narrow in focus, disregarded the possibility of such a legacy, and attempted to define a practice by new ethics, aesthetics and social systems (Manovich 2001).

While new media and the Internet offer opportunities for breaking down barriers between people and providing access to new tools of information, communication, and

creativity, these tools also expose us to an environment of surveillance where we are always watched, and collection of private information where we are tracked (Manovich 2001). Less privacy, to Lev Manovich, means increased opportunity for surveillance founded in existing models of state power from totalitarian regimes (2001). The Internet is examined as a panopticon or model of surveillance. However, this fails to accommodate corporate technologies that protect information and non-institutional methods for avoiding surveillance, negating the consistent possibility of pure power that effects self-surveillance (Agre 1994). Similarly, scholarship has addressed how the tracking of Internet information presents concerns but is not all encompassing as tracking offline personal information or applying Global Positioning technology to determine someone's location, which can be masked, by privacy-enhancing technologies and simple acts of subterfuge (1994).

The question of whether boundaries of difference (real, imagined and constructed) in terms of human interaction and socialization have increasingly become distinguishable or homogenized with the advent of the globalization of digital media continues to be debated (Butler 1999; Castells 2004; Haraway 1991; Poster 2004). People oppose and celebrate the privileging of spaces of flows and the "simultaneity of social practice" between disparate cultures (Castells 2004). Digital media has facilitated the flow of information and the ability of people to connect across difference, yet there remains a need for people to engage in the practice of constructing, legitimizing, resisting, and projecting identities as their specific needs dictate (2004). In his discussion of social relations and identity, Don Slater argues that to know sex, race and age online, this information must be presented in the text (2004). Conversely, these

characteristics would be "written on the body" in the offline world (Butler 1999; Slater 2004). Sex, race and age in real life are written on the body. In the digital world, these characteristics can be adopted, rejected, or morphed based on an individual's priorities in the performance of identity (Butler 1999; Poster 2004).

Questions regarding technology and associated systems of power in relation to the human body and subjectivity were initially examined in the context of aircraft, bombers, anti-craft guns and human operators (Wiener 2003). Wiener was interested in the use of human interaction with technology. This approach to human and machine interaction has been taken up in the context of cybernetics to support the argument that the use of humans and technology are eroding social responsibility along with humanist ideals, leading to a focus on disembodiment now turned towards embodiment of new media technologies (Hayles 1999; Haraway 1991; Wiener 2003).

Theories addressing the ability to hide and reveal power and resistance in a rhizomatic system are examined from both sides (Deleuze and Guattari 2001; Manovich 2001). Power is elusive in this system based on its rhizomatic characteristics. Information is freed from traditional systems and more easily controlled. Resistance and power move nomadically across the network. Systems of resistance use the rhizome to bypass the traditional, authorial and linear "assemblage" of knowledge, and the flows of information and commerce (Deleuze and Guattari 2001). This system of links allows people to negotiate information and community based on desire, existing knowledge, and common interests (2001). The network enables action such as creating rhizomatic systems to conceal those publishing amateur media in resistance to state oppression or in witness of human rights abuses (Critical Art Ensemble 1994). Systems of power,

such as institutional policy, influence technology design and media usage. Policy increasingly influences design in such a way that usage requires less and less computer knowledge and users increasingly only interact with pre-defined interfaces and organizational systems. Databases and digital archives are one such organizational system that also serves as an origin that helps to bestow legitimacy and authority onto the institution or social network (Sarkar and Walker 2010). The archive or database is a form of digital museum that collects representations of cultural artifacts as films and preserves them through an institutional form of preservation (Rony 1996). However, it also can serve as a site of resistance representing stories and experiences that contradict and destabilize official accounts and narratives.

New media are studied from aesthetic, cultural, and political perspectives. One of the early but still significant debates in digital theory questions whether the technological advances of the Web converged with human activity is so distinct as to signal a break with the modern past (Manovich 2001). To a large degree, this argument was abandoned in the late 1990s but the resultant academic and social products remain a focus for ongoing deconstruction in academia including the digital and cultural theory fields (Slater 2004). Assuming a break with traditional offline forms of social relations, such as face-to-face interaction, theorists imagined the emergence of a new form of social space that was purely emancipatory, with rules and codes of its own (2004).

Describing the efforts of True Majority, an organization who applied participatory strategies to increase the youth vote in 2004, Jenkins makes the argument that old and new media is converging with real world culture on the Internet. He supports the premise that the resulting participatory culture will form a collective intelligence,

eventually turning from entertainment to politics, religion and education (2006). One focus of scholarship in the area of globalization and media is that the power of dominant media to homogenize culture is not clear nor is it a given result. The flow of information from digital media is mutated to suit local needs signaling a resilient hybrid identity where categories are fluid and plural, and change in priority based on external (offline) influences (Appadurai 2005; Bhabha 2004). Nonetheless, as argued in this dissertation, new media, even in its early and somewhat unpredictable forms provide UNESCO with opportunities to survey, influence and appropriate local cultural production.

Globalization and New Media

The digitization and commoditization of information is taking place in the new media order where the mass market requires homogenized products (Hamelink 2000; Hess and Zimmerman 2006; Miller 2006). Hamelink addresses world communication from the perspective that corporate globalization privileges the corporation over the state, and information over bodies (2000). The privileging of information over bodies reinforces a posthumanist civil society where the mythology of Zizek's "body plus machine" allows us to voluntarily associate in a simulation of the real where we find only gratification and pleasure (Hayles 1999; Hess and Zimmerman 2006). From this vantage point, transnational documentary scholars Hess and Zimmerman identify the digital as a site for new capital power structures, basing their research on the argument that access to the digital is worthy of study from the perspective of its function with transnational economies as well as national arts contexts, such as documentary film production (2006). They argue that documentaries emerge as a form of "discursive

repression and induced amnesia" that both create and preserve culture and repress culture and memory.

In an era of the consolidation of media ownership, the subject position (accessible through digital technology) is a site for an "emerging new identity" and offers emancipatory possibilities for marginalized populations (2006; Poster 2004). These analyses provide specific evidence of where and under what circumstances local production practice and content is valued by UNESCO for the purposes for accessing a creative resource.

Appadurai argues that indigenous cultures exhibit autonomy from globalization by absorbing difference by indigenizing the commodity (2006). Local culture cannot be appropriated by the global because it is too specific and therefore negated by the global (Adorno and Horkheimer 2003; Marks 2003; Minh-Ha 2008). The local remains "universally significant" to understanding the interrelatedness of micro-politics, subjectivity, identity and struggle (Mohanty 2003). One of the impacts of the practice of mass participation in culture production for the purposes of commerce is emptying out the "relationship between the object and production," reducing use value as a means of relating to the real world of "things and experience (natural, organic, unmediated)" for the benefit of capitalism (Olalquiaga 593, 2001).

As a response to "hactivism" (the practice of using electronic media to further human rights), corporations and institutions have increasingly applied standards to computers (software, hardware, or digital systems) defining the problem and the approach to problem solving (Suchman 1987). The design of the system defines how knowledge will be sought, used, and created based on the objectives of the designer

and limited to corporate interests (Critical Art Ensemble 1994; Suchman 1987). Examining emerging production culture at the fringes of media industries and societies reveals how media producers successfully circumvent these systems of control.

New Media for Resistance

In addressing theoretical approaches to emerging digital media in terms of women's independent documentary videos discussed in Chapter 3 and community media centers discussed in Chapter 4, it is useful to reference Hall's description of the legacy of cultural studies. Hall argues that cultural studies is a synthesis of multiple and often disjunctive discourses, histories, trajectories, methodologies and theoretical positions (1996; Haraway 1991). The scholarship in this area draws from similarly divergent perspectives including postmodernism, globalization and digital media. All of these expose marginalized communities to forms of control and exploitation but also offer opportunity for exercising acts of dissonance while simultaneously protecting indigenous history and values (Frota 1996; Ginsburg 2006). Foucault's and Habermas' theories of the power/knowledge relationship establish a context for the analysis of individual documentaries and production sites where the public sphere as a public space of discourse separate from the state is problematized, revealing the hegemonic tendencies of this space (Fraser 2007).

In their transnational documentary manifesto, Hess and Zimmerman argue that independent producers and activists have responded by adopting strategies developed by direct cinema practitioners, not only to observe, but also to address economic globalization through creating actual community (2006). Two of these strategies include the local use of small format video for consciousness-raising and education and to

"coalesce tenuous communities" over common issues and, at times, encourage action (Hess and Zimmerman 103, 2006). Both strategies were used in the politically committed feminist documentaries designed for self-identification and recruitment of the 1960s and 1970s (Boyle 1997; Lesage 1990; Waugh 1985) and are used by the feminist documentarists discussed in Chapter 3. Community media production as examined in Chapter 4 draws from participatory and social activist media practice for the purposes of deconstructing negative identities and creating counter-hegemonic positions (Dovey 2004).

To provide access to marginalized communities, unchecked capitalism can enable the flow of global information networks providing emancipation opportunities and alternative forms of democracy not necessarily tied to citizenship (Hardt and Negri 2000; Jenkins 2004). Yet, access does not necessarily result in social justice as discussed throughout this dissertation. The "politics of recognition and the politics of redistribution" do recognize difference but also result in inequities (Fraser 2007). Globalization serves commerce, disregarding nations and borders and contradicts the idea of international based on relationships between nations. Yet, human rights and global digital network systems are simultaneously the backbone of Web 2.0 and the rise of user-generated content (Holt 2009; Jenkins 2006; Green and Jenkins 2009). Digital media technologies are systems of power and can be approached from the perspectives of race, class, and gender (Fraser 2007; Haraway 1991; Sobchack 1996). These systems are contradictory and enfolded with international instruments, political ideologies, and transnational economic pressures (Hall 2006; Marks 2003). Through

this network, the universal values of human rights, culture, democracy, and liberty meet globalizing pressures of the market, technology, and information flow (Baudrillard 2003).

Media scholars and activists (Downing 2003; Kidd 2003; McChesney 2006) engaged in the theorization of independent media centers remind us that the Internet, to a significant degree, arose out of an institutional need to govern mass societies (Manovich 2001). Built on collaboration between government, military and academic interests, the Internet was designed to suit those in power and is constituted by metanarratives and ideological structures can be used as a tool of social control (Olalquiaga 2001).

A number of theorists writing post 1990s, such as Storey, argue that communication networks opened up by unfettered capitalism provide developing countries with opportunities to develop and that positioning these communities as passive consumers of foreign media is inaccurate. Storey also argues that media do not determine audience reaction; rather people engage with media according to their own needs and perspectives therefore, media emerging from dominant markets does not meet a passive audience as argued by many critical of modernization (1999). He states that popular culture is a discursive system that relies on media institutions to pay attention to audience tastes and habits, and audiences in turn engage in media that most suits their needs and allows this media to have influence (Storey 1999). This perspective is reminiscent of Hardt and Negri's utopian vision where unfettered capitalism has the potential of opening up emancipatory opportunities for developing countries to reach an analogous position with more powerful countries on the world stage. It is also a means of creating a foundation for the re-visioning of civil society and

is an opportunity unavailable in the present system (Hardt and Negri 2000). In contrast, others believe participation in this context is symbolic, that the new media order cultivates symbolic participation, reinforces the dominant "public transcript," is a misreading of local groups, and serves capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005; Scott 1990).

Within the globalization information context, postcolonial theorist Appadurai critiques the moral premise of participatory communication and states that the new global cultural economy cannot be explained or understood using old binary centre periphery models (push and pull migratory theory, surpluses and deficits traditional balance of trade models, consumers and producers Marxism) (2006). Rather, he states that the new economy is disjunctive and overlapping in terms of economy, culture and politics. It is a complex disorganized capitalism. To study these disjunctions, he suggests a framework that explores five dimensions of global cultural flow. Appadurai has termed these ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, and ideoscapes (2006). His theory recognizes that each of these are historical, political and linguistical constructs held by different actors in different forms of communities and groupings whom imagine these dimensions (2006).

Cunningham et al. argues that ethnoscapes include people and communities (refugees, workers, immigrants) migrating and affecting nations with marginal and diasporic video broadcasting (2000). These productions are a means to maintain and renew culture (2000), thus reinforcing Appadurai's claim that some are stable, some are always in flux (2000; 2006). Technoscapes include mechanical and informational networks configured globally as well as the distribution of technology, which is affected

by labor, skills and politics. These systems influence media production and reveal tensions between institutional policies, and transnational media economies (Miller and Yúdice 2002). Postmodernism, globalization and digital media expose marginalized communities to forms of control and exploitation but also offer opportunity for exercising acts of dissonance while simultaneously protecting indigenous history and values (2002).

Bhabha and Appadurai argue that the flow of information from digital media is mutated to suit local needs signaling a resilient hybrid identity where categories are fluid and plural and change in priority based on external (offline) influences (2004; 2006). The construction of resistance identities or acts of dissonance occurs in the process of "creolizing" foreign media, products, and ideas. Hackett and Carroll argue that the Internet, when transformed into a democratic medium, opens up borders and opportunities for transnational communication and organizing that allow the marginalized to bypass the limits of mass media and "implement more dialogical forms of communication" (48, 2006). Salter sets up his argument in consideration of the online /offline dichotomy by first discussing contemporary notions of the public sphere and identifying how the Internet can "facilitate communication in the less formal sense of political society" to varying degrees of success (117, 2003). One approach shows us that theorists have claimed the transformative capacities of technology are a form of technological determinism. Another approach indicates support of "the capacity of social agents to utilize technologies, and shape them in their use," while not taking into consideration the importance of the increasing differences between proprietary and open source software and the basis for these divergent cultures (Salter 121, 2003).

While the former is inclined to colonize the Internet to suit corporate purposes, where websites become one-way and people are herded along controlled and regulated pathways, open source is a tool of social agents (2003).

Development Communication

Development communication consists of the study of institutional policies, practices and outcomes put into place to promote social development. This area of scholarship influences UNESCO's policy and program development and underpins the antecedents of the *Creative Content Programme* and E-Platform from the basis of what did not work to relieve marginalized communities of poverty. The frequent failure of development communication in its historic approach to developing communities is also considered in the composition of the following review of literature and is valuable to this project to explain the tenuous relationship between local media producers emerging from UNESCO-targeted communities and the institution. The disagreements within the field serve to trace the influence of feminist and post-colonial perspectives on development communication on this research project. As such, development communication theory and literature plays a small role in the examination of media production and culture in this project but sets a context for critically examining this area from a critical feminist perspective that draws from non-development related media theory and methodological approaches.

Development communication emerged as a practice after the Second World War in response to the desperate living conditions found in what soon would be defined as Third World countries and was believed to be a causal factor in the development of positive community identity. The most dominant of the development communication

approaches emerging in that period was the Bretton Woods School describing studies of the post-war Marshal Plan economic strategies and the establishment of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (Melkote and Steeves 2001). This school of thought officially drove global governance devcom study and practice for almost 20 years up until the 1960s when the failure of many projects and the rise of colonial resistance forced a redefinition (Manyozo 2006).

Critical scholars agree that the dominant paradigm was an approach to development that assumed that the target population was uncivilized and illiterate and should be civilized and educated by Western interventions (Freire 1997; Jacobson and Servaes 1999; Manyozo 2006). The result was practices and theories that often failed because of policy experts not taking into consideration the potential of available resources and assuming that every development problem was one that could be solved by external resources (Huesca 2002). Further, the institutional context consisting of UN and non-government organizations (whose rights-based delivery systems have historically privileged Western perspectives on issues of gender, ethnicity, nationality, and class) both facilitate and preclude a grassroots practice of bodily safety, autonomy, choice and equity (Eisenstein 2004).

While scholars are in disagreement about who first defined development communication, what schools are the most influential and what theories and practices have proven successful in promoting sustainable civil societies, they do agree that it is a practice designed to assist in improving the human condition. Development communication has been described as one way to identify how improvements should be achieved and how the process of improving these living conditions are defined and

measured (Melkote and Steeves 2001). Kasongo states that development communication is both a means and an impediment to "beneficiary driven development" (p. 30 1998). He argues that macro-analysis has been replaced by micro projects because of the growing critique of Western development intervention. Despite the claim that these projects help local development, Kasongo describes how they repeat and reinforce the top-down interventionist paradigm they were designed to replace (1998). He calls this development by effects where historically dominant components of development communication such as the belief in the "the centrality of the mass media in promoting innovation, trickle-down processes, and behavioral change" has been recreated on a community-based level through participatory development communication practices emerging in the 1970s and 1980s (p. 31 Kasongo 1998; Servaes 1999). Similarly, development communication with a micro focus has also been criticized as being too concerned with culture and designed to promote value and behavior change as a means to alleviate poverty, ignoring macro considerations such as underlying socioeconomic and political system constraints on development (Braden and Mayo 1999; Manyozo 2006).

In the second edition of *Communication for Development in the Third World*, Melkote and Steeves organize communication for development into three conceptual approaches or three ways to think about and practice development including modernization, critical, and liberation or monastic (2006). Defined by scholars including Lerner, Schramm, and Rogers the modernization school is referred to as the dominant paradigm in development communication studies. Emerging after 1944, out of the post World War II Bretton Woods economic system, this model established the rules for

commercial and financial relationships between industrial states. The dominant paradigm is based on Western economic (neo-classical) and capitalist theories and models of development and the promotion and support of capitalist economic development. In this scenario, technological adoption is required for success and policies that support and promote human services and education are foregone for economic growth (Manyozo 2006; Melkote and Steeves 2001).

The critical approach emerging in the 1960s and 1970s exposes and challenges the imperialism of modernization, argues for restructuring, and provides for a more equitable distribution of resources. However, Melkote and Steeves state that this approach seldom results in substantial alternatives and therefore seldom forms the primary basis of funded development projects (2001). In contrast, the liberation or monastic approach combines scholarship and practice focusing on individuals and groups working together towards self-reliance and empowerment from the oppression of modernization that exploits for the purpose of profit. Within this approach, individuals are free to choose their material needs and other aspects of modernization and can include adoption of technology if it contributes to the spiritual needs of the individual or community (2001). Melkote and Steeves argue that this approach is the key to empowerment and self-reliance, which is the goal of development, and they focus their arguments from this perspective.

In terms of both critical and liberation or monastic approach, Friere argued that students are not lacking ability, they are not passive consumers of education, nor are they in need of improvement (1997). In his writing on Freire's work, Huesca argues that Friere determined that a co-relationship must be established between community and

external aid organizations based on aspects of the Indian development communication premise that community is based on sharing for the common improvement of each person's individual life (2002). Freire established a framework for dialogue and synthesis between and amongst "development collaborators to arrive at mutually identified problems, needs and guidelines for action" (p. 212 2002). This framework forms the basis of much participatory theory and practice in current development literature.

Perhaps more firmly positioned in the monastic approach, Ariyaratne is credited with initiating the Indian movement in 1958 when he organized a voluntary sharing of resources in support of labor, in a poor village in Sri Lanka (Melkote and Steeves 2001). Combining the teachings of Gandhi to serve one's community as part of a spiritual life and to share resources, Ariyaratne's project spread throughout Sri Lanka (2001). By 1987, Paranjape writes, local Indian development professionals began to establish a movement (2007). At the core was the belief that social change could only come about if the processes for change were defined and in the hands of the community calling it "people-centered development" (2007). To this end, Abhivyakti for Development, a community media organization in India, utilized their audio-visual resources to create and disseminate community-produced media that would be indicative of individual community empowerment over their own voices and serve to express their support for the community at public exhibitions (Paranjape 2007).

Servaes is positioned as a supporter of the Los Baños School (the systematic practice of studying and practicing communication development emerging out of the Philippines in the early 1970s), but one who operates from within a context of global

government, the United Nations and its agencies. Therefore, according to Manyozo, he also is within the dominant paradigm (2006). In his article "Is 'Empowerment' the Answer," White explores Servaes' empowerment approach to communication for development from a historical perspective (1988). He describes Servaes as someone whose work "provides a comprehensive organization of virtually all of the issues that must be considered at different levels of analysis, local to international….over the past 30 years" (White 8, 1988). White describes Servaes' model of development as both community-based and supported by government and international organizations (1988). He writes that this model is designed to support individuals and help communities create positive images of themselves (media images) by encouraging them to "select the information that is important" to them including film and video production techniques (9, 1988). Finally, this model demands disassociation from Western media and development aid and calls for decentralization of power and some degree of independence from state power. Therefore, the literature arguably repositions Servaes as a hybrid scholar who draws from multiple schools of development communication thought.

Criticism of modernization or the dominant paradigm forms the basis of the Latin American and often the Participation school where theorists articulate their position in relation to the Western hegemonic perspective. Castells provides such a criticism (2004). Since the early 1980s, he has studied the social and economic transformations caused by the technological revolution. In *The Power of Identity*, Castells focuses on social movement groups, politics and the struggles over global dominance versus democracy in a computerized globalized world (2004). Huesca argues that participatory

communication arose out of the Latin American critique of the dominant paradigm in the 1970s and states that research falls between the extremes of participation as a means or participation as utopian end. This theoretical research claims participation as neither a means nor an end, but does focus on a specific topic and theme and varies in level of abstraction (Huesca 2002).

Development Communication: Methodological and Moral Assumptions

In terms of methodology, the scholarship of development communication takes into consideration all forms of media. From a historical perspective, two distinct trajectories of study in development communication (Western-driven development communication versus local endogenous development communication) emerge, addressing two levels of media: mass and local, the mediums of choice being radio with television weighing in as a distant second (Manyozo 2006). Mass media is produced by Western and European public and private organizations and was once heralded as an effective tool to disperse "expert" knowledge and the message of the modern quickly and cheaply to large populations (Hornick 1988; Paranjape 2007).

Small, local and community-based centers, such as the *Container Project* explored in Chapter 4, use the tools of mass media (radio, television, print, digital new media) but are designed to engage individual citizens in the process of creating and sharing knowledge, experiencing communal relationships, circulating information, and valuing all within a community (Paranjape 2007). Paranjape describes specifically the role of local media in Indian communities before the advent of the modern. He argues that local media in some form have always existed and how in many targeted 'under'

developed countries. However, local media was forcibly undermined by mass media and promised products in place of civil life (2007).

In some cases, local media is developed and studied in critical response to the dominant mass media development programs. In other cases, local media has been identified in the literature as a response to local needs framing both ends of a spectrum of responses to development communication. For example, Huesca argues that the mass media diffusion model is based on Western and European ideologies and ignores local realities including social, political and economic systems and cleavages between groups (2002). This system, Huesca argues, is based on the premise that the target community is to blame for underdevelopment based on their lack of knowledge and has resulted in establishing or re-establishing "landlord-peasant relations" and reinforcing in-egalitarian societies (2002). In contrast, White questions whether leading scholars'--such as Servaes'--push for empowerment through community-based participatory media can live up to its utopian promise when it is detached and dismissive of the realities of world economic systems (2004). From a conservative perspective, Hornick reminds us of the value of the critique of the dominant paradigm and the need to analyze the promise of alternative approaches to the dominant paradigm by reviewing the objectives of modernization and its failures to raise Third World communities out of poverty and aid dependency (1988).

Moving from the general to specific, Williamson writes of the *Fogo Process* when in the late 1960s and early 1970s the Canadian government established community programs designed to address systemic poverty in rural and remote communities in Canada. The Fogo Process was one in which video equipment was introduced,

residents were trained in production and the technology and video was used to archive, share knowledge, and develop community participation (1991). In his short article, Williamson describes the experiment and the outcomes of the *Fogo Process* on a small community in remote Newfoundland. In contrast, local media production examined in this project is not the result of interventionist programs but local initiatives. Similarly and based on Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Latin American activist and theorist Boal writes about his adoption of theatre with help from outside facilitators (2003). During these performances, actors embody characters and situations providing marginalized communities with the opportunity to try out different situations until one interpretation is agreed upon by the group. Here the actor is translator who "must give expression to the collective thought of men and women" (342, 2003).

Braden and Mayo describe this particular participatory theatre as one where the audience participates by discussing how a particular scene or story should be represented. Theatre is a means by which drama is used for the purposes of making people politically conscious (1999). Frota describes her experience in bringing video technology to the indigenous people in Latin American. From the premise that making video is a political act or practice, not just an end result projective for an audience, filmmaker Frota instructs indigenous communities to use video equipment in order to gain control over their own representation. She argues that this has resulted in changing the power dynamic within the community for those who are engaging in the process of creating self-understanding and but also defining how their images will be looked at by non-indigenous people (Frota 1996). Kivikuri argues that by mediating social issues there is also the potential for the subject to move from peripheral social status as a

direct result of the Western mediation process (1999). Honor Ford-Smiths' work with the Sistren Collective, a local women's consciousness raising theatre group in Jamaica (1977-1988) also used performance to address the issues faced by women. She argues that while useful, this organization lacked the ability to change women's power in society (1997). While these programs do raise consciousness, provide a tool for local problem solving, and help to create community, the approach cannot achieve significant social change, unless they can overcome their dependency on funding agencies, challenge power structures (Ford-Smith 1997). Characteristics of the Sistren Collective are evident in the *Container Project* approach to media production.

The resultant products of the modernization framework, according to critical theorists Hackett and Carroll, are based on Western filmmaking ideologies and commercial information dissemination and are dependent on the local producer adopting narratives that adhere to a predefined list of themes (2006). These narratives tend to privilege traditional Western notions of civilian populations in faraway places, where women and children are framed as victims or peacekeepers, as this is the "moral language that resonates [most successfully] with donors" (Carpenter 296, 2005).

In terms of production culture, Paranjape argues that activists are faced with the challenge of addressing individual and community expectations that are more in line with Western mass media. Incongruent with local goals, the pressure for valuing production quality over content, financial reward over problem solving, and adopting other external measures of success produce negative perceptions of the local and represent a misunderstanding of the role of media in community building. Hornick, like Paranjape, addresses these as some of the reasons why such projects often fail (2007).

Paranjape addresses each challenge to community-based media as a tool of community development creating a framework for re-visioning community spaces. In this model, he shifts the emphasis from community as a space to showcase media to community as a space to explore the relationship between activists and the process for "harvesting knowledge" (465, 2002).

Feminist Post-Colonial Approaches To Development Communication

The dominant paradigm of development communication is an approach that assumes that the target population should be civilized and educated by Western interventions (Freire 1997; Manyozo 2006; Melkote and Steeves 2001; White 2004). These values are visibly evident in the documentary films included on the E-Platform as examined in Chapter 2. Dominant paradigm recommendations and practices are based on the theory that developing countries needed external information and that local culture is an impediment to development (Huesca 2002; Melkote and Steeves 2001). As a result, women's political, social and economic struggles in developing countries have been studied through an ethnographical lens defined by the Western experience of modernism, colonialism, and liberal democracy (Eisenstein 2001; Lind 2003; Mohanty 2003; Spivak 2001; Sreberny 2000). This perspective has subordinated Third World women as "the Other" in feminist scholarship and resulted in women in developing countries being distanced from Western feminism and has disregarded the importance of differences of place (Eisenstein 2004; Lazreg 2000; Said 1982).

In this context, feminist post-colonial and 'empowerment' scholars call for a development model that allows women to address local social and cultural relations and the Western influenced agenda for women's development (Braden and Mayo 1999; Lind

2003; Melkote and Steeves 2001; White 2004). This model grounds participatory development in local communities and in a framework of planning that is linked to larger global economic frameworks (Hamelink 1995; Mohanty 2003; Servaes 1999). This is referred to as the liberation or new paradigm model emphasizing communities working together to fix existing systems and working towards the goal of self-reliance and self-empowerment needed to respond to both external and local oppression of modernization (Freire 1997; Hamelink 1995; Jamieson 1991; Melkote and Steeves 2001; Paranjape 2007; White 2004). Aspects of this approach are evident in the *Container Project*'s convergence of media production and community sustainability.

Mohanty reframes development in what she describes as an antiracist feminist framework "anchored in decolonization and committed to an anti-capitalist critique" arguing that the micro or particularized struggles – if analyzed as process in a global framework– deconstruct the gulf between theorizing universal concerns and facilitating assistance to marginalized communities (3, 2003; Waisbord 2001). Shifting the micro versus macro argument by connecting micro-politics, struggle and subjectivity in a local contextual framework to economics and macro-politics in a global contextual framework promotes empowerment and reveals how the particular is often universally significant (Lind 2003; Mohanty 2003). The E-Platform organizes media in a manner to make connections and prioritize economic and political issues that meet institutional objectives.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is criticized as being associated with an *idea* of rights rather than rights practice that would address neo-colonialism and the need for a politics of place (Cmiel 2002; Eisenstein 33, 2004). This dichotomy is

supported by a critical framework in which human rights are interpreted as standard-setting and discursive and failure of these standards to protect human rights is judged at the level of policy implementation or practice (Chalk 2007; Cohen and Seu 2002; Des Forges 2002). Merry argues that what challenges patriarchy are the ideas that embody women's rights, including the right to bodily safety, autonomy, choice and equity (2006). Therefore, while the women's movement starting in the 1960s provided opportunities for women in Third World countries to gain global political visibility, human rights remained gendered against women as indicated by the deterioration of state welfare and continued patriarchal control over the private sphere (Castells 2004; Eisenstein 2004; Ford-Smith 2003; Lind 2003). In response, global feminist scholars have pursued the idea that human rights need to be translated to local practice in such a way that women's human rights have a causal relationship to political and economic participation (Eisenstein 2004; Lind 2003; Merry 2006; White 2004).

During the 1990s, advocates have argued that women are excluded from Third World power structures and that human rights law does not address their needs as it is established distinct from their experience (Charlesworth, Chinkin and Wright 1991). As such, women remain vulnerable without adequate representation at the United Nations (1991). This is a complex issue and Spivak notes that women in particular, also become the target of a dominant power (the United Nations) that appropriates entrepreneurship existing outside of the dominant concept of the global economy without their involvement in decision-making (2001). This is evident in the development of the *Creative Content Programme*, the E-Platform, and the film submission process analyzed in the three substantive chapters of this dissertation. Communities such as

those examined in Jamaica in Chapter 4 have the infrastructure and security to support independent grassroots media and reveal the themes of race, class, and gender in areas pertinent to a global feminism including community, home, sisterhood, and experience (2003). Struggles over these themes in these contexts are integral to the construction of civil society and self-construction as personal and political transformation (McNay 1992).

Current Development Communication

A new politics of human rights has emerged from the intersection of theoretical and practical approaches of multiple disciplines in response to the globalization of information, labor and capital, the destabilization of the nation-state, and construction of the world citizen (Bradley and Petro 2002; Crack 2008; Miller 2006). This has resulted in a contradictory politics of identity where individual rights and a utopian vision of the public world maintain dominant white/Western privilege by co-opting and filtering out ideas that contradict dominant interests (Hamelink 2000; Jenkins 2006; Sobchack 1996). The E-Platform serves such a filtering role. Alternatively, distinctions between national versus cultural identity become the subject of value resulting in a cultural identity that advocates diversification and cultural spontaneity, but the individual sees no improvement in their material circumstances (Eisenstein 2004; Kivikuri 1997). This serves to privilege the subordinate identity that fits the goals of promoting human rights and negates those aspects of identity that are deemed obstacles to change such as spirituality and gender perspectives (Steeves 2001).

Branden and Mayo dig further into participatory community media development and explore competing approaches to culture in community development (1991). They

specifically explore the use of multimedia as a top down tool to "change people's behaviors and attitudes" and bottom-up "for cultural and political transformation" and is a basis for comparison between the institutional policies and media producers' resistance embedded in media productions (1991). In either case, their article is a critique of the dominant paradigm utilizing the perspective of Freire. They also point out that Freire's gendered perspective on development communication and his methods and perspectives on consciousness raising and liberation resonated throughout the Women's Liberation Movement (1991).

In her article "Liberation, Feminism, and Development Communication" Steeves critiques development communication scholarship and practice for lacking both liberation and attention to gender (2001). Closely examining the socioeconomic and structural biases, she calls on scholars and practitioners to drawn from feminist theory and liberation theology as a means of addressing ideological influences. She argues that non-material factors such as spirituality and gender perspectives are rarely considered in development communication practices *except* as obstacles to change as in the modernization paradigm. Religion, for example, is seen as oppressive and patriarchal and yet it was religious leaders who fight against Apartheid, supported the American civil rights movement, and resisted colonialism in India (2001). Steeves points out two critiques, the first being that few scholars, including those that are influenced by Freire, have considered the role of religion in development communication, and those who do discount women's struggles. Secondly, those who are involved with feminist studies often assume religion is oppressive in its relationship to women therefore

neglecting to identify those instances where women are involved but challenging

religious texts and reinterpreting religion in "feminist directions" (2001).

CHAPTER 2 UNESCO'S *CREATIVE CONTENT PROGRAMME* AND AUDIOVISUAL

E-PLATFORM: GENDER AND ACCESS

This is a feminist analysis of the film submission process of the United Nations Education, Science, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Audiovisual E-Platform. An activity of the *Creative Content Programme* situated within the Creative Content area of UNESCO's Communication and Information sector, the E-Platform is an online video catalogue, archive, and distribution platform for local media producers. The platform is designed to accept and promote video content and production practices that represent institutional values and policy initiatives for marketing to broadcasters, festivals, and institutions. The E-Platform is not the first online community designed for video testimonies. As the world becomes increasingly networked, communities of media producers, who bear witness to the best and worst examples of human interaction, coalesce by creating online communities (Sarkar and Walker 2009).

Videos included on the E-Platform are representative of "genuine expression of different cultures" in so much as the video content and producers meet institutional policies (E-Platform). The institution controls what films are included on the platform by demanding that filmmakers meet a series of technical and content-related requirements. Once accepted, the information representing the filmmaker and their video is organized by the frameworks of the site database and the interface. These organizational systems shape how the filmmaker and video are represented for viewers, accessed, and distributed. E-Platform program officers solicit video submissions through the E-Platform but also select videos produced by interagency film programs, accepted into film festivals and selected for competitive festival awards. By the time films are available on

the E-Platform the content and production practices have been filtered through a series of screening and framing processes defined by technological, production practice, and content policies. The website pages, navigation, links and text represent information based on institutional standards. These bits of information form the pages and define how filmmakers will approach the challenge of inclusion and representation in the E-Platform (Suchman 1987).

Therefore, more than being a mere aesthetic analysis of an online media catalogue of public service related films, this study examines institutional standards that comprise the admission criteria, the design of the process of entry into the catalogue, and the representation of the film in the catalogue. A feminist critique is applied as a means to reveal the political and cultural economy of the contact zone created when marginalized women and men negotiate these two interrelated but disparate elements (Hesmondhalgh 249). This critique begins to explain how the process facilitates, reshapes and transforms local creative production into creative commodity. Moreover, examination of the process involved in media production serves to reveal the transformation of community production shaped for knowledge creation and problem-solving to creative media product shaped for the market.

The E-Platform film submission process serves a gatekeeping function consisting of a collection of policies (technology, production practice, and content) and a filtering and organizing media development practice. This represents an ideal site to consider through a critical cyberfeminist lens. When focused on process as a negotiation between institution and filmmaker, this lens begins to reveal how the process facilitates, reshapes and transforms local creative production to creative commodity. By

compartmentalizing the submission process into steps and isolating the technological skills/literacy/knowledge/equipment needed to gain entry to the catalogue, we can observe that the process filters out media that is not representative of the organizations' program objective to promote media with value to broadcasters (Jolly and Narayanaswamy 6). Those filmmakers who are accepted are deemed professionally disciplined. Their standardized media are valued as having commercial value.

The purpose of this chapter is to look beneath the surface of site aesthetics to investigate the technological gender bias built into the design and functionality of the E-Platform's submission process. This is based on the premise that the institution privileges one kind of local production over another as a means to close the gap between corporate and local elite professional producers and those who have the limited access to the tools of production, training, industry experience, and the mass media ("Partners and Beneficiaries").

This chapter reviews the institution's policy development with an eye to its effects on women and inclusion. By targeting policy development towards men, Roach argues that woman (and therefore their lived experience, basic needs, and systems of knowledge) are absent from the movement for a new world information order (Roach 288). Based on Roach's argument, analysis of the foundational documents of the *Creative Content Programme* was conducted and reveals that women were absent from these policy decisions. The shift in scholarship from examining marginalized media producers in the limited context of the opposing forces of West and Third World, has broadened to include the tensions within the nation-state (social and economic), as well as those emerging as a result of transnational and corporate interests (Sinclair 343).

The film submission process provides an opportunity to look at these issues within a framework that is limited by its role and bounded by a process with a clear beginning and an end. It is important to understanding how and where women are relevant to the process in transnational and corporate contexts. Therefore, the process in which filmmakers agree to submit their work in exchange for inclusion in the catalogue is ideal for examining how the *Programme* is constituted by these tensions as much as by local and women-focused policies, and conference resolutions. To reveal and then examine these tensions, this chapter examines the process systematically, drawing on direct observation of the websites to uncover the underlying purpose of marketing local media to global broadcasters and to reveal which participants are systematically overlooked or included in the project and site development plan.

This chapter is organized into two sections. The first section traces and briefly outlines the development of UNESCO, the *Creative Content Programme*, and the organizational structure that supports the E-Platform. This examination reveals the institutional policies, external influences and intra-organizational pressures that shape the E-Platform program, and its film submission process. The second section analyzes the E-Platform site and the film submission process in critical comparison to Witness's The Hub media catalogues and their supporting sites[3]. By comparing the E-Platform to a parallel website such as The Hub, characteristics of its gatekeeping are revealed. The Hub is an online catalogue and social networking site supported by Witness, an international human rights organization whose mission is to create conditions of partnership and learning ("About Witness"). The author observed the E-Platform, The

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[3] The E-Platform is supported by the Communication and Information sector site, the *Creative Content Programme* pages. The Hub is supported by the Witness site.

Hub, and their supporting sites via the Internet over periods of 30 and 12 months respectively. The methodology also included interviews and the examination of organization reports, conference proceedings, and related international instruments, as well as the use of secondary sources.

The Development of UNESCO

UNESCO was established in 1945. As one of fourteen special agencies of the United Nations, UNESCO pursues its institutional purpose of international dialogue through five sectors: Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture, and Communication and Information. The organization was founded by 37 member countries of the United Nations and ratified by twenty in November 1945.

Emerging out of an identified need to re-establish systems of intellectual cooperation and education after the end of World War II, UNESCO was established as a specialized agency. UNESCO's purpose is to create the conditions in which to promote the institutional values of human rights, justice, the rule of law, peace and security through international collaboration on education, science and culture ("UNESCO Constitution"). Originally, UNESCO was formed by allied countries with stakes in maintaining the colonial structure, foreign business interests, and domestic policy. With the decolonization process, a larger group of postcolonial countries joined UNESCO. These countries pressured the organization to address the imbalance in media power and increasingly demanded that their voice be heard as part of UNESCO's mission fulfillment.

Ratified in 1945, the UNESCO Constitution states that the organization will endeavor to create the conditions in which intellectual cooperation can take place and

describes how it will focus resources on the mass media as the network for promoting the free flow of ideas and information ("UNESCO Constitution"). However, underdeveloped countries, colonial countries and countries decimated by wars leading up to 1945 had limited national media industries at the time of ratification. Over time, Africa, Asia, Middle East, and Latin America took issue with the concept of the free flow of ideas and information, which they equated with Western press power represented by organizations such as Reuters and The Associated Press. The emphasis on the existing mass media systems reinforced existing concerns of Western media imperialism with the United Nations Charter and was interpreted to mean that the free flow of information was controlled by the West. This set the stage for increased controversy over whose interpretation of world events information would flow where (Cmiel 108).

Focusing on mass media as the network for promoting the free flow of ideas and information, UNESCO targets its activities towards reinvigorating public education and knowledge sharing. The organization does this by developing programs to assist and educate member countries about the responsibilities of freedom; preserving, diffusing and promoting the development of intellectual production, and access to books and information; and supporting the diversity of cultures and education by not intervening in domestic jurisdictions ("UNESCO Constitution"). However, the concept of the free flow of information has an established interpretation that is perceived by many as systemically biased towards sites of power not limited to the West, but including domestic elites, as well as transnational and local corporations. In response, decolonized and less developed countries expressed a demand for a greater say in how the free flow of information was interpreted. Furthermore, these non-western countries

demanded more say in how their nations/regions were represented in world press/media in order to balance media coverage and control over their cultural artifacts (Cmiel 108).

Prior to the drafting of the United Nations Charter, poor countries without established media institutions banded together demanding control over how they were represented to the world by outside media. They had their own version of representation that was more "anti-colonial than the industrial democracies wanted" and took aim at Western and local hegemonic media systems (Cmiel 108-110). However, the gap in the communication structures in developing countries was quickly being filled by a range of homegrown and imported ideologies, media systems, practices, personnel and content (qtd. in Sinclair 345). In some cases, powerful countries contributed to a "one-way media flow, from the West to the rest," to appeal to the elite which supported the systemic practice of the mediation of difference (Cmiel 110-126; Curtin 109). In other cases, less powerful countries countered imperialism by demanding a new media order not based on equity and freedom of speech, but as a tactical tool to control mass populations again to serve local elite populations (Sparks and Roach 279). However, in either of these two examples access to the existing mass media industries or opportunities for the development and nurturing of local culture in the media was not provided to marginalized populations who economically, socially, or linguistically did not belong to the ruling class (Curtin 110).

Between 1954 and 1970, UNESCO established agreements[4] to protect cultural artifacts from theft and export, affirming the sovereignty of postcolonial countries and acknowledging property law (Miller, "Introduction to Part VIII" 267). The UNESCO Declaration on Mass Media (1978), in conformity with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), Article XI guarantees freedom of speech and expression. Additionally, UNESCO established resolutions and declarations for eliminating racial discrimination, and freedom of information. Miller concludes that these agreements create connections between cultural artifacts, location, origin, and ownership that are increasingly complicated by hybrid identities arising from migration, social change, and technologies (Miller, "Introduction to Part VIII" 267). These agreements protect access to information and poorer nations' right to impart information as cultural artifacts in the form of media – in consideration of emerging technologies and cultural diversity – and provide comprehensive recommendations to practice broader interpretations of location, origin, and ownership connections. For example, diaspora filmmakers and media producers may perceive location as a place to live, quite distinct from their origin and homeland. Further, connections to the homeland with which filmmakers may identify facilitate a sense of ownership over local culture even if, in the example of diaspora filmmakers, the cultural product (film) is created beyond the homeland's borders.

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[4] *The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* (1954), and the *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* (1970).

Influential Communication Policy Development and UNESCO

In response to what Third World countries perceived as links between information and economic domination, the MacBride Report (published under the name of *Many Voices, One World*) (1980) put forth recommendations for a new world communication order (Roach 283). While addressing the grievances of an alliance of post-colonial countries, this controversial report did not acknowledge systematic gender bias and did not address the needs of women and oppressed populations' access to media in any comprehensive manner (Roach 299). The mention of women as a particular group in need of assistance is limited to Recommendation 60, supporting women's access to "communication means" and the cessation of stereotyping of women in the media and advertising is supported ("Many Voices, One World" 267). Reworded and more specific, this recommendation was reiterated in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), Section J, which is one of the four component international instruments of the *Creative Content Programme*. By 2000, the UN identified women as a target group to be addressed across all agencies through institution-wide policies that specifically address their needs and experiences. This new direction is evident in the launch of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, and most recently in UNESCO's 2009 strategic plan. That plan identifies women as a specific global priority ("UNESCO: What is it?" 3).

The current political context for the development of UNESCO programs stems from three major post-foundational institutional organization realities. Established in the 1970s and 1980s, the Third World alliance formed over claims of imbalance in media and the establishment of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). As a result, the MacBride Report was drafted and promoted media from

former colonial and current communist countries. A few years after the release of the MacBride Report, the U.S.[5] and the U.K. withdrew from UNESCO (Roach 284). The NWICO formed to address what was perceived as the colonization of information, resulting from the connection between economic policy and communication media in Third World countries for the benefit of external powers (Roach 283). The MacBride Report recommendations outline actions for marginalized countries to not only receive information, but also to create, to impart and to contribute actively to the flow of mass media ("Many Voices, One World"). These recommendations called for controls to be placed on the power of the dominant media organizations, forcing them to change the formation and reporting of international news to support and include locally produced media and news perspectives, and to support public media separate from commercial concerns ("Many Voices, One World"). In response to the charge that the MacBride Report recommendations equaled government interference, censorship, and licensing of the media, the United Kingdom and the United States removed their significant financial support from UNESCO and did not rejoin until 1997 and 2003 respectively (qtd. in Miller, "Television" 91). As a result, UNESCO almost immediately began to negotiate policy changes in order to reconcile its differences with its most influential patrons. This led to the burying of the MacBride Report (Roach 289).

UNESCO was reshaped to advantage the United States' interests in exchange for its renewed support (Sparks and Roach 275). This included the reduction of UNESCO offices and addressing concerns over coherence of programming and justification of the organization. In 1989, the UNESCO Strategic Plan (1990-1995)

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[5] The U.S. had previously inflicting pressures through withdrawing financial support and in 1984 withdrew their membership after the MacBride Report.

addressed some of these concerns by emphasizing media training and education to increase the flow of information rather than to move forward on the MacBride Report, which was vilified as a censoring mechanism of the NWICO (Roach 288). In response to the NWICO's demand for cultural policies that would facilitate artists' and grassroots groups' access to mass media, policies were developed to support the study of innovative uses of media (increasingly commercializing film, television, radio) as an expression of culture for ongoing intercultural/international dialogue. These policies were met with the demands of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in which economic determinants won out over cultural. As a result, emerging cultural policies were significantly shaped by commercial priorities undermining local cultural production and industries (Miller and Yúdice 174).

New GATT policy meant that cultural expression and practices designed to serve the public good outside of commerce were transformed into practices of commodification of culture for the purposes of efficiency, trade, and commerce (Miller and Yúdice 176). Participants in the GATT talks decided that consumer preference should be the determining factor in cultural production, paving the way for commercial production standards to become the norm. This left no room for public sector cultural production, which was dismissed as a negative force on cultural production and an excuse for imposing import barriers on screen media (film and television). Moreover, national cinema and broadcasters were seen as having been promoted to the detriment of private investment (Miller and Yúdice 172).

UNESCO's Current Policy Initiatives

The United Nations launched the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 to help the world's poorest people by partnering with member countries on development projects that meet specific targets by 2015. Women, girls, and gender are central to many of the targets of the eight MDG goals, and women figure as a priority in Goal Three – to promote gender equality and empower women in all areas of society ("United Nations Millennium Development Goals"). UNESCO contributes to furthering the MDGs by promoting activities that encompass the goals of reducing poverty, increasing gender and equality, and promoting sustainable development. By turning the organization's information and communication activities towards the MDGs, UNESCO is positioned to fulfill an organization mission as well as an economic development and surveillance role that serves the interests of governments and commerce. Facilitating the circumstances by which local creative activities are transformed into creative industry (shaping, filtering, archiving, and promoting media as institutionally representative) local culture is represented as valuable as an information and/or money resource separate from the community of origin (Jakubowicz 205).

Emerging as a more Westernized media institution after an era of reform, consolidation and mission realignment, UNESCO encourages connectivity through existing digital and social networks, and creates content for the purposes of encouraging creativity and commerce in and between member countries (Deuze 146). UNESCO is charged with creating the environment for media literacy, and directing creative production, practice, and content once literacy is achieved (qtd. in Miller "From Creative to Cultural Industry" 91). Promoting cultural creativity and communication is a

means by which UNESCO is endeavoring to meet the Millennium goals. In this way, UNESCO strives to establish the conditions for economic and social development and provide circumstances in which entrepreneurship may take root in marginalized communities. To manage newly literate communities, as described by Toby Miller, UNESCO provides guidance, training, support, a clear direction, and reward for adhering to institutionally established guidelines and values (Miller "From Creative to Cultural Industry" 91).

Development of the *Creative Content Programme*

The *Creative Content Programme* is designed to deliver, promote and facilitate the goals and values of the United Nations through UNESCO's unique program areas and activities to assist in the eradication of extreme poverty, and to promote intercultural dialogue and sustainable development ("UNESCO What is it?" 3). UNESCO uses its unique capabilities through the Communication and Information sector to promote the free flow of information, including freedom of expression and freedom of the press. It further provides media producers with institutional training in journalistic practices and facilitates access to emerging communication technologies ("About the Sector"). UNESCO also oversees the protection and management of cultural artifacts. This role has led to the establishment of agreements that identify a correlation between production, location, ownership, and culture, which form the threads connecting nation-state, transnational, and corporate entities. These connections are a source of tension.

The *Creative Content Programme* and the Audiovisual E-Platform fall under the Communication and Information (CI) sector whose purpose it is to deliver activities that directly engage people in the practice of information and knowledge creation by

providing access to the tools of production including training, equipment, and networks ("About the Sector"). The CI sector is substantively guided by the UNESCO Constitution (Article 1) that calls for the promotion of cultural diversity and knowledge collaboration between nations, and the free flow of ideas by word and images. This sector also outlines how the organization will endeavor to create the conditions in which intellectual cooperation can take place. This includes providing access to information, promoting culturally diverse and plural expression in the media and other information networks, and promoting equal access to information communication technologies or ICTs ("About the Sector"). The CI sector implements projects in member states; the organization commits additional regional funding to support projects in Africa, the Arab States, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean; and it works with other United Nations, bilateral development, and non-government agencies ("About the Sector").

Activities in the Communication and Information sector are reconfigured to address earlier concerns of Western ideological and economic policies with the adoption of Internet technology; a fairly inexpensive, accessible and commercially viable content delivery network; accessible tools of production; and resulting market-friendly digital media content. Influencing the form and direction in which diversity and the free flow of ideas and images are reconfigured, the Millennium Development Goals emphasize the eradication of abject poverty and promote gender equity. Coupled with the globalization of the Internet, the Millennium Development Goals frame opportunities for UNESCO to extend its influence into marginalized and untapped communities. As a target group for development, women and marginalized men are a source of creative value.

UNESCO launched the *Creative Content Programme* project in 2002 as a means to implement existing recognized international instruments. These include UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity Action plan, item 12, in which it is determined that the organization will encourage production, protect the distribution of diverse content across global networks, promote public media and "the development of audiovisual productions of good quality,"[6] and foster partnerships to facilitate media distribution. These activities are developed within a framework consisting of the United Nations ICT Task Force's Goal to support local content creation, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to address extreme poverty, and the Beijing Platform for Action, Section J that promotes women's access and participation, as well as the "balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal" of women in the media ("UNESCO's New Initiative").

In terms of local content production, the *Creative Content Programme* documentation states that the program is designed to support the development and promotion of content produced by "disadvantaged communities of the developing world" ("UNESCO's New Initiative"). In the broader context, this project supports the development of specific content that focuses on "major societal and development issues" through its representation in locally-produced media ("Content Development"). In addition to media content, the *Programme* supports and facilitates media training and ensures that local content is disseminated across existing networks. This includes providing access in multiple languages beyond the language of the elite populations and access to people in marginalized, rural and remote communities. The 32nd Session of

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[6] This language is used to define the criteria on which submissions to the E-Platform are judged and remains undefined.

the General Conference (2003) included the adoption of the International Convention on the Preservation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which concerns "oral traditions and expressions, including languages as vehicles of cultural heritage; the performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and traditional craftsmanship" ("UNESCO Adopts A Convention…"). However, in the proceedings, the mention of women is notably absent from the text outlining the responsibilities of the *Programme for Creative Content* and ostensibly, the E-Platform, both implemented to support this Convention.

The 32nd Session of the General Conference is important for a number of reasons. As the conference documentation indicates, the organization confirms the commitment to action in addressing the specific needs of women in light of existing resolutions and recommendations on gender equity through institutional projects such as the MDGs and the development of activities to deliver on these commitments. The commitments to women's rights as part of human rights (specifically as defined in Articles 19[7] and 27[8] of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and to women are included in the draft debate on the organizational budget for 2006-2007 ("Records of the General Conference" 148). Action on the Beijing plan recommendations to assist women and marginalized men to gain access to multilingual information and to

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[7] Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

[8] Article 27.
(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

emerging technology is limited to the section on social and human sciences. Women are also consistently mentioned in the sections on education, science, human rights, and culture but are not mentioned in the section on Communication and Information that supports the mission of the *Programme for Creative Content,* where the Director General is authorized

> (a) to implement the corresponding plan of action in order to:
> (i) promote the expression of pluralism and cultural diversity in the media and global information networks, *inter alia* through the *Programme for Creative Content* designed to encourage the production and dissemination of culturally diverse and multilingual contents in the media ("Records of the General Conference" 68).

As this resolution indicates, the focus of the *Programme for Creative Content* is pluralism and cultural diversity in media production and dissemination of content. This language indicates that women are assumed to be addressed through diversity and multilingualism. The absence of the mention of women in this section also indicates that as a group, they are not a target for this particular program. The program privileges existing grassroots media producers ("Privileged Partners"). Consequently, women are absent because of their limited access to existing local organizations, schools, and grassroots media production.

In his analysis of race and digital literacy, Jakubowicz notes that those U.S. communities that are both racially marginalized and poor remain the least accessible to government policy initiatives and do not attract economic development because they do not engage in (digital) media production/consumption/dissemination. As a result, they are not considered a valuable demographic (217). To extrapolate from this study, the

notable absence of women from the mission of the *Programme for Creative Content* would indicate that they are not a valuable demographic, as they do not engage in media production. Further, as Hackett and Carroll indicate, if women are not present in the conversation, then their difference of experience is not acknowledged, resulting in a democratic deficit in the conference proceedings and the resultant programs (11).

Within the UNESCO *Programme for Creative Content* website, the strategy, activities, target groups, partner/beneficiaries, along with four short-term and eight long-term objectives are outlined ("Creative Content"). The short-term objectives include providing the support, encouragement and framework to facilitate training, the production of media, as well as dissemination and networking of "communication and information institutions" both locally and beyond. The long-term objectives focus on the individual and the community and endeavor, through the use of existing and emerging technology, to create linkages with the global community. These objectives include "promoting the expression of cultural and linguistic diversity through communication and information," as well as the development of an inclusive knowledge-based social sphere where usable information is compiled and maintained locally ("Creative Content"). In addition to society building and information maintenance objectives, UNESCO proposes to implement frameworks designed to provide communities with support for the development of a public sphere with inter-cultural democratic discourse as well as international cooperation, leading to future community-based sustainable development ("Creative Content").

Activities listed on the *Creative Content* page make two references to an online catalogue, but the E-Platform is not mentioned by name. However, activities listed

under television and computer-based content indicate that the program will set up, maintain, and promote an online video catalogue "with an annual input of 100 full-length high-quality local programs from African, Asian and Latin American producers aimed at putting ICTs at the service of local content producers" ("Creative Content"). The "catalogue site" is said to be launched and promoted under the "umbrella" of *UNESCO Programme for Creative Content* ("Creative Content"). The program description makes no mention of gender, and while the overview identifies the importance of the local, the cultural and diversity, it does not differentiate in its delivery and actions in its approach to women.

The program description lacks specificity and the submission process is unclear in its expectations, clouding the underlying motivation. The structure of the site – marked by incomplete instructions, inconsistent functionality and difficult site navigation – serves to confuse the user. At the same time, the convoluted site organization also creates an immediacy in which the mechanisms of the organization are hidden behind the assertion that the bad design is the result of the organization's reduced financial circumstances. Rather, the connection between policy initiatives and the design of the website is the result of a series of decisions made during the negotiation between policy people and web developers who have different priorities. Therefore, the objective of translating policy initiatives to website functionality results in unpredictable consequences or the functions of the website may distract from the mission of the policy (Bolter and Grugin 26). In their discussion of "policy behind closed doors," Hackett and Carroll conclude that these distractions are not necessarily intentional, but are indicative

of synergies between powers such as politicians and media companies who trade favorable publicity for favorable legislation and keep these negotiations quiet (10).

Fraser's examination of Habermas' theory of the public sphere describes how socialist and Marxist movements have been unable to clearly distinguish "between the apparatus of the state [….], the public arenas of citizen discourse and association" and the needs of marginalized communities (489). In contrast, the public sphere as mandated by UNESCO's project is a unique construct where the lines drawn between the state, its citizens and itself as a governance institution are distinct but the organization's presence is hidden or enfolded within the digital frameworks, database, and interaction. As outlined earlier, this project is in keeping with international law and UN charters, and yet it is working directly with the citizens irrespective of the sovereign ruler in order to fulfill its mandate to promote human rights through supporting cultural diversity and pluralism. Yet, the project is beset with tensions, which the filmmaker has little opportunity to address. The site lacks a feedback system that would allow for critique or grievance regarding perceived exclusion or hegemonic practices of the organization, for the purposes of public discourse. In addition, the project employees control what media products will be accepted for dissemination, maintaining traditional media power relationships evident in local society, and in mass media. What the *Programme for Creative Content* offers traditionally marginalized communities is the opportunity to participate in a pre-fabricated public sphere constructed to guide and shape knowledge production in a manner that forces filmmakers to adhere to industry processes and practices. As a result, filmmakers gain skills required to participate in

national and international media industries but at the same time may lose their connection to local storytelling practices and become irrelevant.

The beneficiaries or "privileged" partners of this project are identified as those who are associated with the independent production of local media including film, video and radio. These practices are described as "grassroots level organizations" ("Partners and beneficiaries"). The language used in the description supports the idea that the beneficiaries are those who are both organized and presently functioning at a local grassroots level. "Grassroots," a description for community-based civil society organizations designed to service local communities, suggests that UNESCO is looking for groups that are already politically organized around common issues and invested in their communities. "Grassroots" also indicates limited financial and other resources, such as professional production equipment, experience, and knowledge. Yet, as the *Creative Content Programme* language indicates, it is not a funding mechanism; these partners must already have some level of organizational structure in order to benefit. Therefore, this structure masks privilege; in reality, it is unclear how "grassroots" applies to these partners except in terms of their location in the community and political organization.

The project as described also deviates from what Hackett and Carroll describe as democratic communication. In describing grassroots democracy, they state that while "subaltern publics that have a stake in radical democratization find common ground" they must share a common identity that will frame their strategic objectives (186). Identities are formed by exclusion from society in which they live, by experience of violence, by subjugation by the communities on the periphery, or by destruction of an

important community resource. However, rather than emerging organically from the social negotiations within an established community, the *Creative Content Programme* provides an opportunity for existing identities to be reconceptualized as a result of the external imposition of pre-packaged social identities defined by the functionality of the archival database. The three social identities available in the drop-down search menu are "minorities and indigenous peoples," "children," and "women". The inclusion of these identities in the search functionality indicates they are an institutional priority and put into place to direct broadcasters and users towards these themes. Further, limiting thematic identities to these three categories indicates an exclusive focus on the films that promote United Nations values in the context of the concerns and lived experiences of minorities, children, and women.

The Audiovisual E-Platform

The E-Platform was launched in 2004, and functions within an established institutional hierarchy. The catalogue is supported by the *Creative Content Programme* under the control of the Creative Content (radio, TV, new media) area established in 2002.

As part of UNESCO's current mandate to reduce poverty by increasing gender-equal access to information communication technologies through local creative content development, the E-Platform provides an unprecedented opportunity for marginalized filmmakers in poorer countries to have endorsed access to an online distribution system. The Audiovisual E-Platform helps to solicit for and to promote what is described as public service-oriented television content from developing countries to the international television market and film festivals ("Medium-Term Strategy, 2008-2013"

10; "E-Platform"). The catalogue entries found at this public site include a select corpus of films that are produced by grassroots and independent filmmakers and are described as a "genuine expression of different cultures in the world" ("Audiovisual E-Platform" 2007). In addition to serving as a catalogue and archive, the E-Platform is promoted as a media hub and social networking site for media producers of television content in developing countries.

The E-Platform offers interested filmmakers a social network, invites submissions to the catalogue, and confers the benefit of exclusive access to international television broadcasters. One of the methods of having a film included in the E-Platform catalogue is to participate in the submission process that is mentioned at the site but more fully detailed at the *Creative Content Programme* site. During the process, grassroots content in the form of video submissions is either discarded (inappropriate content/poor production value/limited comprehensibility) or promoted (appropriate content/acceptable production value/globally comprehensible) for viewing by the digitally literate in the form of a public catalogue (Miller, "Technologies of Truth" 32; Volkmer 319). In some cases, media are even uploaded to the catalogue without the permission of the filmmaker (Bondy, Skype interview). Filmmakers and independent producers whose films are eventually accepted into the catalogue are subsequently endorsed as professional media producers of local culture. The submission process is thus fascinatingly contradictory. It provides a select few grassroots media producers unprecedented access to global media markets and online networks while simultaneously filtering, defining and then valorizing the resultant corpus of institutionally-organized work of endorsed marginalized filmmakers ("E-Platform"; Miller, "Can Natural Luddites" 184).

The E-Platform contributes to establishing UNESCO as an authoritative archive of human rights media that can accommodate media from all developing countries for the purposes of promoting local capacity building, diversity in cyberspace, and local perspectives on globally relevant issues ("Content Development"). From a Foucaudian perspective, the process also creates systems of power/knowledge that incorporate or enfold existing policies into new technologies in which gender and race considerations represent a recent addition, but not necessarily a systemic re-configuration (Marks 38). The experiences of gender and race are increasingly enfolded into the development of these technologies because they are useful as information and as capital (Marks 38). The submission process functions as a gatekeeping mechanism that measures local content for its usefulness and then standardizes the representation of lived experience for television. For those with economic and/or cultural interests in a particular country or region, the video media serves as evidence of local capacity building, successful political transformation processes, and emerging economies. In terms of production labor, the videos represent the skills, experience, and knowledge of local practitioners and serve as a measure of whether practice and/or content supports institutional values and economic policies (Volkmer 319).

The E-Platform is a collection of component parts and organizing technology systems aggregated to serve the objectives of the institution. The component parts (represented by the organization and representative Constitution, recommendations, conferences, policies and activities) are technologies creating categories and subjectivities that are part of the institution and part of the target subject. These organizing systems in turn organize the technologies that then create technology

systems of gender, race, and class and constitute the archive (Sullivan). Therefore, this examination approaches the E-Platform as a material manifestation of the *Programme* and functioning with a distinct international political economy (economic and political system created by relationships between state, economy, practices, institutions, culture and organizations) in a national and local context (Kellner 100).

The E-Platform is a hub designed to bring together media producers, user-generated media, and broadcasters under the institutional umbrella. On the E-Platform website, the hub is described in terms of a social and media network designed to provide a center for professional media producers and filmmakers. The objective of the E-Platform is to provide the digital means for connectivity between filmmakers and broadcasters, to facilitate a network of professionals that will draw three groups, filmmakers and producers who create public service media and broadcasters. Rather than drawn to a geographical place, these groups are drawn to a virtual place. This model is based on one which Deuze describes as counterintuitive in today's globalization of capital in which cultural workers continue to coalesce in urban centers creating media industries to serve available business, not virtual centers (146). In this application of information and communication technology, membership in global civil society is a benefit of development thought and activities. By providing and promoting the network to local grassroots organization and independent producers, UNESCO is attempting to create an environment for development from below, in which local media production and participation are encouraged and flourish. UNESCO supports accessible technology that is both low-cost and mobile, and ideally, in such a format as to provide for measurable and quantifiable success. To measure success in its mission, the E-

Platform requires registration, providing UNESCO a list of those who are filmmakers, film enthusiasts, activists, and broadcasters.

The E-Platform design and creation (coding process) is underpinned by the combination of a set of conventions and custom design applications that are representative of the institution's mission, goals, intellectual history, cultural makeup, and values and replicates the ways the institution engages with its stakeholders (Manovich 117). The E-Platform is designed to be a matrix for sharing and disseminating values of the United Nations and approved human rights practices. The site is designed to bring global filmmakers, broadcasters and film enthusiasts together in dialogue.

In consideration of the role and function of the E-Platform, it is useful to apply the flow theory of television to the site interface[9]. If we consider the aggregation of maps, lists of countries, and images that suggest culturally and linguistically diverse programs, the E-Platform interface takes on greater value to the promotion and distribution of UNESCO's core brand. TV flow theory applied to the elements forms a lens through which to analyze this aspect of the site (Caldwell 139).

Despite the seemingly disparate elements of maps, links, and images that compose the interface, there is a rationale to the organization. Each element contributes to an organizational priority or flow, which is privileged by click-throughs (links), creating opportunities for interactivity that is not "a user-technical process somehow inherent in the technical interface. It is rather a form of responsive, multi-participant textual interactivity" or negotiation between organization and user (Caldwell 141). From this

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[9] John Caldwell concludes that website interfaces are the "culmination" of television elements (programs, promos, previews, ads and bumpers) organized in a non-linear manner (133).

perspective, it can be posited that the flows of the site serve three purposes. The first flow promotes the site as a distribution opportunity for filmmakers via the studio/gallery; the second flow is designed to appeal to broadcasters looking for content via the distribution company; and the third is designed to deliver evidence to member states of program coherence, relevancy and success via the database.

E-Platform - Digital Framework as Production Matrix

The E-Platform is a vessel constituting its own systems of power and knowledge of components drawn from media production practice and industry. These components perform the work of an archive, which holds media that is shaped by the processes constituting the E-Platform's other components including the studio/gallery, distribution company, and database (Sullivan). Each of these components plays a different role in the shaping of the video media along with the media producers and the representation of origin, ownership, and location. The E-Platform's function is to promote public service-oriented media produced by grassroots and independent producers from poorer developing countries. It offers filmmakers a professional transnational network, invites submissions for the catalogue, and promotes the benefit of exclusive access to broadcasters. Conceptually, it also functions as a digital extension of UNESCO's mission as an intergovernmental agency of the United Nations. In this context, the catalogue entries and media content serve as evidence of UNESCO's success in fulfilling its mission to create conditions where international dialogue, mutual understanding and its current priorities to promote women's equity are adopted at the local level. Each film in the catalogue represents an endorsed interpretation and translation of this mission. Filmmakers and independent producers who are endorsed

by the program are rewarded with admission to the catalogue and enter into a synergetic relationship with UNESCO.

Dependent on producers from the global South participating in a quality control or screening process, which can best be described as contradictory and the endorsed media defined as a "genuine expression of different cultures in the world," the resulting synergistic relationship is worthy of analysis ("Audiovisual E-Platform"). Despite the program's stated intentions to create the conditions for collaboration and knowledge sharing, the functionality of the E-Platform replicates an historically unequal power relationship between the institution and the media producers. This power imbalance is evident in the organization of information, the design of the interaction, and the design of the quality control process. These elements are consciously designed and derived from institutional policy and project objectives and embedded in the page design during the coding process. In practice, they serve to deny access to marginalized communities, exactly those who, the program materials acknowledge, have the least access to the tools of production, training, and the industry experience that would certify them as professionals. These design elements (information organization, links and wayfinding) form the navigational framework that inhibit users and serve a gatekeeping role that permits only films deemed to have value to broadcasters.

The studio or gallery component of the E-Platform is defined by interactivity (submission process, film rating system, discussion boards, membership) and fills the role of introducing and preparing users of the system (Marshall 85). It is in the construction of the interactivity and the interaction between what Marshall describes as three levels of interactivity – including cybernetics (functions and processes of the

system), wayfinding (navigation cues or bread-crumbs), and smart technology (applications that increase safety and efficiency) (85). The interaction between cybernetics, wayfinding, and smart technology increases user productivity, facilitates human-to-human communication, and creates community. The distribution of content by streaming media to personal computers promotes "films" packaged by the E-Platform and facilitates flow with similar space of TV (commercials, shows, show previews) maintaining a sense of place but collapsing distance and standardizing difference (Govil 140). The digitized film content is organized in the database into predetermined categories and themes (such as "women") linked to institutional objectives (such as improving women's access to technology) (Frick 35). In this way, the E-Platform serves to enfold formerly subaltern communities into the organization systems of the institution, rendering cultures knowable and predictable. This system of organization controls the unknown of a culture by applying familiar themes to film content in an attempt to control the unfamiliar that autonomous media often deliver and reinforce (Sullivan).

The E-Platform distributes media produced by independent producers as well as producers funded by UNESCO. Information about both independent and UNESCO filmmakers provides insight on media labor practices, production practices, and treatment of local content by local producers alongside UNESCO producers. Analysis of this information suggests that those filmmakers who create media on behalf of UNESCO are being replaced by media created by independent filmmakers. In their discussion of the moral economy of Web 2.0, Green and Jenkins describe user-created media as a source of wealth for media companies who just need to figure out how to effectively harness this creativity for the purposes of promoting local and transnational

media industries (213). Media companies have managed to commercialize user-generated content by the promise of a like-minded community to draw fans and those interested in engaging with and participating in the creation of media. However, using the aggregated media to create a catalogue that represents evidence of the organization's credibility transforms cultural specificity and authenticity into a public relations tool for the purposes of increased visibility to broadcasters and distributors.

The database organizes digitized video by country, theme, and film genre/form, making films accessible through a filtering interface for personal viewing. The search functionality is designed to standardize content and production differences endogenous to the filmmaker and to limit differentiation. To do this, the database and corresponding interface clearly identify, organize, and represent instructional values and, in turn, shape the media that is uploaded to the catalogue database. When an instruction is received, the database "delivers" the archived media, transforming the visual content into a file that is reduced to pre-defined categories. Controlled by the existing database configuration in which channels for finding, viewing, and discussing films are defined by the site framework, the film categories are defined by the institution. Programmed into the search functionality based on organizational objectives and topical issues, the categories organize the film search for users.

From users' perspective, the threshold for access to the E-Platform includes Internet access with enough bandwidth to accommodate streaming video and audio from the E-Platform database. Users also require an updated version of the video software REAL Player. Films open in a 495 by 400-pixel window and require literacy in one of the three United Nations languages – Spanish, English, or French. Users are

required to register to access the catalogue. A hybrid of the social network and video upload site, the E-Platform functionality controls access to the catalogue for both media producers and visitors. The registered user is, in theory, an active participant in the social network who is provided access to the forums. Registered users also may participate in evaluating the films available on the E-Platform using a rating system and a comment function.

From the filmmakers' perspective, the site is based on a dysfunctional combination of "community logics" where re-use and permission are a given, and "commercial logics" are negating community by enforcing ownership and restriction (Green and Jenkins 216). Without control of what films get uploaded and when, the filmmakers are less able to build critical mass around a common issue or event based on community interests. As such, users' and filmmakers' participation is not fluid and spontaneous. Rather, participation is geared towards using the catalogue as an archive, reinforcing it as a holder of evidence and a vessel of content for broadcasters. Limited spontaneous participation by filmmakers and users – integral to a healthy civil society – serves to reduce participation and activity on the E-Platform that would challenge the existing power structure. The recent successes of grassroots activism, born out of social networking to disrupt international corporate and government meetings, serves as a precedent.

The phenomenon of building mass participation has occurred since the popular adoption of the Internet and has potential to disrupt organizational activities and threaten power systems. The protests against globalization at the WTO meetings in

1999, 2001, and 2002 represent examples where successful grassroots action was incited by organizing through the Internet.

Grassroots activism has contributed to the current debate over public communication by representing diversity in public media, demonstrating ways in which participatory culture can successfully make change, revealing the adverse affects of globalization on marginalized communities, and framing a role of democratic public communication in contradiction to that which is endorsed by media corporations. Hackett and Carroll argue that the Internet, when transformed into a democratic medium through the adoption of social networking, collaborative tools, and standard design practices, opens up borders and creating opportunities for transnational communication. Effective organizing can bypass the limits of mass media and "implement more dialogical forms of communication" (Hackett and Carroll 48). Establishing the interdependence of these two spaces of interaction, Salter discusses contemporary notions of the public sphere and identifies how the Internet can "facilitate communication in the less formal sense of political society" to varying degrees of success (117). Salter also defines two distinct theoretical approaches to the Internet. One approach shows us that theorists have claimed the transformative capacity of technology as a form of technological determinism. The second approach indicates support of "the capacity of social agents to utilize technologies, and shape them in their use" but does not take into consideration the importance of the increasing differences between proprietary and open source software and the basis for these divergent cultures (Salter 121). While the former is inclined to colonize the Internet to suit corporate purposes, where websites become one-way and people are herded along

controlled and regulated pathways, open source is a tool of social agents and grassroots activism (Salter 139). In the following discussion, a comparative analysis is conducted between a proprietary site, the E-Platform, and The Hub, an open source site. While the purpose of this examination is not focused on the differences between propriety and open source software, it does examine the differences in culture between processes that are delivered across these two difference platforms.

E-Platform Film Submission Process

The *Programme* offers different ways to gain access to the catalogue including film festivals and an open submission process. The open submission process is marginally mentioned on the contact page of the E-Platform, and full submission information is only available at the *Creative Content Programme* site ("Audiovisual E-Platform"). The process forces local cultural goods through industrial processes based on economic considerations not cultural development, resulting in a cultural product that is "nonorganic, distanced, remotely conceived but locally delivered" (Miller, "Technologies of Truth" 31).

Many of the films produced by independent and grassroots media producers are not contracted by the institution to complete this work. These are beneficiaries of UNESCO's network and the promise to make their media available through the catalogue and distribution system. These films are not freely available for download and reuse. A valid restriction for a film catalogue aimed at connecting filmmakers with international broadcasters. However, this restriction is a commercial logic that contradicts the logics of community and a successful social network.

The film submission process is a quality control process that serves a gatekeeping role and serves to legitimize UNESCO's program activities over and above the mission to support local media development by marginalized women and men. The following discussion examines the functionality of the publicly available media submission process by which filmmakers gain access to the catalogue and examines how their work is then represented and evaluated in the E-Platform catalogue. To examine the film submission process, it is examined through a feminist film, technology and post-colonial lens in the context of development. For example, Wiegerma's research draws from the feminist post-colonial theoretical shift towards women-focused development to accommodate basic needs and acknowledge available resources of media producers (community media centers, informal training, and limited access to equipment) as a means to deconstruct the gender bias of technology (362). In this framework, the author outlines three main points based on current web usability standards against which the film submission process is compared. These are that:

1. the institution uses non-user-friendly site development practices in the design of the E-Platform rather than adopting increasingly standard and intuitive social networking design practices;

2. these practices, the information architecture and the associated functionality are unclear, require an unnecessary layer of industry expertise, and parallel an institutional bias against local filmmakers and;

3. the practices, design and functionality of the E-Platform maintain the dominant, subordinate relationship between UNESCO and media producers; it seeks to engage with for the purposes of mission delivery and credibility.

To examine these points, web usability standards are applied to the process loop that a filmmaker must go through to have their film included in the E-Platform catalogue and to then benefit from the UNESCO partnership. This submission process loop has four elements, including finding the instructions, preparing the submission based on the criteria provided, representation of the film on the catalogue page, and viewer feedback on the film.

To provide context for this examination, the author compares the film submission process of the E-Platform to that of The Hub, a non-governmental social network and participatory media site for human rights built around an online catalogue. The purpose of this comparison is to compare two international social networking sites built around human rights-related video content. The Hub and the E-Platform share commonalities in their mission to promote local content, untold stories, and independent media producers. Both sites serve as an archive and distribution system of human rights-related content and are accessible to international broadcasters and the public. The sites differ in their approach to providing access to filmmakers. Where UNESCO pre-screens video content and only promotes the films deemed as representative of UN values to the E-Platform's archive and distribution system, The Hub allows filmmakers to access the platform without a pre-screening process. The Hub supports a peer-review system to ensure the films are deemed representative of Witness' values of supporting the fundamental principals of human rights, collaboration to support inclusiveness, diversity and access to resources.

The Hub site is supported by Witness, an international human rights organization whose mission is to create conditions of collaboration, partnership and learning as

defined in the values of Witness. This site promotes the use of video and media technologies to "transform personal stories of abuse into powerful tools for justice, promoting public engagement and policy change" ("About Witness"). Witness is a nonprofit that partners with grassroots human rights organizations around the world to collaborate on media development. Located in Brooklyn, Witness was started 1992 by singer Peter Gabriel in the aftermath of the Rodney King Jr. beating and the subsequent broadcast of amateur video footage of this event. Since then, Witness has helped to train human rights advocates in over 70 countries to use video to further their campaigns. The Hub is a response to the increased access to mobile video technology and its potential as a tool for anyone to "witness" human rights abuses ("About Witness").

As of May 2011, the E-platform catalogue contained 626 digitized films and videos (434 listed as documentaries) produced by UNESCO partners, UN agencies, and independent producers. General access to the site's functionality is open to the public with registration. A registered member can view the film catalogue, forums, news, and view compressed versions of the films using Real Player. Access to the upload features is limited to professionals (a term that remains undefined) who are pre-screened and endorsed by UNESCO's program specialist. The Hub was launched in 2007 and lists over 1200 videos. Access to the upload feature is open to anyone with an email address and human-rights related media they want to share. Access to the catalogue, forums and news is open to the public without registration. The Hub does not limit access, but rather states that media producers are assumed to be experts in their

topic area and trusted to promote media that is representative of their professionalism and in keeping with ethical standards.

To successfully submit a film and then be accepted into the E-Platform catalogues, filmmakers/media producers must demonstrate a standard level of information literacy not necessarily required to produce a film. They must demonstrate that their approach to production and participation is guided by principals that demonstrate their ability to construct concepts from exiting information and then to reuse/shape that information in such a way that is representative of an understanding of cultural, legal, ethical and social issues (Dunn and Johnson-Brown 88). The text-based, reading/writing, computer-literate person who is positioned in a formal educational system, deemed as necessary for "social inclusion and participatory citizenship," negates oral traditions and is contrary to the accessibility of video technology that does not require reading literacy (Dunn and Johnson-Brown 89). Dunn and Johnson-Brown use the example of the Maroons, free Africans in Jamaica (consisting mostly of runaway slaves prior to emancipation in 1883) who defeated the British troops with their knowledge of local terrain and sophisticated communication systems designed to suit local conditions. This example of the value of local knowledge, over institutional knowledge demonstrates how non-Western or local notions of literacy and knowledge have been negated (Dunn and Johnson-Brown 90; Jarman, Personal interview). Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) are arguably pro-poor (provide access to marginalized populations), address an individual's lived experience, and provide the opportunity for developing countries with local/tradition information literacies to participate, gain access to information, impart and express knowledge beyond their

location (Dunn and Johnson-Brown 97, 94). In their recommendations, Dunn and Johnson-Brown limit their recommendations to the use of ICTs in formal education environments. Their research does address those without means to attend these institutions and who may access ICTs in informal environments, suggesting that Dunn and Johnson-Brown do not fully address the real lived experience of poor communities and women (98).

Finding the information needed to make a submission requires information literacy in that a filmmaker can find, understand, and use the information provided (qtd. in Dunn and Johnson-Brown 85). In each case, the E-Platform proves difficult to navigate. The first barrier is language. English is the dominant language of the Internet and therefore rendering the Internet largely inaccessible to many marginalized women, poor and rural people (Jolly and Narayanaswamy 6). Both the E-Platform and The Hub provide language support in English, Spanish and French at the click of a link. On testing the functionality, The Hub site pages, navigation and links are mostly translated while translation on the E-Platform site is limited to navigation, leaving all page content (and submission information) in English.

Once a filmmaker has overcome the language barrier, The Hub provides two paths signposted by buttons leading to an information page detailing the submission process. Both buttons are located in the top navigation bar on every page. Following the wayfinding or navigation clues for submitting a film, one button is in the form of a tab entitled SHARE and the other is a button entitled UPLOAD accompanied by a graphic of an arrow pointing up. These links lead the filmmaker to a comprehensive guide that directs them through the upload process with step-by-step tips, suggestions on

preparing the media, and information on privacy and security. In contrast, The E-Platform offers a non-operative graphic at the bottom of the catalogue and contact page, which asks the question "Would you like to have your productions in this platform?" Little other information is provided – only an email address if the button is discovered on the contact page. Upon further research, no other submission information is available at the E-Platform. Instead, this information is found at the *Creative Content Programme* site, where brief submission information is available along with a link to the submission form in the portable document format (pdf).

Using the information to make a submission requires that the information provided is comprehensive and guides a filmmaker through the process to submission. This includes outlining the actual steps in sending the media to be submitted and the criteria by which a submission is deemed appropriate for the catalogue. The submission information provided at the *Creative Content Programme* site outlines the criteria for a successful submission. According to the information provided, grassroots organizations and independent producers are the program's "privileged partners" whose media are chosen on "merit" based on their "talent to create meaningful and innovative content," however, the merit criteria and content specification are undefined and left open to interpretation. The Hub, in contrast, starts from the premise that filmmakers bring significant expertise in their area of knowledge and are capable of making decisions on media production practices supporting the mission of the site. At The Hub, submissions go through a peer review process, which is described as informal and based on adherence to the "Content Review Guidelines" that outlines in detail what content is appropriate for the site ("The Hub"). The organization takes the perspective that media

producers need clear guidelines to make decisions on whether their content supports basic principles of human dignity and is unlikely to put anyone involved in the project in danger ("Things to Keep in Mind"). Determining the credibility of a submission is the responsibility of The Hub community, which is provided with the tools to critique the uploaded media and flag it as inappropriate, rate it, and tag it for consideration in another context.

The E-Platform submission process is more time-consuming and arduous. The submission form requires basic submission information including format of the original film, credits, budget, production details, broadcasting history, a film synopsis, and contact information. The submission must be mailed to the UNESCO office in Paris and be sent in VHS format, which assures the Program Specialist who screens the films that the media meet basic broadcasting requirements and may allow for the circumnavigation of state-imposed Internet censorship, or access to Internet technology (Volkmer 322). Most of these requirements are within reason, except the requirement that the submission be sent in VHS format, which assumes access to technology, required to transfer their film to this format. The Hub allows for immediate digital upload of files, which assumes a consistent Internet connection with significant bandwidth. Both of these methods of submission have their drawback and challenges. Still, a review of the submissions uploaded to The Hub shows that filmmakers from all across the global south are represented in greater numbers than at the E-Platform, indicating a greater openness to a range of content and resulting public engagement.

The representation of the endorsed submission in the catalogue is the third step in the upload process and confirms the filmmaker's relationship with the institution. The

filmmakers' page is also a visitor's introduction to the video content. According to the submission information, once Alton Grizzle, the *Creative Content Programme* specialist (and former program manager of the Container Project through the Kingston UNESCO office) accepts the film for inclusion in the catalogue, the filmmaker receives access to the online upload features. This apparently allows filmmakers to upload their film in a digitized format, and to create a catalogue page with film stills, credits, synopsis, contact information and an image of the filmmaker. The finished catalogue page frames the Real Player screen with the title and date of the film, along with viewer ratings at the top. At the left side, a Google Map shows the origin of the film, along with a list of related films in the catalogue. The Hub provides similar functionality, with the addition of the opportunity to subscribe to the catalogue page through Live Bookmarks, and to search Technorati (two social networking tools that allow users to tag media of interest-effectively empowering users to promote media of interest beyond the site) to see who else has linked to the catalogue page.

Films have similar quality parameters. Each is represented in the same video player, dimensions and frame. The standardized format flattens the video and reduces differences that are present between local and national video production practices. Standardization ensures that independent and local films are more commercially viable. As differences in production become less noticeable, the line between commercial and independent videos becomes blurred. A similar phenomenon has occurred on YouTube, in which commercial entities have appropriated independent and amateur authenticity by reproducing non-standardized production practices (Marshall 88). This suggests that the inclusion of less standard quality of video production represents a more democratic

production process and content bestowing on the network a sheen of democracy of access and authenticity of purpose as archive and authority (Hilmes 27-30). Standardization also serves to unify the films as being representative of institutionally defined values and categories – affirming the definition and boundaries of the categories – serving to denationalize the production while integrating the subnational (subaltern) into the national through the process of media and communication development. In this case, it becomes easier to integrate dissention that may appear in the film into the service of the institution by describing it as a representation of culture.

The design of the E-Platform catalogue page and associated assets indicate little concern for promoting the catalogue content. The quality of the images in the E-Platform catalogue page is poor. The stills are most often distorted and pixilated, and the digitized film is often so distorted as to obscure the picture and the subtitles. Associated information about the film is often incomplete and of questionable usefulness. This lack of attention to the quality of the catalogue page suggests that the information provided for upload is incomplete, incorrect, or unclear. In any case, the lack of information provided, the quality of the imagery and the film, contradict the claim that this is valuable content – relegating the work of the filmmaker to amateur status. In contrast, the design of The Hub catalogue pages indicates significant attention to promoting the catalogue content. Each page provides enough information for a viewer to take action, to share and/or engage in dialogue about the filmmaker's work. The aesthetics of each catalogue page complements, rather than degrades the film, reinforcing the premise of this community that each filmmaker is an expert in their area. The Hub catalogue pages also include a counter to let the filmmaker and visitors know

what is popular or highly viewed and records linkages outside and into the site—creating a knowledge network.

Feedback functionality provides for peer comments and represents an immediate and tangible networking benefit to filmmakers for including their film in the catalogue. At The Hub, feedback and ratings provide a measure of accountability for each catalogue entry, informing subsequent visitors and the filmmaker of the impact of their work. The Hub's credibility is derived from the collective action on the site and in communities resulting from the film. Action is Witness' measure of success in social terms. In contrast, the E-Platform measure of success is the number of submissions from target countries and registered users. While each catalogue entry is designed to include broadcast information, that information is seldom available. In some cases, the broadcasting location and dates are now missing in the wake of the site upgrade in June 2009. The measure of success of each catalogue entry in the E-Platform, therefore, is limited. While the E-Platform boasts 6000 registered users as of June 2009, the forums area is seldom used and the most recent entries are either announcements or posts that go unanswered by staff or visitors. With limited recorded interaction, success of the project seems to be limited to the existence of the media hub, with little emphasis placed on its use beyond the creation of the catalogue and the pages.

At the E-Platform, online viewing is encouraged, but downloading of films from the catalogue "is not allowed" which excludes viewers with limited Internet access. Despite the highly degraded quality, any use of the film requires the permission of the filmmaker who must be contacted through the information provided. This is perhaps in

keeping with the idea that this is a catalogue for TV broadcasters that happens to be hosted on the Internet. With the mission converged within its technological context, The Hub itself is designed as a distribution tool and provides notice of the Creative Commons licensing agreement as determined by the filmmaker, allowing for appropriate usage of the film almost immediately. The E-Platform excludes the user-determined copyright functionality and instead directs broadcasters to contact the filmmakers to negotiate a usage agreement. As such, it replicates the functionality of a traditional paper catalogue—promoting inventory and controlling access, while decreasing the chances the films are seen and distributed—locally or globally.

Chapter Summary

Enfolded into the *Programme for Creative Content* are numerous international instruments that have initially ignored women and marginalized men, their lived experience and basic needs followed by specific development projects that situate the equality of women in society as a priority. As with the adoption of new technologies, new policies addressing women are designed to be a better version of their predecessors and are converging policies to address diversity and women to meet commercial objectives (Bolter and Gurgin 14). UNESCO states that the *Programme for Creative Content* and community media centers provide opportunities for marginalized and subaltern populations to engage and participate in a public sphere. The media development framework of UNESCO's project remains in agreement with free speech and free expression principles while continuing to similarly engage in practices that "restructure the media landscape according to international recognized standards" designed to reconstruct an inclusive and flexible public sphere (Price 151). Yet this

public sphere is constructed and buttressed by rules established by the international community in a process that is often exclusive of marginalized populations. Acceptance for distribution is dependent on the local producer adopting narratives that adhere to a predefined list of themes set by UNESCO (Hackett and Carroll 12). Consequently, the resultant media products – those directly supported and/or chosen for dissemination within the *Creative Content* distribution framework – are situated in overlapping and often competing institutional contexts: global governance, development communication practices, feminism, and Western filmmaking ideologies.

The political social justice documentaries and media projects supported through the E-Platform are the result of mediation (translation) of human rights to the vernacular visual medium of digital video. Local documentarists whose media are promoted through the UNESCO E-Platform are deemed successful in the endeavor to embody the values of the organization, including UN-wide priorities emphasizing women's rights and UNESCO-specific priorities to promote cultural diversity at the local level.

The E-Platform makes a claim as a social network in addition to a distribution system to connect filmmakers with broadcasters. The *Creative Content Programme* E-Platform applies non-user-friendly site development practices resulting in inaccessible and complicated submission, cataloguing, networking systems and copyright. By examining the upload process within a framework of comparing sites with like mission statements and supporting functionality, this research reveals how the E-Platform site is not designed to facilitate access to the catalogue, nor is the E-Platform, as intimated, a social network site or a collaborative media catalogue. The E-Platform systems are designed contrary to social networking, collaborative, and basic web design standards

to gatekeep inclusion in the catalogue. With this in mind, the E-Platform serves to justify the program by claiming credit for procuring the work of local filmmakers and providing broadcasters with local representative content, but fails to create the conditions for a participatory community of filmmakers. Furthermore, access to the catalogue, which is promoted as the benefit of the program forces the content through a process that ultimately shapes the media content archived on the E-Platform. This process transforms the media from a source of potential knowledge building and community asset to commodity—cut free of specificity of location, and disconnected from its origin by the decontextualizing pressures of the E-Platform site. As a result, the site is temporarily invigorated as an emerging and legitimate authority on human rights and public-service related media from the global south, but over time, it becomes apparent that the site lacks community, feedback and, thus, sustainability. The filmmakers are not represented as partners but rather as beneficiaries of a program designed to assist in promoting "the best" representations of a particular culture to global broadcasters— maintaining the subordinate / dominant relationship between the institution and local media producers.

CHAPTER 3 REPRESENTATIVE DOCUMENTARIES ON THE AUDIOVISUAL E-PLATFORM

This chapter is a critical cultural analysis of three woman-produced documentaries sanctioned by UNESCO as representative of institutional values and made available for global distribution through UNESCO's Audiovisual E-Platform. Moreover, this is an examination of identity emerging when media representing universal values of human rights, culture, democracy, and liberty meet globalizing institutional policies consisting of the market, technology, and information flow (Baudrillard). This research examines why UNESCO values these films, how institutional practices and synergistic relationships influence production and texts, and how filmmakers resist with their approach to representation of everyday life. Institutional policies challenge specificity, which evidence class, race, and gender disparities in favor of generalities that serve to render sameness normal and the local knowable.

The E-Platform is an ideal technological system for appropriating, replicating, and promoting the institution's policies and programming objectives for social representation. In terms of content, analysis of three documentaries reveal the institution's preference for global themes such as cultural tolerance, women's emancipation, and acceptable political struggle grounded in traditional family and gender roles. Yet, the films also reveal glimpses of local life that contradict the persistence of traditional gender roles in *Welcome Mr. Postman*, class difference in the *Ladies Special*, and civic participation in *Chronicle of a Dream / Crónica de un Sueño* and question the stability of these normalized stereotypes.

Broader global themes of family, nation and homeland frame local examples of inter-cultural dialogue, women's equity, and the social struggle for peace and poverty eradication. These examples are just a few of the eleven categories currently listed in the E-Platform. Representing changing priorities of the institution, it is evident that these themes are presently relevant to UNESCO because they constitute the organizational system of the E-Platform. In turn, these themes and the organizing system define the media in the catalogue. Except in keeping with the pre-defined themes, critical analysis of the films in the catalogue is not promoted.

The tensions between the two systems (local creative production and global media systems) are evident in the differences examined within representative documentaries. Therefore, this is more than just an analysis of independent documentary content and documentary practice. Framing this research are interviews with three UNESCO-supported women filmmakers to examine their relationship with the institution in comparison to their approach to documentary production. This includes a textual analysis of their films on the E-Platform. The goal of this chapter is to uncover what aspects of the filmmakers' approach and content the institution supports and then, how it appropriates their films and their production practices.

This approach deconstructs representations of local life in developing societies in contestation with institutional pressures for sameness. These research methods expose how filmmakers negotiate their radicalness formed by experiences of feminism, migration, exile and local struggles for justice set in the transnational cultural/political economy. Further, this chapter examines what and how filmmakers produce within the

context of broad institutional initiatives, structural processes and the tensions between conflicting visions for civil society.

The documentaries to be examined include *Welcome Mr. Postman / Mi Case Es Tu Casa* (Madeleine Bondy, Mexico, 2004), *Ladies Special* (Nidhi Tuli, India, 2003), and *Chronicle of a Dream / Crónica de un Sueño* (Mariana Viñoles and Stefano Tononi, Uruguay, 2005). The films were viewed on a computer screen in the RealPlayer video player embedded in the online E-Platform catalogue page. Additional research sites include production and promotional materials posted to selected websites, as well as the E-Platform catalogue. The films are part of a larger corpus of 54 documentaries drawn from 355 independently produced videos available on the E-platform[10]. These documentaries are presented in English with subtitles when local languages are spoken. Filmmakers were interviewed between 2009 and 2010 via Skype and email.

These films are representative of independently produced documentaries in the E-Platform. The inclusion of these documentaries in the E-Platform indicates that they have been individually reviewed and sanctioned (and in some cases obtained and uploaded without the knowledge of the filmmaker) by UNESCO's Creative Content Programme specialists. Further, they represent television content that is "public service oriented, innovative, challenging, going beyond conventional forms of television language, as well as a genuine expression of different cultures in the world" ("E-Platform"). Moreover, inclusion in the E-Platform indicates that they represent the institutional human rights-based value system. In UNESCO's purview, this includes the promotion of peace through international dialogue, and cultural and linguistic diversity

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[10] As of May 2009.

realized through grassroots media content development. Influencing these priorities is a current organizational mandate to promote gender equity emerging out of the Millennium Development Goals implemented to reduce poverty by increasing access to information communication technologies through content development ("Medium-Term Strategy, 2008-2013" 10; "E-Platform"). In this context, these personal stories are surrendered to UNESCO protocols and processes. Shaped and then circulated as a published collection of human rights films, these films are accepted to the exclusion of others (Schaffer and Smith 12).

Filmmakers Bondy, Tuli and Vinõles produce films within a documentary and industry tradition. These women create films in the broader culture of two divergent media systems. Simply described these systems are a state-influenced system in the former British colony of India (BBC/ORTF), and a commercially influenced system based on the United States private interest model in Latin America (Sinclair 346). As filmmakers, they operate on the margins of local and global mainstream film industries. These women are all first-time independent film directors who have limited access to mainstream production tools and funding sources, a range of formal and informal film training and experience, and access to the Internet as a means of distribution.

The filmmakers use modern technology and actively participate in civic life. The three documentaries provide different perspectives on documentary production and demonstrate the diversity in which activists and filmmakers approach the practice of human rights issues in everyday circumstances. While the topics differ from film to film, they represent stories of everyday life in communities in developing countries as observed and experienced by immigrant women filmmakers. As part of a multicultural

Diaspora[11], they act as intermediaries between the institution and the local and fill a "liminal subjectivity and interstitial location in society and the film industry" (Naficy "Accented Cinema" 10). Therefore, this chapter examines their role as intermediaries by describing their relationship with the institution, their films and their production practices in relation to their experiences as transnational filmmakers.

Commonalities between the three filmmakers and their films form the framework of analysis. In addition to their relationship with UNESCO, Bondy, Tuli, and Viñoles produce stories that examine experiences of exile and emphasize human rights promotion. In terms of story construction, they use traditional narrative forms (clear beginning, middle, and end). Further, they have a discernable production style and similar approaches to filmic construction, (editing techniques specific to film production that include different cuts, transitions, and the use of different shots that are used to create a story in film such as an establishing or master shot). The three filmmakers have similar experiences with funding and distribution systems formed by industry-defined practices, represented as intrinsic to filmmaking and a standard of professionalism. The common representation of lived experiences of home and homeland, heterosexual family life, community engagement, the struggle for social justice, and modern life, reveal imbedded ideologies, institutional pressures and homogenizing tendencies. Establishing this framework clarifies how institutional policies and practices influence the represented output of production activities. It allows us to recognize that these films function within a system (mainstream media industry) of rules

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[11] Madeleine Bondy is a Danish national living in Puebla, Mexico (Bondy interview). Nidhi Tuli is a Kashmirian national now living in Bombay, India (Tuli interview). Mariana Viñoles is a Uruguayan national who lived in Spain, but has now returned to Montevideo, Uruguay (Viñoles interview).

where people do not share equally in the means of production. Here, the institution requires the films to be made recognizable by the application of "common features" across a disparate field of film products (Naficy "Accented Cinema" 20).

The framework prepares the documentaries for a cohesive examination of meaning and identity construction to determine what is representative of institutional values within the political and cultural economy of UNESCO's *Creative Content Programme.* This framework accommodates filmmakers' distinct, disparate and yet historically interconnected experiences of identity fragmentation resulting from migration and other pressures of social change brought about by globalization and technology. Differences in identity, because of subject choice, treatment and style, is examined within this framework of commonality in the context of the influence of institutional expectations. The purpose is to discern how the films (representing universal values) converge with or diverge from, the policies of the institution. This then allows for the examining of how the films function within a globalizing technology system (Minh-Ha 76).

The documentaries are comparable based on four areas that are significant to our understanding of the production, distribution and textual analysis of filmmaking. These areas allow us to compare these films based on the experience of migration of the filmmaker, the approach to story, and the filmmaker's production practices, all of which influence the final text – the film. All three of these women have experienced migration because of choice or by force. In terms of approach or style, they use a recognizable documentary standard (a hybrid based on the Griersonian didactic tradition and 1970s feminist documentary practice of developing trust between

filmmaker and subject) and recognizable narrative form. These films are not about exposing falsity. Rather, they represent a social justice issue addressed through community or citizen engagement where problem solving is fore-grounded within local culture and community discourse. They also share a commonality of production technique including the filmmaker/ production apparatus in the frame. These films were all produced with little funding and small film crews. They are currently available for viewing as part of the E-Platform online catalogue. In addition, these films have won recognition at international film festivals.

There are three sections in this chapter. Each section is an analysis of a documentary film and filmmaker. Interviews with filmmakers, textual analysis of each film and supporting websites are organized into a discussion of the filmmaker's relationship with the institution, their political and social context, their approach to story, and their unique style and production practice. The analysis of the films and production practice draws from the institutional context and available external sources including festival reviews, media coverage, and production documentation. The order of the films forms a bridge between the preceding chapter that is an institutional analysis of the UNESCO E-Platform and its influence on documentary production practice, and the subsequent chapter that is an examination of production practice at a community media center. Conceptually, this examination of three representative documentaries leads the discussion of struggles for social justice from the institutional analysis of the UNESCO *Creative Content Programme* in the previous chapter to grassroots community media production in the next chapter. The order of the films goes from a context of comfortable acceptance of migration to critical analysis of exile. Bondy portrays acceptance of the

homogenizing tendencies of globalization and heterosexual family life as a means to promote racial harmony in *Welcome Mr. Postman*. Tuli represents her struggle to acclimate to her adopted homeland and discovers positive change in women's social struggle on a train in *Ladies Special*. Viñoles, representing the most exilic perspective of the three filmmakers, is an uncomfortable economic exile and takes the viewer onto the streets of a political struggle in Uruguay in *Chronicle of Dream.*

***Welcome Mr. Postman / Mi Casa Es Tu Casa -* Transforming the Transfrontera: Issues of Race in the Filmic Construction of Transnational Identity**

In *Welcome Mr. Postman*, four male postal workers from four continents share experiences of daily life in countries as seemingly dissimilar as Mexico, to Japan, Zimbabwe, and Denmark. Over the course of a one-week home stay, families share their hopes and dreams for their families, as well as experiences of home, school, and work. They address issues pertaining to what it means to be human in the world today and find commonalities across differences in race, religion, salary and social status. They demonstrate that issues of difference do not need to divide us. Promoting UNESCO's goal for cultural understanding and sharing of knowledge between countries, this film examines global issues within a context of static gender roles of traditional heterosexual family life. In this case, the E-Platform serves to reaffirm traditional gender roles through replication and distribution.

The Film and Its Relationship to the Institution

Welcome Mr. Postman (Madeline Bondy, Mexico, 2003) is an observational documentary punctuated by accidental self-reflexive scenes of interaction between the

postmen, their families, and the film crew in the process of discussing and performing production-related activities. The postal profession and the family is a means to examine issues of race, difference and sameness in four transnational/cultural contexts. The film is divided into four segments corresponding to each country. Each segment focuses on the interaction between a foreign postman and his family and a local postman and his family. The first segment opens as the Danish postman and his family visit Mexico and a local postman and his family. Next, the film moves on to Japan where the Mexican family visits a Japanese postman and his family. In the third segment, the Japanese family visits Zimbabwe and stays at the home of a Zimbabwean postman and his family. The film ends with the Zimbabwean postman and his family visit Denmark. Each segment is constructed to represent socially and ethnically diverse postmen in family units as they discover commonalities and differences between how they live their everyday lives. Director Madeleine Bondy says that focusing on the lives of postmen and their families helped to remove barriers, encourage bonding, reveal where people share preoccupations, and identify differences.

In agreement with UNESCO's values and policies, this film examines social relations as representative practices that promote peace between nations and equality between people and gender. Communication theorist Carey argues that social relations are actually an ancient means of communication and association tied to politics and entertainment "conducted by speech and storytelling overlaid with newer habits of literacy" which have been "stabilized by writing and reinforced by printing" or film in this example (3). Since John Grierson's pioneering of documentary film in the 1920s and his work with the British Government Film Unit, documentary has served the powerful as a

tool to overcome geography and difference through promoting social relation practices of the monoculture (necessary to promote colonialism) by mediating and smoothing over difference. However, in *Welcome Mr. Postman*, Bondy has effectively constructed a framework in which distance between countries is re-inserted and geography emphasized through difference in place. Travelling from place to place, the postmen and their families construct a transnational flow of shared perspectives on the human condition. Differences of local culture, race, and social status shape those perspectives to varying degrees and cause awkward social moments, but are valued as part of human interaction. In this process of networking one country to the next, the filmmaker connects families through commonality across local tradition, economic disparity, and social conditions (Carey 6).

The Center of Visual Arts for Global Understanding (CAVAC) produced the film with the assistance of numerous private and public institutions in Denmark, Japan, and Mexico, including the Danish postal service, Japan Airlines, and the University of the Americas in Puebla, Mexico (*Welcome Mr. Postman*). Funding was difficult to secure for this film according to Bondy because her family-focused examination of race, based on transnational commonality, did not resonate with funders. She was told her film lacked conflict and dramatic impact. Bondy also noted that her requests for funding were rejected by UNESCO Mexico and UNESCO Denmark and she was surprised to learn from this researcher that *Welcome Mr. Postman* is being distributed through the UNESCO E-Platform. The film is also distributed through TV2 Denmark, the publically owned Danish television network, and is available through the Open Society Archives

(OSA) at the Central European University film audiovisual archives within the Film Library.

Welcome Mr. Postman was shown in 15 film festivals between 2004 and 2007. In addition, the film was chosen for the 2005 Chicago International Documentary Festival's Mexico - Country in the Spotlight; showcased during the Visionaries: Youth and Environmental Filmmakers panel at the 2006 Sacramento Film Festival as a family focused learning experience; chosen for the Potsdam 2006 World and Culture Dokumentar film festival; and chosen for the 2007 Women's International Film Festival. The film also has a page on the Internet Movie Database (IMBd). Bondy's film was highlighted in 2006 while she was a visiting filmmaker at the Cultural Institute of Mexico in Washington, D.C ("Women in Film & Video" 3). In the broader public sphere, Bondy has received positive feedback from schools and multiple requests for a copy of the film. More recently, the requests have dwindled and she expressed disappointment with the lack of opportunities to distribute the film and to have the film screened. In terms of future endeavors, Bondy says that she has a lot of footage of the children taken at the schools and would like to eventually turn this into an educational program and develop supporting materials.

Danish, Mexican, Woman Documentary Filmmaker

A Mexican by immigration, Bondy is Danish by birth and moved from Denmark to Mexico in 1985. Bondy is fascinated by how people perceive those in distant countries as so different from themselves. She believes people's lives and daily struggles are quite similar, but they are unable to recognize their own reality. "When you move to another country, you are scared of everything," she says. When she first moved from

Denmark to Mexico, her friends and family commented on how strange and different her new home must be from her homeland ("NG World Talk Interview"). Bondy explains that when she immigrated, she was concerned about Mexico's reputation for violence and corruption, and although she now knows these things do exist, she learned that her daily reality is quite similar to what she experienced in Denmark. This exotic entrance consisting of the preconceived ideas, initial fears and later experiences made her realize the impact that travel and interacting with different people can have on how we all see the world.

Bondy has been involved with film production for over 20 years and *Welcome Mr. Postman* is her directorial debut (welcomemrpostman.com). Bondy states that she does not support the practice of some filmmakers who travel to other countries and treat a topic through their own eyes. Even though she controls the camera and creation of the final film through editing, she encourages the families to create their own topics of conversation through various forms of social interaction (sharing a meal, exchanging gifts, discussing children and family, and participating in a day at the host's post office). She shows these families from different cultures and countries, talking about their dreams, struggles, and desires for their children in order to foreground what they have in common. With this hybrid approach, Bondy maintains control of the film but invites the families to co-create meaning and knowledge through dialogue.

Bondy's experience of home and homeland is a result of migration based on the availability of employment opportunities and access to formal education. Unlike Nidhi Tuli and Mariana Viñoles, she and her family immigrated out of choice rather than economic or social necessity. Bondy has a Master's degrees in French literature from

the University of Copenhagen, and in Theatrical Sciences from the Sorbonne, Paris. She also has a Diploma in Fundamentals of Cinema from the Universidad Iberoamericana, Puebla, and she studied Fine Arts in the Universidad de las Americas in Puebla (welcomemrpostman.com). Bondy's husband is a political scientist, and they enjoy a middle-class lifestyle. While her experience of immigration is not because of forced exile, she is acutely aware of social isolation and describes on the film's website how immigrants face suspicion and intolerance that makes their daily life more difficult (welcomemrpostman.com). Still, she is currently committed to Mexico as her home and maintains her connection to Denmark during the summer months when she travels to visit family. The persistence of her connection to her home and homeland is evident in Bondy's choice of countries for this documentary and the involvement of her family, colleagues, and friends in Denmark and Mexico.

Director Bondy's Approach to Story

"It's all about similarities," Bondy says when describing her approach to her film. As an immigrant and someone who has the means to travel, Bondy feels it was important for her to make a film against racism "which as Carlos Fuentes says, is generally due to unfamiliarity with the other" (welcomemrpostman.com). Bondy has learned through the experience of travelling and living in Denmark, the United States and Mexico that the fear of the unknown and the unfamiliar are at the root of racial conflict. She says her experience of living in Washington D.C. and the imposition of affirmative action policies resulted in her believing that a result is segregation and attention to difference. Yet, during the scenes shot at the Harare (Zimbabwe) Post Office, the noticeable discomfort of the local postal employees (in response to the

camera and crew) suggests that differences exist between those with power and local people.

The exploration of race is contextualized for the viewer in three socio-cultural frameworks with multiple points of familiarity and/or difference including location, profession, and family. In a podcast interview with National Geographic *World Talk*, Bondy explains she chose Denmark, Mexico, Japan, and Zimbabwe as representative of the four points of the globe (north, south, east, and west). She chose the postal profession because it is an internationally recognized occupation with positive regard, and decided to include families in the film as most of us live in families of one sort or another. Paralleling the viewer's experience of encountering sameness and difference while watching, the film is also a journey of discovery for the families. As these families do not have the means for international travel, the filmmaking process provided them with the opportunity to travel and to engage in conversations with another family who share the familiarity of the postal profession and similar family structures. Bondy writes that this experience of introductions and interactions is essential to the development of the film (welcomemrpostman.com).

Bondy believes in a positive approach to addressing racism where viewers can identify with what they have in common with others rather than divided apart by difference. She chose postmen and their families as a vehicle for examining racism because it "gave us the possibility of going out into the streets where people live" and into neighborhoods where the postmen work rather than focusing on tourist destinations or spaces dominated by public monuments ("NG World Talk Interview"). She says that postmen are familiar to viewers as well as adept at communicating with their customers

on a regular basis and they make it possible for people from different parts of the world to communicate. This skill in communication is represented in each chapter when the postmen (local and visitor) travel their route on bike delivering mail and interacting with local residents. Bondy says postmen "know a lot about your life, a lot more than you would imagine" because of their involvement with each resident in the neighborhood ("NG World Talk Interview"). This professionalized voyeurism is echoed by Bondy's approach to shaping encounters that are both familiar and support gender-based ideologies of work, home, and childcare.

Bondy's approach as a woman director is to focus on the family and the commonalities she has observed in familial relations in Mexico and Denmark. She says that this is as important as the postal profession in facilitating understanding of race across nations and cultures. Yet, she had significant challenges securing funding because her topic and use of everyday family relations in such a manner was not considered a "heavy enough" topic for a documentary on racism. Potential backers such as the Danish Government asked why she did not just go out and do the interviews about racism in different countries herself – "why bring the families?" She even had difficulty entering the film into festivals because there is a predilection for conflict that is absent from her film. Yet, the *Creative Content Programme* believes the film contributes to the E-Platform, indicating that they support these representations of gender, work, and social relations.

Despite the lack of support she says, "I could see that I was right. There does not need to be conflict between people [to address racism]. People can open up when they are together and people can see connections between the cultures" (Bondy interview).

A specific example of this is shown in the film as the Mexican and Danish women describe and then laugh about how their husbands allow the children to stay up past their bedtime when they are caring for the children. A seemingly unremarkable moment in the documentary reveals a connection between cultures within a banal every day event that would otherwise go unnoticed if the subject of the film were conflict-based. It is also a moment that specifically addresses familial/gender power dynamics that are constant across cultures, but set within the daily negotiation of the private realm (familial relations, home life) deemed too light of a topic. It is in these moments that the film resists homogenization and ideology by representing specific experiences of family life.

This observational documentary is interwoven with scenes of interaction between the family members and the film crew that foreground power dynamics along the transfrontera or border between the filmmaker and the subject and between the different families. The transfrontera is a term used in Chicana feminist studies to complicate the binarism between people of unequal power on either side of a border as a means to represent the nuances of difference that can include practices of transnational collaboration and resistance (Saldivar-Hull 252). Within each of the four sections of *Welcome Mr. Postman*, a transfrontera defines interactions as the new family and the film crew arrives to visit, work and film for one week in each country. In this contact zone, the filmmaker and her subjects meet and interact for the purposes of creating a documentary. In this process, the conversations are unscripted, but the filmmaker, who controls this interaction, defines the framing and the editing.

The choice of locations defines the conversations by traditional gender roles where men concern themselves with life in the public sphere, and women concern

themselves with life within the home. Bondy explains that she did not ask her subjects to talk about any particular topic, but she did film in specific and gendered locations such as the Post Office, the kitchen, and the dining room. The men interact at the Post Office and their wives interact in the kitchen. The families most often interact in the dining room and living room. At the Post Office, scenes and conversations between the postal workers focus on their identity made up of work conditions, social status, and salary.

The promotion of gender roles reinforces public and private sphere spaces and activities, and sets the tone of the documentary. As the film title implies, *Welcome Mr. Postman* represents people connecting via a traditionally male-defined profession. The profession is familiar around the world, and the postman is a respected public figure who controls the flow of information between countries, businesses and citizens. Representing transnational commonality, these postmen fluidly transition between home, work, and public life.

The men engage in conversations comparing their experiences of society and national culture. During the Japanese family's stay in Mexico, the men go out for beers with friends to discuss the Mexican postal worker's perception of the city and Post Office. Auturo, the Mexican postman says, "I've always had the impression of a very respectful country….And very clean" (Welcome Mr. Postman). In response, an unidentified Japanese postal colleague says "You have too high of an opinion of us." Another adds, "I want you to know that in Japan there's the truth and the surface. And I think you only see the surface," and continues to talk about how it is hard for postmen to make ends meet in Japan. They then turn the conversation to how they similarly must

help at home (laughing) because their wives in Mexico and Japan work. They clink beer mugs celebrating their new friendships, and the scene ends. Constructed by gender roles including helpmate and parent, the framework of interaction between the wives is markedly different than the framework of the interaction between the postmen.

Unlike her husband who is performing the act of attending work today, Eriko has taken the day off to act as a homemaker and mother in a domestic scene in her kitchen. "My husband doesn't like to wash dishes or clean the house," says Eriko in the first seconds of the domestic scene where she interacts with Arturo's wife, Patricia. She responds with a complaint about how her husband does not separate the colors from the whites when he does laundry. The women laugh about this as they sit around a portable cooker in the kitchen, where Eriko carefully attends to the cooking of a meal. The scene ends.

Further reinforcing their social role or place in society, Eriko and Patricia, as with all the interactions between the postal worker's wives are shown as physically located in the home. Here, the women talk while the men are at work and the children are at school. They interact only with each other in these scenes and discuss their relationships with those who are absent. The conversations tend to focus on comparisons between family life, child rearing, and food preparation. At times, their conversations seem banal and forgettable form the familiar examination of the day-to-day experiences of cooking, cleaning, and children. On closer inspection, these scenes reveal that these women rarely speak of their individual hopes or dreams. They rarely are represented as discussing life outside of the house or work such as personal interests or hobbies.

What makes these scenes vacillate between forgettable and suffocating are the contrasting moments when the women act as individuals, not women performing social roles. Shot between visits are scenes where each family discusses what they expect of their forthcoming visit to another country. Here the women have voice. In these moments, Rikke (Denmark), Patricia (Mexico), Eriko (Japan), and Evelyn (Zimbabwe) express what they are looking forward to or what to learn during the visit. For example, countering Torben's questions about leisure time (in the context of television and Playstation) in Mexico, Rikke says, "Pssshaw…I just look forward to meeting them, to see who they are, to talk to them." The roles here are reversed. The women address substantial issues pertaining to culture and society, and the men focus on finding distraction through entertainment.

Bondy and her crew shot many hours of digital footage and only suggested another topic of conversation in the instance when the subjects "got lost talking about something like food" (Bondy interview). At times, her subjects would talk to the crew during a break while the camera was still rolling. In one example, the film is rolling and a subject comments to the crew about the other family not present. In our personal interview Bondy said she decided to include these interactions between the subjects and the film crew if they offered an opinion about the other (not present) as she believes these evaluations of the encounters are important to the film (interview).

In each chapter in the film, what lies in the transfrontera is social interaction along a racial and cultural border (a family from a first world country meets a family from a less developed country) and the boundary that exists between the filmmaker and subject in an observational documentary. To examine the transfrontera between the

families and the filmmakers, it is useful to examine the "cracks" in the social interactions between the families and the production crew that disrupt the often-smooth flow of the documentary. For example, Eriko, the Japanese wife expresses her fear to the crew that Africans are uncivilized, but does not speak of this to the African family. These moments reveal the social missteps that disrupt the social interaction and reveal cracks/fissures/borders delineating difference in what is generally take for granted as culturally common interaction.

Bondy includes the social missteps, awkward moments, aside conversations that occur in the meeting of the families at moments when they seemingly forget they are on camera. As such, rather than simply facilitating the construction of a monoculture, the documentary serves to restore distance and difference and to reconstruct local forms of community, social interaction, and evidence of democracy. This is evident in a scene when Tendai, the Zimbabwean postman, comments on how people in Demark have so much but are unhappy in life. Revelations of racist and hegemonic-based assumptions reveal themselves as unintentional communication, telling us more about race, gender, and class than the commonalities of the postal profession and heterosexual family life. These revelations are evident because of three story-development practices that occurred during production-induced encounters leading to the construction of the transfrontera evident in this documentary. These actions include negotiating identity and subjectivity resulting from negotiations between the filmmaker and the subject; destabilizing the frame resulting from on-screen interaction between the subject with the filmmaker; and acknowledging the construction of the transfrontera, negotiations and interactions during editing as evidence in the final film and in film stills. The film stills of

the camera crew, set and subject remind us that these are constructed encounters between people with different priorities and goals.

Director Bondy's Representative Style of Filmmaking and Production Practice

The production of *Welcome Mr. Postman* occurred over a period of six years and involved significant pre-production work.

> Development of the project began in October 1998, but it was not until May 2001 that the production started with the recording of the Danish postman and his visit to Puebla, Mexico. In September 2001, the production was taken to Yokohama and in November 2001 to Harare. In May 2002, the production was finally taken to Copenhagen. The post-production began in September 2002 and the final cut was ready in September 2004 (welcomemrpostman.com).

Bondy travelled with a crew of four or five to each of the four locations, meeting the host family and the visiting family at the location. In each country, she hired addition local crew, interpreters, translators, and caterers, as well as country-specific accounting and legal assistance. In each country, she had to secure permissions from the local embassies, postal authorities, schools, and local municipalities to film in the primary schools and city streets.

Bondy says that the families quickly forgot about the film crew because they were focused on communicating with each other, which was often facilitated by a translator. In some cases, English is spoken and understood (such as between the Danish and Zimbabwean adults). Yet, she also emphasizes the disjunction between difference and sameness by including dialogue in which one family confesses racially motivated

concerns to the crew behind the camera that are not addressed between families. This creates a break in the practice of social pleasantries (universalized culture), serves to amplify issues of race, and redefines each of the families when it ceases to function. Therefore, the filmic construction of a seamless transnational identity and the possibility of addressing racism through commonality (with emphasis on foregrounding the family) are questioned and remain unresolved. Alternatively, Bondy leaves this open to our interpretation as a means to posit that there is no transcendental unity – that difference lacks identity (Eisenstein 40).

To examine Bondy's style the following discussion will focus on the production elements evident during the encounter between the Japanese and Zimbabwean postal workers and their families in Zimbabwe. This chapter in the film is useful as a means to identify that the context of language and cultural differences pose less of a barrier to mutual understanding than race, class and gender differences and expectations. In this sequence, the application of the filmic process to construct a story of cross-cultural relations clarifies that these issues are more complex and integral to the practice of civil society. The camera apparatus is also useful in revealing a disjunction between the layers of social interaction between places as is again evident when the camera captures confessions of preconceived ideas of the other or acknowledgements of difference.

In the lead-up to the encounter between the Japanese and Zimbabwean family, more than the other three encounters in this documentary, the interaction between Eriko, the Japanese wife and the camera crew who are off camera, destabilizes the frame. This interaction, shot before leaving Japan, reveals underlying hegemonic-based

assumptions and a need to tell but not to reveal her discomfort of racial and cultural difference. The offside interactions between the family and crew are noteworthy as they read as a confessional of the Japanese family's concerns, questions, fears, and misunderstandings of Zimbabwe and African people. For example, in one such scene, Eriko turns to the camera (she is still in Japan during this scene), and voices her previous belief that she thought African people ran around naked and chased animals – but, she assures the crew, she bought a book and now knows this is not true. In a later clip shot in Zimbabwe, Masahiko (Japanese postman) talks about how life in Japan is not particularly happy because of the focus on work, social status, and governed by the stigma of speaking publically of personal issues. He contrasts this to life in Zimbabwe, which he perceives as more fulfilling. Zimbabweans have less money and fewer creature comforts, but voice greater satisfaction in their lives and pride in the emancipation of women in their society. This observation is confirmed by Bondy during our interview and during the final sequence representing the Zimbabwean family's visit to Denmark.

It is evident that the context for the dialogue between families, including recognizable familial and social rituals, was reconstructed to accommodate production practices and the director's pre-defined objectives to explore racism. Repeated for each of the four encounters in this documentary, the interaction between the Japanese and Zimbabwean families is organized into the following four scenes. Opening each sequence, the families meet in the host family's community. In the morning the postmen head out to spend a day at the host postman's office and on the delivery route. While the men are at work the wives prepare meals and discuss family life, and the children

spend a day at the host children's school. The sequence ends with a scene of their final meal together and the departure of the visiting family. This ending is punctuated by declarations of friendship and promises of future visits. In each scene, the subjects comply with the environments created by social expectation, compare difference and sameness, and perform highly ideological and gendered activities. For example, at a park or a home, the families meet and exchange pleasantries and gifts; at work, the men talk about post office labor practices, modes of transportation, and delivery methods; in the kitchen, the women talk about food preparation, running a household, their relationship with their husbands, and child rearing. When the discussion diverges from the context/dialogue relationship, it serves to represent the construction of identity separate from the filmmaker's intentions.

These moments are evident in the film in certain circumstances in Zimbabwe, but demonstrate a lack of understanding of the other, and an awareness of difference that makes communication between the crew and the subject uncomfortable. The Zimbabwean family – Tendai, his wife Evelyn and their children do not step out of character, cross the boundary of the fourth wall, or otherwise engage the crew during production. The incidents of negotiation between the Zimbabweans and the crew are evident in the scenes shot at Tendai's house and at the Post Office, but do not communicate the same level of trust in similar situations captured during the *Ladies Special* (discussed in the next section). These awkward moments of silence are evident when the camera captures representations of discomfort revealed by body language and the exchange of uncomfortable glances off camera, reminding the viewer of the

intervention of the camera apparatus into private lives and spaces and the expectation of performance to result during production.

Singled out for close attention, the Zimbabwean family is a discursive formation that represents a power inequity between the camera and the family in this small representation of races and nations. When Tendai speaks of his daily struggle to secure food for his children, there is no response. At no point in the film is this difference examined as a possible underlying cause of racial conflict. This silence and a later voice-over expressing friendship with the Danish postman demonstrates how Tendai's family bears the burden of representing "divisive issues of difference as differences of class, gender, region, and ethnicity, that articulate which aspects of culture will 'count' as representative of the nation, and that manage the tension between tradition and modernity" (Mahon 471). In this example appearances count, but people noting significant disparities in access to basic food does not warrant any mention. This is interesting to consider in the context of Zimbabwe's current social and economic upheaval[12]. Therefore, as we watch this film – we see the representation that peace and human rights prevail and Tendai's family as representative of how well Zimbabwe performs the monoculture.

The Ladies Special - Deconstructing Identity Politics / Increasing Gender Visibility

Reconciling the filmmakers' initial experiences of a women's only train running daily to and from Mumbai, this film tells the story of how women have transformed their twice-daily commute into time and space for themselves. On the Ladies Special, women

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[12] At the time of this filming (2001) Amnesty International reported systematic human rights violations across the city of Harare, including the establishment of torture centers, and the clearing out of the civil service for those who did not support the current government.

jostle for seats as well as create community, celebrate life events, support each other, and find a space of their own. The women's train is a place of contrast. At times, this is a spiritually uplifting place, at other times women fight over seating or a difference of opinion. Some women engage in substantial conversation about family issues, others paint their nails, sleep or gossip. The Ladies Special is a First Class car, separating the women from the men. Within the car, the middle-class women sit separately from the lower-class women. Professional women (lawyers, doctors, professors as well as office workers) sit in the train seats or stand. Women street vendors sit by the doors on the floor preparing food to sell in the city and for the women who share the train. Relatively wealthier women ride in seats by the windows and commune in small groups. Therefore, while, women are cultivating a women-only train-based culture, within this culture class divides are maintained and normalized. Therefore, this film serves to meet UNESCO goals of women's equity in society by changing women's behavior. Yet, it does so without promoting social discord between classes, or questioning men's role in society.

The Film and Its Relationship to the Institution

The documentary *Ladies Special* (Nidhi Tuli, India, 2003) is a present-day story of the women who ride the Ladies Special back and forth from outlying communities to downtown Mumbai, India. Examined in the context of the theory and practice of communication as liberation, this transient space is represented as one where women network, form groups, make friendships, share stories, and celebrate ceremonies during their daily commute. Chosen in the Open Frame competition held by UNESCO, *Ladies Special* appropriately promotes UN-targeted global human rights, including cultural

diversity and the right for women to participate equally in the development and maintenance of their local communities. This documentary is representative of the practice of women's rights: bodily safety, autonomy, voice, equality – ideas that are practiced on the train and translated through filmic construction and content (Merry 137).

This documentary is currently being distributed through the UNESCO E-Platform and was produced with the assistance of The Public Service Broadcasting Trust (PSBT) of India and has been broadcast on television in India (c2003). The film is also available on Culture Unplugged, a website designed to promote "socially and spiritually conscious" content, and storytellers to global audiences. According to Tuli, she did not submit the film to UNESCO and was not aware of the E-Platform stating that PSBT arranged to have the film included in the UNESCO catalogue (interview). Further, she has received numerous requests for interviews, but does not know if the interest in her film is because of the E-Platform.

In the context of the role of documentary film in India, this film represents an active attempt to educate the public about women's rights and experience in public spaces. Moreover, Ladies' Special represents women's emancipation but does not disrupt deep-set gender expectations or class divides in society. Through the film, the theme that women repeatedly perform their traditional roles is evident. The women can voice their concerns about their role at home or in society, but the train makes those challenges a bit easier to bear, it does not change them. In keeping with UNESCO's goals, the film replicates acts of women's community, but do not destabilize societal class or gender roles.

This location has cultural and social significance as it frames women, provides context for the practice of rights and translates women into knowable individuals with voices and autonomy. Simultaneously, the documentary serves to maintain the importance of family, tradition, religion and culture in the practice of human rights. For example, the film opens as a group of women on the train adorns another with jewelry. Then, the shot cuts to a tray holding cloth, a bowl of rice, and fruit. The women hold the tray and proceed to sing and "fill her lap" with the contents of the tray in celebration of her pregnancy. In this example, the women are free to express themselves, to create community and to reaffirm the role of motherhood.

The filmmaker, Nidhi Tuli became fascinated with the women's train because she experienced it as an outsider who was initially overwhelmed by what she perceived as a callous rush and jostle for a seat during rush hour (Tuli interview). She notes in a personal interview that in her adopted city of Bombay "the eye of the outsider is always there." An exile from her birth country of Kashmir, Tuli's experience of migration is one in which the pace of life increasingly sped up after each move and is a constant reminder of how slow life was in her home country. India is her adopted country; she lived her first 16 years in Kashmir that she describes as "a wonderful place to grow up (back then), idyllic, easy going, and blessed with natural beauty" (interview). Forced to leave during the insurgency, her family relocated to Delhi where she enrolled in film studies, served as president of the dramatics society and moved to Bombay[13] at the age of 21, after her college graduation. She describes the differences between states as

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[13] Tuli refers to Mumbai as Bombay throughout her interview.

large as if they were countries. Her early days in Delhi are described as hectic and Bombay as even more so and a "far cry from my easy childhood days" (Tuli interview).

Kashmirian, Urban Indian, Woman Documentary Filmmaker

Tuli re-presents her experience on the train and the women not as witnesses to conflict or victims but as active participants in social change and development. This film is a representation of Donna Haraway's theoretical argument for an oppositional politic that uses human and machine to develop collective networks of commonality between like-minded participants. This film represents the women in front of and behind the camera and serves to represent women as producers of knowledge and meaning. The Ladies Special, a women-designated train car is their space. For two hours in the morning and two hours at night, it is a place of women's personal and communal liberation. Foucault argues that liberty is practice and that the practice of laws and institutions is liberty, not the law or the institution itself. Therefore, while the Ladies Special train car provides a space for liberty, it is the women and the relationships they forge – whether they are based on friendship, animosity, convenience, conflict, or class – that are the practice of liberty within accepted societal boundaries.

Practicing these relationships during their daily commute transforms the architecture of the train to a space of discourse consisting of values and intentions of the women riders and is specific to their needs at those times (Foucault 165). Throughout the documentary strategically placed subtitles reveal the purpose of a represented celebration. The accompanying practices of friendship and community do not need description. Repeatedly women are shown offering food to a group, adorning others with jewelry or cloth, or laying a hand on another's shoulder. In one sequence, a

woman shares celebratory sweets. She first passes a box around to those in the seats surrounding a celebration and then walks down to car to share with everyone. These are recognizable acts of intimacy (touching, laughing, and sharing food). In these scenes, the train is transformed to a place of celebration that includes the cultivation of close friendship and demonstrations of affection.

The architecture of the space changes subjectivity from a male-dominated public space where women must be constantly aware of their behavior to a space where women practice their rights. During the few hours a day when women make their daily commute to work and back, this train car becomes a space of relationships between women and a public sphere where we witness a representation of their daily experience of everyday life, religion and cultural difference. Steeves argues that the practice of religion and culture is a form of colonial resistance. Rather than oppressive and patriarchal, women's practices of culture and religion are represented from a gendered perspective and are the practice of liberation. On this train, women create community in the public sphere, away from family obligations.

Director Tuli's Approach to Story

The film is representative of women's experience of personal and communal liberation. Tuli produced *Ladies Train* in part as a celebration of the community women have created there, and in part because of her own experience of the hectic but necessary train commute to Bombay. In a personal interview, she notes that on her first local train trip to Bombay, she felt violated because she did not know the train-commute culture and the ways of its riders. During rush hour the crowds of women getting onto the car and into the seats are like "bullets being fired out of a machine gun… [everyone

is] pushing and jostling to get a seat" (interview). This is an apt description for what rush hour must seem like at first. Still, her treatment of the rush of women on and off the train is anything but chaotic. If anything, the movement of their bodies appears orchestrated. The transition of women on and off the train represents the fluidity that women in this society move from one sphere of their lives to another. In these scenes, women compartmentalize, morph and transform their roles as mother and wife, friend and confident, and professional. On the Ladies Special, they can be all these things at the same time.

Tuli's initial experience of the Ladies Special left her upset and feeling violated, but she eventually returned, as the train was the most economical and fastest way to travel around Bombay. She describes how she watched and began to learn about the women who must travel over two hours each way and at the end of the day jostle for a seat to have some rest time before getting home to make supper, care for children, and get to sleep (Tuli interview). She also began to notice the existence of communities of women. They sat together, talked about their lives and families, celebrated life events, and supported each other through crisis.

More personally, the film is representative of Tuli's fascination with the women and their interaction on the train. Much of the footage she shot is focused on capturing the community forged on the train trip. For example, in the early moments of the film a group of women sings songs, share cards and laugh as they bless a pregnancy. In another group, women paint their fingernails, passing around a box filled with small glass bottles of polish. Other women quietly pray alone, while others read or sing. At

times, the train patrons speak off side, seemingly responding to a question from the director.

At other times, the women speak directly to the camera and intermittently ask for direction from the crew. One woman who speaks to the crew calls herself the millionaire of the road then launches into a description of her day that includes selling vegetables on the train and in the city of Bombay. She is not evidently in a group of friends, but sits alone with her bags of vegetables. In one notable moment, she asks, "You want some English speaking, no?" While we cannot hear the response, the vendor quickly reverts to a local language to tell us of her day as an independent vegetable vendor. She is clearly of a lower class as is evident from her clothes, occupation, and location in the train. However, she is one of the few women interviewed who speak about what she does for a living while working on the train. Here, she serves the other women, making their lives easier by selling to them prepared vegetables.

Tuli uses stream of consciousness to express the daily rush a commuter experiences and how the Ladies Special provides a space where women do not have to play a role or focus on others. They can take refuge from an otherwise exhausting daily routine. She says,

> as homemakers, there is so much work to tend to….[you are] the first to wake up, cook for the family, pack the lunches for children and husband, leave for work, you may not find a place to sit in that journey, then there are demands at the work place, then rushing back to catch the train and [you want] a place to sit after a hard day…then be back home and cook for the evening, [fetch] water in some cases and be the last one to sleep. Over and above [you must] always be on

guard, some dirty male gaze will always be there…that freedom to be is available

on the Ladies Special…which is hugely liberating. (Tuli interview)

This experience of liberation is not limited to care of the immediate family. It is also representative of the challenges of physical labor of home life where running water may not be available. It is also representative of the position of women in the extended family where generations share homes. A wife that lives with her in-laws cannot be alone or be herself in marriage and the train is like "we are in our mother's place" at a time before the pressures of adult life, family, marriage and work interfered with a woman's time for developing a sense of being herself.

Tuli represents difference by including images of the range of women present as indicated by dress, behavior, age, location on the train and group interaction. For example, women on the train are represented as diverse in their clothing, some wearing traditional Indian dress (differentiated by celebrative, everyday, class) others wear Western-type clothing. The different clothing aesthetic serves to represent social change (traditional women travelling to work in professional jobs) balanced with religion and culture in the practice of human rights. In a local context, the sharing of train space in which all different women in the train are collectively commuting to work in Bombay demonstrates a form of colonial resistance that promotes difference, rather than homogenization. From a global perspective, this is important to developing just societies that can adapt and address the need to practice women's rights without sacrificing culture and religion. This form of representation of women's everyday lives is significant as it promotes women in developing countries as human beings.

Director Tuli's Representative Style of Filmmaking and Production Practice

From a global perspective, Tuli's exploration of women's practice of community is important to our understanding of human rights beyond media representations of isolated events of crisis and violence. This is the story of community within what seems to be a chaotic mix of cultural, social and class difference. It is only over time that Tuli can understand the women's train as a place of community defined by women. This universal experience of discomfort with difference is constructed during editing to introduce the viewer to the women commuters and allow for the recognition of common experiences and goals. To represent this experience of discovery over time, the filmic construction of the Ladies Special does not represent the real time. Instead, the film is designed to allow the viewer to discover community out of chaos and the significance of the women's experience within the train space.

The experience of chaos Tuli describes as experiencing when she first began riding the train is related to her experience of childhood in Kashmir and even the experience of growing up in Delhi. In contrast, riding the women's train is parallel with the frenetic pace and ambition of Bombay that she admires but still evaluates with the eyes of an outsider and endeavors to negotiate in her daily life. She notes that learning how to deal with the rush that upset her on her first trip was helpful. In the interview, Tuli describes some of the actions she learned from other women to make her trip easier. She says, "The trick is that one has to keep standing near the entrance with the face turned towards the wall and wait for the initial mad crowd to get in and then slowly turn and step out of the train." We see this process of embarking and exiting the train as the film opens.

In the film, women are represented as defining local feminism based in local realities of their traditional role as wives and mothers, and gender segregation. The documentary shows how women in Bombay live their everyday lives with increased dignity on the train. Still, they are not questioning their role in society, only how they are able to fill their role with greater social support and in greater comfort. Women are represented as maintaining traditional roles relevant to global concerns – such as rights to autonomy in the public sphere. However, their rights are realized through segregation rather than a collective societal change where women can live equally in public with men. In this scenario, men represent chaos and danger, but the solution is to give women a first class train and reinforce the need for gender segregation, an accepted societal practice. This is represented by a commuter who tells a story of a woman's conundrum of being allowed to travel, but not with men. In this story, her husband travels by train, but she cannot because all the cars are open to men. Therefore, she stays home. This story is an example of how the opportunity for gender segregation for women is both an example of emancipation and reinforcement of societal expectations.

Over time and repeated experiences, chaos becomes recognizable patterns and practices of women negotiating urban transportation, class and cultural organization, and social interaction. After travelling the train for awhile, Tuli describes observing the women on the train and learning to recognize how they interact with each other to pass the time, to entertain, and to support, and then "one day [she] got onto the Ladies Special, it was wonderful" (interview). She describes how she began to see the train trip as empowering, fantastic, because it was a whole train of women. She began to interpret the train trip as a tightly knit community with identifiable characteristics

including a support system, and once she learned the tricks to entering, exiting, and finding a seat, she discovered that she could walk into any of the three women-only cars and be comfortable. The women demonstrate pride, she says, even identifying the train commute and the space they create as a space that suits their needs. It is "'our thing!'" (Ladies Special).

The experience of transformation of her understanding of the Ladies Special from a crowded and chaotic commuter train to a women-defined social space appealed to her so much that she decided to make the film the *Ladies Special*. With her idea, Tuli applied to a trust in Delhi called PSBT (Public Service Broadcasting Trust, New Delhi) which funds 52 documentary films a year, targeting independent filmmakers directly rather than distribution or production companies (psbt.org). Focusing on public themes, especially those that address "contemporary predicaments due to the accelerating processes of change and issues related to diversity," the fund supports young filmmakers by providing support for them to make their first film. Tuli's idea for the women-only train was selected to be funded for production and shown on national television.

Once Tuli had the support of the PSBT to make the documentary, her biggest challenge was getting permission from the railway to shoot the film in the train (Tuli interview). She said it took her seven months of going to the Railway office every day and pleading with them. However, it was not until PSBT sent them a letter that they relented and granted her permission for five days of shooting which translated into ten journeys: five in the morning and five in the evening. She also got a discount on a

permit to film in public because the premiere of the documentary was to be broadcast on the national channel Doordarshan (Tuli interview).

The film was shot on the women-only cars of a regular commuter train in which three of twelve cars are identified by signs saying Ladies Special and set aside for women only during the rush hour commute in the morning and in the evening. The film covers embarking on the train in the morning at 5:30am, the communities of women who socialize on the train in different groups, some of their practices, a scuffle for seating, interaction with a vegetable vendor, and disembarking at the main train station around 7:30am. The return trip departs at 5:00pm and continues to the end of the line. As this is a commuter train, taking people from their homes to work, the train is busy, crowded and filled with daily travelers who have established practices for entering, departing the train, finding a seat, passing the time, and socializing. Many of these rituals are unrecognizable at first, as Tuli describes, but knowable over time (interview).

The documentary shows us how this local women-only train has cultural and social significance and provides context for social change where rights are translated into practice. Tuli discusses this in her recount of how she approached filming women within the train. Filming the women who ride the Ladies Special posed a unique challenge as the train is a place where women enjoy a sense of privacy, where they can be themselves and do not feel they are under the constant scrutiny of family, work, and society. This sense of privacy is associated with safety and is important in defining Tuli's approach to filming because privacy is something that is intrinsic to the women-only train. In our personal interview, she describes how the women feel comfortable riding on the Ladies Special without wearing their "dupattas (stoles that women wear over the

salwar kameez, an Indian dress for women) and do not feel they are being watched."

Therefore, Tuli says she was careful to edit out what she considered violations of their

privacy (interview). With this decision, the film resists the voyeuristic aspects of

traditional documentary as the content that is shown has been negotiated with the

community of the women's train.

The ability for Tuli to shoot this film in a women-only train required that she

depend on her existing relationships and knowledge of the women commuters. As a

commuter herself, Tuli was part of this community and her ability to film was dependent

on maintaining trust between her and her subjects. This relationship reveals aspects of

Tuli's relationships with the women riders who sometimes speak directly to the camera.

In preparation to shoot the film, she rode the train for a month to identify outgoing

women who would agree to be filmed. Her choice to shoot women in animated group

interaction illustrates her thesis that the train ride is as rejuvenating as "a power shot"

(Tuli interview).

While Tuli endeavored to stay out of the film, the all-women commuters

immediately interacted with the all-women film crew and demonstrated their acceptance

of the film apparatus by allowing themselves to be filmed, and in some cases overtly

performing for the camera. In one sequence, the negotiation of the interaction between

the filmmakers and subject is included and the subject asks what they would like her to

talk about for the camera. There is also a short clip where a woman declines the

request to be interviewed on camera. While these interactions remind the viewer that an

unseen film crew constructs the film, Tuli states that she does not like films where the

filmmaker tells the viewer what they are seeing and what to think. She prefers that the

viewer discover the story, and therefore, she included interaction between the women and the film crew when it was important to the development of the film.

***Chronicle of a Dream / Crónica De Un Sueño* - Human Rights, Camera, (Inter)action: Class Scene/ Seen in the Democratic Process**

In this documentary, the filmmaker Mariana Viñoles returns to her home country, Uruguay, after three years in Spain. She comes to visit, but more importantly to the film, she comes home to vote and campaign along side her militant family. Forced to leave Uruguay in the wake of an economic crisis, she records her experiences of the depression and her country on the eve of historical and political change. Weaving political speeches with personal interactions with family members campaigning on the streets of her hometown, we see daily life in Melo, a town of approximately 50,000 residents ("Melo"). As political supporters of the left-wing party Frente Amplio we also see and hear a family talk about their feelings for their country and their dreams for the future leading to the 2004 election.

The Film and Its Relationship to the Institution

Chronicle of a Dream / Crónica de un Sueño (Mariana Viñoles and Stefano Tononi, Uruguay, 2005) is a self-reflexive, non-women centered documentary that records the week leading up to the national election in 2004 from the perspective of one family of politically active campaigners in the community of Melo, Uruguay. The film constructs a counter-history of regular Uruguayans as seen through the lens of Mariana Viñoles and her spouse Stefano Tononi who records her geographically fragmented family actively engaged in political organizing in hopes of bringing about social change that will allow them to live in their country with dignity. *Chronicle* is told from the

perspective of Mariana Viñoles. The film follows the weeks leading up to the election as her middle/working-class family engages in door-to-door canvassing in poor neighborhoods for the left-wing party Frente Amplio and ends with the celebration after the results are declared.

As per the E-platform mandate, the film is public service oriented and represents dialogue and actions geared towards orderly engagement in the democratic process. In this example, the film represents the effectiveness of the democratic process in the particular social and cultural context of the family. We see their struggle for political change in response to Uruguay's economic crisis from the perspective of the filmmaker and her family and get a glimpse into class relations from the perspective of local political organizing. While compliant with orderly and peaceful civil action and maintaining traditional family values in the institutional context of promoting women's rights in the structure of political activism, this film rejects gendered orientation. Rather, the film examines the Diaspora returning home to vote and to engage in the particular day-to-day main street interactions of the election (in front of and inclusive of the camera). Through themes of engaging in political action, reuniting of families, and supporting the rights of the Diaspora to return home, Mariana captures local struggle. In a framework that links local to the global as a means to identify how an election in a country of three million is "universally significant" the film reveals the interrelatedness of micro-politics, subjectivity, identity and struggle (Mohanty 223). This film is the most subversive of the three in its critique of globalization and the resultant migration of young people from developing countries who often work in low-paying temporary or

sexually exploitive jobs in developed countries as a means to support their families back home.

The film is currently distributed through the UNESCO E-Platform with little measurable result. Viñoles and her co-producer Stefano Tononi learned of the UNESCO E-Platform through a friend, and they submitted the tape to the *Creative Content Programme* for consideration. The film was subsequently included on the E-Platform. Viñoles and Tononi have received numerous requests for interviews and they are the subject of a number of articles about their documentary, but this is the first time that they have been contacted about their film because of its inclusion on the E-Platform. Still, the filmmakers have achieved a level of success in Uruguay and to a lesser extent in Switzerland, Tononi's homeland. The film was produced with the assistance of Fonds Regio Films, Department of Culture for the city of Genève, Département de l'instruction publique du canton de Genève, and the Dipartimento dell'educazione, della cultura e dello sport del cantone Ticino.

The most recent and significant election and the controversy of expatriates returning home to vote is the topic of the documentary; therefore, the film is popular in Uruguay. The film is included in the *Catalogue of Uruguayan Documentaries 1985-2009.* This catalogue evolved out of a meeting in Montevideo designed to create a network of filmmakers and films about Uruguay. This group catalogued documentaries that are representative of Uruguayan documentary production of the past 25 years as a means to promote the documentary output of local filmmakers and to further the goal to have these documentaries screened on television (Martínez). The film can be viewed on Google Videos and is available for online viewing at Documaniatv.com a film catalogue

site promoting documentaries from and about Latin America. The film is distributed in Montevideo through BuenCine Producciones, an online catalogue that promote DVD sales of national cinemas. *Chronicle of a Dream* premiered April 2005 at Cinemateca Uruguaya in Uruguay, and has been an official selection at film festivals in Columbia (21er Festival Internacional de Cine de Bogotá 2005), Brazil ("Foco Latino" en el "IT'S ALL TRUE" International Documentary Film Festival of Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro 2006) and Switzerland ("FROG" Festival du film Romand à Genève, and Premio del público y Premio a los Nuevos Talentos 2006).

Uncomfortable Exile, Uruguayan, Woman Documentary Filmmaker

As a young person, Viñoles describes how she dreamed of becoming a filmmaker and decided to pursue film studies in Belgium on the advice of a woman director colleague who had attended the same school 15 years earlier (interview). Unable to afford to attend the cinema school in Uruguay no matter how hard she worked and without parents who could afford to support her economically in her quest, she had to leave home to realize her dream and achieve it in stages. First, she had to work and save the money to get to Belgium. Once she was there, she had to learn and then pass a French language entrance exam. She was accepted at school and had to work odd jobs, including babysitting throughout the week, for four years to pay for her studies. In our personal interview, she says, "Even though my reality wasn't easy, I was making the dream of studying in a cinema school, reality" (Viñoles interview).

Viñoles does not consider herself an exile in the same sense that the term is often used to describe Uruguayans of the 1970s who cannot return, as she has returned to Uruguay and now lives in Montevideo. In our interview, Viñoles explains that she left

the country in 2001, a year before the economic meltdown. "I left one year before….But, [the crisis was] in the air. I could feel that something big was going to happen" (interview). However, her brothers and friends felt forced to leave permanently because of the economic crisis. In describing how her exile differs from others, she tells me that her two older brothers left Uruguay for Spain, and her best friend left for Europe. On a larger scale, she states that too many people, of all different ages, including entire families, have emigrated in this second major crisis (2002) for Europe and the United States. Her father has also left and now lives and works in Venezuela. She says many who left became "ilegales" (illegal aliens) in their new countries (Viñoles interview).

Viñoles had left Uruguay for Europe by choice and was not a true exile, but she says, she was still treated like an unwanted immigrant or Sudaca, a derogatory term used in Spain to describe people native to South America[14]. She describes experiencing racism when asked to produce her passport by officials who treated the document as meaningless because they did know of the country of Uruguay. As a struggling student in a foreign country she was ostracized for her origin and did not have the funds to return home for three years. "Filming the election of 2004 has an enormous meaning to me. I was getting back home after years out of the country, and [this] was a crucial moment in the history of the country, in our story."

Viñoles says her being a woman *might* bring a special sensibility to the film. Her gender is secondary and not consciously used to frame her family and childhood surroundings. She says she is only trying to speak to express her deeper feelings. She constructs an identity of herself (a daughter of political activists and an economic exiled

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[14] Sudaca is described in the *Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy* as a similar derogatory slang term to greaser used in reference to natives of Mexico.

citizen of Uruguay) through representing self-understanding by actively engaging in the right to use political processes to change the formation of the state. In one scene, her father discusses his experiences and takes us on a tour of his modest home. He shows us an empty and unplugged fridge. He explains how he lives on lentils and rice most weeks and is "Happy to live in this poverty" (Chronicle of a Dream). Then he shows us how the house is now divided in two separate living areas. The home he once shared with Mariana and her mother is now divided into apartments. Mariana portrays her father as dignified in his suffering for the cause of Frente Amplio. Her mother is not mentioned except in terms of the past, before the recession. There is no animosity expressed, Viñoles' mother just does not seem to be part of this reunion.

By weaving interviews of family members into the campaign, she redefines how we should view the truth of this struggle. She considers herself lucky to have been able to return to film and to vote, unlike so many of her exiled friends and family.

> It was very hard for them, because [this] was an important moment for all of us. I don't know how to explain. Making this film gave me the opportunity to be there and I wanted to be part of it. Even though I was living in Europe and I was there to make this film, this was also my story and the story of all of us who were outside [Uruguay].

The film and the journey serve multiple purposes. It is a record of an exilic Uruguayan returning home to exercise her democratic right to participate in the democratic process, but it represents and stands for those who could not make the journey. It is the story of her longing and the longing of the Diaspora to be home with family during this event in the history of a country and of Uruguayans.

The film promotes the value of Uruguayan exile's involvement in civil participation and the democratic process in their homeland. As in the other two documentaries, people's role in society is tied to their family. We see this longing for family and the everyday in the scene at Mariana's grandmother's house where they go through the simple acts of preparing and eating a meal together. Here, we watch Mariana set the modest kitchen table in real time. The bright red and white checkered tablecloth, salads, and bottles of soda in the small quiet kitchen contrasts with the highly produced archival segments of government officials talking about the threat of Frente Amplio. We see that in this juxtaposition, the government is disconnected from regular people like the Viñoles family who must choose to live close to the poverty line or send family members abroad. The Viñoles live in quiet dignity and they campaign against the government using the democratic process. It is a story that she describes as being told from deep within her bones (Viñoles interview). As many Uruguayans are living illegally outside of their homeland, the film serves to promote the idea that it is part of their responsibility to return to vote and to fight for their country.

Director Viñoles' Approach to Story

Chronicle of a Dream is the story of people who are economically exiled from their homeland or exiled within their homeland because of political and economic circumstances. It is also the story of Viñoles' return to vote, to fight for her right to live with dignity, to make a living, and to participate fully in the democratic process. Viñoles' experience of exile and economic struggle and the opportunity to return home to participate in and record the election is evident in how she and Tononi construct the

narrative of the documentary that transitions from alienation and nostalgia to collective action and victory.

In the opening scene we see a modest living room where Viñoles and Tononi are in the process of preparing for the trip to Uruguay. The next scene is the view through a plane window that transitions to the interior of a home in Montevideo, Uruguay. There we meet Hugo, an economic exile who also recently travelled from Europe to visit family and to vote in the election. Hugo speaks with the filmmakers about local resentment towards exiles returning to vote. The filmmakers ask Hugo if he is still angry about the situation in Uruguay that has forced him into economic exile. He indicates that while he lives abroad, Uruguay is his home. Hugo then gestures to his Uruguayan home and speaks of simple acts of daily life as a means of expressing his right to return and to vote and his cultural connection to his community that lets him "recognize himself" as human in contrast to his life in Europe where he does not belong.

Viñoles and Tononi introduce us to everyday life of Uruguay through the frame of Hugo's home life, now a memory in his mind and the minds of exiles but so very much valued and desired. This domestic scene is repeated at the home of Viñoles' father and grandmother as a means of buttressing the scenes of door-to-door campaigning and reminding the viewer that the political struggle happens within the context of family connections and community and not in a vacuum. In this scene, we learn of home from fellow exile, Hugo who tells us he is not angry about Uruguay as he gestures us over to his kitchen cupboard. He then proceeds to show us the glasses that he drank wine out of and the tool he used to make ravioli when he lived in Uruguay to impress upon us his deep connection to this home.

At one point he says "Europeans can't understand what we live…they can't understand normal people's suffering…financial…disbanded families" as he pours glasses of Ballentine's Scotch for all three of them. Hugo describes the sadness and nostalgia he feels for the way of life in his homeland that he can now only visit and barely afford to maintain even with his current employment. He takes us on a tour of his home and up to the roof as a three-legged dog rushes past into the house – seemingly symbolic of Hugo's situation of being functional but not whole. On the roof he points out the clothes line he built years ago and the other houses where many families are now forced to live in one-family homes converted to tenements.

We cut to the image of the sky meeting the countryside shot from inside a moving car. It is at this point we are more fully introduced to Viñoles via the images of farmers' fields taken from the car window as she explains that she is home to see her family and to vote, too. She explains how she will vote for the Frente Amplio, a political party that was considered subversive since the days of the Cold War. We then cut to a sequence of short shots (forming a long montage) that includes a local campaign headquarters as people are handed election materials, young men folding leaflets, the drive to the polls, men hanging candidate signs, and a woman campaigner going door-to-door speaking to supporters and non-supporters about who they are voting for in the upcoming election. Some of the residents take the leaflets and others close their door to the campaigners. In a later scene, an older couple stands in front of their government-sponsored housing suite and explain that the wife has agreed to support the existing party in exchange for work and a food basket. They too reminisce about better times long gone and describe an economic reality where they often cannot pay for their

electricity and water, have no work opportunities and are suffering from ill health without any form of social safety net.

The repeated images of blue sky reinforce the experiences of the returning exile that dreams of a life now gone and mourns families split apart. Viñoles describes these themes as the "motor" of her work, which she says is about the destruction of families, a consequence of the political turmoil resulting in two economic crises that have forced one million people (often young adults) to emigrate leaving three million (often older) Uruguayan inhabitants (interview). *Chronicle of a Dream* provides an overview of a sequence of events that starts with the exiles' return followed by community action to fight for a better life through the democratic process. The film is constructed around these themes placing equal importance on the exile returning home, the family struggling to survive, and the family participating in political action. The film focuses on dreams of the past and of a future where families live together in the homes they own. References to poverty and suffering borne by the subjects are referenced to as unfortunate but inevitable under the political circumstances.

Hugo, Viñoles' father, and Viñoles accept their financial circumstances peacefully. In the film they do not step outside the law to overthrow the government. They do not promote revolution. Instead, we see in detail how the people in the town of Melo carefully and systematically work through the system to vote the dictatorship out of office. This is demonstrated in the campaign scenes where small groups of people fold pamphlets, campaign door-to-door, hang campaign signs, and talk to poor residents. These scenes are intimate and personal. We see the same people working throughout the campaign. These are regular people making a difference in the streets of Melo. In

terms of activist documentaries, this film is interpreted as an effective promotional or training tool for the cause of fighting for social justice through the democratic process.

Director Viñoles' Representative Style of Filmmaking, Production Practice

While not women centered, the film is recognizable for its similarities with feminist documentary film of the 1970s, which Lesage describes as biographical, simplistic and indicative of "trust between woman filmmaker and woman subject…. [With] little self-consciousness about the flexibility of the cinematic medium" (233). In this documentary, as in *Ladies Special*, the camera is fused with family and community interaction and human rights practices. Viñoles crosses from behind to in front of the camera while filming as part of a process of creative production, embedding the construction of trust in the filmic layer of the story. As such, *Chronicle of a Dream* is an intimately told story in which the two filmmakers with limited equipment capture a long-awaited grassroots political victory in a week of fieldwork surrounded by friends and family.

The elements of committed documentary, family, community and politics are fused together in an opportunity to represent an election and at the same time impose real limitations. Viñoles explains that she struggled with the point of view and in the process of pre-production thought about how they would tell such a big story under the circumstances. She says that to make the story understandable "[w]e decided to do it from my home town [of] Melo…to tell a big story within the little one (Viñoles interview). The little one is the story of my father, my grandmother, my family, [and] my story. It is also the story of the people who live in my hometown. The big story [is] the History" as

represented by the election when people struggled to use the democratic process to create an environment where exiles can return home (interview).

Viñoles and Tononi adapt familiar fieldwork techniques to accommodate their limited access to equipment. As such, they use a range of camera techniques applied in an organized and controlled manner. These techniques are recognizable and appropriate. They include using a tripod when they want to include both filmmakers in a scene, using available surfaces to steady the camera for interior shots, and frequently using hand-held shooting. As a result, interior scenes are often shot from below with the camera on the table tilted upwards to frame standing subjects, capturing them in medium shot (head to waist) or in close-up (hands folding leaflets). Handheld camera shots are used to capture interaction between the filmmakers and the subject, as is represented in the early scenes in Hugo's house as he shows the filmmakers his home, in the car as campaigners travel to the polls, and most evidently as the camera follows campaigners as they walk along the dirt roads in the neighborhoods of Melo.

Viñoles transverses the boundary formed by the camera and thus destabilizes boundaries and borders in *Chronicle of a Dream,* yet at the same time creates a recognizable "we" against the adversary, the third. The third is based on Uruguay's government leaders who are most often represented in news archival clips of anti-communist stump speeches. These clips contrast with the intimate representation of her family members as they go door-to-door talking to people about voting, her grandmother making dinner, and her father talking about their home and expressing his hope for the future. The "we" is embodied in the completed media. It is the product of family and community representation of solidarity in support of common values and a successful

struggle. The documentary is constructed in support of specific values of social justice, of family and personal identity. From this vantage point, Viñoles integrates her corporeal self into the fabric that represses and contributes to the (re)construction of gender identity. However, when she and Tononi interview the most oppressed community members, they revert to a traditional documentary format where the power in the meeting remains with and behind the camera.

These filmic "slips" contradict Viñoles' and Tononi's politically motivated project and reveal the class divide during this election. It would seem that the truly poor are motivated by offers of food and work in exchange for votes. As a supporter of the Frente Amplio, Viñoles has difficulty convincing those on the margins they should continue to suffer in hopes of a brighter future. In revealing difference here, Viñoles also reveals her social position as part of the middle class and illustrates her formal film training. Viñoles and Tononi frequently speak to those they know in a seemingly unscripted manner about loss, returning home, and family in which the camera is part of the dialogue. Hugo, for example, speaks to Viñoles off-camera. Sometimes he gestures to the camera to turn away. Other times he gestures the camera forward. In interviews with the poor of Melo, the interaction is reminiscent of a traditional documentary interview and the class distinction is evident in the framing, and Viñoles' questions are distinctly different – less intimate. To the poor she asks specific questions about what they think of the Frente party. In each interview, the subject identifies reasons they have not voted for the socialist party, which include a headline from 1970s campaign literature that a vote for Frente is a vote against themselves. A mother of five explains that she was told that if she voted for Frente they would take away her children.

The repeated use of symbolic images, acts of daily life, and familiar human interactions remind us that even in action and victory, alienation and nostalgia remain constant companions for Uruguayans. Images of sky, kitchen tables and early mornings in a small town, sounds of shoe soles scuffing across quite dirt roads and other familiar sounds of daily life are the pulse of the film that contrasts dramatically with the silenced victory celebration at the end. In this moment, when the Frente Amplio is represented as a silent victory over the current government, we realize that Viñoles has avoided what Mark Bradley and Patrice Petro describe as "valorizing narratives" that mock the opposition telling us that what has been lost cannot be returned (Rabinowitz 6).

Chapter Summary

These three documentaries are produced by women and, therefore, valuable to the E-Platform because the films fulfill an equity mandate of UNESCO and the *Creative Content Programme*. By promoting these films through the E-Platform, UNESCO can demonstrate action towards meeting their goals. Human rights advocates perceive women's rights as a set of values that all people should hold in common, and there is significant pressure at the institutional level to systematically alter representations of the past and present to represent this belief (Carpenter 300). As such, imagery of women transforming the framework of the public sphere(s) or re-establishing a politics of identity where women fill roles of authority and knowledge is promoted. Women are represented using public space differently, changing its meaning while maintaining connections with the traditions, culture, and society. More importantly, women are not only representing change but are also challenging patriarchy and institutional control by

creating media and, therefore, practicing the right to autonomy and safety, as the well as broader rights to create and disseminate knowledge (Merry 137).

Perhaps most importantly, these films also are valuable contributions to the E-Platform because they represent global themes of intercultural tolerance, women's rights, and peace but do not promote real social change. These films are organized in the E-Platform to represent women's emancipation and at the same time reaffirm existing power structures including UNESCO's international role of promoting social plurality, knowledge sharing, and women's equity in media. At times, the films are banal in their treatment of everyday life but at the same time, it is also apparent that they are in the catalogue because they promote universal values without questioning existing systems of power. Interpreted as "how-to" manuals the films are distributed for their acceptable approaches to tolerance, equity, and struggle. As part of this catalogue, the films do not promote social disruptions or other independent forms of social action, or threaten to interrupt the flow of social rules.

Welcome Mr. Postman explores cultural difference across four countries through the interactions of four postmen and their families. Intercultural-tolerance and knowledge sharing, according to this film, occurs through the recognizable performance of gender. This is most evident in the postal wives, Eriko, Patricia, Rikke, and Evelyn whose interactions are mostly limited to the home and conversations to food, home and child rearing. In contrast, the postmen are equally in charge at home, at work, and with other men.

The *Ladies Special* is a woman-defined space that shows us how personal and gendered space does not agitate the status quo. Rather, it reaffirms women's role as

wife and mother by segregating the women from the men and then the women along class lines. While everyone is portrayed as getting along, these divides are not questioned. The men who whistle and stare at the women who ride the Ladies Special are ignored, even though they seem to represent a threat to the peaceful community on the train.

In *Chronicle of a Dream*, the film represents a training tool divided into a sequence of events that lead to political freedom. Here, filmmaker Viñoles shows us exiles returning home to visit, participating in the democratic process, and overthrowing a dictatorial government. Reinforcing the importance of homeland and family during the 2004 Uruguayan election, the E-Platform provides a platform for distributing a recruitment film that promotes the idea that returning home and peaceful engagement in the democratic process is important to reuniting family.

In terms of the larger project of conducting an institutional analysis, these documentaries fill a niche of social justice and human rights films that serve to reaffirm institutional values. As is evident, these documentaries exist and are available for viewing on the E-Platform. This in itself demonstrates rights in practice. However, on closer inspection, these films promote universal themes, but the E-Platform organizational system reduces their unique approach to local issues. Within this framework, the films stand for UNESCO values and are no longer independent representations of women's lives.

Examining these discourses alongside and counter to the human rights institutional context and within national documentary practice is critical to understanding how particularized struggles are universally relevant. Examining these local discourses

in the context of the visual media is also crucial to understanding independent documentary as representative of emerging political media that are redefining civil society, shaped by and circumventing corporate and institutional mass media gatekeepers.

CHAPTER 4 THE *CONTAINER PROJECT*: REPRESENTING AND CONSTITUTING INSTITUTIONAL PRODUCTION PRACTICE

This is a fieldwork study of socially engineered technological approaches to video production at the *Container Project*, a UNESCO-supported community media center. Based on interviews, direct observation and participation in the production process, this research examines organizational approaches and production practices. These methods help to examine documentary production for the purposes of revealing the institution's influence on production practice, and how media producers resist mandated approaches to gender, race, and class. Whereas the goals of the previous chapter are to examine women documentary filmmakers supported and distributed by UNESCO E-Platform, this chapter focuses on institutionally supported media production practice.

On-site research occurred over two weeks from July to August 2009. During this time, this researcher served a residency at the *Container Project* and delivered workshops on field video and audio production. In this capacity, participant observations and interviews were conducted. The project director, Mervin Jarman, and the site manager, Elaine Scarlett, organized interviews with video producers, local activists and scholars in Palmers Cross, Windsor Heights, and Kingston, Jamaica in July and August. Additional interviews and participant observation were conducted between June and November 2009. As a conference delegate and invited videographer at the Subtle Technologies Conference 10 in Toronto, this researcher participated in and observed the *Container Project*'s presentation in June. Interviews in-person with overseas directors and workshop facilitators in Toronto in November were conducted.

Launched in 2003, the *Container Project* is a community media center located in the community of Palmers Cross. Long-time local resident and artist/activist Mervin Jarman worked in collaboration with local elective representatives, government agencies, residents and businesses to develop this grassroots-led initiative. Conceived and underway by 2000, the *Container* struggled into existence. For the three years prior to the launch, the directors sought institutional support and funding. However, UNESCO and other local funding institutions demonstrated a lack of interest in the *Container* because it is located in a poor rural neighborhood and run by local residents with little formal education (Jarman interview, Gordon interview, Turner interview). Interestingly, after initially ignoring the project directors (2000-2003), then providing limited support (2003-2008), and admittedly not responding to their communication, the UNESCO Kingston project manager Alton Grizzle was promoted to the Paris office to operate the *Creative Content Programme* and E-Platform (Grizzle, personal email correspondence, 2009). Grizzle now promotes developing community media centers in UNESCO targeted communities. This story follows a familiar pattern of funding refusal and subsequent content appropriation as discussed in Madeleine Bondy's experience with UNESCO in Chapter 3. However, this chapter reveals this pattern in production practice. Chapter 4 examines how the *Container* stakeholders developed the project under similar social and financial circumstances imposed by UNESCO policies. The practices developed by the *Container Project* because of these challenges now constitute the *Creative Content Programme* to some degree. Therefore, it is argued that a significant unwritten practice of UNESCO is to force sustainability expectations on to community media centers in hopes of results that can be appropriated. Paradoxically,

this forces the project to be both appealing to UNESCO and independent of UNESCO funding.

The original center located in Palmers Cross provides computer and Internet access, and serves residents within a 20-mile radius. Creative technology skills training, community health promotion, and small business development are the three objectives of the center. The *Container Project* is growing in popularity, and a new location opened in Windsor Heights in May 2010. While the development and sustainability of each center is the responsibility of the local host community, they benefit from name recognition and support provided by the *Container* directors. As directors are not always residents of Jamaica, overseas collaboration is encouraged and is part of the ongoing training and development services offered.

The permission process to conduct this research lasted almost a year. During this time, Jarman examined my intentions and research objectives. We discussed how I intended to interact with the community. I learned it was necessary to demonstrate my commitment to sharing knowledge and working with the community as an equal. In exchange for permission to conduct research, I completed a teaching residency to deliver digital media skills required by the *Container* participants.

Community constitutes the *Container* and therefore, the media organization is one focus of this study. Constituted by the needs of participants, the *Container Project* represents an opportunity for marginalized communities to access technology they could not otherwise afford. For youth in particular, the *Container* is a safe place to meet with friends. Still, as Jarman explains in a personal interview, for some youth, time spent at the center is time away from securing food and shelter. This reality is consistent with

poverty statistics. In Jamaica the national poverty rate, determined as those who live on less than one dollar per day, hovers around 16%, and for approximately 10% of residents' "food intake is chronically insufficient to meet their minimum energy requirements" ("Globalis Jamaica"). Therefore, the *Container* must be relevant to the community.

The site-specific media and practical approaches to representing lived experience is another focus of this study. To understand how the project is evolving at each location, in terms of gender access to technology and institutional influence, the Palmers Cross and Windsor Heights *Container* sites are examined separately. To understand production practice and resulting media content as co-dependent and influenced by an increasingly volatile economic and social context, the sites are compared. The Palmers Cross and Windsor Heights sites share the same mission and purpose but follow different community development approaches. Further, each is at a different stage of development. At the time of the fieldwork, 13 participants (mixed gender media producers) had produced three-minute autobiographical videos in a digital storytelling workshop held in Palmers Cross in 2006. A similar sized group of at-risk-youth (male only) in Windsor Heights embarked on the pre-production stage of documenting life in their community in the summer of 2009.

Media producers interviewed for this study possessed a rich variety of education, work, and family experiences. However, they are also stigmatized because of their neighborhoods and the lack of employment opportunities. All of the participants interviewed attended primary school and many completed at least some secondary school. Most of the research participants were computer literate and comfortable

accessing the Internet for research, overseas communication, creative activities, and social networking. Research participants were mainly between the ages of 18 and 30[15]. The majority of the participants lived within walking distance of a *Container* site, but a few travelled up to ten miles by bus to participate in the research. Some people interviewed have been involved with the media center since its inception and are in contact with artists, teachers, information technologists (computer programmers), academics and community development organizations in Canada and the United States.

Examining the power disparities within the synergetic relationship between UNESCO and the *Container Project* helps to destabilize the binary relationship between the institutionally driven policies and local practice. This approach allows for the recognition of documentaries and production practices as discursive spaces ideal for examining subjective along with mandated approaches to race, class and gender. The institution promotes gendered media production policy to encourage the practice of women's rights. However, local knowledge dictates that women's rights and equity can only come about by first ensuring their safety and security and releasing them from their dependence on men. Therefore, women's rights are exercised simultaneously (but at different stages) when programs assist young men to find a productive role in the community. For example, the center promotes gender equality by first establishing peace between the young men. Mixed gender media production workshops are secondary, but anticipated. This approach opens up the possibility of examining technologies as organizing systems that both produce and deconstruct race, gender

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[15] The group included one female participant who was 49 years of age and one male participant who was in his late 50s. All other participants were aged 18-30.

and class. The *Container Project*'s strategic priorities balance institutional pressures with local needs (Sullivan 4). The examination of gendered media production in practice in a local context of creative resistance also reveals what the institution values and appropriates for self-promotion.

This study incorporates interviews with media producers, observation of media production practice, and critical analysis of media content. This approach is a means to analyze the *Container*'s relationship with UNESCO and its role in influencing local production practice, content, and community development. The objective is to understand how these communities use media production as a tool to challenge the authority of the institution and to re-construct both personal and communal identity as a means to demonstrate their resistance. One goal then is to identify how media producers reform, resist or re-inscribe dominant visual representations, new paradigms and conventions created by this form of grassroots documentary practice. Another goal is to compare the practices of an international media institution with a grassroots media organization that share similar goals of promoting community development, human rights, and media development.

In Jamaica, creative community practice is set within a recent history of women's grassroots development. Storytelling, improvisation and participation of creative organizations in the community as a means of problem solving and community development are a hallmark of the Sistren Collective (1977-1989) a theatre organization that explored the condition of working class and poor women in Jamaica. Digital storytelling blends fiction and non-fiction with experimental media practices based on aesthetic interpretations of daily life to problem solve (Ford-Smith 224). Local problem-

solving practices resist the organizing systems of education and technology that render culture knowable and predictable (Sullivan 4). Analysis of these encounters compares how UNESCO's *Creative Content Programme* with the *Container Project* in terms of how policies and protocols shape production practice (Schaffer and Smith 9). Interviews and observation allow for examination of first-person perspectives on the production process and approaches to representing personal experience through digital storytelling in a community setting. The goals of this chapter are to identify the characteristics of grassroots-defined documentary video production and production practice within this institutional context.

Presented in four sections, the following discussion thematically parallels the organizational framework of Chapter 3, and allows for the non-linear analysis of a community media center at two locations evolving at different times. These sections include an overview of the *Container Project* and Jarman in relation to UNESCO, the social-economic and technological context of the *Container Project*, an analysis of the production environment, and an analysis of the media including media producers' perspectives on production practice. These sections form a framework to examine grassroots level media production.

Overview of the *Container Project* in relation to UNESCO

UNESCO supports the *Container Project* under the Communication and Information sector[16] within the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC/UNESCO). With a focus on knowledge sharing and development, UNESCO promotes human rights, cultural diversity, and civil society

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[16] The Communication & Information sector covers the *Creative Content Programme* discussed in Chapter 2, and the *E-Platform* discussed in Chapter 3.

through the dissemination of media. UNESCO is unlike any other media distribution, production, and promotion organization in that its mission is to promote cooperation and understanding between its member states. UNESCO's support of the community media center is evidence that the *Container* represents the institutional mission. The *Container Project* is subsequently promoted by UNESCO as an example of program success.

The IPDC program is a multilateral forum in the United Nations designed to promote discussion and to support media development in 143 developing countries. The goals are threefold. The first is to support media projects such as community media centers to provide marginalized communities with the opportunity to freely create and disseminate knowledge at national and international levels. The second goal is to foster the environment needed for the growth of pluralistic media, and the third is to develop human resources to support media development and dissemination ("About IPDC"). In Palmers Cross and Windsor Heights, the community media center supports youth and adults who have little access to digital media and provides the opportunity to express their lived experience through creative technology.

This community media center is in agreement with UNESCO's rights-based values and promotes rights of expression and the free flow of ideas through the creation and dissemination of local content. The *Container* self-evaluates its programs identifying who in the community is utilizing the facilities ("Self-Evaluation Tool Now Available…"). The *Container* supports local video content for the purposes of producing skilled media practitioners and quality local productions for mass media distribution. In terms of practice, the *Container* promotes the exploration of the translation and retranslation of lived experience in the context of media production.

In theory, institutionally driven development communication policies and protocols promote collaboration with grassroots communities. In practice, local representatives demonstrate little interest in supporting grassroots-led initiatives. This is in light of development practices that have excluded women and the poor from program development (Ford-Smith 1989; Freire 1997; Manyozo 2006; Melkote and Steeves 2001). The *Container Project* is an example of a grassroots-led initiative that has succeeded because it does not attract the attention of aid organizations or development communication programs who seek to determine its practices. Rather, it is the result of years of local struggle to secure funding to serve under-educated and marginalized communities. Despite being championed by well-known playwright, author and social activist Sonia Mills, the *Container* directors had to wait two years to secure a meeting with the local Kingston office of UNESCO, to get it to consider the value of such a project. In a personal interview, Sonia Mills says that she notified the Kingston office of the project early on, and she finds it interesting that UNESCO "found" the *Container* after it was launched and demonstrating success (Mills interview). Other *Container* directors state that the disinterest is a result of systemic class divisions in Jamaica that infiltrate both international and local institutions (Jarman interview; Turner interview).

Some of those interviewed indicated that UNESCO's lack of interest in the project is a result of class divides and local bias against poor and rural residents. Skin color defines class division and intellectually entwines Jamaica's post-colonial society (Gordon interview). Jamaican national and author of *Media and the Politics of Culture: The Case of Television Privatization and Media Globalization in Jamaica* Nikesia Gordon says that dark-skin equates to a rural background, poverty and lack of

sophistication, a perception that permeates society (interview). Jamaican society differentiates between urban and rural, rich and poor, and light and dark skin. This complicated social stratification is evident in the relationship between Jarman and UNESCO, which he describes in a personal interview as often uncomfortable as a result of the pressure he perceives to adopt an appearance of upper-class. Despite establishing himself in England as a successful graphic designer and digital artist, he says he struggles to get meetings with the UNESCO office. He believes this is because of his appearance, his lack of official credentials, and his poor rural origins. Jarman states class-based biases between marginalized urban participants of the *Container Project* and the city-based UNESCO program officers result in the lack of communication (interview).

Jarman's appearance is notable for his shoulder-length hair bound in locks, symbolizing his Rastafarian beliefs. Gordon describes the Rastafarian culture of appearance as significant in the class-based society and associated with resistance and anti-authoritative politics (interview). Rastafarian culture challenges Eurocentric notions of physical beauty, gender roles, and social norms, although it has produced world-renowned artists. Paradoxically, she says, local residents consider anything representing African culture (Rastafari emerged from Africa) as inferior, preferring the neo-colonial appearance and behavior in positions of power (interview). Yet, despite society's distaste for Rastafari in practice, the tourism industry does not hesitate to exploit its symbols to represent Jamaica as an easy-going culture to attract tourists.

In terms of his rural roots, Jarman's most notable symbol of class is a hand towel tossed over his shoulder. This highly practical accessory is used to wipe away

perspiration in hot humid conditions. However, the hand towel in this context is considered low-class, "yardie," or common. In a personal interview with *Container* director Camille Turner, she points out that appearance often shapes the priorities of the institution (interview). A suit and tie or a blouse and a skirt are the uniforms that represent the institution. Casual attire worn at meetings is associated with the poor or lower class and considered an indication of failure. Jarman maintains his appearance that includes T-shirt, shorts, hand towel and locks in keeping with his beliefs and the mission of the *Container* to represent local culture.

The relationship between the *Container Project* and UNESCO is parallel with Jarman's relationship with upper class and institutional society in Jamaica. As a dark-skinned Jamaican growing up in the poor rural community of Palmers Cross, Jarman describes how he learned firsthand about being smart yet ostracized by teachers and the elite of the community because of his dark skin, his bad-boy behavior and his yardie attire (Jarman interview). With few options for gainful employment, he rejected what little Jamaica had to offer and immigrated to South England in 1985 to search out better opportunities. Here, he still experienced various forms of racism and classicism, but he was able to attend school and gain skills that would enable him to raise his daughter and fulfill his dream of returning to Jamaica to help other youth in his community. Dividing his time between England and Jamaica, Jarman continued to circumvent traditional institutional limitations, choosing to apply his skills to grassroots media development (Jarman interview). He became involved with the Information Communication Technology 4 Development Jamaica (ICT4D), a collective of Jamaican organizations who promote the use of information communication technologies (ICTs),

as well as the community non-profit radio station Roots 96.1 FM (Jarman interview). A partner of *Mustard Seed*, a residential non-government organization that serves disabled children and youth in Kingston, Roots FM is a volunteer-run radio station serving inner city residents.

Jarman's success in using technology to work around institutional barriers enables him to translate between the institution and marginalized communities. As a Rastafarian as well as a working digital media artist and activist, he promotes black culture and identity. In Jamaica, this means connecting the Rastafarian beliefs to ICTs to frame community development. Therefore, community needs and beliefs constitute the approach to developing a community media center. In this model, community members support the mission and then physically construct the center. Services and training offered at the center are evaluated based on the needs of the community and then integrated into local culture and communication practices. He believes that this is the only pathway leading the poor of Jamaica towards a better future (Jarman interview). In practice, these methods and approaches run contrary to institutional-based society, which values education and community services delivered through formal institutions. As a result, support for the *Container Project* concept has been slow to develop.

The Relationship between the *Container Project*, UNESCO and Local Institutions

The *Container Project* has an ongoing relationship with UNESCO based on limited funding and support. According to UNESCO documentation, the local office was involved with the *Container Project* since 2000 and envisions continued support "within the framework of its programmes to create lifelong learning opportunities through

community media and to support the development of community multimedia centres"
("Self-Evaluation Tool"). In 2006, Jarman convinced UNESCO to conduct an evaluation
of the impact and benefit of the *Container* to the community as a means to demonstrate
credibility. He then secured additional equipment and workshop funding from the
International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC/UNESCO), and
funding from the Canada Council, and ICTs for Development Jamaica (ICT4D) (Jarman
and Mills 96). Post-evaluation, UNESCO provided support in the form of press releases
and project documentation published on the UNESCO website. Turner says, "UNESCO
wants to take credit, but not give money" (interview). Hence, there are multiple profiles
highlighting the *Container* and limited financial support. Correspondence with Grizzle,
the staff person involved with the *Container Project* until 2009, now manager of the
Creative Content Programme and E-Platform at UNESCO Paris, suggests that requests
from the *Container* directors languish in a long queue before receiving a response
(Grizzle email correspondence).

The programs delivered at the *Container Project* were initially developed and
tested in South End, England, and Regents Park, Toronto. Leveraging these positive
results, the *Container Project* won a small amount (approximately seven percent of the
overall budget) of start-up funding from the IPDC/UNESCO in 2003. IPDC supports the
Container by providing limited funding and networking opportunities. They also promote
the center by publishing news releases, budgets, and program notes pertaining to the
IPDC/*Container Project* partnership on the UNESCO website. These reports suggest
that the institutional/grassroots partnership is collaborative and ongoing. However,
Jarman describes UNESCO support as limited to what the institution determines is of

promotional benefit to the local office (interview). In 2005-2006 UNESCO granted project support to develop mobile multimedia capacity for rural youth ("IPDC Special Account budget"). In 2008, the *Container* received additional project support to develop the iStreet Lab. UNESCO asks the *Container Project* directors to participate in meetings and demonstrations as a recipient of support. Still, discrete project funding contributes little to the sustainability of the *Container* organization or the media center.

In terms of day-to-day funding beyond Jarman's contribution, the *Container* center depends on in-kind donations, and income from services. The *Container* earns a small amount of income from providing business services and offering teaching residencies. Much of the ongoing funding comes from local sponsors like Cable and Wireless Jamaica Foundation, which donated an ADSL line for Internet access (Jarman and Mills 96). Other project funding is sporadic and often comes as the result of the commitment of overseas supporters and art organizations in Canada, the U.K. and the U.S. For example, in 2006 the *Container Project* was the recipient of digital storytelling project funding from the Ontario Arts Council, the Canada Council for the Arts, UNESCO and an agency of the Jamaica Ministry of Education (H.E.A.R.T NTA), which has accredited some of the training courses (Jarman and Mills 96). The digital storytelling workshop facilitated by a Toronto community worker (Jennifer LaFontaine) and a media developer and artist/activist (Camille Turner) was based on curriculum developed by *The Center for Digital Storytelling* in California (The Story Project).

Establishing its core funding independently, the Windsor Heights *Container* location draws from different funding sources that include government, international institutions and regional corporations. As part of a community project, the *Container* has

won funds from the local European Union office under the "Poverty Reduction Programme II" ("Six Communities Benefit"). It is partially funded by the Jamaican Government through the Jamaica Social Investment Fund. Windsor Heights receives funding and support from the Jamaican Social Development Council. They also have received project funding from a food distribution company, the Lasco Group, Jamaica. The *Container Project* locations benefit from a shared network, share namebrand, and occasional collaborative fundraising.

The Social-Economic and Technological Context of the *Container Project*: Early Years

For years, a general lack of interest in the *Container Project* was evident at the local government levels. Social service offices did not initially support the *Container* because it is a grassroots-led initiative and not an activity emerging from institutionally credentialed programs. Moreover, the proposed uncertified training focused on community creative skills development, causing people to question its value. They did not take this grassroots-led initiative seriously because it lacked institutional credibility. Community members turned away for different reasons. While they do not trust institutions, they respect their authority. However, attention from abroad attracted attention at home. Winning the Stockholm Challenge Award[17] in 2008 and presenting at the Subtle Technologies Conference at the University of Toronto in 2009 contributed to a shift in attitude (Jarman interview). Increasingly, local elected officials, social service agencies, foundations as well as community members come to demonstrate respect for

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[17] The Stockholm Challenge Award is an international competition that promotes social entrepreneurs who are promoting innovative uses for ICTs.

the *Container Project*. Paradoxically, the years of anonymity have benefited the *Container*.

In a personal interview held in Toronto in the fall of 2009, Camille Turner – director of the *Container Project* and facilitator of the Palmers Cross digital storytelling workshop – points out positive aspects of not receiving funding and attention. The *Container* is accountable to no institution and has no pre-set expectations of success. She says,

> We had no money, so we did it this way…using community collaboration and local knowledge. Would it be different if we had had money? Yes. However, the big question is, is this model replicable? Can a community center emerging from community desire [and] pure belief be a model? How do you determine what is external and therefore, how do you define what works? (Turner interview)

To test whether the model is replicable, the directors are pursuing the development of a portable media center, a self-contained version of the original concept.

The *Container Project* was conceived as a mobile media center housed in a shipping container. However, initial funding shortfalls resulted in a container at a fixed location and a mobile satellite media center moving from community to community. Named the iStreet Lab to emphasis the alignment of technology with the Rastafarian belief in the oneness of all humans, the concept was demonstrated in two communities in 2006. The *Container Project,* symbolizing the repatriation of technology, and the iStreet lab, symbolizing the integration of technology with local identity, fill different roles in the community.

Today, the iStreet Lab is housed in a wheelie (rubbish) bin converted into a battery-powered mobile media lab with tools for video and music production, as well as television and radio transmission. The compact design of the iStreet Lab emerged in part because of the lack of funding. The resulting portability of the iStreet Lab allows for delivery of stand-alone services to isolated communities, providing youth with a hands-on introduction to multimedia production. Beyond direct engagement with youth and adults, the iStreet Lab is also an introduction to the *Container* philosophy. Jarman and his volunteer crew, consisting of youth who experienced the iStreet Lab in their communities, demonstrate the media tools and encourage local youth to participate collaboratively. If the experience is positive, communities have the opportunity to negotiate future iStreet Lab visits and to open a *Container Project* with the support of the existing center.

To establish a *Container Project*, communities must confirm commitment from their community, find funding, and determine what training best serves their needs. The community of Windsor Heights worked with the *Container Project* for over a year to develop such a plan before moving forward with their own center. Seven months after this interview CP2 (*Container Project 2*) launched in Windsor Heights, and the community is ambitiously planning for multimedia training in the coming year. As the *Container Project* grows, there is increased interest in expanding the iStreet Lab program to assist youth to develop facilitation skills and in increasing the number of fixed *Container* sites around Jamaica. Preliminary discussions are also under way for expanding the *Container Project* to other islands in the Caribbean. From interviews and observation, it is evident that the development of community networks and the

subsequent introduction of portable technology in the form of the iStreet Lab is an effective way to introduce the *Container Project*.

Word of the *Container Project* has spread through the grassroots ICT community worldwide. Jarman is currently acting as a consultant for a number of related projects. One UNESCO project involves the reconfiguration of the iStreet Lab from a multimedia center into a mobile communication lab to broadcast in conflict or disaster locations. Jarman is also spending time in Australia providing consulting expertise to the Australian Change Media Team, combining lessons learned from the Jamaican experience with Australian methodology to develop an international arts community exchange between indigenous and marginalized communities in Canada, Jamaica, and Australia (Concept: ArtGate – a Xcolonial collaboration). He says he enjoys his gypsy-like life-style, but notes that all that he earns goes back into the *Container Project*, supporting the day-to-day running of the project as it has no sustained long-term funding and must raise the operating budget year-to-year (Jarman interview).

The Social-Economic and Technological Context of the *Container Project* and Media Producers

The *Container Project* is a response to contradictory forces in Jamaica. These include a chaotic economy, increased access to Internet and wireless media such as cell phones, and a large socio-economically marginalized population. According to the CIA World Factbook, the Jamaican economy is facing long-term problems that hinder the government's ability to invest in infrastructure and social supports. High unemployment and social disenfranchisement result in increased crime and drug trade. At the same time, the island is increasingly serviced with mobile phone and Internet

access (Dunn "From Voice Ubiquity" 98). Some argue that cell phone access in this environment is more valuable than computer access to low-income Jamaicans. The argument is that computer access provides opportunities for economic advancement but is costly for the individual. Even with increased Internet coverage available at home, computer use in the home is low at only about 21% (Dunn "From Voice Ubiquity" 98). In terms of community media centers, the *Container Project* benefits from the adoption of cell phones that have lead to community organizing and empowerment to address local concerns such as youth crime.

Jamaica's subaltern population is innovative, melding lived experience of historical exclusion from colonial institutions and economic downturns with entrepreneurial spirit. Forced self-sufficiency is increasingly converged with access to mobile and now Internet technology. In Palmers Cross and Windsor Heights wide adoption of cell phone use and increased Internet access is resulting in a nascent entrepreneurial approach to creative social and community development. Functioning on the margins of society, they are unhindered by the social or economic codes of colonial institutions. Pay-per-use cell phones in Palmers Cross and Windsor Heights are an impetus towards self-defined and sustainable development. Cell-phone adoption is also an interim step to adopting digital technology to address specific local concerns like youth crime and economic development (Doctorow n.p.). Sustainable community development hinges on participation in media development based in local action.

In terms of the effect of participatory production and development on communication, it is important to note that access to media does not translate into "automatic higher standards of economic or cultural development, improved social

communication or greater political democracy" (Tehranian 47). Access to media must be conceived to meet local needs that will result in mobility. For example, the community legacy of illiteracy and class division in education is beginning to be closed by computer-based homework programs where parents working along side their children can gain computer literacy skills. In this context, access to media begins to deconstruct language power, exposing it as representative of ideologies developed through the imposition of colonial values and practices (Anderson 260-261). In terms of marginalized populations, the fragmentation or breaking of the language power of post-colonialism results in mobility.   At the *Container Project*, solidarity depends on coordination of action in the community and adoption of technology to develop parallel networks of communication for survival. The *Container Project* can circumnavigate mainstream media that does not meet the needs of the local public but must be in support of existing development plans for community economic sustainability (Tehranian 48).

The Palmers Cross *Container* is housed in a 40 foot repurposed shipping container once used to export goods from Jamaica (for the benefit of a few). Jarman describes this transformed shipping container as a fitting location for repatriating technology back to the people of Jamaica (interview). Turner points out that Jamaica is part of the globalized world and that the shipping container is an indigenous structure and symbol of the island's role in the world (Turner interview). Originally envisioned as a mobile center, the *Container* has a permanent location in the Palmers Cross town square. This center serves as a hub for the broader community and outreach media workshops held in communities across the island using the iStreet Lab. The tasks of

organizing the project, renovating the containers, and building the site foundation, are completed by community volunteer labor. The collaboration is representative of the community support of the project, intrinsic to its success, and a symbol of solidarity in the community.

Each *Container* is purposefully located where disenfranchised youth and adults have traditionally "hung out," gained a reputation for causing conflict, and carried out criminal activities. Designed to transform street corners into positive social places of learning and creative activities, the *Container* opens its doors to everyone. Jarman believes this is one of the few methods of encouraging youth to reject crime. He also states that for many of the most marginalized youth, a day at the *Container* is a day without hustling, stealing, and begging, but also a day without food (Jarman and Mills 94). The highly visible location is accessible by foot, car, public transit and serves as a center for economic and social activity.

The *Container* locations are open Monday to Friday and offer broadband Internet computer workstations, office equipment, and an assortment of consumer/prosumer digital media production tools including video cameras, audio recorders, and digital still cameras[18]. Volunteers support the *Container*, but a salaried staff person who provides graphic design services and a part-time IT person manage the center. With the infrastructure in place, the centers also offer training and mentorship as well as business services, digital media workshops, and after school programs.

Youth up to the age of 30 constitute the majority of participants and are a target group of the *Container Project*. Participants by age are as follows: 20% ages 6-12

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[18] The Palmers Cross location is equipped with the multimedia equipment listed. As of January 2011, the Windsor Heights location is in the process of obtaining funding to purchase digital media equipment.

years, 70% ages 13-30 years, and 10% ages 31-65 years (*Container Project*). Workshops and training are not limited to age groups; rather they are designed to meet local interest and need. Frequently, workshops consist of multi-aged groups of friends who create a peer-support network. As such, this research is not focused on any particular age group; rather the focus is on production practice and video content created in this supportive environment.

The *Container* is an important addition to the local economy. The *Container* provides impetus for economic renewal activities by offering businesses basic desktop design, printing, faxing, and Internet access. The *Container* supports the nascent business and community center that in Palmers Cross initially consisted of a small grocery, hair salon and a cell phone credit shop. Recently, since the establishment of the *Container Project*, a restaurant has opened and there are plans for more businesses to be launched (many in renovated shipping containers). In Windsor Heights, the *Container* sits at the main entrance to the community and provides equal access to all six neighborhoods within the greater community of 12,000 inhabitants. This entrance adjoins a main artery serving the greater city of Kingston and has bus stops serving the community. The *Container* sits beside two small variety shops, a (soon to be) renovated pottery workshop, a restaurant and the main road into the community. The *Container* provides a social center for youth who now have a place to congregate and recreate in a creative and productive manner. This is particularly valuable in small close-knit communities. Parents can send their school-aged children to the *Container* where they are supervised and engaged in activities as part of the homework program.

The *Container Project* is a recent addition to the varied landscape of media development projects on the island. It is unique in that it serves to narrow the digital divide in marginalized communities for the purpose of self-defined community social development. As a local scholar of telecommunications, broadcaster and member of the national commission for UNESCO, Dr. Hopeton Dunn[19] opened our interview by recalling his demonstrable support of community media development and setting a context for his critique of the *Container Project*. He reviewed his historic involvement with Bluefields, a grassroots environmental media project dating back to the 1990s. According to Dunn, both he and Jarman were involved with the residents of a fishing village, working together to care for the water and its resources by developing a community radio station (Dunn interview). More to the point of the interview, Dunn then provided me with statistical information establishing a technological context for the *Container Project* that indicates that cell phones are widely adopted in poor neighborhoods such as Palmers Cross (part because of low-cost access purchase and cost per use), but computer use in the home remains low. He suggested that cell phones, not Internet and computer access, lead these communities to development. Notably, computer access centers are not included in his study of mobile phones and low-income Jamaicans (Dunn). This oversight suggests that centers such as the *Container* are not studied as a viable form of access because they are communal and do not generate income comparable to cell phone sales (Schement 306). Similar commercial concerns in the United States have resulted in reduced infrastructure investment in Internet access in poor neighborhoods (307).

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[19] Hopeton Dunn is also former Chair and CEO of the Creative Production and Training Center and member of Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO.

There are two sides to the institutionalization of media production and each falls on one side of the class-enforced digital divide. Dunn positions himself on the institutional side of this divide. He responded to the question about how community based media fits into telecommunications in Jamaica by describing his own history of involvement and interest in multimedia production as a tool of community sustainability. Moreover, to demonstrate his commitment he discussed his preferred version of community media production as demonstrated by the Creative Production and Training Centre with which he has had a long relationship.

In contrast to the *Container Project*, the Creative Production and Training Centre (CPTC) prepares media practitioners for the mass media industry. CPTC is an organization that started in 1985 as an archival institute funded through UNESCO. Over time, it was expanded to include production facilitates and is now departmentalized into three sections. One provides studio and field production equipment and facilities; the second provides accredited training courses in multimedia through the Media Technology Institute; and the third is cable television Creative Television (CTV), a national forum for non-mainstream issues (creativetvjamaica.com). Jarman indicates this is exactly the form of institutionalization of creative production that prevents many from moving on from the basics (Jarman interview). The modest beginning of the CPTC suggests that the *Container Project* will evolve over time. However, the difference is that the *Container* targets hard to reach youth who are most vulnerable when funds for school fees are needed for food and shelter. These youth need sustainable access in their communities in the event formal opportunities for education fall short of

expectations. The *Container Project* exists to serve the needs of the community, not the mass media industry.

The institutional framework in Jamaica enfolds a history of colonization, classism, and ideology based on the belief in the British legacy of societal organization. This barrier does not support the development of democracy, human rights, and culture unless shaped by the market, technology and information (Baudrillard). Neo-colonialism comes in the form of a more subtle divide between classes where institutionally educated media students and professions are preferred over local experience and knowledge. Dunn states that the Jamaican constitution includes a tenet outlining freedom of expression, emphasizing that creative industries are important to Jamaicans realizing their human rights (Jarman interview). However, the system can be dismissive if the production and people are not industry credentialed. As Jarman points out, this distinct class divide has survived the end of colonialism. Still, Dunn and Jarman agree that entrepreneurism is the way to progress and that there are opportunities in Jamaica's hostile economy (Dunn interview, Jarman interview). Jarman's vision includes the possibility of marginalized communities who have access to the tools of production for their collective benefit.

Media training enfolded with a history of institutionalized education traditionally exclude those without the financial or social means to complete a pre-determined program of study. Those excluded from the system are aware that it forces their lived experience through a filter as a means of shaping them for society. In response, marginalized people reject the system that appropriates what it determines valuable and rejects what it does not understand (Adorno and Horkheimer 409). Similar to the

submission process of the E-Platform's distribution system discussed in Chapter 2, institutionalized education remains a test of inclusion and negates what is valued locally such as community knowledge and culture because it cannot be appropriated (Marks 38).

The argument that the *Container* is not an appropriate venue for media production training misses the point that the purpose of the center is to provide creative technology to people excluded from existing opportunities. Institutionalized education with social and financial barriers to access prevents marginalized people from valuing their ability and crossing over to self-sufficient media production. However, it is not as simple as removing the barriers within the institution as Jarman says, "People who are in the upper class do not seem to believe that people can produce without having been through the institution" (interview). There is not much confidence that the *Container* can provide the training and expertise supposedly provided by an institution. Further, those who promote institutionalized media production argue that the CPTC provides for appropriate multi-skilling and is the proper venue for marketing and distributing creative content (Dunn interview).

In contrast, the *Container Project* is part studio, part idea incubator and all community focused. It is unlike networks and studios elsewhere that use "convergence initiatives to implement long-standing industry practices." Rather, this center addresses the negation of local culture and creativity through remediation of self (Caldwell 131, Bolter and Grusin 232). The *Container* revises creativity using technology based on existing community knowledge, collaboration, and self-taught learning. These less

tangible elements of everyday life shape content rather than the collective professionalized traditions of European media production and social organization.

As a self-defined "yardie" or bad-boy in his youth, Jarman says that organized education did not serve him. However, in our personal interview he tells me he could draw, and when the inspectors came around to check on the progress of the schools in Palmers Cross, Jarman was asked to draw pictures that were posted so classrooms "looked good" (interview). His creative talent had no other value in the eyes and minds of the school system and society. Feeling unwanted and alone in his community, he immigrated to the United Kingdom. Once he began to value his own creativity, he realized that he wanted to return to Jamaica to help others to do the same (Mervin Jarman Forum Vid). He describes this as repatriating technology, returning knowledge and hardware to Jamaica from places that have made fortunes for centuries off the resources and people of the island (Jarman interview).

The *Container* remains a renegade, existing outside the boundaries of accepted community-based training. It serves the literate and the illiterate of all ages. Thereby, the role of the *Container* is to suit the needs of the communities and those who are engaged in creative production. Dunn states that the *Container* is not serving the hard to reach and those most in need of literacy skills (interview). He suggests that Jarman set up the field visit to the *Container* in a self-serving manner. For example, he suggested that Jarman handpicked participants for my workshop to create an impression that the youth were literate and ready to learn and engage. This criticism was not represented in the youth who were introduced to the *Container* during the residency. Some were highly technologically literate, and others could not read but did

successfully operate their cell phones. It was a challenge to keep youth involved and a number dropped out before the end of the workshop.

Dunn stated that the *Container* is sourcing only a small part of the population. This is true, as in marginalized communities someone must identify youth who would benefit from the program and then actually bring him or her to the center. It is still a word of mouth resource. Although Jarman is well known in the community, the *Container* is not an easy sell to those whose greatest worry is food and shelter. Dunn also suggested that Jarman should be reaching out to the truly marginalized – those without literacy skills. Direct observation indicates that this is happening on a regular but individual basis, as dictated by the needs of those with limited literacy skills.

Fieldwork at *Container* in Palmers Cross and Windsor Heights revealed that participants have a range of literacy skills. People with limited literacy levels are not isolated from the group on this basis, which would put their personal dignity at stake. Rather, it was observed on separate occasions that they are included in a group. Group members act as mentors and translators for those at different skill levels as a means to maintain the dignity of all participants. For example, group members helped a non-literate friend by reading instructions to him, negotiating the answers verbally, and then typing or writing the answers as needed. Without this form of peer support, the *Container* could easily lose this group because of perceived exclusionary practices. At the local level, the lack of literacy is a barrier as the neediest are hesitant to engage with the *Container Project*, which they perceive as part of the power structure. In these instances, groups of friends are invited together. It requires a fine balance of persuasion and managing expectations to convince youth to come to the *Container*.

Jarman does not promise youth that coming to the *Container Project* will transform them into filmmakers or propel them into another level of financial stability. What he does tell them is that working at the *Container* with give them the opportunity to learn new ways to express their creativity and to share their perspectives of the street. Together it forms a "'power with' rather than a 'power over' model of social inclusion in which young people are empowered to engage with the design and delivery of their own services," and to take control of their own production of meaning and knowledge ("Subtle Technologies 10" 42). From this perspective, Jarman uses ICTs to promote their rights, but does not promise that the technology is a cure-all for social exclusion (interview). It is just as much a site of contradiction as corporate and industry media, but has greater possibility for social well-being because of the cultural environment (Sobchack 88).

An Analysis of the Production Environment

According to Sullivan, postmodern feminists argue that technologies are "heterogeneous in their histories, their uses, and their effects and are thoroughly embedded in contextually specific cultural processes" (3). At the two centers, methods of production are similar and based on recognizable practices of creation and distribution. Yet, the tools used are unique to that place and time and composed or constructed from economic, social, political and gender systems of knowledge. In this economic context, differences in race and gender are evident. Gender breakdown at each of the two locations is different and related to different approaches to community development, community priorities, and the capacity of the *Container* site.

Class divides the rural and the urban in Jamaican society and gender divides people within communities. At the more established *Container* location in Palmers Cross, usage based on gender is almost equal. During the fieldwork period, the majority of those involved at the Windsor Height location were men. Gordon associates the male-dominance in public life to firmly entrenched patriarchal social practices that go against the myth that Jamaica is a matriarchy (interview). Jamaican women are survivors, they have learned to fend for themselves and many households are women headed, but "good woman characteristics include cooking and care of family" prevail (interview). Honor Ford-Smith describes this as a system of race in Jamaica where "socially white" defines power and poor women are living in communities where violence increases their dependence on men (213). Female leadership is challenging the gender division between economic and social aspects of women's lives. Some of these advances are evident at the Palmers Cross *Container* where women are an integral part of the creative community. They are also an integral part of the economy and social fabric, filling gaps left behind from reduced services and infrastructure investment.

Women's role in some parts of the society has improved, but often, this does not result in material gain. Rather, they fill services that hospitals, schools and community centers used to provide (Ford-Smith 222). During the 1970s and 1980s, the Sistren Collective sought to address the inequities experienced at home and work by providing a creative space for development. Through theatre, women engaged in collective, participatory practices of storytelling, "based on the interpretations of daily realities of Jamaican women combined with myths, images, and dramatic poetry" (224). Through performance, women had an opportunity to express their identity, engage in problem

solving, and to create community with other women. Many of these practices are evident at the *Container* locations, but address the needs of both women and young men.

The *Container Project* has emerged in two distinct locations at two different times in the progression of gender equity in current-day Jamaica. Location is relevant in as much as the *Container* is an adaptable framework in which the community defines activities and technology. Sara Diamond says, "The learning and creation and presentation situations are structured as community experiences" where people work together and experience the results (62). This is still a traditional view of media production and it misses that point of the *Container* in that the process of synergy (human and technology) begins before the "results" are in or final production is completed. People are involved in the experience throughout the entire production cycle – these are not separate activities from a community perspective, but non-linear collaborative activities. The *Container* represents what technology is available to serve a community, who is participating, and what issues the community wants to address. As a result, women's involvement fluctuates and depends on the stage the community is in terms of addressing street violence (most often involving the young men). This difference is evident when comparing Palmers Cross after six years of operation and Windsor Heights in the first and second years.

Palmers Cross and Windsor Heights are considered undesirable neighborhoods. This external and internal perspective has resulted in a social isolation compounded by high unemployment and low education. Local culture exists but is devalued, criminalized or negated by the community. Such a project helps in the construction of an

"anthropology of place" that encourages the examination of society from the perspective of regional priorities as well as in a historic continuum of colonization, racism, and neoliberalism (Lind 228). In applying Hamelink's theory that the development and preservation of local culture provides "people with a sense of identity, a past, destiny, and dignity," the following discussion identifies how technology is consciously adopted to address local issues (111).

A sense of place and community is contributing to the existence of specific local cultures leading to women and collectives gaining access to the tools of media production. Palmers Cross is an old community, and residents can trace their ancestry back generations. Many continue to live in the houses where their mothers and grandmothers were born. The streets remain unnamed here, but locals know this as the center of Cross where the community gathers for events, sends its children to school, shops for groceries, visits the hairdresser, and buys phone credit. It is a sleepy, rural, but deeply-rooted community where poverty and relative opulence coexist on many streets. The Diaspora is evident in the money sent from abroad to support family and to build retirement homes. Still, everyone locks the gates at night and the negative reputation of the area still clings.

Women are active at the Palmers Cross location. They use their video production training for entertainment, to engage in creative production, and to promote their talents. Others limit their use of the facilities to communicate with family abroad or to purchase business services. The younger women may spend their time watching music videos and participating on social networking sites such as Facebook. Some have limited interest in taking advantage of the creative digital tools available, preferring to chat with

friends. Some of those who are engaged in creative work were suspicious for asking them to participate in an interview. This became evident when researching a female video artist and singer who has posted her music video to YouTube and hoped to have her music played on the radio. She stated that she would not benefit from this research project and refused to participate. Jarman responded by saying that this way of thinking gives them an out, a chance to walk away from opportunity (interview). They fear opportunity because it means they must risk failure. He says that this way of thinking permeates marginalized communities, and many youth do not want to collaborate or engage with people from outside the community out of fear and to protect their pride (interview).

Windsor Heights (formerly Sufferers Heights) is a former squatters' community that emerged around 30 years ago on a rugged hill area located between Kingston and Spanish Town. Originally, people lived without electricity, running water or proper roads. Local leaders struggled to transform the garrison into a functioning community. Community elder Cyril Henry (Chauka) was instrumental in bringing the first electric lights that were strung up along an extension cord from the bottom of the community for the length of the cord 25 years ago (Jarman interview). By 1998, community associations formed in partnership with the local Member of Parliament. In 2005, the land was surveyed and in 2006, residents were granted title to their land ("Windsor Heights Residents to receive Titles"). Windsor Heights is also a tightly knit community of six neighborhoods and 12,000 residents. In the past, these neighborhoods have experienced feuds resulting in violent confrontations between the men. Now the Windsor Heights community works to keep cross-border conflict and rivalries on the

soccer field and out of the streets. Here, men still dominate attention, as they are most likely to participate in violent acts and require an immediate community response. To address this pressing issue, young men are first to participate in *Container* projects. Women, at this stage of community development in Windsor Heights are active behind the scenes, organizing women's groups and ensuring young girls have access to education, but only women organizers and community leaders are involved with the development of the *Container*.

The fieldwork and residency provided an opportunity to observe gender roles at this point of media development. During the second week of the residency a local woman and community leader spoke to Chauka about her recently launched women's group in one of the neighborhoods. It was evident that women's liberation and empowerment is not a new concept, but certainly a nascent practice that can only succeed in conjunction with men's empowerment[20]. In the community setting, marginalization is evident in the behavior of young men who are most likely to determine the safety of community streets. In Windsor Heights, gender disparity in the community is heightened by social conflict where the six neighborhoods are divided into territories and borders are defended by gangs of young men who are poor, uneducated, and either day laborers or unemployed (Hamilton). Many will eventually end up dead or in prison, says Jarman (interview). According to Dr. Herbert Gayle, 25% of young men from garrison communities such as Windsor Heights will not live to 40 years of age (Hamilton, Gayle quoted in "Under 40 & Under Threat"). For the majority of youth in this community there is nothing to do and no future in sight. On a tour of the community,

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[20] Generally, these men are aged 18-30 years of age.

Chauka tells me as we pass youth hanging out on the corner, "Youth need to wake up in the morning and have purpose, something to do" (interview). He says, "It is a terrible thing to wake up and have nothing to do…it is bad for the mind" (Chauka interview).

Media development delivered through the *Container Project* is an opportunity for community and youth development between the six neighborhoods (China Town, Compound, Zambia, Square, Windows Meadows, and Hill View) in Windsor Heights. Communities are adopting soccer as a means of conflict resolution and healthy competition. Now, the community seeks other forms of community collaboration, such as the *Container Project*, to serve the needs of creative and entrepreneurial development, considered the building blocks of sustainable community development. Chauka is instrumental in keeping the peace between neighborhoods, which requires a careful balance of respect and interaction using analogue and digital technologies. He encourages using cell phones, reading the local newspaper, and using computers and the Internet. He also is seen daily at the local hangouts and drives by the corners stores. During the evening, Chauka and a number of the community leaders come together to talk and play dominoes outside the elementary school located centrally in the neighborhood of China Town.

In this un-policed garrison community, it is important to be visible and actively involved with the community. Chauka drives around the community everyday in his car, waving at people, stopping and talking at a few of the over 200 shops in the sprawling neighborhoods. He is often talking on his cell phone. On the first day, a tour is organized to show the community that someone foreign is here to work with the *Container Project*. This performance is organized to demonstrate its credibility outside

the community and to increase its internal credibility. Chauka organizes community soccer games, a community meetings with the local Member of Parliament, and meetings with youth. He negotiates with Jarman and Andre Johnson (*Container Project 2* manager and graphic designer) over how to negotiate the building of the *Container* site, and how to integrate the *Container* into the community.

Philosophically the same project and benefitting from the growing local and international reputation of the *Container* in Palmers Cross, the *Container* in Windsor Heights only came to fruition because of the community support. The community's distinct needs, personality, and reality shape the project. In Palmers, the emphasis is on providing business services, an after school homework center, certification workshops, and an Internet café. While there is overlap in Windsor Heights, this center is enthusiastic about promoting graphic design skills, music production, and crime reduction through providing youth with creative outlets and opportunities.

It is the young men who form the initial group of community activists whose willingness to support the *Container Project 2* (that is still dependent on the Palmers Cross location) has resulted in its development. As such, these men form the group interviewed at this site. All are in their 20s, many are fathers, and a few have spent time in jail. They are all creative, intelligent, and open to talking about life in a garrison community and the *Container Project*. In the majority of instances, these young men did not talk directly about how the *Container* benefited their lives, but focused on the needs of their children to have a better life. In speaking with Jarman about this disconnect, he explained that men over the age of 20 in this community believe they are living on

borrowed time and that they will likely die before seeing their children grow up (interview).

As part of the pro-youth development, these young men have responsibilities that require them to behave civically and step into the spotlight in their community. To perform this role in support of the *Container Project* this researcher conducted interviews at the local elementary school and other public spaces where people congregate for learning or recreation. As part of their role as community representatives, these young men are also expected to promote the *Container Project* outside the community to sponsors by participating in presentations and disseminating the results of these meetings to the community. As part of the *Container Project* fundraising, Lasco Incorporated – a Jamaican-based food distributor – sponsored Andre Johnson and Phillip Ellis to travel to Toronto to participate in the Subtle Technologies conference. The resultant video of the presentation (shot and produced by Johnson, Ellis, James, and Jarman) was screened in the Lasco boardroom for Mr. Chin, Chief Executive Officer. Afterwards, Mr. Chin spoke with Johnson and Ellis about their achievements and congratulated them on their ongoing work in Windsor Heights. The presentation resulted in further financial support from Lasco to the *Container Project* to increase the reach of the media development project through the iStreet Lab.

An Analysis of Media and Production Practice

Whether central or peripheral to mainstream culture, social codes determine identity. At the *Container*, lines between the identity of creator, teacher, and subject blur to fit the needs of the community, the individual, and the learning environment. A successful workshop at the *Container* requires the right convergence of technological

and social codes that respect lived experience, local knowledge, and cultural practice. The resulting framework of technological and social codes must have cultural resonance to ensure the collaboration between facilitator and student. On the topic of culture of codes, Jarman and Mills write that "personality, attitude and response, all these have to be subliminally encoded into the work so that it can produce the required response, both in audience and participant" (92). Participants work with social codes and new technology to become media producers of experience. Through these projects, media producers are encouraged to cultivate ambition, develop collaboration skills, and form the nucleus of community energy and local identity. Directors expect media producers to apply learned skills in a systematic manner to manage and complete projects to their highest ability. Turner says, "Working at a community media center is no excuse for not working hard at your chosen craft. No one outside the center should accept less than quality work…. to accept anything less, is to assume we are not capable of better" (interview).

The ambition and drive behind the *Container*, Jarman is described as a "hactivist" and the *Container Project* as an act of "electronic civil disobedience" (Moran 180). Discussed alongside the maker of "FloodNet," software used on behalf of the Zapatistas to "flood" websites with page views and famously put into service to disturb access to government websites, the *Container* threatens the status quo (180). The *Container* disrupts the flow of information, capital, power, institutional education and "raid[s] the spaces dominated by traditional media and entertainment" (180). Jarman and those who are part of the *Container Project* share this philosophy with communities they seek

to connect with through collective knowledge and experience of poverty and social marginalization.

Palmers Cross Digital Storytelling

One of the first funded workshops at the *Container* in Palmers Cross was a digital storytelling workshop bringing together facilitators and funding from Canada and Jamaica. Facilitator Jen Lafontaine and media artist Camille Turner, both from Toronto, delivered the digital storytelling workshop. These women were instrumental in securing funding from the Canada Council in partnership with Central Neighborhood House in Toronto. The final video projects are posted to *The Digital Storytelling Program* at Central Neighborhood House website. The curriculum was adapted from the Center for Digital Storytelling that has developed a process to enable people with few computer skills to create their own short video projects using personal mementos, photographs and their own voices (The Story Project).

Seven of the thirteen participants in the 2006 digital storytelling workshop participated in this phase of the research. Jarman and Scarlett contacted and scheduled each media producer for a 30-minute interview at the *Container Project*. In the familiar surroundings of the *Container*, the media producers could comfortably sit and talk about the media projects in a supportive environment. A few had to travel by public transit from a far distance and graciously took the time to participate in this study and provide a digital file copy of their documentary. The purpose of the interview was to explore the motivation behind the choice of content and production challenges outside the framework of a media development digital storytelling workshop. This includes asking

media producers what they believe is the community benefit of this form of self-referential documentary production and how it has benefited them personally.

All of the participants spoke highly of the *Container Project* and had different reasons for participating in the inaugural workshop. While many have not produced another digital story they are connected to the *Container*, volunteer their time and skills, and use the services. As with the consciousness raising theatre, productions and local workshops held by the Sistren, digital storytelling is a form of self-help and community development exercise. It is not an end in itself. A few have gone on to upgrade their skills in other areas, gaining certification through HEART Trust National Training Agency, a non-profit designed to promote entrepreneurial skills. For example, Elaine Scarlett has been involved with the *Container* since its inception, and is now the manager. A former elementary school teacher and administrator, she participated in the workshop in order to experience the video production process so that she could teach others.

The most notable influence of the workshop is the manner in which the artists describe their experience and voice a personal story about life experience. Often, the story represents negative experiences. These include the loss of innocence, lack of opportunities, personal failure, as well as experiences of committing violent acts to protect themselves or to maintain shelter and food. These stories are similar in that they represent personal histories of social exclusion, suffering, and family breakdown. Each artist chose a personal story and identified how telling their story in a short video can help others. This self-reflexive and transformative process of creative endeavor is similar to the performance work of Sistren as video is representative of personal

experience. The production process is a transformative tool for community engagement (Ford-Smith 222).

Beyond computer and production skills, many of the workshop participants explained that they felt they had problems in their lives they did not know how to address. The workshop was not merely a means to gain transferable skills, but also a way to deal with a personal issue or problem. It is an opportunity to meet in public and work out problems in a constructive way without judgment or criticism that may prevent speaking out (Jasmine Smith qtd. in Ford-Smith, 225). Elaine Maytress Scarlett (*Losing My Aunt*, 2006) tells the story of losing her aunt when she was a teenager and how for the past 30 years she has mourned the loss. She says the process of telling her story, of learning how to put it all together and then show the final video helped soothe her sense of loss. Scarlett believes digital storytelling is a way for others to deal with grief. Others say that sharing lessons learned about life, personal choices, and experiences are beneficial to their community, which they most often perceive as a place that is increasingly poor and fraught with violence. Three years after the workshop, participants describe their role as a teacher or messenger to younger people.

Each stage of the media production process (pre-production, production, and post-production) is unique. Social and technological characteristics are potential challenges or opportunities to be acknowledged and accommodated in the process. In the pre-production stage, participants must learn how to use the equipment, overcome fears of failure, address personal insecurities about their ability, and formulate a story to tell.

Challenges facing the *Container* are a part of the production process (Jarman and Mills, 92). Media producers not only have to contend with equipment failure but have the added challenge of working around power and Internet outages. These interruptions in access are a regular occurrence, and media producers and instructors must adapt or not finish their projects. Andre Tulloch (*Ghetto Life*, 2006) points out how he learned to save his video editing files after every change because during windstorms or hot weather, the power can cut out for a moment or a few hours. Internet access is similarly affected by uncontrollable conditions. During the first two days of the field research, the Internet was down, forcing the reorganization of a workshop that relied on finding images online. Digital photography and the process of capturing images to create a montage sequence was the chosen alternative.

Producers describe the experience of the workshop and learning digital skills as fun but are quick to qualify this by adding how hard it is to choose a topic and then translate their personal story into words, sound, and images. Chin (last name withheld) (*Thank You!* 2006) found the process challenging because she had never experienced expressing her feelings through media. Although it was hard, creating a short documentary was an "easier way to express feelings" and to get some of her feelings out about the challenges she is facing in life (Chin interview). Chin believes that creating *Thank You!* helped her to overcome some of her unhappiness. At the time of the workshop, Chin was out of school and unemployed. In our interview, she said the workshop gave her the courage to return to school and to believe in her abilities.

The videos are all two to three minutes in length and consist of a sequence of photographs and other scanned documents, an artist voice over, and music. The stories

follow a traditional narrative structure of beginning, middle and end. Each starts by introducing us to the artist at birth or in early childhood. The middle tells the story of a lived experience. The end is a presentation of lessons learned, and the video closes on a positive note. Tulloch believes it is important to talk about young people forced to commit violence and engage in criminal behavior by local gangs. He produced a story about his childhood and the problems he encountered with guns and gang pressure. He believes it is a good fit for digital storytelling. Tulloch incorporates old photos and music to tell his story. Similarly, it is important to Roy to tell the true story of his life as a Rastafarian, describe achievements and represent the knowledge he has gained with age. He says that society ignores him because of his Rastafarian appearance and lack of financial success (Roy interview). He created his video to show young people like himself that he has value as a human being.

Media producers repeatedly describe how the experience of the workshop helped them to identify their skills, to value their knowledge, and to gain confidence in their own ability to communicate. In some cases, this experience resulted in the return to school or the pursuit of greater skills in technology. Other outcomes include the belief that the process of work brings rewards and the confidence required to look for work outside the neighborhood. Melesia Miller (*Lucky Girl*, 2006) says the experience taught her that she is capable of learning new skills. In our personal interview, she describes herself before the workshop as someone who stayed home because she did not have the confidence to try to make a living. She had dropped out of school and felt that she did not have the skills to graduate. Now she says, "I can go and learn, graduate and set an example for others. Anyone can pick up [learning] again." Jarman is acutely aware of

how challenging it is for young people to risk leaving their immediate community to do anything or go anywhere because they carry with them the negative reputation of their community. He describes a conversation after a day-trip with the iStreet Lab to visit a neighborhood about an hour away. He says one of the youth came to him to tell him how important this trip was to the group, as many had never had the courage to leave their community (Mervin Jarman Forum Vid). The iStreet Lab trip endorsed their experience and knowledge.

The directors of the *Container* chose carefully when they organized their first workshop and official launch of the creative learning aspect of their program. They decided on digital storytelling because it is something that respects individual experience and integrates technology to serve local knowledge. However, digital storytelling also serves the community by documenting experience and archiving local knowledge. Documentary can be transformed to incorporate myth, story, truth, subjectivity and objectivity. This gives the *Container* credibility and resonates with the community as a site for local self-defined stories. Before this project, much of the local history and culture passed from person to person, and when an elder died, their stories of the community died with them. By bringing together digital technology with a community for the purposes of storytelling, the *Container* promotes local culture over dominant culture. In this example, colonial tools are used to deconstruct colonization and define the path towards new and autonomous creations of local culture (Sobchack 88).

From Palmers Cross to Windsor Heights: Repatriating Technology to Other

Communities

Three years after the Palmers Cross digital storytelling workshop (2006), the community of Windsor Heights invited the *Container Project* to conduct an exhibition in their community in the winter of 2009. With the mobile iStreet Lab, Jarman and his crew visited the community and encouraged youth to try the technology offered. While different people stepped up to sing and record their performance, digital storytelling workshop alumni filmed the interaction. One of the most enthusiastic participants was Phillip Ellis. Ellis says that when he saw iStreet he was curious but felt he had to act cool and disinterested in front of his friends and community. Speaking of the experience in detail, he says:

> I could not get it out of my mind, so I came closer. Mervin (Jarman) showed me the battery powered multimedia lab built into a bright yellow wheelie bin, the screen, camera (built into the lid) and the microphone that can be used right on the street corner to create and mix video and music. I started singing. I kept singing and I am now a part of the *Container*. (Ellis interview)

Ellis posted the video of this encounter to his MySpace website page in early 2009 (Windsor Heights expo…). Ten minutes in length, the video shows Ellis performing for the camera as the community draws around. It is an unguarded moment that shows how Jarman constructs an environment where youth, technology, and circumstances can come together to result in a unique synergy. Since then, Ellis has travelled with the *Container Project* to the Subtle Technologies Conference (June 2009). Described as a

place where art and science meets, Jarman brought Ellis and Johnson to talk about the day the iStreet Lab came to Windsor Heights (Mervin Jarman Forum Vid).

The iStreet Lab introduces youth and the community to the possibilities of creative technology and is an initial test to see how the community will interpret the *Container Project.* Workshops suit participants' creative needs. They are limited only by the capabilities of the technology. Facilitators introduce youth to equipment, provide instructions and support during the production process, and free them to create what they want. Workshops last an afternoon, and the iStreet Lab comes equipped with a low-band television signal so the community can tune into what is going on out on the street corner. From their homes, people can dispel concerns of criminal activity and access a medium by which the community can support to the project and engage with street youth in a meaningful way (Mervin Jarman Forum Vid). There is also a radio signal and wireless Internet so that music and video productions can be uploaded immediately and become part of the positive iStreet network as opposed to the "negativity that currently links …[street youth] across the world" (Mervin Jarman Forum Vid).

Chapter Summary

This chapter examines how technology is contributing to the existence of specific local culture. As a form of amateur media, this community media center forms a framework that adapts to local needs, knowledge, and creative desire. The resulting media products are the result of grassroots-defined communication development projects and provide an opportunity to explore new forms of civil discourse. In terms of gender access, the *Container* promotes participation and equitable involvement.

However, gender development and accessibility to technology is secondary to basic needs such as safety and security. The initial focus of the *Container* program is on creating a safe and peaceful environment where people (women and children) are safe to use the resources.

Since its inception in 2000, the *Container Project* and UNESCO have maintained a mutually beneficial relationship. The media center struggled to gain support in the early years and was forced to adapt. As UNESCO became increasingly interested in the project, the local office assumed the role of long-term sponsor, extending the legacy to 2000. In 2009, the local project office for the *Container Project* was promoted to the Paris office and is now in charge of the *Creative Content Program* and E-Platform. While the *Container Project* initially represented UNESCO's disinterest, nine years later, the grassroots practices and policies constitute the *Creative Content Program*.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has explored the role of independent and local media production and distribution as activities that reveal UNESCO as a system of institutional media power engaged in synergistic relationships with media producers. The institution encounters media producers through the *Creative Content Programme* and E-Platform, which it supports, and accesses local creative content through promotional activities. These activities serve to shape media practices and content to meet UNESCO values and policy objectives. Independent and local production practices considered successful results of institutional activities are documented. If available, the resulted video is promoted through the E-Platform website. Content that adheres to predetermined UNESCO values is catalogued on the E-Platform and promoted to international television broadcasters as well as the public. The E-Platform also serves as a hub for independent media organizations and producers to interact, network, promote their videos, and have their productions distributed as credible representations of United Nations values.

Maintaining the focus on gender, human rights, and media production cultural practices, the relationships formed by the interactions of UNESCO and media producers are representative of unequal power dynamics. Each of the three points of contact between the institution and media producers discussed in this research reveal gender, race, and class as ongoing areas of contention have social and economic consequences. To examine the relationship between the media institution, the producers and practices it supports, and how they interact, this research examines a narrow slice from the industry level that is UNESCO's programs and policies, to the

media production level that is production practices at the grassroots level. Institutional policies and practices reveal how issues of race, class and gender are contested in terms of access to production tools, content, production practice, and distribution.

Despite the facade of a monolithic organization, UNESCO is constituted by member countries and bureaucracies as well as cultural and media organizations, all with differing levels of power and influence and competing agendas. Still, these groups traditionally draw from the elite in a given county and are inclined to support their own elite media industries, culture, and dominant languages. Access to new media tools of production has resulted in newly identifiable characteristics of the marginal class, excluded from national mass media, in which communities of common interests are forming, established media systems are circumvented, and unique media cultures are emerging.

Considered as a media organization in the context of existing global media industries and production scholarship, UNESCO is creating an international industry of marginalized media content deemed to support its institutional values. This industry is created by aggregating independent media content, supporting media production practices and offering subsistence funding to media producers and small organizations in a framework based on international media industry practices and values. However, this framework diverges from the familiar commercial and non-profit or public media industry models, creating a narrow focus on media and production practice that support the values founded in human rights and international co-existence defined by the United Nations. In the development of media programs, UNESCO draws from long-standing

and accepted film and video practices. Therefore, the content and production practices are recognizable and comparable to similar activities in other media industries.

The content and production practices share some theoretical origins with those documented in production studies scholarship. The institution is responsible for a large geographic area and diverse populations. New media has been adopted to extend the institution's reach and provide local media producers with an accessible network for their content. Therefore, the emerging media industry and production culture supported by UNESCO is recognizable as a byproduct of Hollywood and related industry production practices and standards.

The production culture fostered by UNESCO is framed to represent policy initiatives and activities in the content and during production activities. Each part of the production process – from policy development to production to content distribution – is interpreted as valuable to institutional success. However, UNESCO differs from Hollywood in that the institutional objective is promoting media production and practice. Moreover, UNESCO specifically supports media activities that embody human rights discourses, and it promotes media that drive current policy and program initiatives. This includes promoting access to production tools for women, but more generally, it strives to create a space for non-discrimination and equality for all people. Still, this approach provides evidence of a developing community's readiness to adopt modern ways of representation.

The top-down and bottom-up hierarchy that is assumed in other media industries such as Hollywood is blurred at times and even collapsed at the producer and production level, but remains comparable. As is true in Hollywood, systems of power

are recognizable in keeping with established systems of media management. This is evident through this research; however, local media organizations and producers inconsistently follow a set of practices. Media production labor in target countries is not consistently organized into groups who perform limited tasks. The adoption of new media by UNESCO acts as both a system of control and one of emancipation for local producers.

Together, the *Creative Content Programme* and the E-Platform contribute to the creation of a culture consisting of selected producers, practices, and content determined as representative of the institution. The framework or space of negotiation formed by this interaction is a place where filmmakers and community centers who represent United Nations values receive support, guidance, credibility and some funding for accepted media practices and content. Like any place of human interaction, this heterotopia has a unique culture created where power is negotiated. In this project the locations of negotiation discussed are UNESCO's *Creative Content Programme* policy documents, the code and design of the E-Platform submission process, the content and production practice of sanctioned filmmakers, and supported community media production practice. Examined at these points, this media heterotopia serves as an incubator, archive, media hub, network, and calling card. It is institutionally situated, rather than geographically placed, but is defined by specificity of place and nation. This dissertation highlights the interactions that occur between the institution and producers, the negotiation of practices, and the resulting content produced within this heterotopia to begin to account for the interaction within these spaces in the context of production studies.

The target of UNESCO programs has shifted towards those who live in abject poverty, and approaches have changed as institutional policies have become focused on women's equity. Women have become a policy focus, as have rural communities and communities whose language is different from the elite. Producers and beneficiaries of UNESCO media programs and activities are not "insiders" or employees of the organization or even the social or economic elite within a target country, but rather they are insiders of their own communities. A part of a target group because of social and economic exclusion, local media content, production practices, and media organizations are documented by UNESCO and used to justify development related programs. Developing relationships with local media producers provides UNESCO with insider status, a view into formerly subaltern communities, but also creates an archival connection between the community and UNESCO, provides a source of research, and lends credibility to the institution. Much of the access is as the result of the promise of funding and other forms of support.

Throughout this research, financial support and access to tools of distribution were revealed as common issues of local producers. Funding in particular was a concern for media producers who wanted to maintain control of their films and production activities. The documentary filmmakers received no financial support from UNESCO, but did receive support in the form of distribution if their film was accepted onto the E-Platform. The *Container Project* received limited financial support. The majority (over 90 percent) of the *Container*'s start-up and yearly budget was derived from other sources including in-kind donations and the sweat equity of community volunteers.

The lack of institutional support meant that media producers and community media center directors maintain the freedom to develop their projects based on their locally-defined mission. Still, the lack of financial support meant that filmmakers and community groups are forced to turn elsewhere for funding. Media producers approach corporate entities for donations, and in some cases, foundations set up by corporations funnel funds back into communities. The lack of sustained funding makes it difficult for filmmakers to plan their next film and for the community media center to develop ongoing programs. This funding approach often resulted in unique projects, but media producers note that there is little to sustain future production with this approach.

These projects exist despite lack of institutional support. Notably, the lack of financial support means limited outside control and input into development of content and production practice. Once a project or media producer has proven their production successful, UNESCO may provide funding and support. However, UNESCO takes credit for supporting the project from inception, absorbing the distinct qualities of the project. As UNESCO does not support these projects at inception, these practices and content fall outside of development communication scholarship and are analyzed from the perspective of film and media studies.

It was observed in Chapter 2 that the E-Platform as distributor and online catalogue archive reinforces the amateur status of the filmmakers and their films. The frequent distortion of the catalogue page assets (images and text), incomplete information, and film files often so distorted through compression as to make subtitles unreadable, do not serve filmmakers or broadcasters. Considering the role of the E-Platform to provide broadcasters with the resources for locally produced content,

filmmakers may have been better represented in a paper catalogue. The E-Platform reinforces the idea that local equates poor production value and lack of professional skills, and it also reinforces the notion that these films are not of a caliber to be delivered through mass media.

While influenced by development communication (in that the media producers in Chapter 3 and in Chapter 4 are supported by UNESCO), the effect is limited to content sanctioned as promoting human rights media and production practice. Still, emerging media producers do not reportedly consider acceptance by UNESCO programs as a goal, but something of an after thought or an additional opportunity. To a significant degree, local media producers seek to negotiate support, but struggle to limit institutional influence on production practice.

Digital media and information communication technologies such as the Internet are necessary to support an environment for democratic access to media. The parameters of the relationship between UNESCO and local civil society are evident in the content and production practices supported by the *Creative Content Programme* and the E-Platform. The institutional model maintains norms and manages conflict. The E-Platform appropriates, conforms, differentiates and distances the video content from the place of origin. Media affecting social change and engaging in conflict in the process of challenging power structures is maintained as a local issue. Content provides only a momentary collective contextual worldview available for our interpretation. The relationship provides for the construction of a subject that cannot be appropriated by another to serve the institutional purpose.

The tension between the institution and local media organizations is integral to the development of civil society. As identified in each chapter, community and independent media continue to struggle to come into existence, maintain independence, and empower social change. Local politics of identity and discourses of race, class and gender are evident and relevant to discussions at a global level but can be inconsistent with the institutional objectives. Artistic practices of re-presenting experiences of everyday life in documentary video production and content challenge power inequities and assert identity.

As media continues to evolve and mutate into a globally interactive and participatory practice, identity remains relevant to marginalized communities who do not wish to be absorbed by larger polities and who have fought to become visible and to participate in the public sphere (Appadurai 217). The question of whether boundaries of difference (real, imagined and constructed) have increasingly become distinguishable or homogenized with the advent of the globalization of digital media continues to be debated in the West as people oppose and celebrate the privileging of spaces of flows and the "simultaneity of social practice" between disparate cultures (Castells 181). Digital media has facilitated the flow of information and the ability of people to connect across difference, and yet there remains a need for people to engage in the practice of constructing, legitimizing, resisting, and projecting identities as their specific needs dictate.

Finally, the elements that compose digital culture and therefore emerging identities do not come together easily or at the same time and often arise out of social movements, struggle, and conflict. Thus, there is a political aspect of identity embedded

in digital culture. In the examination of the discourses of identity, we must embrace the messiness of culture in order to avoid sanitizing the political in the quest for the realization of a more just world. Further, production and media practice are integral to community sustainability, but success is locally determined. Production is the act of constantly interacting with people and life in the community and includes a complex mix of digital technology and traditional forms of communication, creative endeavor and the politics of the garrison, resulting in a composition that is regenerative rather than reproductive. As discussed throughout this dissertation, the boundaries between creator, teacher and subject are transient, malleable, and determined by the needs of the community. Production practice and culture are the result of a community adopting digital media as a means to practice local organizing, sustainability, creative endeavor, gender equity, and identity. The results represent new forms of civil discourse composed of digital media and social justice intertwined to represent local knowledge.

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ABSTRACT

THE *CREATIVE CONTENT PROGRAMME* AND AUDIOVISUAL E-PLATFORM: AN INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS OF UNESCO'S INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDEPENDENT DOCUMENTARY CONTENT AND PRODUCTION PRACTICE

by

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The study of media industries, representing the creative and cultural industries that produce media, is underdeveloped despite their unprecedented growth, transformation, influence on culture and centrality to our political, economic and everyday life (Holt and Perren 2009; Kellner 2009). With the increased accessibility of digital media at the local level and the need to support women's equity in local media as part of community sustainability, the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) has increased its focus on promoting local media production to international industry standards. In this context, media industry studies is an ideal field for examining UNESCO's recent foray into the international media industry as a digital video producer and distributor of video content to international broadcasters and the public.

In response to this recent venture, this dissertation is an institutional analysis of two interrelated UNESCO (United Nations Education Science and Cultural

Organization) activities. These include the *Creative Content Programme*, and the Audiovisual E-Platform, an online catalogue and social networking hub for independent filmmakers/media producers from the global South. Contained by these activities, the author focuses the multi-method approach on gender and access by (A) conducting an analysis of the composition of programs and practices of the *Creative Content Programme* and the E-Platform; (B) conducting textual analysis of documentary media and interviews with Diaspora women producers; and (C) participating in and observing community-based multimedia production practice.

The research reveals that the *Creative Content Programme* and the E-Platform shape media practices and content to meet UNESCO values and policy objectives. Further, independent and local production practices considered successful results of institutional activities are documented, and the video is promoted through the E-Platform website. Together, the *Creative Content Programme* and the E-Platform contribute to the creation of a culture consisting of selected producers, practices, and content determined as representative of the institution. Still, local women and other marginalized media producers struggle to express local lived experiences. These struggles are evident in approaches to story development, production, and the media industry.

As systems of power, UNESCO's Creative Content Programme and E-Platform influence media production and reveal tensions between institutional policies, and transnational media economies that specifically affect those at the margins in a developing community.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Debbie James is Wayne State University's Humanities Center Dissertation Fellow for 2010-2011. Her research interests include feminist perspectives on transnational documentary, and community digital media practices that challenge our ideas of gender, civil discourse and political action. James has won both a Top Paper and a Top Graduate Student Paper award in the Global Communication and Social Change Division at the 2011 ICA conference in Boston and published her work in *Studies in Documentary Film*, *Flow*, and *Scope*. Further, she is honored to share a 2010 Emmy award for the documentary project *WatRUfightn4* won while serving at Wayne's University Television. Alongside her academic activities, James is collaborating on a digital storytelling workshop with the Stockholm Challenge Award-winning Container Project in Jamaica. This includes teaching youth how to use video technology to develop skills, promote community sustainability, and represent and keep local knowledge. In August 2011, James joins the faculty at Governors State University as Assistant Professor, Media Communication.