Toward an intersectional political economy of autonomous media resources

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Abstract

This paper presents results of a co-research project with autonomous media activists to analyze the challenges they face when mobilizing resources, and the myriad strategies they deploy to overcome these challenges. Drawing on qualitative data from six focus groups with eighty-nine media activists, and sixteen semi-structured interviews, four key media practices emerge. First, we find that media activists cultivate funding sources based on ethical relationship building. Second, they negotiate a complex ethics of paid vs. unpaid labour practices. Third, they mobilize a wealth of immaterial or intangible resources. Fourth, they develop innovative anti-oppression media practices challenging intersectional systemic oppressions. We argue it is imperative to engage intersectionality in conjunction with political economy to deepen our understanding of autonomous media resource practices, as intersectional anti-oppression strategies can contribute to sustainability.

Keywords: Autonomous media; media activism; intersectionality; anti-oppression; political economy.

"How to resource alternative media is a crucial democratic question of our times" (Fuchs & Sandoval 2015, 173). Alternative media can offer critical interventions in public debate and tend to support social movements working toward positive social transformation. However they are faced with a perpetual lack of funding based on an inherent contradiction—how to work as anti-capitalists in a capitalist society. In addition, alternative media are often working within and as part of anti-racist, feminist, anti-colonial and LGBTQ+ movements, and yet the economic systems they must work within to mobilize resources tend to be racialized, gendered, colonial and heteronormative. How do they address this dearth of resources and the intersectional oppressions that shape access? Few scholars have researched with autonomous media activists to document, analyze, understand and share their strategies for developing material and immaterial resources in the face of these tensions and contradictions. Our research team has set out to do this. Specifically, we research with and from within intersectional feminist grassroots autonomous media movements; most of us, in addition to being involved in research, are also engaged in such movements.

In our work, we use the term 'grassroots autonomous media' rather than the term 'alternative media' (cf. Pajnik and Downing 2008; Atton 2007, 2002; Fuchs 2010; Rodriguez 2001; Bailey, Cammaerts, and Carpentier 2008) for

several reasons. The term 'alternative media' is ambiguous or even contradictory in its claims (Jeppesen 2016, 55-56). Recently the term 'alternative' has been co-opted by the so-called alt-right, which produces purportedly "alternative" media, including fake news, which reproduces misogynist, racist, colonial and homophobic discourses of 'intersectional hate' (Ghanea 2013). Contrary to these media forms, our research participants' projects emanate from a segment within alternative critical (left) media, and are quite distinct from alt-right media. They focus on social justice perspectives, referencing a body of scholarship and activism grounded in militant multi-issue movements such as autonomous Marxism, social anarchism, feminism, Indigenous self-determination and more (Langlois & Dubois 2005; cf. Dyer-Witheford 1999; Dean 2005, 2014; Cohen 2017; Downing 2001; Costanza-Chock 2012; Kidd 2016). We therefore adopt the term 'grassroots autonomous media', with reference to the following definition:

> First, they are part of broader grassroots anti-authoritarian, militant or autonomous social movements. Second, they are anti-capitalist not just in content but also in funding models, which are both anti-corporate and not for profit.... And third, they exercise collective autonomy in their political, cultural and decision-making models, structures and practices, which are prefigurative, directly democratic, horizontal and rooted in anti-oppression politics on issues of race and colonialism, class, gender, sexuality and disability. (Jeppesen 2016, 385)

Specifically, we are interested in how anti-capitalist media groups develop resources in ways that account for these multiple political commitments.

This paper focuses on participatory grassroots autonomous media activism and presents findings on resource mobilization to support media activist projects. Media activists are facing problems such as whether to use advertising, where to get grant money from, how to use mutual aid or sharing economies, how to develop donation streams, and whether to offer services for a fee, all of which play a role in the ethics of media activist resource mobilization. Often projects will put ethical and political concerns ahead of financial ones, which results in a great deal of unpaid or underpaid labour. At the same time resources may be easier to access for some people than for others, breaking down across race, Indigeneity, class, sex and gender. Questions of who gets paid or how to generate and distribute resources equitably can inadvertently result in the development of hierarchies based on race, class, and gender, even in ostensibly non-hierarchical groups. Beyond material resources, immaterial resources such as time, capacity, emotional labour and more can also contribute to the sustainability of media activism; however, they are also not always equitably distributed. How are these inequities addressed by grassroots autonomous media groups?

Analyzing the anti-capitalist approaches of media activist projects toward the development of material and immaterial resources, we use a critical political economy approach typically reserved for analysis of mainstream media. Political

economy, like grassroots autonomous media, takes a critical approach to capitalism. We also found that when media activists talked about resources, they directly connected them to labour practices, including who does paid, unpaid, underpaid, and emotional labour. These labour questions can be elucidated using political economy theories, however the activists we worked with also use intersectionality theory to address resources and labour. Intersectionality can account for movement and media resource practices that address interlocking systems of oppression and power engaged by or differentially impacting women, racialized or BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) groups, as well as LGBTQ+ and non-binary[1] groups and networks (Breton et al. 2012; Daring et al. 2012; Eslami & Maynard 2013; Jaggar,2014; Costanza-Chock et al. 2017). These two theoretical approaches thus dovetail nicely to help us better understand the empirical interview data from the intersectional anti-capitalist perspectives that are widespread among the activists interviewed.

With the objective of making our results useful to activists and academics alike, our research addresses four gaps in the literature on media activist resources. First, the literature emphasizes the under-resourcing of alternative and autonomous media work (Fuchs & Sandoval, 2015; Kurpius et al., 2010; Skinner, 2012), but few studies use a political economy approach to understand the complexities of resource and labour structures within autonomous media projects (Atton 2007; Fuchs 2010; Kozolanka, Mazepa & Skinner 2012). Second, while the need for sustainable resources is well documented, specific autonomous media labour practices regarding resource accumulation and distribution within collective projects remain understudied (Salter, 2014; Cohen, 2017) with the exception of the Indymedia network (Kidd 2003; Hanke 2005; Pickard 2006; Milioni 2009; Lievrouw 2011; Wolfson 2013). Third, while the literature focuses on the importance of material resources and labour to sustainability, the impact of immaterial resources and immaterial labour has largely been overlooked (Gill & Pratt 2008; Dowling 2007). And fourth, while scholars emphasize economic issues in autonomous media projects, which is the primary emphasis in the research on Indymedia, the free open source movement, and technopolitics (Fuster Morell 2012; Kurban, Pena-Lopez & Haberer 2017; Toret 2012), and some even note the dominance of cis-white-males (Costanza-Chock 2012), few researchers have investigated how specific activist media practices may either differentially impact women, LGBTQ+ and/or BIPOC people within groups and projects, or be generated by these marginalized groups to address differential impacts. This gap in the research exists despite these uneven practices being acknowledged for many years within media activist spaces (Jeppesen et al., 2014; Costanza-Chock et al., 2017). Our research therefore examines strategies used by media activists to address a range of resource problems, including labour practices, as well as how they

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[1] We will use 'LGBTQ+' or 'queer and trans' to refer to LGBTQQIP2SAA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, pansexual, Two-Spirit, asexual, and allies) and non-binary groups and individuals in this article. We acknowledge the terminology changes quickly and that this acronym may fall out of use.

address the unequal distribution of resources within projects and work to challenge hierarchies that can be created or exacerbated by inequitable resource mobilization across structures of oppression.

Our paper is organized as follows. First, we describe our Participatory Communicative Action Research (PCAR) methodology, which is rooted in radical anti-capitalist intersectional social movements and media activism. We then map out a theoretical framework that brings together political economy and intersectionality theories, explaining how these have emerged both from the interviews and the literature and are directly useful in analyzing media activist resource strategies. Empirical findings on material and immaterial resources and labour practices are then presented from our interview data with media activists across Canada. We also discuss three anti-oppression practices that are attentive to colonialism, racism, and gender oppression with respect to media activist resources which emerged from the interviews.

We argue that intersectional anti-oppression resource strategies are key to the economic sustainability and resilience of grassroots autonomous media because they allow feminist, LGBTQ+ and BIPOC media activist projects, groups, individuals and networks to put intersectional anti-capitalist politics into practice whereby their media content and organizational functioning become more consistent, particularly with respect to the way resources are mobilized, including where they come from and how they are utilized. These intersectional media resource practices, though not without challenges of their own, have strengthened both the content and the organizational processes of media projects that use them by challenging and mitigating the impacts of interlocking systemic oppressions with respect to material and immaterial resources and labour practices.

Methodology

This research was conducted by a horizontal intersectional feminist collective co-researching with and as grassroots autonomous media activists. Collective members are students, media activists, social movement participants, faculty, and/or community members. We have developed a Participatory Communicative Action Research methodology, in which activist-researchers build relationships with and *as* media activists working together in researching toward transformative social justice objectives. We are active within communicative action networks, or networks of social movement action in which communication is itself a form of social action and can also spark future communicative and movement actions.

Findings are based on two sets of empirical interview data. In 2014-15 we invited media activists who identify with our five research pillars—intersectional feminist, queer & trans liberation, anti-racist, anti-colonial and anti-capitalist—to participate in workshops to discuss challenges, successes and future directions for media activism. Through the workshops we reached 89 media activists in Toronto, Ottawa, Halifax, Vancouver, Victoria and Montreal. The

workshop data-set was analyzed within the research collective, then shared and validated with research participants, and finally used to generate new research and interview questions. These activist-derived interview questions were the basis for our second data-set, which consists of 16 semi-structured interviews with four members from each of the following:

(1) The Media Co-op, a member-run multi-stakeholder solidarity cooperative, founded in 2007 and producing "grassroots news [which] covers those directly affected" on their website and in *The Dominion* magazine (Media Co-op, n.d.);

(2) Ricochet Media, a "public service investigative journalism" video news website that emerged out of the Quebec Student Strike, with French and English editorial boards (Ricochet, n.d.);

(3) Rabble, an independent and progressive journalism website with the objective of "reporting on stories from civil society while providing a counterbalance to corporate-owned media," established in 2001 (Rabble, n.d.);

(1) A network of campus and community radio stations that includes: CKUT in Montreal (CKUT, n.d.), Queer Radio Hour at CILU in Thunder Bay (Queer Radio Hour, n.d.), and the national independent community radio news show GroundWire (Groundwire, n.d.).

We prioritized projects that had existed for a minimum of six months, with a decision-making collective. Moreover, we sought to ensure that taken together, the projects produced a range of media genres (radio, print, video, and online). We have intentionally used our resources and work as researchers to support media activist projects and movements by participating and sometimes organizing radical media movements, conferences and events, and integrating media activists into our collective in different ways. Through this methodology, which envisions research itself as a form of communicative action, our participants created movement dialogues and built relationships not just with our research collective but also among their/our media activist networks and communities. The methodology takes elements of activist-led research (Kuyek and Choudry 2012), militant ethnography (Juris 2005), feminist community research (Cahill 2004; Jaggar 2008; Fine 2006) and anti-authoritarian feminist research within social movements (Breton et al. 2012a, 2012b).

Integrating these social movement methods into our research on media movements thus contributes a new methodology that focuses on the interstices between media and social movements and blurs the boundaries between research and activism. It provides results that emerge directly in the moment of the research, through media activist dialogues, research conversations, and networking, as well as contributing to the literature on media activist practices. It also offers space for critical reflection on best practices in the political

economy of material and immaterial resources and labour through a consideration of intersectional media activism projects and networks.

Theoretical framework

Following the lead of our research participants, our theoretical approach to analyzing our interview data uses both political economy and intersectional theory. We augment the anti-capitalist thinking of earlier alternative media scholarship—particularly with reference to the Indymedia network, free and open culture, and technopolitics as mentioned earlier—through a consideration of intersectional forms of oppression that articulate to capitalism. Conversely, we also ground intersectionality theory in the material and immaterial impacts in on-the-ground grassroots autonomous media practices. We see neither political economy nor intersectionality as the foremost theoretical perspective, but rather consider both as equally important and reveal ways in which they can be mutually informing.

Political economy

A political economy approach to media activist resource practices foregrounds the intertwined structures of communicative capitalism in which, as Jodi Dean argues, the compulsion to communicate and participate in ubiquitous social and other forms of media, rather than principally driving democracy forward by providing avenues for digital political participation, instead drives and amplifies capitalist accumulation, on the one hand, with little to no response from government regarding progressive policy frameworks, on the other (Dean 2005, 53). Moreover, Nick Dyer-Witheford warns of the intensifying commodification of communication technologies and practices in cyber-capitalism, that is to say, capitalism integrated into the digital circuits of communicative action (Dyer-Witheford 1999). As well, Curran, Fenton and Freedman (2012) suggest that the original sociopolitical promise of the internet for improving people's lives and society in generally was somewhat technologically deterministic and that this promise has not been fulfilled for reasons based in political economy. Thus, we critically analyze the political economy of activist media with respect to communicative labour practices, which includes the mobilization or input of material and immaterial resources to fund and support projects, as well as the mobilization or output of these resources toward material and immaterial labour.

Robert McChesney (2000) notes that there are two main relationships in the political economy of media. The first is the "relationship between media and communication systems on the one hand and the broader structure of society" on the other (2000, 110). In this sense we will consider how the communication systems of activist media projects generate content to challenge structural oppressions within the broader society.

The second key relationship in the political economy of media inheres in the internal structure of media organizations, which is to say the relationships among ownership, support and advertising policies, including labour and other structural processes in the production of media (McChesney 2000, 110). All of the media projects in Canada that we studied are collectively owned and self-managed, structured as neither public (state) nor private (capitalist) but independent (anti-capitalist).

We add a third relationship, which is the link between these two. In other words, we consider how the political content of media activist projects that challenge societal structures of domination shape and are shaped by the internal media organizational structures and vice versa. This is a pivotal question within autonomous media and a key site of action and political change that bears further examination.

Autonomous media activists critique labour structures in mainstream journalism which, according to Nicole Cohen, has long been "a gendered model of employment based on a male citizen-worker who enjoys 'full-time continuous employment' for one employer, works on the employer's premises, and receives employment-based benefits" (2015, 515). As such, women have long been marginalized in journalism, occupying increasingly precarious positions, with unpaid internships "further entrench[ing] class, race, and gender inequality in media industries" (526).

Within media employment in Canada, inequities across race and gender do exist, with only 4.8% of board members and executives coming from racialized groups, who are also under-represented among journalists or hosts and interviewed experts (Cukier et al. 2011, np). In terms of gender, although the numbers of men and women employed have more or less equalized (with studies failing to account for non-binary genders), in news media, women are paid less in similar positions as men, and are under-represented in upper management (Gasher et al. 2012, 284). These realities suggest the need to augment political economy with intersectionality theory to better account for not only these exclusions in the Canadian mediascape, but also the important contributions of women, BIPOC, and/or[2] LGBTQ+ people in grassroots media projects attempting to correct for systemic oppressions and exclusions.

Intersectionality theory

Several scholars address social movement resource mobilization around issues of race, class or gender through social justice approaches to media from a participatory research perspective similar to that of our research project, however, without necessarily directly addressing intersectionality theory. Charlotte Ryan provides strategies for obtaining positive coverage of activist campaigns in mainstream media (1991; 2010). Ryan, Carragee & Meinhofer propose frames for collective action to advance movement objectives in TV news

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[2] The term 'and/or' is used to indicate the intersectional nature of these identities.

(2010). Deborah Barndt has developed community arts projects in Toronto and Nicaragua to put media production tools and skills in the hands of marginalized communities (2002). Barndt and Reinsborough use similar participatory strategies toward decolonizing research in Mexico and Panama (2011, 162). Harlow and Guo research with immigrant advocacy activists in Austin, Texas, finding that digital media is a supplement rather than a replacement for face-to-face organizing (2014). In general, researchers address social movement media strategies engaging one axis of oppression. However few scholars study the resource-based digital divide at a higher level of granularity, for example by assessing the impacts and strategies used by activists to address multiple intersecting axes of oppression through media (Costanza-Chock et al. 2017). Building on elements of these community research projects, our research collective takes up similar strategies to Costanza-Chock's research with the Transformative Media Organizing Project (2017) to explore how intersectionality is integrated into resource mobilization practices of grassroots autonomous media projects.

Intersectionality theory was developed by Black feminists to better understand lived experiences of sexism in the context of racism (Crenshaw 1989; hooks 1981). Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (2016, 2) offer the following definition:

> Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world. … When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other.

Sherene Razack (1989) suggests that intersectional *interlocking* systems of oppression are key to understanding the structures that shape individual and collective experiences. We see a deepening understanding of interlocking systems of oppression within anarchist scholarship to account for oppressions of the state through, for example, the gendered effects of immigration and deportation and racialized police brutality (Dupuis-Déri 2017). Moreover, Collins and Bilge (2016) suggest that intersectional identities and practices are always-already coalitional, connecting issues by necessity, whereby for example, women of colour might form coalitions within or across anti-racist and feminist groups to contest racialized-gendered state and economic oppressions.

Addressing critiques that intersectionality theory does not provide a methodological approach (McCall 2005; Nash 2008), we use an intersectional participatory communicative action research methodology to examine ways in which grassroots media activist projects have made interventions against interlocking intersectional structures of oppression when considering resource mobilization, such as how to generate and utilize resources. These strategies simultaneously respect, reinforce and recognize the strengths of intersectional

marginalized identities, experiences and self-representations developed through media activism while being particularly attentive to how they are affected by and can better develop resources.

Critical analysis of findings

Our interviewees pointed to several best practices of resource mobilization, yet they also indicated that they faced a range of contradictions and tensions. Primarily, media activist projects face an inherent resourcing tension articulated by Fuchs and Sandoval:

> On the one hand, their self-management renders them more independent from the interests of the power elite whose domination activists want to challenge, but on the other hand, alternative media face ... the problem of mobilizing resources without state support and [capitalist] advertising. (2015, 173)

So where do these resources come from, who can (and who cannot as easily) access them, and what are some of the related media practices?

Mobilizing material resources for autonomous media

A key concern in the political economy of media is an examination of power structures through monetary flows. This is particularly salient when it comes to media activist resourcing decisions. A classic example of an alternative media resource controversy was Indymedia's rejection of a $50,000 grant from the Ford Foundation, arrived at via a collective decision-making process (Kidd 2003; Hanke 2005; Pickard 2006; Milioni 2009; Lievrouw 2012, Wolfson 2013). Indymedia took a political economy view as they were concerned not just with the economics of the grant but also with Ford's business practices, including how they treat their workers, as well as how the funds would impact the volunteer labour model on which the network was formed, including their relationships with communities, social movements and Indymedia users. While some attention was paid to differential access to resources in global locations, an intersectional view of material resource access was not pervasive within Indymedia at that time and did not enter into the analysis in the scholarly literature.

Here we explore five key resource streams identified by media activists in Canada, analyzing the political, structural and relational impacts beyond advertising and economic effects, to account for the ways in which these resources tend to shape and be shaped by autonomous media structures, including relationships among media activists or producers, advertisers, sponsors, audiences, communities and social movements.

1. Donations. Donations are generated from media supporters and audiences through crowdfunding, launches, funding drives, events, and online donation buttons. When activists have needed equipment, such as video cameras or sofas, they have solicited in-kind donations from community members. Ricochet has run successful crowdfunding campaigns, including one for Indigenous reporting. Ricochet and the Media Co-op rely on monthly sustainer contributions; Rabble accepts online donations; while campus and community radio stations run annual funding drives. Donations can be anonymous but nonetheless they foster a relationship between the donor and the media project based on shared values rather than censorial expectations.

2. Mutual Aid. Some media projects have used co-presentations and sponsorships in lieu of advertising. Sponsorships appear at the end of a program saying 'this program brought to you by'. CKUT radio would "seek out co-presentations with local concerts, protests, [and] grassroots community-based events" (Aaron Lakoff[3]) where they would promote each other's work. Sima, a media activist with Rabble, explained the importance of the relationship co-presentations help to build: "organizations give us a certain amount of money; for that, we help to amplify the work that they're doing. They're all organizations that are progressive and that believe in the same stuff we do." Sponsorships and co-presentations with groups who share social justice values go further than donations in developing on-going inter-group coalitions and mutual support networks.

3. Fee for service. Some media groups receive funds for services which may be specific to their genre. Campus radio stations in Canada receive an annual student fee levy from students who are in essence paying for the service of having a campus radio station. This levy provides on-going funding that gives programmers a degree of stability and autonomy. For print media, subscriptions and sales paid to obtain the zine, magazine or journal generate funds that partially offset printing costs.

In these three types of funding the media users are in effect funding the project, creating a mutual relationship of care and a dialogue concerning shared social justice values and social norms expressed through news content, organization and production. These relationships may arise within but also extend beyond social justice movements.

However, the following two funding sources come from outside social movements and are more fraught with concerns that the structures, social

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[3] Some research participants chose to have their comments attributed to a pseudonym, consisting of a first name only, while others opted to use their real first and last names.

norms and values of the funding bodies may be at odds with the intersectional anti-oppression politics of autonomous media projects.

4. Advertising. Grassroots autonomous media policies regarding advertisements tend to emphasize both editorial independence and social justice values. First, in terms of editorial independence, Carolin Huang, a media activist with CKUT 90.3 FM, suggested that if a corporation wanted to dictate content, "There's just a straight-up 'no' to that kind of funding." Similarly, Jesse from Ricochet explains that they let their advertisers know "they won't be able to have editorial input."

Second, in terms of social justice values, decisions regarding who can advertise are also made on political grounds. A complex debate occurred at CHRY radio regarding Western Union as a potential advertiser, a corporation that, as Omme Salma-Rahemtullah (a long-term program host with GroundWire Community Radio News and the former CKLN and CHRY Community Radio stations) pointed out, "has gouging rates and they exploit people of colour and they exploit third world dependency." Immigrants in Toronto (and other cities in the global north) often use Western Union to send money earned in the global north home to family in the global south. They are charged very high rates for this service. When family members might not have access to mainstream bank accounts, Western Union may be the only service available to them. Salma-Rahemtullah's analysis links the political economy of autonomous media funding to the interlocking global oppressions of neocolonial capitalist corporations, and further connects these systems of oppression to potential audience members' experiences of intersectional racialized capitalist exploitation due to forced immigration. If CHRY wants to cultivate a relationship with immigrant communities, then while they may have been an attractive advertising site from Western Union's perspective, the radio station did not want to encourage their listeners to use Western Union or to appear to be supporting business practices that exploit immigrants and refugees.

At the same time, not all advertising is considered bad: some advertisers were seen to be conducive to the development of positive community relationships. For example, Rabble has hosted ads for "gay sex parties" (Kayden); *The Dominion* has placed ads from labour unions; and Jules, a media activist with CILU's Queer Radio Hour, explained how they ran paid-for ads for The Hunger, a fundraiser to benefit the local community art gallery, and also "provided volunteers to help with setup [of the fundraiser event] and to help with the door or other types of tasks." These advertising relationships thus can go beyond a simple economic business exchange to include working together on campaigns or events around interlocking struggles such as queer and trans, the labour movement, and cultural spaces that promote alternative image or representation systems.

Sometimes, the choice to accept or reject an ad is more complicated and may not be a simple yes or no decision. Tina from Rabble describes how they

accepted an ad despite having mixed feelings about the company, with a predictable and ultimately positive result. She says, we did "have a large ad-buy from American Apparel, and we took it. And American Apparel was deconstructed on our discussion boards" regarding the company's sexism[4]. "And," she added, "I think that's great." The ad helped Rabble to have an explicit dialogue and debate about advertisers directly with their audience, and indirectly with the advertiser as well. In this sense the decision was a double win—it provided much-needed funds for Rabble, and also drew people to their site for this meta-discussion of ads in autonomous media.

Thus ads can be seen as quite a complex source of funding and site of debate that play into the political economy of both media activist content in terms of: first, aiming for a kind of political consistency between advertising and journalistic content; second, creating project structures including specific relationships among producers, advertisers and audience members; and third, developing an understanding of how advertising decisions shape and are also shaped by the relation between these first two.

5. Grants. Grants are also a desirable but contradictory source of funds for autonomous media projects. Some participants saw them as tentatively acceptable if there were no strings attached, while others raised critiques regarding the granting system that forms part of the racialized-gendered exploitative NGO industrial complex (Dempsey 2009).

Huang explains how radio stations in Canada receive grants from the state. She notes that although CKUT's policy was to reject corporate ads, the station does "get a grant from the [Canadian] Community Radio Fund, which is a pool of money that actually comes from commercial radio. So in a way it's still tied to corporate funding," which is in turn derived from advertising. The Fund is meant to redistribute the wealth from the private sector in order to facilitate community radio and as such it also redistributes the relationship from being between a radio station, advertisers and the audience (no ads are heard on the radio) to being an economic contribution from the state to the station. However, Huang notes that the source of the funds must nonetheless be put into question.

While some media projects shared critiques of corporate funding, state funding was embraced in certain cases. For example, Jesse, a media activist with Ricochet, believes that "the money that people pay in taxes should be supporting independent media projects." As such, Ricochet applied for and received a grant from the City of Vancouver "to document homelessness and the tent city in Vancouver" (Javed). However, in the workshops some media activists who might be anarchist or anti-authoritarian expressed that they would reject state funding altogether, seeing it as a conflict of interest when they are engaged in anti-state political organizing, for example around 'no border networks' or

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[4] Practices include objectification of women in ads and sexual harassment in the workplace; sexual harassment charges against CEO Dov Charney led to his removal as CEO in 2014.

police brutality. Others thought that taking state funding and using it to create journalism that critiques the state would be acceptable.

At the same time, many participants found state or government grants inaccessible, time-consuming, and unrealistic in requiring a level of professional experience impossible to acquire without first having a substantial grant. Salma-Rahemtullah notes that grants are "like you're funding your own job." A grant obtained through the precarious labour of submitting an application is used to fund the journalist-as-grant-writer's next position. As she wryly adds, "that's not a good model." Moreover, she observes how grants "racialize and feminize this kind of work, by not providing stability or benefits to workers," further entrenching already marginalized media activists in precarious labour, and intensifying the impact of interlocking oppressions. Whereas cis-white-male media activists and projects were seen to gain access to grants more easily, LGBTQ+, women, and BIPOC groups and projects experienced a double oppression in this regard. First, they were more likely than people in dominant groups to be in precarious labour situations that might include having to write grant applications to try to self-fund their employment in a high-stakes competition; and second, they were less likely to receive the grants in the end due to systemic issues within the granting system. Some participants in the workshops noted that the decision regarding who to hire with grant money was also fraught and could cause tension within groups. Thus, the political economy of grant funding, for many of the activists we interviewed, was seen through an intersectional lens to be contradictory both to desire and acquire. And once acquired there were then questions regarding what to do with the funds, most often circling around labour practices.

Resourcing labour in autonomous media

Within autonomous media labour practices, Arielle Friedman identifies a key tension: "It's like an alternative economy that we're trying to build that unfortunately has to have a capitalist structure because we live in a capitalist society." This tension points to a structural contradiction in the political economy of autonomous media—working as anti-capitalists in a capitalist world. This tension is connected to a set of intersectional concerns that are key to the alternative economy Friedman points to. This alternative or social economy is structured around not just economics but also organizing labour collectively and fairly, so that it generates a media and knowledge commons that represents and provides access to media production for the whole population, not just the corporate, media and political elite. In other words, autonomous media covers and thereby engages in the struggles, identities, experiences, and politics within the everyday lives of marginalized groups experiencing invisibilized oppressions and fighting for equal rights and improved living conditions. Autonomous media projects are therefore part of the emergent media commons that articulates with the broader movement toward establishing a social economy that includes workers co-operatives, community gardens, DIY bike repair skillshare shops, collectively run cafes, tech and hacker

collectives, and many other radical socioeconomic configurations (Ostrom 2000, Carlson & Manning, 2010; Cafentzis & Federici 2013; De Angelis & Harvie 2014; Jeppesen et al. 2014; Vlachokyriakos et al., 2017).

Considering media as a common good, access to being able to produce journalism and to be paid for it within autonomous media becomes a key issue in terms of who has the power to speak, whose voices and issues are heard, and who is able to make a living and develop a professional practice producing media outside and against the constraints and structures of mainstream media power. These media labour questions were articulated by our participants not just through discussions of economic concerns but also in terms of intersectional politics, oppression and privilege with respect to paid, unpaid and underpaid labour. What also emerged was the importance of the often invisible emotional, affective, immaterial and intangible labour performed, it would seem, more often by those in systemically oppressed groups.

Paid (and underpaid) labour. Autonomous media projects can offer paid admin staff positions and may also attempt to pay contributors, with practices ranging from structured to informal. Campus radio stations are more structured, with studios on campus and the student fee levy providing for paid, albeit precarious temporary part-time labour contracts for staff, whereas radio program producers are unpaid volunteers, with the exception of GroundWire, which has raised funds when possible to pay producers. The other three projects presently have no office space and their labour policies are less formal and more malleable. Rabble is committed to "paying everyone who worked at Rabble, whether they were writers or editors or tech staff or administrative staff or fundraising staff" (Tina). Ricochet staff and contributors are paid, whereas "editors are on the board and they're volunteers" (Jesse). Media Co-op labour is more ad hoc; as noted by Geordie Dent, a media activist in Toronto: "we get volunteer content that just pours in, in a massive amount, and then we will use that content for the [magazine]. We might pay for some of it, kind of after the fact." At the same time in most projects, "there is always the thing of how many extra hours do people put in on the job" (Sima), resulting in *under*paid labour.

It seems that decisions on paid labour may be shaped by internalized oppression, or "the incorporation and acceptance by individuals within an oppressed group of the prejudices against them within the dominant society" (Pheterson 1986, 148). Perhaps materializing the effects of internalized oppression, some female, queer, trans and/or BIPOC activists felt conflicted about asking for decent wages for their own labour, while at the same time they worked hard to ensure that journalists other than themselves from marginalized groups were adequately compensated. Not a definitive finding, this matter would bear further investigation.

Unpaid labour. Kayden acknowledged the unspoken assumption that "you can't be in activist media and not do unpaid labour." Some participants

characterized unpaid media activism as a labour of love, as Aaron Lakoff from CKUT explains regarding program volunteers: "everyone knows from the get-go they're putting in their labour because it's a labour of love and passion." Similarly, "with CILU, a lot of people who participate do it because they're passionate about the type of music or the way they can use this platform" (Jules). This is not unique to radio: "There are a lot of volunteers involved in the Media Co-op and they do important work in exchange for recognition and credit" (Arielle Friedman). Javed mentioned that when Ricochet was starting up, everyone put in unpaid hours, motivated by "a sense of personal achievement and doing things that are valuable." As with a great deal of activist labour, it is undertaken because people feel strongly committed to work toward social transformation.

One of the negative impacts of unpaid labour is a pervasive structural and personal unsustainability. As Morgan points out, this is further complicated by a gender "pay gap" specific to autonomous media, where women take on more of the unpaid labour, and this extends to LGBTQ+ and/or BIPOC individuals as well.

Reliance on unpaid labour poses a challenge to the horizontal power dynamics key to autonomous media, insofar as it creates a hierarchy based on how much people are paid, on the one hand; on the other hand, this hierarchy is further affected by the amount of 'free time' people have available to contribute unpaid labour in the first place. Media activist May from Ricochet elaborates that unpaid labour "can't be our main gig because we all need to perform other work in order to put food on the table." Precarious and invisibilized labour situations, such as reproductive labour or domestic labour (Jarrett, 2014), which tend to be racialized and gendered as mentioned above, absorb a great deal of time and energy, making it harder for individuals from systemically oppressed or excluded groups to take on unpaid labour. This in turn creates unbalanced reporting:

> When you have journalism that relies on free work then you start to shrink the pool of who is doing journalism to people who have external resources…. That whittles down the field of what we're getting in terms of journalism to a very narrow and privileged perspective. (Jesse)

Some grants impose age, citizenship, student identity, or other restrictions, which "excludes a lot of people, and we would rather not have those restrictions. … Obviously who we hire affects our media output" (Friedman). Hiring constraints have impacted media content by providing space for the paid journalist's perspective; reducing space available for unpaid journalists; and forcing unpaid journalists to support themselves through paid labour elsewhere. This has an impact not just on the individuals who are further marginalized, but also on the media project's structure.

Who is paid, underpaid or unpaid further creates an unequal power dynamic within autonomous media projects, despite ostensibly horizontal organizational structures. Being attentive to these power dynamics, through observing the relational, or what Collins and Bilge call the 'coalitional' character of intersectional identities, is a key strategy within autonomous media. As Collins and Bilge argue, seeing intersectional identities "as already coalitional creates possibilities for political organizing that attends to intersecting power differentials within the group" (3). Being attentive to these intersecting power differences reveals how a reliance on unpaid labour constrains participation in activist media for systemically oppressed groups—the very people autonomous media aims and claims to be empowering.

Strategies that mitigate these constraints are therefore fundamental within autonomous media structures and processes with respect to labour. "Understanding identity as a coalitional location stresses in-group and inter-group power differentials. In other words, conceptualizing identity *coalitionally* highlights the coalitional labour that is *already at work* within the group before deploying it for building inter-group alliances" (Collins and Bilge, italics in original). This highlights the importance of the way activists articulated their understanding of autonomous media labour as always-already in relationship—to the audience, within social movements, to other autonomous media projects and so forth. The relational aspect of autonomous media labour is perhaps even more foundational to their immaterial labour practices.

Mobilizing immaterial resources

If intersectional concerns regarding the structural material resource and labour practices can shape media projects, how do contributions of immaterial resources serve to support intersectional autonomous media projects? Our participants identified six dimensions of immaterial resourcing to which media project participants and allies have contributed. Unlike material resources, all of the immaterial resources people discussed were valued within the alternative social economy logic. However there were still inequalities in tendencies and capacities to contribute these resources that broke down along intersectional lines.

Emotional labour. Emotional or affective labour refers to practices of mutual support and care that involve feelings, sociality, relationships and reproductive labour (Gill & Pratt 2008). Feminists, anarchists and antiauthoritarians, who emphasize interpersonal relations as a site of social transformation, emphasize the importance of affective labour (Apoifis 2017; Dowling 2007). Participants recognized that emotional labour supported their projects but doing too much of it could also be personally exhausting where the contribution of time and labour came with a cost: "People's time isn't free, it's costing them a lot just to do the labour, whether it's emotional or physical" (Morgan). This cost is also gendered and racialized, and several media activists narrated how white cis-

male activists sometimes took on managerial decision-making roles, leaving administrative reproductive and affective labour to women. Morgan said, "I felt like the female labour was being exploited ... And I got really burnt out trying to change it." On one hand, women's affective labour, including BIPOC women, in trying to change gender and racialized inequities within projects can lead to burnout and withdrawal from media work, having the reverse effect of tending to further marginalize them. On the other hand, some intersectional feminist, LGBTQ+ and BIPOC participants suggested affective labour contributed to highly valued experiences of friendship and pleasure that kept activists involved. These emotional labour relationships of care can be understood as part of the coalitional nature of intersectional identities that can either intensify or mitigate structural oppressions within the mediascape. While media activists noted a tendency toward increasing feelings of emotional and social isolation, emerging research notes troubling impacts of social media and smartphones on mental health within society (Twenge 2017), an avenue of research that bears further investigation with respect to social movement and media activist projects.

Networks. Linked to emotional labour, personal and professional networks among intersectional media activists constitute a key intangible resource. As Collins and Bilge (2016) suggest, "community based organizations form networks or coalitions of like-minded groups, drawing upon intersectionality to shape the logistics of how they organize as well as the political agendas they pursue." Ricochet has collaborated with *Briarpatch Magazine*, *À bâbord*, and other independent media. Kayden mentioned tech-oriented discussions using IRC to chat with other 'hacktivists' in a work pattern of mutual aid. Rabble is part of a digital resource-sharing network, In Cahoots. Tina stressed cultivating connections among women in leadership roles to break the isolation typical of digital labour mentioned above, a challenge noted in the 'radical media mixers,' as most projects did not have their own or even a shared physical space. Networks are notably more effective if they can happen in person; as Harlow and Guo (2014) found in research with immigrant rights advocates in Austin, Texas, digital "technologies could not create the personal connections that are the core of activism" (473). Sharing meeting spaces, converging at gatherings like the People's Media Assembly or the Allied Media Conference, and forming informal networks strengthened the resilience of individuals who could share knowledge and draw on these community resources, and in turn also strengthened the media projects within which they worked or volunteered.

Time. Increasingly, time is perceived as a scarce resource (Hassan, 2009; Rosa, 2013, Tomlinson, 2007). Attention to the temporal dimensions of collective action (McAdam & Sewell 2001; Pietrzyk 2013; Scheuerman 2009) can reveal structural and intersectional conditions attached to time availability that can constrain some activists' capacities to participate. Javed describes experiences with respect to time in the early days of Ricochet:

> It just seems natural to us, to give what [time] we have for something that we believe in. One of our editors is expecting a baby, the other one has two kids and does a different bunch of contract work, plus I am in a different country with 10 hours of time difference, having a full-time job, others in Montreal have their own commitments. But none of that has affected the pace at which we edit stuff and publish articles. Even though sometimes we have no choice but to take our time, there was never a significant slowdown.

This observation reveals multiple intersectional time pressures influenced by race, class, gender, geographical location, parental labour and so on. While some media activists created media in their so-called "spare time," others identified the scarcity of time as a challenge, or noted the impacts of the fast pace of publishing, versus wanting to 'take our time'. The immaterial resource of time is not evenly distributed, where women, BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ people, particularly those who engage in reproductive, affective or caring labour, tended to face added time pressures. Acknowledging the intersectional impacts on availability of time and providing mechanisms within the political economy of media activist labour to account for these impacts, not just on internal power dynamics but also on who comes to voice, was a key media activist practice.

Capacity. Having the capacity to participate builds on having the time but also means working to develop capacities with respect not just to media production, horizontal decision-making, self-confidence, and emotional capacities. As Collins and Bilge note, activists see "building institutional capacity as an important dimension of race/class/gender" (2016). Many activists noted a difference between urban and rural settings in the relationship to capacity, where people in urban settings are more emotionally taxed, pay higher rents and day care costs, and spent more time in paid labour to cover these costs. Individual capacity was sometimes seen as a privilege accruing to heteronormative couples: if one had a full-time paid position, the other had greater capacity for unpaid media labour. Collective capacity may be lost when individuals leave a project after a short time because "to build with people, to build capacity, to build skills, it takes much longer" (Lakoff). The political economy of capacity building is therefore intersectional across race, class, gender, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ identities as well as rural vs urban locations and family or living structures such as being single, a couple, parenting, etc. Addressing the impact of differential access to capacity, some projects asked volunteers for longer-term commitments to build individual and institutional capacity; others added more volunteers, as more people meant less capacity required per person.

Skills. To build capacities, a range of skills can be developed through the activist practice of skillsharing, or the hands-on exchange of knowledge through

non-hierarchical workshops. This process is based on an acknowledgment that not everyone has the time or capacity to undertake a university or college degree or diploma, and at the same time people without post-secondary education also have many different kinds of skills and expertise, often garnered through experience in social movement organizations or milieus. For example, CKUT staff and volunteers took part in mandatory radio production skillsharing with experienced programmers, anti-oppression training from the Quebec Public Interest Research Group (QPIRG), and social media skills development from The Centre for Community Organizations (coco-net.org). GroundWire provided honoraria for autonomous radio producers to facilitate skillshare workshops for less experienced participants. Anya, a media activist with Rabble, was involved in a feminist media-maker conference in 2015 in Vancouver called Fierce Voices, to facilitate skillsharing among young women. Thus skillsharing took place within media projects or was offered from one organization to another to build capacities among supportive coalitional networks sharing social justice values and movement objectives.

Mentorship. The sharing of organizational, production, technical, and content development skills of more experienced activists with less experienced people is an informal type of activist mentorship. At Rabble, Sima received external mentorship on website development from consulting group, Tech Soup, addressing the gendered digital divide. At Ricochet, Javed found that when writers wanted to know "how to see [their] articles in terms of data and numbers, that help was always available by people who were more technically aware," in a form of internal mentorship. In turn he was called on to mentor fellow autonomous journalists on foreign policy, including his "knowledge of South Asian, Middle-East and diaspora and racial issues" (Javed). He felt respected for his specific experience, a non-traditional valuing and centering of grassroots knowledge found in autonomous media projects (Lievrouw 2011). Indigenous media expert Leena Minifie mentioned that Ricochet engages in mentorship, as through the

> Indigenous Reporting Fund there is a concerted effort on developing writers. We hold people's hands who are new Indigenous writers and other writers, through the edits of their work, often giving it back, inserting suggestions or helping do some extra research.

This includes working with an awareness of where the new writer is coming from, in that they may not feel entitled to speak, or may be sensitive to critiques of their work. She was also attentive to different ways of using language that derive from the modes of thought and value systems of Indigenous communities and cultures. In these three examples, we see mentorship in autonomous media accounting for and challenging structures of oppression across gender, racialization and Indigenous cultures.

Complex inequalities of power and access have emerged in this analysis, wherein undervalued intangible, affective labour falls more often on the shoulders of individuals with marginalized intersectional identities, and on the contrary, material resources are more easily accessed by those with dominant intersectional identities, such as cis-white-hetero-males. Building on this analysis of immaterial and material resources and labour practices, we now highlight three key intersectional anti-oppression media practices.

Challenges to media power through anti-oppression media resource practices

Below we analyze three intersectional anti-oppression media resource practices that have been used to challenge specific media power inequalities by foregrounding a specific axis of oppression when considering how to best mobilize resources within a project.

Decolonizing media resource practices

Decolonizing media and society (Tuhiwai Smith 1999) is a multifaceted personal and political process. As Indigenous media activist and journalist Starlight writes:

> Colonization has brought more than the racism, displacement, resource extraction, and environmental destruction that we witness and experience (and which our ancestors have witnessed and experienced). Colonization is also responsible for the enforcement of the gender binary, trans antagonism, heterosexism, ableism, ageism, classism, speciesism, and a plethora of complex and contradictory forms of oppression that play out in our lives. (Starlight, 2016)

Using an intersectional anti-oppression approach to decolonizing media, Indigenous media expert Leena Minifie explains Ricochet's approach: "The Indigenous Reporting Fund at Ricochet Media is set up to prioritize paying emerging journalists and experienced writers who are Indigenous, two-spirited or youth." She lists these intersectional Indigenous identities, and also adds that compensating them "is more important than giving myself compensation as an Editor," a political commitment shared among Ricochet's editors in their approach to structuring their labour. Prioritizing paid labour for Indigenous journalists challenges the deep social effects of colonialism, building in time, space, mentorship, skills and capacities for foregrounding Indigenous knowledge through media production (Tuhiwai Smith 1999).

Similarly, in putting together *Warrior Up!*, the Indigenous land rights issue of *The Dominion*, the Media Co-op collective decided that all writers and editors would be Indigenous people, and they were all paid for their media labour. The attempt to raise funds for this issue, however, was challenging, as Friedman explains:

> [Lands rights] are struggles that most of the time are fighting against large-scale industrial projects like mines, pipelines, the tar sands, and so on. So this time we didn't have the same interest from unions in funding this project, with the exception of the postal workers union [CUPW] ...It's not always in the interest of unions to be taking a public stance against industrial projects and a lot of workers are working for these projects. ... I think that maybe points to a need to reimagine ways that unions can function, and that the class struggle can function, that also incorporates an anticolonial framework.

This complex decolonizing intersectional analysis of the political economy of Indigenous media labour, gender, social class, youth, and the labour movement by activists at Ricochet and Media Co-op shaped their specific media practices regarding who to prioritize for paid labour, and who should be writing about marginalized groups, a political approach also taken up in some antiracist media practices.

Antiracist media resource practices: the resource of the space to speak

As noted above, the Canadian mediascape suffers from a latent racialization of access to paid media work, and this also impacts media activist spaces. Carolin Huang makes the following observation:

> A lot of work is stolen from certain writers, if it's their social media. And that's often women and people of colour expressing ideas in social media, and then the people who benefit off of those ideas can often be white men.

Three dimensions of exploitation are at work in this scenario: first, the capitalist exploitation of social media data mining which generates mass profits from women and/or BIPOC individuals for the platforms without paying content producers where the primary beneficiary is the social media platform itself (Cohen 2015). Second, she highlights the white cis-male appropriation, for profit, of content produced by women and/or BIPOC media labour. Third, there is also the exploitation of the resource of having the space to speak, which systemically accrues more readily to white heterosexual cis-men. Even as many BIPOC and/or women are taking the space to speak in social media, often social and economic capital for producing this content does not accrue to them. Thus in this moment the coalitional aspect of intersectional media work is lost through the failed exploitative social relationships facilitated through capitalist social media.

Autonomous antiracist media activists were attentive to who has access to the resource of the space to speak in public. The autonomous media practice of creating self-representations by, of and for marginalized groups, is reflected in

the media policy of Black Lives Matter Toronto (BLM-TO), explained by Taylor from GroundWire:

> Black Lives Matter had specifically asked that media only centre Black voices when reporting on Black Lives Matter actions. And this one [radio] producer submitted something to us, and wanted to include a white bystander, and was mansplaining what balance is.

Using the term *mansplaining* here, Taylor identifies an intersectional racialized gendered dynamic. While Taylor expresses coalitional support for BLM-TO, respecting their policy to center only Black voices, they had to confront the producer who was *mansplaining* the concept of media balance about which Taylor was in fact better informed, as follows: Autonomous media projects see their role as correcting a pre-existing imbalance in which mainstream media over-represent dominant groups and misrepresent marginalized groups, therefore autonomous media intentionally amplify *only* marginalized groups and perspectives. We saw this in Rabble's 'about us' where they aim to provide a 'counterbalance to mainstream media'. This anti-oppression media practice is at the root of the BLM media policy which Taylor had to walk the programmer through, rejecting the inclusion of the white bystander speaking about Black Lives Matter. This policy and practice is an approach to equalizing media representation that can only be accounted for through mapping political economy to intersectionality in practice on the ground in grassroots media, which media activists themselves do.

LGBTQ+ & feminist 'non-mixt' media spaces: the resource of emotional labour

Intersectional gendered and heteronormative power dynamics in media can be simultaneously exclusionary and more demanding of women, LGBTQ+ and BIPOC people (Costanza-Chock 2012). Media activist Morgan mentions that in their experience, "a lot of the work ended up just falling along gendered lines, where female labour would do all of the editing," for example, but the male labour wanted the recognition, and in practice were sometimes even paid for work that had been completed by unpaid female media activists, causing an exhausting and exploitative gendered power imbalance.

Addressing these kinds of systemic issues, a strategy used by marginalized groups was the caucus or 'non-mixt' meeting that both reduced the amount of emotional labour required by marginalized people in mixed groups to challenge unfair power imbalances, and provided the space to foreground the collective self-care among marginalized groups. This can be generative, according to Taylor, in providing support for their continued media activism:

> When I was working with prison radio in Guelph we were a collective of six queer-identified, mostly feminine people, and we were all really close friends, and so there was a lot of emotional support built into the work that we were doing, that was often very emotionally challenging.

They also note that non-mixt (feminine, queer) radio station trainings were important for "the comfort level of taking the time to go in and spend intimate time in the studio learning how to do the editing and production work. It's just more comfortable" (Taylor). Working with people who shared an identity made the experience more relaxed and conducive to learning. Taylor also observed that at GroundWire, "It was an all-woman board, and I think that that has created a space where we have created [and integrated] that … emotional support and labour into our work." These two experiences of adhoc safer spaces for building relationships of collective care and trust among media activists provided mutual support for intersectional racialized, queer, trans, and feminist media and cultural workers (Jeppesen, Kruzynski, & Guzman 2016). Moreover, the all-Indigenous reporting team, the queer feminine prison radio station training, the all-female GroundWire board, and the foregrounding of Black-only voices in reporting on BLM, were similar strategies that meant, if only in those moments and spaces, marginalized in-group media activists did not experience so-called casual or everyday colonialism, heterosexism, sexism, and/or racism.

This strategy can also have drawbacks. For example, individuals must foreground just one dimension of their identity, which presents a challenge to those experiencing multiple intersecting oppressions such as trans-of-colour, an identity that is not hybrid but integrated (Gill-Peterson 2014). The non-mixt strategy also risks giving straight, white, settler cis-men or cis-women (or other dominant intersectional groups) a pass in terms of not having to take responsibility for anti-oppression work. However, a related strategy used by people from dominant groups was to form anti-oppression groups to deconstruct privilege, such as 'men against patriarchy' or 'white anti-racist allies' in which individuals engaged in supporting each other's learning about how to be better allies through intersectional coalitional work based on 'flexible solidarity' (Hill Collins 2017).

Conclusion

Intersectional anti-oppression media resource strategies permeate the work of the autonomous media activists we interviewed, from political economy approaches to advertising and labour, to immaterial and material resource mobilization, to anti-oppression work.

If we return to McChesney's two primary relationships in the political economy of media, our analysis has shown how anti-oppression media resource practices have challenged and changed the relationship between independent media within the tripartite (private, public and independent) media system in Canada and the broader structures in society. Media content produced by autonomous

media systems has explicitly accounted for and attempted to undermine these broader interlocking structures of oppressions. It has thus micro-shifted the mediascape as the work of autonomous journalists is being taken seriously by the broader public by bringing forward important previously silenced or invisibilized perspectives. This has been achieved by media activist projects paying attention to and accounting for inequalities in resource mobilization.

Furthermore, in the second relationship defined by McChesney, among internal mechanisms of ownership, support, advertising policies, labour and structural processes within media activist projects, the intersectional resource practices articulated here conduce to a much more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the economics of grassroots autonomous media. Media activists engage in resource mobilization in myriad complex ways that go beyond advertising revenues. Moreover, in their media resource practices, they engage specific decision-making principles and policies with respect to material and immaterial paid, unpaid and underpaid labour which have contributed to important changes in the political economy of media through an attentiveness to the complexities of coalitional intersectionality.

Finally, we have demonstrated the importance of the third relationship postulated earlier in this paper, that is, the connection between the influence of content on society, and the internal structures of media operations. Within grassroots autonomous intersectional media, the focus is on developing a consistency between the multi-issue reporting of intersectional content and the internal economics-based processes with respect to ad policy, labour practices and more.

This third relationship in our intersectional analysis of the political economy of autonomous media has been articulated by activists as being crucial within media projects and to their professional development as journalists and media leaders. It is thus important to understand this not just as a best practice of media activists in resourcing multi-issue intersectional social movements today but also because of its potential in both the private and public media sectors in Canada and beyond.

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