GOVERNMENT-COMMUNITY CABLECASTING RELATIONSHIP

An evaluation of government-media models

by

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A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
M.A. Communications

Graduate Program in Communications
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the adequacy of government-media models to represent the reality of community cablecasting control by the governments of Quebec, Canada, the United States and Great Britain. The models are: Lowenstein's "progression typology" and Merrill's "media-national-political development". Community cablecasting control is characterized by a pluralism of philosophies and category overlapping. Control rationales include: authoritarianism, libertarianism and social libertarianism. It is suggested that, on the one hand, Lowenstein's model is inadequate for such complex reality, but, on the other, Merrill's approach, being much closer to reality, is more useful. However, in order to improve previous American and European theoretical approaches, this study proposes the "government-media-audience divergency" model.

RESUME

Le but de cette étude consiste à évaluer la capacité des modèles, portant sur les rapports entre les gouvernements et les médias, de représenter la réalité du contrôle de la télévision communautaire par câble par les gouvernements du Québec, du Canada, des Etats-Unis et de la Grande Bretagne. Les modèles sont: la typologie progressive de Lowenstein et le développement médiatico-politico-national de Merrill. Le contrôle de la télévision communautaire est caractérisé par un pluralisme de philosophies qui sont parfois combinées. Les philosophies de contrôle sont autoritaires, libertaires et socio-libertaires. Il est suggéré, d'une part, que le modèle de Lowenstein n'est pas adapté à cette réalité complexe, mais, d'autre part, celui de Merrill, étant beaucoup plus près de la réalité, est plus utile. Toutefois, afin d'améliorer les approches théoriques antérieures, américaines et européennes, cette étude propose un modèle de divergence entre les relations des gouvernements, des médias et des auditoires.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am most grateful to my thesis supervisor, professor G.J. Robinson, for her numerous suggestions.

I also cannot thank Carole enough for having dedicated so much time to the preparation of this study and, most of all, for having shared my enthusiasm.

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the problem

One can study social communication by focusing on one of its institutionalized forms, namely mass communication. Mass communication is not to be confused with the technology, such as radio, television and cable. It is basically a product of the interaction between communicators and audience through a unique communication experience. The analysis of mass media is often concerned with the social expectations and norms of a particular society. However, this approach is somewhat limited, as suggested by Wright. "Fuller appreciation and understanding of the forms of mass communication as social institutions requires a consideration of the relationship between mass communications institutions and other social institutions (government, the economic structure, the family, and so on), and a comparative analysis of mass communications institutions in other societies." [1]

Researchers are always very interested in assessing the interaction between governments and communication media, thus several models of government-media relationships are proposed in North America and Western Europe. But, as Merrill indicates, regardless

> of how many typologies may be suggested, there are perhaps only two approaches to government-press classification. They might be called (1) the "Pigeon-Hole" Approach and (2) the "Progression"

> Approach, ... The first tends toward typologies which place government and/or media systems rather snugly in one or another category in a kind of static, "immediate slice of time" way. Actually, however, pigeon-hole classification does imply the potential for change and for category-overlap, but this aspect is minimized. [2]

Such a pigeon-hole approach includes several models which can be further subdivided into two categories, according to the perspective chosen. For instance, while Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, as well as Lowenstein and Merrill use politics and philosophy, Williams uses a communication systems perspective.

The politico-philosophical perspective was initiated in the now classical four-theories-of-the-press model, proposed by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in 1956. [3] Their model has been used extensively by scholars and has inspired several modifications, such as Lowenstein's in 1971 and Merrill's in 1974.[4]

The four-theories model suggests that four philosophies or rationales underly the relationship between mass communication and society: authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility and soviet-totalitarian. They differ from each other with respect to certain basic assumptions about the nature and relationship of man, society, the state of knowledge and mass communications. The classical model identifies four theories, but in fact the latter two, namely social responsibility and soviet-totalitarian, are only modifications of the libertarian and authoritarian rationales respectively.

The authoritarian theory, developed in the 16th and 17th centuries in England and still used, describes the media systems of many countries. It originates from centuries of political thought. Its basic postulates are: (1) the individual is less important than the state, (2) the state is essential to the full development of man,

(3) knowledge, discoverable through mental effort, becomes the standard for a society, and (4) the purpose of mass communication is to support the state.

The soviet-totalitarian or soviet-communist theory developed mostly in the Soviet Union, in the 20th century. It is a development of the old authoritarian theory, but it is grounded in Marxism. Its postulates are basically authoritarian except that mass media are positively used as conveyor belts for programming which contributes to the success of the dictatorship of the party.

The libertarian theory, adopted in the 17th century, in England and in the United States, is influential elsewhere and describes some of the early practices of media in Western democracies. It originates from political democracy and laissez faire economics. The basic postulates are: (1) man, as a rational animal, is the goal of society, (2) the function of society is to promote the interests of its members so that they realize their full potentialities, and (3) knowledge is not cumulative and truth may change, but most of all every man has a right to free expression, and (4) the purpose of mass communication is to check on government as well as inform, entertain and sell. Most of all, the media are partners in the search for truth.

The social responsibility theory was developed to describe changes in media practices, in the United States, in the 20th century. It is grounded in a communication perspective. Its basic postulates are focussed on the use of communications. In fact, it assumes that the means of communication are in the hands of a minority of media owners and managers who control the messages of

media. Consequently, the new oligopolistic communicators must be socially responsible. As in libertarian theory, the functions of the media are to inform, entertain and sell, but mostly to insure fairness in the presentation of conflicting ideas.

This politico-philosophical perspective leads to Lowenstein's progression typology, in 1971, which proposes three modifications to the standard four theories. The first one is a new terminology. In order to broaden the applications of the model, "social centralist" replaces "soviet-totalitarian". Furthermore, in reaction to the classical model's implication that authoritarian, libertarian and soviet-totalitarian rationales generate irresponsible media attitudes, due to the emergence of a social responsibility theory which fosters socially responsible communicators, "social responsibility" is replaced by "social libertarian". Second, a fifth theory, called "utopian", is proposed. This utopian approach is characterized by individual freedom and media self-determinism. Third, and most of all, the five concepts of media control are related to the development of societies. Thus (1) authoritarianism is found in under-developed societies, (2) libertarianism in moderately developed societies, (3) social libertarianism and social centralism in well developed societies, and (4) utopianism in utopian societies.

Several other modifications of the standard four theories are proposed by Merrill in 1974, such as the "three-and-one", the "developmental triangle" and the "media development and national and political development". The first two, although using the standard four theories, are presented as more realistic approaches. The three-and-one model makes a clear distinction between the libertarian approach

which is the only one to support journalistic freedom and the other three concepts which promote control. In the developmental triangle, it is suggested that the evolution of philosophies follows a cyclical path. Presumably, the progression starts from authoritarian, moves to libertarian, then to social responsibility and comes back to authoritarian or communist. It is also stressed that social responsibility is only a step toward authoritarian or communist approaches, because it imposes control on the communicator's freedom.

The media-development-and-national-and-political-development model is a multi-factor approach which takes into account press concepts, media and personal freedom, political theory, government control, population tendency and most of all development stages of societies. In contrast with the other models, this one uses only two categories, the authoritarian and libertarian. It suggests that control rationales are cyclical. They go from authoritarian to libertarian and back to authoritarian.

The models discussed so far originate from the American research tradition. As such, they focus on media freedom, self-control and responsibility. In contrast, the West European approaches, in particular those derived from a socialist perspective, agree that mass media must be controlled. In other words, while American models denounce the control of the freedom of expression, Europeans expose the control of the mass media by a minority, either economic or political.

The model, proposed by Williams in 1962, is an example of this socialist tendency.[5] This second type of pigeon-hole classification is based upon communication systems. Four systems of mass media are

identified: authoritarian, paternal, commercial and democratic. Only the latter corresponds to a democratic control of the media, in other words a control by the majority. In all other systems, the control is in the hands of a minority, aristocratic, plutocratic or otherwise. In an authoritarian system, a minority dictates what can be said over the media. The objective consists in supporting a social order based on the ideas of minority power. This power is exerted principally by a monopoly of the means of communication. Media control can be direct or indirect as is the case with censorship.

The paternal system, as Williams puts it, is an authoritarian system with a conscience. In other words, assuming the obligation to rule and in addition to maintain the power of a minority, paternalists aim at transmitting their values, habits and tastes. Using censorship among other things, paternalists eventually diffuse their ideas to the majority. Briefly, in this system, a minority decides what ought to be said on the media.

The commercial system differs from the first two, because it is opposed to any form of regulation. It assumes that anything can be bought and sold freely. However, in practice, media are governed by a plutocratic, thus a minority determines what can profitably be said or broadcast.

Even if the democratic system does not exist in reality, it is nonetheless described as an ideal type. To begin with, the main feature is that it is based on the notion of freedom of expression. The democratic approach is inspired by three principles: (1) there is a right to transmit and receive, (2) these rights cannot be modified by minorities, and (3) if these rights are limited by the majority,

it will only be after an appropriate public discussion. Thus, in the democratic system, communicators can have control of the means of expression, as long as the public consents.

Although American attempts presented so far are important modifications to the four-theories typology, and although the model of Williams tends to get away from a politico-philosophical perspective, they all share the same weaknesses. They are modified pigeon-hole models which lead one to believe that the categories are independent and mutually exclusive. Such an approach is too categorical to describe the complex setting of government-media interaction.

In 1974, Merrill, suggesting a progression approach, proposes the "political-press circle". The structure of the model, in reaction to pigeon-hole approaches, is a circular organization of philosophies. The political-press circle is based on political theory and is structured around the basic authoritarian-libertarian dichotomy. Basically, the model suggests that libertarian and authoritarian objectives can be attained by going left to socialism or right to capitalism,such as authoritarianism occurring in communism and fascism.

All these government-media models are presented as adequate theoretical representations of reality but their perspectives are not the same. In fact, the models presented can be subdivided into two categories: structural and dynamic. Siebert, Peterson and Schramm's four theories, Merrill's three and one and political-press circle, as well as Williams' four communication systems are structural models, because they analyze a totality by focussing on the constituent parts, in this case rationales of control. In contrast, Lowenstein's progression typology and Merrill's developmental triangle, as well as

media development and national and political development are dynamic models, because they analyse a process or an evolution, in this case rationales or philosophies of control.[6]

Model testing is possible for both categories, but the result is not the same. With structural models, one can verify relational implications. For instance, testing the four-theories model, one can conclude that government-media relationships are influenced by authoritarian and libertarian ideas. With dynamic models, one can verify evolutionary implications. For example, model testing can reveal that government relationships begin with an authoritarian philosophy and develop into a soviet-totalitarian approach. Another refinement can be added to the dynamic model, that is the dimension of time. When a model represents an evolution through time, it gives a clearer picture of reality.

Of all the preceding models only two dynamically represent government-media relationships with respect to time, they are: Lowenstein's progression typology and Merrill's media development and national and political development. Some may think that the categories or rationales proposed are too broad and therefore preclude actual testing, but their inclusion of development stages in social evolution and communications systems and their reference to organizational conditions make it possible to assess their relevance to an understanding of government-media interrelations.

Of course government-media relationships can be studied with respect to various media, but regulated ones, such as radio and television, offer a better opportunity to evaluate the regulatory attitude of governments. Within broadcasting, the new technology of

cablecasting offers a particularly instructive example, because this technology permits the democratization of media access as well as policy and decision-making. This opportunity for non-professional communicators to produce and distribute programs over cable television systems challenges traditional government broadcast policies and regulations, in Canada and in the rest of the world. Such public participation in television production, better known as community cablecasting, has attracted a lot of attention from governments, researchers and practitioners.

For example, in Canada, the Canadian Radio-Television Commission and the Quebec Departments of Communication and Education investigate community programming on cable.[7] In the United States, the Rand Corporation, the Center for Policy Research, the Fund for the City of New York as well as the Institute for Communication Research are all interested in public access channels.[8] In Europe too, many organizations deal with local television experiments. These include: the Independent Broadcasting Authority, the International Institute of Communications, the Center for Mass Communication Research, as well as the Council of Europe and Unesco.[9]

Since community cablecasting is well developed in Canada, the United States and Great Britain, there are sufficient data, based on several years of policies and regulations as well as overall experience with cable television access projects, to supply evidence for an evaluation of government-media models. Furthermore, assuming, like Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, that any medium of mass communication "always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates," a cross-national

comparison will be most helpful.[10]

The purpose of this study then is to evaluate the adequacy of government-media models to explain how community cablecasting is controlled in Canada, the United States and Great Britain. We will in particular assess Lowenstein's "progression typology" and Merrill's "media development and national and political development" models, because they are refinements of earlier theories and thus avoid most of the pitfalls detailed above. More specifically, this study analyzes the policies and regulations of four control agencies: the Régie des Services Publics (RSP) in Quebec, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) in Canada, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the United States and the Home Office in Great Britain.

Review of related literature

A lot has been written on cable television, but not all of it concerns community cablecasting. Furthermore, the literature dealing with government-community cablecasting relationships is even more limited. However several contributions merit attention for this thesis.

The evaluation of governmental contributions to the development of community cablecasting by Hillgartner and Chicoine (1979) is a good example.[11] Based on a comparison of policies and regulations in North America and Great Britain, it suggests that the development of cable television access is facilitated in Canada, especially in Quebec. In contrast, it points out that policies and regulations in the United States and Great Britain are generally an obstacle to the public use of the access channels. Even if Hillgartner and

Chicoine's work is closely-related empirically to the present study, its major fault is that it is atheoretical and does not deal with the underlying rationales of control.

Another comparative study, however, makes an interesting contribution to the field, namely that of Sparkes (1976).[12] This work tries to develop ex post facto a philosophical rationale for the two North American cablecasting experiences. It suggests that, in Canada, the CRTC chooses a "facilitator" approach where the cable operator has the responsibility for the development of community programming. In the United States, the FCC selects an "access" approach which gives programming responsibility and control to the public. It is suggested that while the Canadian approach limits creativity in the long run, the American fails to provide adequate support to access. The work differs from the present study, because it is atheoretical and provides a brief summary of only one aspect of control, namely the role of the cable operator. This thesis will overcome this shortcoming and focus on several aspects of government control.

Finally, the critical comparison between Canadian and Quebec control of community cablecasting by Boucher (1977) helps in the interpretation of policies and regulations and clarifies the position of the RSP with respect to written regulations.[13] The study concludes that the fight over cable control between Ottawa and Quebec does not facilitate the development of community cablecasting, because too much pressure and too many conditions are imposed on cable operators.

Methodology

The classical typology underlies data selection and analysis,

because it offers the best organizational conditions, in terms of the number of control aspects considered and definitions, as indicated in table 1.[14] The classical typology argues that no matter what rationale or philosophy they propound, there are five ways in which governments regulate the media. Applied to cable television access however, this approach generates four research questions, because ownership does not concern community cablecasters since cable television systems are owned by cable operators. The questions then are: (1) what is the chief purpose of community cablecasting? (2) who has the right to use it? (3) how is it controlled? and (4) what content is forbidden in community cablecasting?

Government control of community cablecasting may take several forms, such as public policies and regulations, comments and suggestions at licence renewal time, or even off-record opinions and assumptions regarding the use of cable television access. Without diminishing the objective of gaining as much information as possible on government-media relationships, one must admit that official and public policies and regulations form the basis of control. Furthermore, a consideration of such documents makes a study more manageable.

Therefore the selected data sources for this study are all the official texts of policies and regulations in Quebec, Canada, the United States and Great Britain. The historical perspective is also taken into account, since data come from all the experiments with community cablecasting between 1970 and 1980.

More specifically, this study is concerned with sixteen official documents. Canadian data come from six sources: four texts concerning the policies and regulations of the CRTC and two texts by the

TABLE 1

FOUR RATIONALES FOR THE MASS MEDIA

	Authoritarian	*Libertarian*	*Social Responsibility*	*Soviet Totalitarian*
Developed	in 16th and 17th century England widely adopted and still practiced in many places	adopted by England after 1688 and in U S influential elsewhere	in U S in the 20th century	in Soviet Union although some of the same things were done by Nazis and Italians
Out of	philosophy of absolute power of monarch his government or both	writings of Milton Locke Mill and general philosophy of rationalism and natural rights	writing of W E Hocking Commission on Freedom of Press and practitioners media codes	Marxist Leninist Stalinist thought with mixture of Hegel and 19th century Russian thinking
Chief purpose	to support and advance the policies of the government in power and to service the state	to inform entertain sell—but chiefly to help discover truth and to check on government	to inform entertain sell—but chiefly to raise conflict to the plane of discussion	to contribute to the success and continuance of the Soviet socialist system and especially to the dictatorship of the party
Who has right to use media?	whoever gets royal patent or similar permission	anyone with economic means to do so	everyone who has something to say	loyal and orthodox party-members
How are media controlled?	government patents guilds licensing sometimes censorship	by self righting process of truth in free market place of ideas and by courts	community opinion consumer action professional ethics	surveillance and economic or political action of government
What forbidden?	criticism of political machinery and officials in power	defamation obscenity indecency wartime sedition	serious invasion of recognized private rights and vital social interests	criticism of party objectives as distinguished from tactics
Ownership	private or public	chiefly private	private unless government has to take over to insure public service	public
Essential differences from others	instrument for effecting government policy though not necessarily government owned	instrument for checking on government and meeting other needs of society	media must assume obligation of social responsibility and if they do not someone must see that they do	state-owned and closely controlled media existing solely as arm of state

Quebec Department of Communications.[15] American data originate from six policy and regulatory texts, issued by the FCC, in the Federal Register.[16] Finally, British data are taken from four documents, including three texts, related to licensing for experimental local cable television, and the Annan report.[17]

Three things have to be done, in terms of data analysis. First, the four research questions will be answered using official documents of Canada, the United States and Great Britain. Second, governments' control attitudes or rationales will be inferred from the comparative evidence. Third, the adequacy of Lowenstein's and Merrill's models to represent the reality of government-cablecasting relationships will be evaluated.

Organization of the study

The purpose of the first chapter is to briefly describe what community cablecasting is, as well as why and how it developed. First, the emergence of the movement for more public access to the mass media is recalled, second, the historical development of community cablecasting, in North America and Western Europe, is traced. Once the setting is clarified, the next step is to analyze the reactions of governments to cable television access.

The second chapter thus focuses on government-community cablecasting relationships. The objective is to clarify the positions of four control agencies with respect to the four dimensions of media control. First, this chapter briefly describes the four control agencies and the historical development of policies and regulations, and also clarifies the control of the technological infrastructure. Second, the rationales, underlying governments'

positions, are identified for each of the four research questions, namely the chief purpose of community cablecasting, the right to use it, the type of control and the forbidden content. Once all the data have been examined, there is a sufficient empirical base for inferring a regulatory agency's underlying philosophical approach.

The adequacy of two government-media models, in representing the reality of community cablecasting control by the governments of Quebec, Canada, the United States and Great Britain, is then evaluated in the third chapter. The models are: Lowenstein's "progression typology" and Merrill's "media development and national and political development".

Finally, taking into account the weaknesses of the two attempts and in order to improve previous American and European theoretical approaches, a "government-media-audience divergency" model is proposed.

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CHAPTER 1

COMMUNITY CABLECASTING

Here the objective is to briefly compare the emergence of the movement for more public participation in the mass media and to trace the historical development of community cablecasting in North America and Western Europe.

During the sixties, when blacks, young people and women began their search for greater equality in public life, electronic media became widely criticized in North America and Great Britain. Though there are basic differences between broadcasting systems, in terms of control, production and socio-cultural settings, two criticisms are common to most countries. The first one refers to one-sided news values which exclude reports of many social groups and the second one complains about the homogenization of messages, leaving out of account the varied interests of the audience.

Other problems include for Canada, the portrayal of too much sex, violence and drug usage in the media as well as a dissatisfaction with the timing and content of advertising.[1] For the United States, criticisms are focussed on low cultural content and a lack of interest in local matters. These undesirable effects are linked to the nature of the commercial broadcasting system in the U. S., which is characterized by network operation, concentration of ownership,

competition with respect to ratings, and by weak regulatory power. The most affected area is news reporting where biased news values, distortion of events and increased gatekeeping are heavily criticized.[2] In Great Britain, boring descriptive journalism is the object of one of the major complaints. There are also inadequate broadcasting and broad objectives.[3] In the western world, all these problems generate a flow of rising frustrations and culminate in a call for wider public participation in the electronic mass-media.

Thus is born an interest in gaining access to radio and television. Proposals for access in the western world are based on two different approaches: "democratization" and "passivity", according to a recent study by Unesco.

> The first approach stresses a need for the 'democratization' of the media to make media structures more representative of the audience, and to allow more participation by the audience. This demand comes from groups which are critical of the control media organizations have over communication channels, and of the rigidity of the organization themselves, which allows broadcasters to decide what shall be broadcast, by whom and when, without built-in reference to the needs and wishes of the listening and viewing public....
>
> The second approach is characterized by preoccupation with the 'passivity' of the audience. It argues that many millions of people spend several hours a day watching television and listening to radio without the wish or the means to respond to what they see and hear. Criticism is levelled at the broadcasting organizations because no adequate feedback systems exist to encourage interaction, and because they seem to accept this 'one-way' communication, even to foster it.[4]

The basic objective behind access is to ensure that more people can contribute to the programming of the mass-media as well as gain these media's attention. A more careful analysis reveals that "access" is an ambiguous term that needs to be specified. Berrigan

notes that access may mean four things: access to policy, to selection, to production and to response. Each of these is further subdivided in the following manner:

> Access to policy means: (a) access to media policy-making-- the right of the individual to take part in decisions about subjects covered, the schedules of broadcasting, the treatment of subjects, the length of time allocated; (b) access to air-time-- the right of the individual to use the channels of communication to express himself politically or creatively; (c) access to the power of the media-- the right to use them to influence others, to enlist support to present a case; (d) access to an audience-- the right to address a mass audience at peak viewing or listening time.
>
> Access to selection means: (a) access to information through the media-- information about the realities of the world, about alternative social forms, about inequalities and injustices; (b) access to education--the right of the individual to develop himself through the media; (c) access to programming at convenient times (d) access to a choice of programme material.
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> Access to production means: (a) access to media tools-- the right to participation in the making of programmes; (b) access to the broadcasting organizations-- access to media producers, to planners and to management; (c) access to all the techniques of the media-- to skilled production and technical help, to support in the presentation of the individual case.
>
> Access to response means: access to feedback possibilities-- the right to respond, to criticize.[5]

These different kinds of access are requested by groups for a variety of purposes: social groups want to reform the media structures, creative groups want the publicity, educators want to innovate, entrepreneurs want to diffuse software and futurists hope to improve the uses of the new media. All these groups, however, face several constraints: technological feasibility, economic reasonability, social desirability, as well as institutional and political acceptability.

The access movement is strong in Canada, the United States and Great Britain. The Canadian government is particularly involved in promoting the idea of community participation. As a matter of fact, in 1966, the National Film Board, in cooperation with several federal departments, designs the Challenge for Change program. The objectives are to fight poverty by increasing participation and facilitating social change. A pilot project in community film, in Fogo Island, leads to a new method of participatory production, known as the Fogo process, which consists in involving people in making a film about their socio-economic situation and then showing the film to decision-makers. These ideas of community participation and self-expression ultimately are exposed and become very influential in many countries. As such, the Canadian experience is concerned with "passivity" and focuses on an approach to foster social animation.

The American access movement takes another approach based on a legal rather than a social orientation. In 1967, under the leadership of Barron, a number of lawyers begin to foster the idea of access to the media, particularly radio, television and cable television. Based upon the assumption that diversity and balance are necessary for presenting conflicting ideas, they assert that the first amendment constitutes a private restraint on free expression. Therefore the free marketplace of ideas needs restoring through a legal right of access.

> Access devotees have found effective allies in public interest groups and law firms pursuing formal legal awareness to access, particularly to radio and television. These foundation-and church-supported enterprises provided litigation support for access

> claims whose intrinsic economic import often would not have generated sufficient means for expensive judicial or administrative proceedings. Perhaps even more significant has been the growing interest of minority groups in right of access as an important way of advancing their overall political and economic goals.[6]

Thus, in the United States, social support for access is not spearheaded by a government department, social animators or film-makers, but comes from lawyers and minority groups. The American experience is therefore related to the "democratization" approach which promotes participation in the media.

In Great Britain finally, the social desirability of access is expressed by the trade-union movement which demands the right to have regular broadcasting programs and by various attempts by professional producers to innovate in terms of production, format and style.[7] The British promoters of access thus borrow North American concepts of community participation and access, but apply them in a more controlled situation. In fact, the British access movement is only just emerging and still experimenting.

In the early days of access to traditional broadcasting, North American and Western European groups want to participate in radio and television. These media are either corporate or state-owned. The traditional Canadian, American and British broadcasting systems sometimes grant access to air-time, but rarely to production. Most of the time, the users can control the content, but the format is produced by professionals.

More specifically, several efforts are made to have access to traditional broadcasting in Canada, but because of a precarious Bill of Rights, of different legal contexts and of differences in the

degree of media ownership and administration, it appears that dissident views are less welcomed and more censored than in the United States, especially when the topic is controversial.[8] In the United States, where media reformists and pressure groups seem to be more active, there are five recognized access mechanisms: the fairness doctrine, the equal time provision, the right of reply laws, the editorial advertisement and the letters-to-the-editor columns. In Great Britain, the control of the format of programs generates a major complaint because the working schedule is too tight.

In answer to the constant fight for access to the traditional mass-media, citizen groups, realizing the advantages of community-owned media, turn to community media. They can be defined as

> the use of communication technology-- broadcast and non-broadcast by non-professionals for intra-and inter-group communication in a limited geographical basis.[9]

Community media first develop in the United States but are now very popular in Quebec.

The objective of community media is best described in a Quebec government report which states that community media aim at privileging local expression instead of advertising, because most citizens do not often get the opportunity to express their opinions publicly.[10] Most interpretations of community media share two common features: community-oriented programming, adapted to a specific community, and non-professional involvement in the media. Although television is tried, radio remains the best medium. In terms of participation, community media offer much more than traditional media,

but they are limited by several constraints: lack of funds, of staff time and of technical skills.

In the late 1960s however, another technology will have a tremendous impact on access, namely cable television. This technology was used before, but now several factors contribute to promote it as a more effective means of access than radio and television. Technologically speaking, broadcasting stations are always rigidly controlled by governments, due to a scarcity of frequencies, but now cable television offers an abundance of channels where more voices can be heard. In the last decade, technology makes possible a capacity of about fifty channels. This potential is further enhanced by the availability of portable video tape recording equipment which permits low-cost productions and increased mobility, and by the rapid growth of cable television systems, especially in North America. By offering more TV channels as well as the possibility of other services, such as two-way facilities, cable television becomes very popular and most of all is believed to be the best alternative to traditional mass media and community media.

The social desirability of cable is particularly supported by the Sloan Commission in the United States. As a matter of fact, in June 1971, the A.P. Sloan Foundation publishes a report which recognizes a need for self-expression in every community, and also suggests to bypass the lack of access to broadcasting by making available a few public access channels.[11] Socially, the use of cablecasting by the public is seen as potentially very influential, since TV is the chief source of information and has a high degree of credibility at least in North America and Western Europe.

Politically, all these claims and promises, along with the problems associated with access to broadcasting, focus the attention on cable control. Cable television thus becomes the first regulated means of access and the preferred medium for public participation in the media.

Thus public access to the communication process on cable television is innovated in the western world, but establishes itself mostly in North America and Great Britain. Such participation by ordinary citizens is known as "community programming" in Canada, "télévision communautaire" in Quebec, "public access" in the United States and "local cable TV experiment" in Great Britain. A more general term would be "community cablecasting".

Community cablecasting in North America is achieved by producing television programs and distributing them on a specially assigned channel of a cable television system. In Great Britain, there is also a special channel, but the difference with North America is that the few cable TV systems are set up exclusively for the purpose of experimenting with community cablecasting.

The pioneering days of experimentation with public participation are marked by three important projects which play a major role in the organization of community cablecasting. The first large-scale experiment occurs in Normandin, Quebec, in 1970. It is supported by Société Nouvelle, the French section of the Challenge for Change program. This project probably serves as a model for the two New York public access channels in 1972, since George Stoney, one of the leaders of public access at the time, is involved with community participation during his work for the Challenge for Change program.

The New York experience in turn probably serves as a testing ground for additional access projects in the United States. The famed British Swindon project in 1974 soon becomes a model of access for Great Britain and other European countries. For example, Michael Barrett, the director of the successful Milton Keynes experiment, was previously project coordinator in Swindon.

In Canada, community cablecasting, which begins as early as 1968, is still active. In fact, it is estimated that in 1978 there were close to 300 cable systems with an actively programmed community channel.[12] The National Film Board sponsored many pioneering projects in the beginning, but early enthusiasm faded under diverse constraints.

> The early love affair with cablevision has cooled as groups and organizations found that too much of their time was being spent in programming activities, and that complete control over production remained with the cable stations. Many also felt limited by the studio format of most cable stations and were not able to afford the cost of portable equipment or the expenses involved in filming outside the studio. The cable stations themselves have not been willing to spend their own funds for extra production expenses and have shown little initiative in creating more varied studio programs.13

English Canadian and Quebec cable experiences seem to have diverged. The former obtain primarily access to production while the latter, supported by the Quebec Department of Communications, have concentrated on policy and production. Strong and popular production is especially noticeable in small Francophone communities.

As for American access to cable, there are major disagreements between the Federal Communications Commission estimates and those of local videogroups. According to Krugman, the F.C.C. believes that the development of access will take time.

> The 1972 decision of the Commission for nonbroadcast growth was societal: the Commission merely assumed people would use the services. As it turned out, the Commission was incorrect in its assumption, for individuals were not using the access channels.[14]

On the other hand, local video groups assert that the extent of cable use is presently beyond assessment. As to the number of access projects, it is estimated that in 1976 there were about 60 video centers, 70% of which used cable as a distributing medium.[15] In contrast to Canadians, Americans have access to policy and production.

European access projects, in France, Switzerland, Sweden, Italy, and Holland fail because of strict government control or lack of funds. In contrast, community cablecasting develops quite well in Great Britain. In fact, six local cable TV experiments were authorized since 1972, in order to test the viability of local production. Even if three such experiments closed down due to financial constraints community cablecasting is rather successful in Swindon and Milton Keynes, where access to production is possible under the guidance of a professional staff.

This brief overview of the development of community cablecasting clarifies the setting of the medium. The next step is to focus on government-community cablecasting relationships in Quebec, Canada, the United States and Great Britain. The reactions of the four governments will be assessed with respect to cable access policies and regulations.

ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER 2

GOVERNMENT-COMMUNITY CABLECASTING RELATIONSHIPS

Here the objective is to clarify the positions adopted by the Quebec, Canadian, American and British governments with respect to the control of community cablecasting. This chapter will be concerned with the official policy and regulatory texts of the following control agencies: the Régie des Services Publics (RSP), the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Home Office. Each of these texts will be discussed in detail in the following sections of the chapter. After a brief description of the four control settings, governments' positions will be identified in relation to each of the four basic questions: 1) what is the chief purpose of community cablecasting?, 2) who has the right to use it?, 3) how is it controlled? and 4) what content is forbidden?

Control setting

In this section, we are concerned with the four control agencies, the development of policies and regulations, and certain aspects of technological control. To begin with, the powers to elaborate policies and regulations with respect to cable TV access are exclusively attributed to the Federal Communications Commission, in the United States, and to the Home Office, in Great Britain. The FCC is

officially in charge of cable TV access since 1972. In Great Britain, cable TV access is under the authority of the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (1972-1974) and the Home Office (1974-).

In contrast, Quebec and Canadian regulation is generally separated from policy-making. While the powers to regulate belong to the CRTC, at the federal level, and RSP, at the provincial level, the Departments of Communications are mostly responsible for policy making. However the RSP in Quebec practically accumulated both powers though its mandate, since 1972, is to control cable TV. Yet, this dual control was challenged in 1977 and Quebec lost its power to control cable, following a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada.

At the federal level, the CRTC, founded in 1968, has been in charge of broadcast regulation. It turned its attention to cable in 1970. The CRTC has an important legislative power which allows for policy-making. These policies inform the public, but also guide the orientations of cable TV access systems. In fact, policy statements indicate the control philosophy and the criteria which are used in the evaluation of the efforts of the licensees to promote community programming. Consequently, the Canadian federal control has more in common with the American and British approaches than the Quebec model which concedes only a supervisory power to the RSP.

Secondly, in terms of the development of governmental control, some governments change their attitudes more often than others. As a matter of fact, there is only one regulatory approach in Quebec. The <u>règlement relatif aux entreprises publiques de câblodistribution</u> was adopted in 1973 and becomes effective in November of the same year. Conservatism also characterizes the British approach which, since

1972, controls six cable TV experiments. Because there is no intermediary between the government and the licensee, as is the case for radio and television, it is decided to grant licenses to corporations which will be responsible for the production of programs. Since 1972, the initial regulations are only modofied twice. First of all, in 1974, the duration of the licenses, which were valid for three years, is extended to six years. Then, in 1975, the Home Office permits the redistribution of advertising, following financial difficulties experienced by the producers. In other respects, the Home Office indicates that it is difficult to evaluate the public demand for such media systems, given that three local cable TV experiments fail. The government is however willing to encourage local initiatives, but raises the question of financing.

In Canada, the official policies and regulations were adopted in 1975 and became effective in April 1976. The official control attitude was preceeded by several policy statements which provided guidelines to cable stations. The 1975 regulatory stance basically clarified the early objectives of community expression and program diversity. Thus CRTC's policy developed slowly from 1970 to 1975. Since then the control attitude towards community cablecasting has not changed, even though the access experience was evaluated by the government.

In contrast, the American approach develops through several modifications. The FCC first begins to control in 1972. Then, following many changes, final modifications are adopted in 1976. Thus, after more than four years of experience with cable access, the FCC evaluates its position. It cannot be said that the FCC reverses its

position because it is clear, from the beginning in 1972, that the adopted regulations are not definite, but are part of a regulatory framework. Thus, while other governments experiment with cable TV access systems before regulating, the FCC prefers to initiate the control within structured policies and regulations.

Thirdly, certain aspects of the technological control help to clarify the control setting. Except in the United States, all cable TV systems are regulated by governments. In 1972, the FCC is controlling all systems located in the 100 largest markets of commercial television. The control is justified by two reasons. On the one hand, it is believed that large centers in general, having more minority groups, have a more pressing need for community expression. On the other, the FCC does not want to impose an economic burden on the small systems by requiring public access channels. The regulation is changed in 1976. Now, all independent or integrated systems, having at least 3500 subscribers, are subject to governmental control.

This approach is based on three reasons. An economic reason states that access costs can be easily absorbed when 3500 subsribers are reached, since profits become more interesting. A social reason reiterates the communication needs of the large centers and indicates that 3500 subscribers correspond to a population of 25,000 or more. Thirdly, it appears easier to adapt access regulations to cable TV systems than to community boundaries. It would, as a matter of fact, be difficult to control in terms of ethnic groups, unless they get a licence to cablecast.

In terms of the number of channels, the CRTC and the Home Office request only one channel. In contrast, the PCP asks for one

or more channels. In the United States, cable systems are no longer required to provide an access channel. In 1972, the FCC's policy is generous. Cable systems, located in the 100 largest markets have first to provide one non-commercial access channel and then other leased-access channels. The FCC wants to promote community interaction.

However, since the 1976 revision of policies, all independent or integrated systems, having more than 3500 subscribers, must have an access channel. But this requirement depends on the operator's capacity to open channels. In other words, the American public gets a channel only if the cable owner or operator can afford it. This access channel is first combined with two other channels, one for education and one for government. This situation is stable until there is enough demand for non-professional communicators to justify the activation of a specially assigned public access channel. This decision is motivated by three reasons. First, the 1972 regulation imposes an economic burden on cable TV systems. Second, the use of access channels is still developing. And third, it is believed that such full use of a channel by the public, educators and government will yield increased audience ratings. Finally, another revision of regulations opt for one channel solely dedicated to all types of access.

This provides a brief overview of the setting. Let us now consider government-community cablecasting relationships in terms of the four research questions. The first one has to do with the orientations of cable TV access.

Chief purpose of community cablecasting

To deal with the question related to the purpose of community cablecasting three different answers are offered. They are to foster local expression, local participation and local experimentation. Even though these concepts of expression and participation are closely related, it is preferable to deal with them separately in order to grasp the subtle difference between community reaction towards a new medium and community interaction following access to production and distribution of local programs.

Local expression, which can be translated as freedom of expression or program diversity, characterizes all governments, except Great Britain. As a matter of fact, since 1971, the policy of the Quebec Department of Communications gravitates around freedom of local expression. The importance of local programming, as an instrument of community awareness, is stressed because it is believed that this form of communication is closely related to the basic needs of citizens.

Furthermore, in one of the first texts, where the policy of the CRTC emerges, it is suggested to increase program diversity so as to reflect the needs and interests of the community. In 1975, the federal regulation reiterates its intentions to encourage local groups in expressing their interests and concerns. Cable television licensees should "contribute a unique social service in the form of a community programming channel"[2]. Besides, the local community channel is a sine qua non for cable operators to become partners in the Canadian broadcasting system.

Diversity and local expression are also given priority in the

United States, since the beginning of cable TV access control. Though access regulations are not structured in 1969, the FCC nonetheless suggests and drops a hint of the orientation of regulations. Besides, the first regulation only becomes effective in April 1971. In 1969, the reasons put forward by the FCC, in order to ask for cable TV access, rely mostly on concepts of public interest, program diversity and communication channel capacity for certain groups. The diversity of information sources is also put forward to justify the use of a cable TV channel. As the FCC suggests,

> CATV systems should be encouraged, and perhaps ultimately required, to lease cable space to others for origination of their own choice on a local or interconnected basis, in order to promote diversity of control over the media of communication and diversity of program choices as well as to increase the opportunities for television communication with the public by more widespread sources.[3]

Several months later, in February 1972, the regulation of cable access focuses on cable's contribution to broadcasting. In fact, since cable television depends mainly on broadcast programs, transmitted over the air, it is seen as appropriate to support the objectives of the national broadcasting system. More specifically, cable TV has to provide new means of expression at the local level, promote program diversity and gratify the emerging needs of communication channels for community expression. Thus, insofar as the contribution to the broadcasting system is concerned, the goals of the American approach are akin to those of the CRTC and the RSP. During the important reassessment of cable TV policies and regulations in April 1976, the FCC retains its initial motives, in favor of the public interest. The FCC says:

> There is, we believe, a definite societal good in keeping open these channels of communication. While the overall impact that use of these channels can have may have been exaggerated in the past, nevertheless we believe they can, if properly used, result in the opening of new outlets for local expression, aid in the promotion of diversity in television programming, act in some measure to restore a sense of community to cable subscribers and a sense of openness and participation to the video medium, aid in the functioning of democratic institutions, and improve the informational and educational communications resources of cable television communities.[4]

Moreover, in 1976, public interest is linked with costs. As a matter of fact, the impact of public access channels is now counterbalanced by the costs of studios and equipment, imposed on cable TV systems.

Participation, the second orientation given to cable TV access, is also invoked by all three regulatory agencies in North America, the RSP, the CRTC and the FCC. As a matter of fact, the RSP and the CRTC favor communications within a community and feel that the community channel is a unique social service. Moreover, as early as 1976, the FCC believes that the use of the public access channel will contribute to the development of a community feeling among its subscribers, facilitate participation in the media and help the functioning of democratic institutions.

A third and final orientation of cable TV access systems is experimentation. The American regulatory changes correspond to a certain need to experiment with cable access, but the British approach is strictly experimental. By permitting several local cable TV experiments in 1972, the British government wants to verify which needs will be satisfied by such a public service, but it also wishes to identify which means of funding are most appropriate. However, Halloran suggests that

> The cable experiments, then, were not sufficiently clearly defined in their purposes, they did not cover different ways of financing or different ways of using cable television for social benefit--the "experimental" period was not long enough and they were not adequately assessed. Consequently, the experience had not really clarified the main issues at stake. [5]

Later, experimental goals vanish and a North American orientation emerges, as indicated by the Annan Committee, in 1977.

> Community television seems to most of us to have two advantages. It extends the number of programme makers and takes programme making out of the charmed professional circle; and this in turn creates a more alert and selective television audience. If there are four television channels showing for the most part highly professional programmes, it is better for communities to learn to make their own programmes rather than arranging for additional programme services to be provided by professional entertainment organizations. Cable television is one of the best ways in which a local community is able to communicate with itself. If people can walk into their local station, borrow equipment and use it as a mean of talking to their neighbours, this is real access broadcasting. The station staff then become professional advisers to the community rather than programme makers. [6]

This objective of fostering local expression is thus similar to that of the other three control agencies in North America.

It is evident that these expressions cannot be classified as being clearly a part of any one of the four philosophies of communication. However, insistence on local expression, community participation, gratification of needs and programming diversity suggest that the control agencies wish to foster open discussions and clarification of conflicts. Otherwise non-professional access to cable TV will only copy traditional television. As a rule, one can say that the three countries concerned are influenced as much by the libertarian concepts, which are concerned with discovering the truth among other things, as with the social responsibility principles, which support the raising of conflict to the plane of discussion. The Home Office however seems to have another emphasis. In its overriding interest

in experimenting with the gratification of needs and the financing of cable TV access systems, it seems that this agency is less interested in facilitating the expression of opinions, at least not in the early phases of the projects. Consequently, the British position is less oriented towards the social responsibility rationale than those of the other agencies.

As has been underlined previously, an analysis of policies is not complete without taking a close look at the actual regulations, because they translate policies into actual practice. The scrutiny of regulations therefore helps us to elaborate a government's position on such matters as the news, program format, diversity of programs, schedules, number of programs, technical quality and commercial advertising. Not all regulators in all four places concern themselves with all these issues. We will therefore simply mention the concerns expressed to find out whether the North American "social libertarian" orientation to regulation is generally sustained and how the British attitude differs.

Cable TV access is not aimed primarily at informing the public in Great Britain, nevertheless the Home Office requests that the news be presented with "accuracy and impartiality".[7]

Even though the regulations do not give an indication concerning the three common and traditional functions of the libertarian and social responsibility philosophies, namely to inform, to entertain and to sell, certain aspects of control lead one to believe that governments in general are not opposed to such an orientation. Thus the requirements of accuracy and impartiality when distributing news in Great Britain indicates that the local cable TV experiments have or

may have to inform the public. However, since there is no indication of a definite tendency in favor of the discovery of truth or the discussion of conflict, the British approach appears to be influenced by the libertarian and social responsibility concepts.

Program format is only regulated by the CRTC. As recommended,

> the nature of community programming should be distinctly different from the programming offered by radio and television stations serving the licensed area. Perhaps the most significant factor which sets the content of community programming apart is its ability to turn the passive viewer of television into an active participant. [8]

The insistence on original community programs in terms of style and format indicates an interest in meeting the needs of the viewers as well as assuming a social responsibility. The CRTC is therefore more influenced by the social responsibility principles than by the others.

Program diversity is controlled by the CRTC and the Home Office. As early as 1971, the CRTC believes that local programming should enrich the community by facilitating participation and interaction, in relation to individuals, groups and leaders. In fact, the CRTC is putting more emphasis on diversity than on the number of programming hours. It says that

> While licensees are responsible for programs carried on the community channel, and must provide reasonable, balanced opportunity for the expression of differing views on matters of public concern, licensees should encourage the use of the channel for unusual ideas and opinions on the broadest range of subjects and give the community the widest opportunity for self-expression. [9]

The redistribution of programs from other communities is authorized, but one is aware that it restricts the scheduling time within the community. The CRTC even permits the distribution of audio programs, as long as visual productions have priority. The British programs, except for advertising, are "intended to reflect the tastes and

interests of persons resident in the area".[10] This is why the Home Office requires that part of the content be of British source. Inasmuch as diversity of programs is concerned, the positions of the CRTC and the Home Office, favoring interaction and participation in the community or the expression of local tastes and interests, are based upon improvement of the community and satisfaction of needs. This approach is closely related to the social responsibility philosophy.

Scheduling and the number of programs are only specified by the RSP. Except when public interest and that of the viewers be served more adequately, every cable TV system in Quebec must

> present productions of a minimum duration of 10 hours per week and comprise: community productions approved by a community committee of subscribers **or** users,accredited by the Board;...local productions; ...productions devoted... to partisan politics; ... discussions...on matters of public concern. [11]

The demands for equity and balance in the programming schedule in Quebec reflect another aspect of the concerns of governments for the social responsibility of the media. So the Quebec approach is also influenced by the social responsibility rationale.

Only the CRTC does not regulate technical quality of programs. As a matter of fact, Quebec and Great Britain demand high standards of quality, but no evaluation criteria are proposed. In this matter, the FCC has a more realistic position, because it believes that the experimental stage would be handicapped by stringent technical standards. Moreover, the FCC thinks that the participation process is more important than the product. Since technical quality helps the viewing of productions, one can think that social responsibility ideas have contributed to the development of the Quebec and British control. However, as Boucher notes for Quebec, until now

this requirement has delayed community productions, because cable operators sometimes refuse low-quality programs.[12] In other respects, this observation does not apply to the American situation. The FCC, opting for a communicator's perspective, underlines an interest for the libertarian concept of laissez faire. Furthermore, the regulations of program diversity, scheduling and technical quality suggest that the RSP, the CRTC and the Home Office are not against entertainment in cable TV access.

Finally, commercial advertising is only permitted on the leased-access channels, in the United States as well as in Great Britain. "All advertising is prohibited during all community productions" in Quebec.[13] In 1972, the British government does not tolerate advertising, but, following financial difficulties by the projects, it is authorized in 1975. Because commercial advertising is permitted by the Home Office, it can be said that the British support the third function, attributed to mass media in the libertarian and social responsibility philosophies, namely to sell. This remark is also partly valid in the United States, due to the fact that such advertising is not tolerated on public access channels per se, but only on leased-access channels. The Quebec regulation, forbidding all kinds of advertising on the community channel, is difficult to assess. It seems to have arisen out of no particular rationale, except perhaps to follow the CBC model of the early days.

In summary, the underlying control attitudes of the three countries lead one to believe that the chief purpose of community cablecasting is related to the discovery of truth and the raising of conflict to the plane of discussion, while not excluding the functions

of informing and entertaining. Moreover the Americans and the British are not opposed to the function of selling through advertising. Table 2 summarizes the various politico-philosophical influences on governmental control of community cablecasting, in Quebec, Canada, the United States and Great Britain. As the table shows, the four governmental approaches adopt a pluralism of rationales with respect to the chief purpose of community cablecasting. In fact, according to the classical definitions, except in the United States, the overall control is characterized by two rationales: libertarian-social responsibility and social responsibility. In the United States, overall control is also libertarian-social responsibility, but the attitude towards technical quality is libertarian. Not only is there a pluralism of rationales, but as noticed, many of the aims overlap and it is therefore difficult to pinpoint the main emphasis. Clearly, however, none of the regulators are interested in promoting the objectives of the government or to enlist cable access in the service of the state. We may therefore conclude that there are no underlying authoritarian interests, expressed in cable access policy making.

Right to use community cablecasting

The second way in which government control can be evaluated is by asking who has the right to use cable TV access, as a policy maker or producer. In other words, it is a question of knowing the conditions of access for the production and distribution of programs prepared by non-professional communicators. Two aspects of regulation in particular are discussed in this context: conditions and costs of access.

Only the FCC imposes conditions of access on the cable

TABLE 2

RATIONALES

UNDERLYING THE CHIEF PURPOSE

	LIBERTARIAN	LIBERTARIAN-SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
CANADA			
RSP			
Local expression	...	×	...
Participation	...	×	...
Schedule/number of programs	...	...	×
Technical quality	...	...	×
CRTC			
Local expression	...	×	...
Participation	...	×	...
Format	...	...	×
Program diversity	...	...	×
UNITED STATES			
Local expression	...	×	...
Participation	...	×	...
Technical quality	×	...	...
Commercial advertising	...	×	...
GREAT BRITAIN			
Local expression	...	×	...
Experimentation	...	×	...
News	...	...	×
Program diversity	...	...	×
Technical quality	...	...	×
Commercial advertising	...	×	...

operators. As requested, each cable TV systems has to"maintain at least one specially designated, non-commercial public access channel available on a first-come, nondiscriminatory basis".[14]

The costs of access are related to fees and funds. Access fees are only imposed in the United States. As requested, charges "for equipment, personnel and production of public access programming shall be reasonable and consistent with the goal of affording users a low-cost means of television access. No charges shall be made for live public access programs not exceeding five minutes in length."[15] However, there are no fees if the production is made elsewhere.

The funding of cable TV access does not preoccupy the RSP, the FCC and the Home Office. In 1971, the CRTC proposes that a contribution equivalent to 10% of the gross subscriber revenue be devoted to the financing of the community channel. The 1975 policy states:

> Having in mind the objectives established for the community channel, the level of revenue generated by the cable television system, its size and maturity, and the diversity of the communities it serves, the Commission will expect the licensees to allocate a reasonable percentage of their gross subscriber revenue for the ongoing operation of the community channel. While some of this amount will be required for facilities or hardware in connection with the channel, the Commission will expect the major portion to be spent on the variable cost of producing community programs.[16]

Even though this proposal is not adopted, it nevertheless serves as a guideline. In Great Britain, the production companies have the responsibility of financing the local cable TV experiments. However, since 1972, these companies have ceased their activities due to financial difficulties, more especially as advertising revenues were forbidden before 1975.

As mentioned, the RSP is not concerned with the financing of the télévisions communautaires, however the Department of Communications provides funds for such cable TV access projects. In fact, about nine years ago, the Department of Communications established a program, called PAMEC, to help the community media. The amount of subvention varies according to the needs of the project and helps cover expenses for a year. However, since this financing policy is not incorporated into the policies and regulations of the RSP, it must be considered an indirect control on cable TV access systems. In fact, PAMEC's contributions rest upon criteria which extend beyond the requirements of the RSP. As such, financial control in general should be the object of a specific study that would take into account public and private funds.

In spite of the lack of data from Quebec and Great Britain, the above-mentioned evidence clarifies the approaches behind the control of non-professional communicators by the CRTC and the FCC. Thus the non-discriminatory approach in the United States, with respect to the communicators, leads one to believe that there is a tendency to facilitate expression in the media whenever the need is expressed. But the Americans opt for a liberal attitude when they tolerate access fees for productions exceeding five minutes. As a matter of fact, in a laissez faire system, anybody who has the economic means can use the mass media system. In other words, in the United States, governmental control of communicators tends towards social responsibility for the first five minutes and libertarianism for the rest. As for the approach by the CRTC, the proposal, which suggests a 10% contribution by the cable operator, indicates a social

responsibility influence which tries to balance private profits and public needs.

Therefore, anybody who has something to say in Canada, except Quebec, can use the production and distribution facilities of cable TV access. Basically, it is the same situation in the United States, but there is a time-limit of five minutes. For longer access periods, only those Americans communicators who have the economic means to do so can have access. Table 3 summarizes the positions of governments towards the right to use community cablecasting.

All things considered, and in spite of a lack of data from Quebec and Great Britain, table 3 suggests that the right to use community cablecasting is characterized by pluralism and overlapping of politico-philosophical rationales. In fact, both the CRTC and the FCC adopt a social responsibility attitude, but Americans are also using a combination of libertarianism and social responsibility. Once again the American position is a bit different, since all of its broadcast media are privately-owned. It is therefore more likely to define libertarian principles in terms of the financial ability to pay. This is different from Canada and Great Britain where mere financial ability is not considered sufficient for a libertarian attitude, because it excludes the great majority who do not have the resources to own a mass medium. In other respects, we may conclude that governmental control is not inspired by the authoritarian rationale, because there is no requirement for a communicator to get a permission from the government in order to use community cablecasting.

Control of community cablecasting

This third way of assessing government-media relationships is

TABLE 3

RATIONALES

UNDERLYING THE RIGHT TO CABLECAST

	LIBERTARIAN-SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
CANADA		
CRTC		
Cost (financing)	...	x
UNITED STATES		
Conditions of access	...	x
Cost (fee)	x	...

related to how cable TV access is controlled. A priori, one might think that the related data encompass all the policies and regulations, but what is investigated here is who or what controls community cablecasting messages.

All three countries in question require a licence to operate a cable TV system. In North America, the licensee is either the owner or the operator of the cable system. In contrast, British experimental licences are given to production companies. Since the governments do not deal directly with non-professional communicators, one may call this type of control mediated.

Message control inquires who has responsibility for the content and format of the programs. While the messages are generally controlled, in Canada, by cable operators and the CRTC, in Quebec, the public has responsibility for the messages it produces. In fact, a "community committee of subscribers or users of a cabledistribution public service may be accredited by the Board to approve, prior to the approval of the Board, that part of the production of a cabledistribution public service, presented as community production".[17] To be officially recognized, such a committee must demonstrate that its members originate from the community, are structured according to a community model and have an operational credibility. In order to avoid a monopoly of access, other similar committees can also be accredited.

In the United States, cable operators control content only in certain cases. As a matter of fact, cable operators are required to establish rules "prohibiting the presentation of any advertising material designed to promote the sale of commercial products or services

(including advertising by or on behalf of candidates for public office); lottery information; and obscene or indecent matter".[18] Thus as in Quebec the cable operator has no programming responsibility. Certain American groups nevertheless insist that the public be consulted in order to stimulate the development of cable TV access.

In Canada, licensees are expected to "set up advisory groups from the community to advise and assist in the operation of the community channel without diminishing the licensee's ultimate responsibility for the programming being distributed".[19] Furthermore, disagreements between licensees and those requesting access are sorted out by the CRTC.

The situation is very different in Great Britain. Experimental licences are granted to companies that are responsible for the production and distribution of local programs. These control structures are directly controlled by the Home Office. In fact, the

> Secretary of State may at any time give directions to the licensee imposing prohibitions or restrictions on the inclusions in its programmes of any particular item... give directions to the licensee as to the maximum time, the minimum time, or both the maximum and minimum time which is to be given in any hour, day, week or other period, to programmes...as to the hours of the day between which, or the occasions on which, such programmes...are not to be distributed 20

Decisions about content are final. Moreover, no change whatsoever is tolerated in the control of the production company without the authorization of the Home Office. Public participation is also considered less important, because those companies have their own permanent production staff.

The policy of the RSP, respecting the committee of citizens responsible for programming, is unique and corresponds to the ideas

of social responsibility of the mass media. However Boucher believes that the powers of citizens are weak, because local committees and the RSP approve the same programs.[21] Nevertheless, the RSP's approach is related to the social responsibility philosophy, because community cablecasting is partly controlled by community opinion. Given the narrow responsibility of the American cable operator, it appears that the FCC adopts a libertarian attitude in insuring a "free market place of ideas".

As for the CRTC, one can say that the surveillance and censorship powers granted to the licensees reflect authoritarian ideas even if citizens' advisory groups are organized. As a matter of fact, those in charge of the messages may be tempted to exert too strict a control. Therefore, the CRTC seems to have adopted authoritarian and social responsibility principles. Freedom of expression is even less promoted in Great Britain, for the Home Office can interfere with the content of the programs. Thus the control of British experimental cable TV expresses a definite tendency toward authoritarian ideas.

In summary, community cablecasting in the three countries concerned is indirectly controlled by government licencing of cable TV systems. Moreover, community cablecasting is controlled (1) by community opinion in Quebec (2) by cable operator's censorship and community opinion in Canada, (3) by the self-righting process of truth in the United States and (4) by public and private censorship in Great Britain. Table 4 summarizes the different governmental attitudes behind the type of control adopted with respect to community cablecasting. As the table suggests, the type of control used in community cablecasting is characterized by pluralism and overlapping. As a

TABLE 4

RATIONALES

UNDERLYING THE TYPE OF CONTROL

	AUTHORITARIAN	AUTHORITARIAN-SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	LIBERTARIAN	SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
CANADA				
RSP Control of messages	...	...	...	x
CRTC Control of messages	...	x	...	...
UNITED STATES				
Control of messages	...	...	x	...
GREAT BRITAIN				
Control of messages	x	...	...	...

matter of fact, each control agency adopts a different politico-philosophical rationale, namely: (1) social responsibility for Quebec, (2) authoritarian-social responsibility for Ottawa, (3) libertarian in the United States and (4) authoritarian in Great Britain.

What strikes one here is the contradictory attitude used by the CRTC. As a matter of fact, the CRTC's control of messages at the same time suggests an authoritarian rationale, due to the fact that the cable operator has the ultimate responsibility of the programs, and a social responsibility rationale, because advisory groups may assist the cable operator.

Forbidden content in community cablecasting

The fourth and final question which requires discussion is: what is defined as "forbidden content" in cable TV access regulation. Seven types of content seem to be affected by government control. They are: obscenity, defamation, partisan programming, language and culture, public interest, religion and finally incitement to crime or disorder.

Indecent, shocking and obcene contents are regulated in the United States and Great Britain. Nowadays the FCC's policy aims at the same objectives as in 1972. Thus while "the cable operator may not in general exercise program content control over programming on access channels, he explicitely does have the power and obligation to proscribe obscene or indecent matter."[22] However, a rule of reasonableness was adopted in 1976 and the FCC makes three suggestions: (1) when there is a doubt concerning a producer or a production, the licensee shall take the necessary measures, including pre-screening. (2) If there are good reasons to suspect that a producer intends to

make obscene programs, access must be forbidden until there is an agreement between the producer and the cable operator; and (3) in all cases when the programs have a good chance of shocking the viewers, because they offend good taste, they should be programmed at times when children are not generally watching.[23] As for the Home Office, it forbids all contents which "offend against good taste and decency".[24]

According to the four theories of the press, the control of obscenity indicates a libertarian orientation. The question of obscenity and indecency is however complicated, because, on the one hand, governments and viewers do not share the same concepts and, on the other, it is not easy to define obscenity, indecency and bad taste. Consequently we will conclude that American and British approaches are libertarian.

Three governments do not deal with civil and criminal liability in their policies and regulations of cable access. Only the United States is concerned with the problem. As a matter of fact, the FCC states that there "is little likelihood of the possibility of a criminal suit in a situation where the system has no right of control and thus no specific intent to violate the law."[25] But since the FCC does not have the support of the Congress, cable operators may censor any portion of the programs that appear inadmissible. According to the four philosophies, defamation control characterizes a libertarian attitude. However, in the classical model, the interdiction of defamation does not seem to fit easily with the orientation and the type of control of a libertarian rationale of mass media systems. In fact, it might appear difficult to reconcile the discov-

ery of truth and the free marketplace of ideas with the interdiction to attack reputation. However this attitude protects the credibility of people who have had their reputation attacked.

Except for the FCC, regulatory structures are concerned with partisan programming which consist in supporting a political party or candidate. The CRTC asks the licensees to "allocate time for the broadcasting of programs, advertisements, or announcements of a partisan political character on an equitable basis to all parties and rival candidates."[26]

In Quebec, it

> is prohibited for any cabledistribution public service to provide its subscribers with programming of a partisan character in relation to a referendum or an election of a member of the National Assembly or of a municipal or school council that is being held within the territory granted to such public service, on the day of any such referendum or election or on the day immediately preceeding the day of any such referendum or election. 27

The Home Office requests that due "impartiality shall be preserved in the content of the programmes as respects matters of political... controversy."[28]

Since partisan programming affects basic rights and can help determine vital social goals, its control originates from socially-responsible mass media, as suggested by the classical model. Consequently, the requirement for impartial and balanced programs, as imposed in Canada and Great Britain, suggest a social responsibility influence. In other respects, there appears to be a typological discrepancy, in the four-theories model, between the orientation and the forbidden contents of the social libertarian philosophy. As a matter of fact, if conflict is required to be raised to the plane of discussion, politics would be one of the vital questions to be discussed

freely. Again the "equal time" requirement is a facilitating rule which assures that if you have a liberal Parliament the opposition parties have the same rights to put their arguments before the public.

In Canada, the cultural setting generates regulations about language and culture. While the CRTC insists on bilingualism, the RSP focuses its efforts on French and Quebec culture. As a matter of fact, since its first policy statements, the CRTC suggests that many "cable television systems should reflect the bilingual nature of the communities they serve. In some cases a separate channel in the other official language will be desirable but where channel space is limited a proportion of the programmes in the single channel could be in the other official language."[29] In Quebec, the production of cable TV systems must

> be in French, including vocal music, except in the case of educational programming and community productions in respect of which the use of another language is authorized by the Board; and
>
> promote the creation and dissemination of audio, visual or audio-visual productions of Quebec and the arts in general, particularly the theatre, cinema, music, and records.30

Language and culture are also basic rights. It follows that government control in this matter is inspired by social responsibility concepts. The Quebec approach is even more interventionist because it insists on the promotion of culture as well. The Quebec government has in fact decided to promote and defend the French language and culture.

Three other types of contents are expressly forbidden, namely public interest, religion as well as incitement to crime and disorder. In Canada, where "a licensee provides opportunity on its community channel for the expression of views of public concern, it shall pro-

vide reasonable, balanced opportunity for the expression of differing views on such matters."[31] In Great Britain, "any propaganda relating to matters of a religious nature" is forbidden, however the regulation does not apply to "religious services or balanced discussions on religious matters."[32] The Home Office also prohibits programmes which are "likely to encourage or incite to crime or lead to disorder or to be offensive to public feeling."[33] Therefore the regulatory attitudes in Canada and Great Britain indicate social responsibility tendencies. First, there is the requirement for balanced and fair programs about public interest topics, in Canada. Second, there is the British concern for the invasion of recognized private rights as they relate to religious programs. However, the forbidding of subversive programs in Great Britain strongly suggests a libertarian perspective.

In summary forbidden contents include (1) obscenity and indecency in the United States and Great Britain, (2) defamation in the United States, (3) sedition in Great Britain (4) serious invasion of private rights and important social interests in Canada and Great Britain. Table 5 summarizes government reaction to contents distributed by community cablecasting. The table suggests that the rationales underlying the control of forbidden contents are again characterized by pluralism and overlapping. In fact, one finds (1) social responsibility concepts in Canada, (2) libertarian ideas in the United States and (3) both libertarian and social responsibility philosophies in Great Britain. We may conclude however that the development of cable TV access systems, in the three countries, is not determined by the authoritarian rationale, since criticism of politics and

TABLE 5

RATIONALES

UNDERLYING FORBIDDEN CONTENT

	LIBERTARIAN	SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
CANADA		
RSP		
Partisan programming	...	x
Language/culture	...	x
Public interest	...	x
CRTC		
Partisan programming	...	x
Language/culture	...	x
Public interest	...	x
UNITED STATES		
Obscenity	x	...
Defamation	x	...
GREAT BRITAIN		
Obscenity	x	...
Partisan programming	...	x
Religion	...	x
Incitement to crime and disorder	x	...

officials in power is not prohibited.

Overall politico-philosophical rationales

Here we will consider the overall control attitude from a national and cross-national perspective. In Canada, the control attitude ranges from authoritarianism to social responsibility. More specifically, the RSP adopts a position which is influenced by libertarianism, but tends towards the social responsibility theory. The CRTC's attitude is similar, but the type of control has an authoritarian dimension. Comparatively, only the control of content, in Canada, is inspired exclusively by social responsibility ideas. This approach is followed closely by the purpose of community cablecasting which, however, uses libertarian principles. Overall then, the Canadian evidence suggests a strong tendency towards social responsibility.

The American position ranges from libertarian to social responsibility. The social responsibility orientation is indicated by two aspects: the purpose of community cablecasting and the right to cablecast. In contrast, the FCC is exclusively libertarian with respect to the type of control and forbidden content. However, the data do not suggest any authoritarian influence. Overall then, in the United States, there also seems to be a social responsibility tendency, but it is counterbalanced by libertarianism.

The politico-philosophical rationales, in Great Britain, range from authoritarianism to social responsibility. Two aspects lead one to believe that social responsibility concepts are also used by the British: the purpose and forbidden contents. In contrast, the type of control is authoritarian. Overall then, British

control appears to be about equally attracted by the authoritarian, libertarian and social responsibility rationales.

Table 6 summarizes the reactions of Canadian, American and British governments in relation to the four aspects of control and situates the various governmental positions in the evolution of the underlying philosophies of control. As the table suggests, the four control agencies, in Canada, the United States and Great Britain, are using many rationales to control community cablecasting. From a cross-national point of view, this pluralism includes: authoritarianism, libertarianism and social responsibility. Furthermore, the control attitudes are characterized by category-overlapping. Two types of combined rationales are found. The first one, occuring in Canada, tends towards authoritarianism and social responsibility. The second one, used in the three countries, is oriented towards libertarianism and social responsibility.

This concludes the identification of the rationales underlying governmental regulations of community cablecasting in Quebec, Canada, the United States and Great Britain. The next step is to see how well the government-media models of Lowenstein and Merrill correspond to the data. In other words, how adequately do these models explain the reality of community cablecasting control by the four control agencies?

TABLE 6

OVERALL RATIONALES

UNDERLYING COMMUNITY CABLECASTING CONTROL

	A	A--SR	L	L--SR	S R
CANADA					
RSP					
Chief purpose	...	...	...	x	x
Type of control	...	...	...	...	x
Forbidden content	...	...	...	...	x
CRTC					
Chief purpose	...	...	...	x	x
Right to cablecast	...	...	...	...	x
Type of control	...	x	...	...	...
Forbidden content	...	...	...	...	x
UNITED STATES					
Chief purpose	...	...	x	x	...
Right to cablecast	...	...	...	x	x
Type of control	...	...	x	...	...
Forbidden content	...	...	x	...	...
GREAT BRITAIN					
Chief purpose	...	...	...	x	x
Type of control	x	...	...	...	...
Forbidden content	...	...	x	...	x

Note

A: Authoritarian
A--SR: Authoritarian-Social Responsibility
L: Libertarian
L--SR: Libertarian-Social Responsibility
SR: Social Responsibility

ENDNOTES

[1]Quebec, Ministère des Communications, L'Allier, p. 12.

[2]Canada, CRTC, Policies, p.1.

[3]FCC, First Report, p. 17652.

[4]FCC, Channel Capacity, p. 20665.

[5]James D. Halloran, The Development of Cable Television in the U.K.: Problems and Possibilities, report no. CCC/DC(75)57, (Strasburg: Council of Europe, (1975)), p. 24.

[6]Report of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting, pp. 221-222.

[7]Home Office, Licence, p. 3.

[8]CRTC, Policies, p. 5.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Home Office, Licence, p. 3.

[11]Quebec, Regulation, pp. 22-23.

[12]Boucher et al., 59.

[13]Quebec, Regulation, p. 21.

[14]FCC, Channel Capacity, p. 20678.

[15]Ibid.

[16]CRTC, Policies, p. 4.

[17]Quebec, Regulation, p. 22.

[18]FCC, Channel Capacity, pp. 20678-679.

[19]CRTC, Policies, p. 5.

[20]Home Office, Licence, p. 2.

[21]Boucher et al., p. 60.

[22]FCC, Clarification, p. 23678.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Home Office, Licence, p. 3.

[25]FCC, Cable Television Service, p. 3271.

[26]CRTC, Regulations, p. 3109.

[27]Quebec, Regulation, p. 22.

[28]Home Office, Licence, p. 3.

[29]CRTC, Canadian Broadcasting, p. 19.

[30]Quebec, Regulation, p. 22.

[31]CRTC, Regulations, p. 3109.

[32]Home Office, Licence, p. 3.

[33]Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

AN EVALUATION OF GOVERNMENT-MEDIA-MODELS

This chapter is concerned with the ability of two theoretical models to represent the varieties of regulation which are found in Quebec, Canada, America, and Great Britain. More specifically, this chapter will explore whether Lowenstein's "progression typology" and Merrill's "media development and national and political development" models are of use in cross-cultural comparisons. These two models situate the rationales for regulation in the societal development process. Both of them refer to the dimension of time and thus facilitate the understanding of social change and how it affects media regulation.

Progression typology

As mentioned before, Lowenstein proposes three modifications to the classical approach, because he is dissatisfied with the four theories of Siebert, Peterson and Schramm. There is first the problem of terminology. In order to broaden the applicability of his theory, he suggests to replace "soviet-totalitarian" by "social centralist". He also suggests to use "social libertarian" instead of "social responsibility", since, by opposition, one may think that authoritarianism, libertarianism, and soviet-totalitarianism generate

irresponsible media attitudes. In addition, he believes a fifth theory, namely the "utopian" needs to be added, in order to indicate that the social responsibility system is not perfect. The third modification, he proposes, has to do with the need to take the social setting into account when assessing the efficacy of regulatory models, since control is related to the developmental stages of societies.

Figure 1 illustrates the "progression typology".[1] In the conceptual model, several characteristics are identified for each theory, such as ownership, literacy and channel availability. However, we will only be concerned here with the developmental stages and the corresponding theory, because, first of all, the figure was designed by Merrill, based on a brief paper by Lowenstein, and, second, Merrill does not elaborate on those characteristics. Nevertheless, Merrill gives an idea of the various philosophies, as used by Lowenstein. They are:

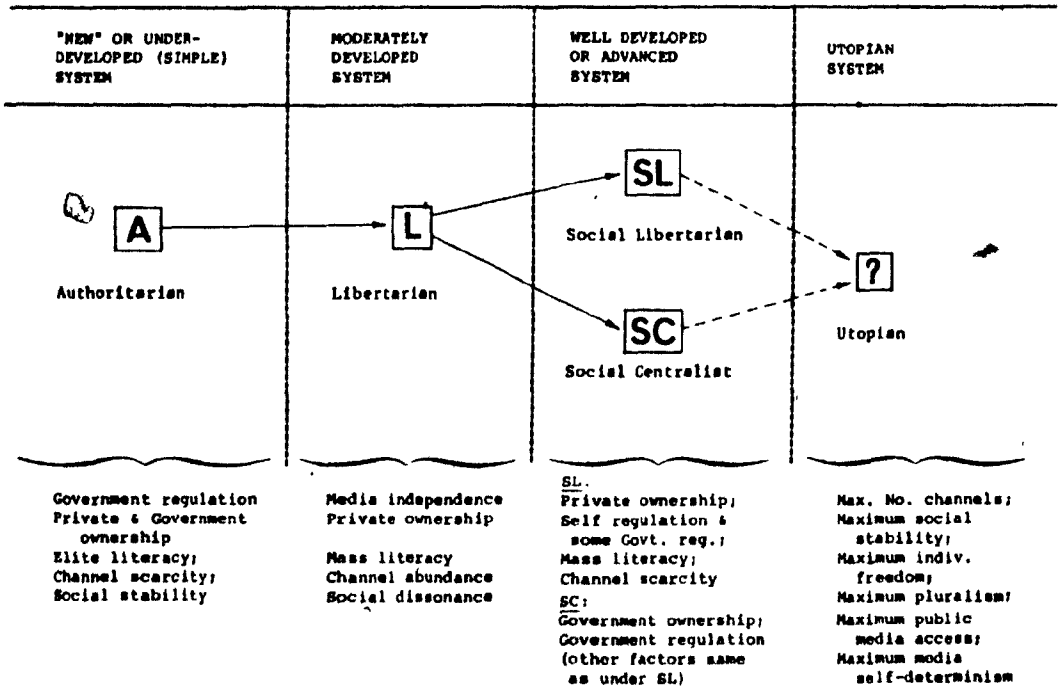
1. Authoritarian -- Negative government controls over the press to stifle criticism and thereby maintain ruling elite.
2. Social-Centralist -- Positive government controls to harness the press for national economic and philosophical goals.
3. Libertarian -- Absence of government controls, assuring free marketplace of ideas and operation of self-righting process.
4. Social-Libertarian -- Minimal government controls to unclog channels of communication and assure operational spirit of libertarian philosophy.2

It seems then that Lowenstein's definitions are not much different from the classical approach.

The model suggests that the evolution of regulatory relationships is quasi-linear and depends on the state of socio-economic development. Thus (1) authoritarianism is found in underdeveloped

FIGURE 1

PROGRESSION TYPOLOGY



societies, (2) libertarianism in moderately developed societies, (3) social libertarianism or social centralist in well developed societies, and (4) utopianism in utopian societies.

As mentioned earlier, Lowenstein suggests that well developed democracies or advanced systems are characterized by social libertarianism. Let us find out if his theoretical representation corresponds to government-community cablecasting relationships in Canada, the United States and Great Britain.

Though the progression typology is better than the static models, it too has its problems. Major among these are its inability to represent category overlapping and pluralism of concepts. First of all, the model cannot represent overlapping rationales, because it does not provide transitions between the various stages of development a society undergoes. This model is thus unable to explain why the CRTC, in Canada, utilizes both authoritarian and social libertarian regulatory concepts. It has no way of explaining the mix between libertarian and social libertarian rules which underly the purpose of community cablecasting in the three countries or the right to cablecast in the United States.

Secondly, the model cannot cope with the plurality of rationales which characterize American and British types of control patterns. In spite of the fact that the two countries are on the same level of development, they follow quite different approaches. Britain has an authoritarian pattern while libertarianism underlies the purpose of community cablecasting and the type of control in the United States. Both countries however regulate forbidden content in the same way. The model is better able to deal with the Canadian

situation which corresponds more clearly to the social libertarian prediction. One must conclude that regulatory patterns are not linearly related to a country's level of development, but also have something to do with historical factors.

This inability to represent more than one rationale for a given phase of development may be explained by the fact that Lowenstein is an optimist and believes that greater economic stability and availability of media will lead to less authoritarian control attitudes. In spite of this it must be noted that Lowenstein's typology is broader than the approach by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, since it includes a fifth option, that of utopianism which is an ideal state. Investigating ideal possibilities provides a framework for assessing the limits to regulatory models and clarifying underlying assumptions.

Lowenstein's social libertarian system which relates private ownership, self regulation and some government control is able to encompass part of the regulatory attitudes toward community cablecasting in Canada. In fact, the model is able to predict attitudes towards the type of control and forbidden content in Quebec, as well as the right to cablecast and the control of content, in other provinces. The fact that only four out of fourteen regulatory aspects are predicted and that the predictions correspond only to the Canadian situation weaken the usefulness of the model at the cross-national level.

Table 7 situates actual control aspects in relation to the predictions of Lowenstein's model. As suggested, on the one hand, the progression typology is unable to predict two overlapping

TABLE 7

EVALUATION OF LOWENSTEIN'S MODEL

	RATIONALES				
	Unpredictable		Predictable		
			Unpredicted		Predicted
	A--SL	L--SL	A	L	S L
CANADA					
RSP					
Chief purpose	...	x	...	...	x
Type of control	...	...	...	...	x
Forbidden content	...	...	...	...	x
CRTC					
Chief purpose	...	x	...	...	x
Right to cablecast	...	...	...	...	x
Type of control	x	...	...	...	...
Forbidden content	...	...	...	...	x
UNITED STATES					
Chief purpose	...	x	...	x	...
Right to cablecast	...	x	...	...	x
Type of control	...	...	...	x	...
Forbidden content	...	...	...	x	...
GREAT BRITAIN					
Chief purpose	...	x	...	...	x
Type of control	...	...	x	...	...
Forbidden content	...	...	...	x	x

Note

A: Authoritarian
L: Libertarian
A--SL: Authoritarian-Social Libertarian
L--SL: Libertarian-Social Libertarian
SL: Social Libertarian

rationales: authoritarian-social libertarian and libertarian-social libertarian. On the other, authoritarian and libertarian rationales are not predicted although it is possible to do so in the model. Finally, the only predicted rationale, among the predictable ones, is social libertarianism.

In summary, even if the evolution of control attitudes is linked to economic development and if a fifth rationale is added, evidence suggests that the reality of community cablecasting control, in the three countries, is much more complex than the progression typology indicates. More specifically, while Lowenstein predicts a social libertarian control attitude in well developed systems, the positions of the RSP, the CRTC, the FCC and the Home Office also include authoritarian and libertarian approaches as well as overlapping rationales.

Media-National-Political Development

In 1974, Merrill proposes the "media development and national and political development" model. Unlike Lowenstein's contribution, this approach is not another modification of the four theories. The multi-factor model takes into account basic press concepts, media and personal freedom, political theory, government control, population tendency and development stages.

The model is based on the postulate that individual, political and press freedoms fluctuate in relation to social conflict. Merrill posits that there is practically no conflict in traditional societies, a lot of conflict in transitional and early modern societies and little conflict in late modern societies. In addition Merrill assumes that social and media development is cyclical. "Societies tend to

develop or progress from autocracy, to democracy, to statism, with their media systems going from authoritarianism through libertarianism back to authoritarianism."[3]

Let us look at the three stages of development. In a traditional society, conflict is discouraged. Such a society is characterized by authoritarianism and autocracy. As it progresses towards the transitional stage, some media and personal freedom are permitted, along with less government control. Media development is conservative and there are only elite media.

A transitional society encourages conflict. It is characterrized by libertarianism in media regulation and democratic form of government. In the early phases, media and personal freedom are at a maximum, while government control is decreased. This situation however reverses as the modern stage is reached. Media development then becomes liberal and the mass media develop.

Modern societies, according to Merrill, comprise three phases. In the beginning, such a society retains democratic and libertarian attitudes, but social responsibility is eroding absolute press freedoms. The mass media are getting more specialized. Later, authoritarianism, which has gradually replaced libertarianism with respect to media control, changes to totalitarianism. Both media and personal freedom are weakened as government control increases. The objective is to eliminate conflict. As development progresses, governments interfere more often in media affairs, and gradually, collectivist goals replace personal ones. In the extreme phase, national development is again authoritarian. The emphasis is now on the masses. The society is characterized by statism. Media development is

conservative and elite media dominate.

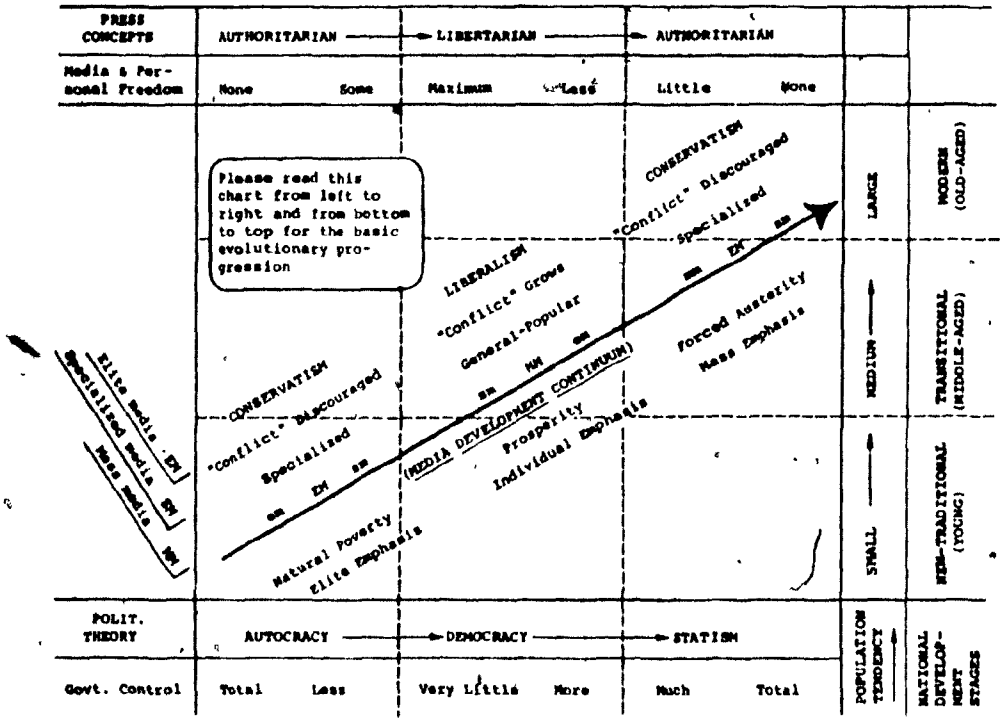
Merrill makes an important contribution to theory building in suggesting that the social responsibility theory, while protecting the interests of the audience, decreases media freedom. Thus a social libertarian control attitude, according to him, may be in fact authoritarianism in disguise. As he puts it: "when a system forces libertarianism, for whatever motive, it is no longer libertarian. Forced, or directed, libertarianism presents a logical contradiction. One might ask if this is simply not an authoritarian theory being used to assure (or try to assure) a libertarian system."[4] Merrill's cyclical approach, from authoritarianism to libertarianism and back to authoritarianism, is therefore different from the linear perspective of Lowenstein, as illustrated in figure 2.[5]

According to Merrill's definitions, Canada, the U. S. and Great Britain appear to have modern societies. Furthermore, development in those countries seems to be somewhere between the first and the second phase of modernism. The predicted rationales for such a stage of development are: a combination of libertarianism and authoritarianism, becoming pure authoritarianism in the last phase. In other words, modern society is characterized by little media freedom and much more governmental control. Let us now verify if the theory matches reality.

In contrast to the progression typology, this model is capable of representing all the rationales found in community cablecasting control, in the three countries we have investigated, even combinations of libertarianism and authoritarianism. This is an improvment over Lowenstein's contribution which cannot deal with mixed rationales

FIGURE 2

MEDIA-NATIONAL-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT



in regulatory attitudes. The apparent weakness of Merrill's model, of not including purely libertarian rationales to media control, is however not a drastic flaw in the model because only two out of four regulatory approaches appear to be purely libertarian, namely the type of control and forbidden content in the U. S.. In the other two aspects, several rationales are used depending on the regulated sub-aspects. Such is the case with the purpose of community cablecasting in the U. S. and forbidden contents in Great Britain both of which are influenced by authoritarian concepts. Therefore, even though Merrill's model does not exactly predict the reality of community cablecasting in the three countries, it is not far from reality. It is a far better predictor than Lowenstein's progression typology.

It is further noticeable that Merrill's model is also in a better position than Lowenstein's to deal with multiple rationales such as the mix of libertarianism and authoritarianism which is found in the three countries. As we have seen most of the control aspects in the three countries are influenced by this mix of rationales. Even the apparently paradoxical prediction of authoritarianism in modern societies is supported by evidence, especially in Canada. Only the U. S. attitude maintains a libertarian tendency which, according to the model, usually characterizes only transitional societies. The accuracy of predictions made by Merrill's model is summarized in table 8 which shows that it makes ten correct predictions against four incorrect ones. This is certainly a very creditable record.

The media-national-political development model is more general than Lowenstein's, since it posits a greater number of factors

TABLE 8

EVALUATION OF MERRILL'S MODEL

	PREDICTABLE RATIONALES		
	Unpredicted	Predicted	
	LIBERTARIAN	LIBERTARIAN-AUTHORITARIAN	AUTHORITARIAN
CANADA			
RSP			
Chief purpose	...	x	x
Type of control	...	...	x
Forbidden content	...	...	x
CRTC			
Chief purpose	...	x	x
Right to cablecast	...	...	x
Type of control	...	...	x
Forbidden content	...	...	x
UNITED STATES			
Chief purpose	x	x	...
Right to cablecast	...	x	x
Type of control	x	...	...
Forbidden content	x	...	...
GREAT BRITAIN			
Chief purpose	...	x	x
Type of control	...	...	x
Forbidden content	x	...	x

which affect the growth, functioning and regulatory attitude toward the mass media. The multi-factor approach is also useful because it identifies relations between the variables of political theory, growth of population, national development stages and personal freedom, and time. The cross-national evidence on cablecasting control moreover validates this model where it has undermined the other. As demonstrated above this cyclic model is capable of encompassing the pluralism of concepts and overlapping rationales which underly the first two phases of modern societies, at least in the three countries concerned.

In conclusion it may be said that Lowenstein's progression typology is too narrow for cross-cultural comparisons of community cablecasting control in well-developed systems, such as Canada, the U. S. and Great Britain. In contrast, Merrill's media-national-political development model appears useful, especially as it represents the pluralism of concepts and category overlapping. In particular, Merrill's model clarifies the effect of social change and development on media regulation in modern societies. Since we have no evidence for moderately developed countries, the question of the two models' efficacy of prediction in this respect must remain open. It is conceivable that Lowenstein's progression typology matches the reality of media control in new or moderately developed systems more adequately. Similarly Merrill's model may not correspond to government-media relationships in transitional societies. Other studies will have to clarify these points which are beyond the scope of this thesis.

ENDNOTES

[1]Merrill, The Imperative of Freedom, p. 40.

[2]Merrill and Lowenstein, p. 186.

[3]Heinz-Dietrich Fischer and John Calhoun Merrill, eds., International and Intercultural Communication, 2nd ed., revised and enlarged (New York: Hastings House, 1976), p. 199.

[4]Merrill, The Imperative of Freedom, p. 39.

[5]Fischer and Merrill, p. 195.

CHAPTER 4

A GOVERNMENT-MEDIA-AUDIENCE MODEL

After having critiqued three different government-media models it is possible to summarize and pinpoint the major factors which influence regulatory attitudes. There are seven of these including: (1) societal development stages, (2) overlapping rationales, (3) the pluralism of control philosophies, (4) the freedom-control axis, (5) the totalitarianism-anarchy dichotomy, (6) the type of control and (7) government-media -audience relationships.

Correlating government-media interactions with the socio-economic development of societies is important, but the three classical categories, namely traditional, transitional and modern, are not sufficient. Some indications of a future state should be given. However, talking about an utopian society, like Lowenstein does, does not fulfill this requirement, because it does not specify the characteristics of a society.

There also needs to be a capacity to represent the pluralism of rationales, including category overlapping, as they relate to each stage of development. Merrill attempts this in his model, however the suggested three phases within a specific development stage are too vague. Future rationales should also be indicated so as to clarify the possible contol philosophies of post-industrial societies.

Another set of factors which need elaboration are those which determine the freedom - control axis. Merrill suggests an approach here by making a distinction between government rationales which facilitate media freedom and independence, and those which appear as constraints. It will be recalled that the media industries welcome a maximum autonomy guaranteed by libertarian rationales for themselves, while condoning the imposition of authoritarian and social responsibility attitudes on journalists. The freedom-control axis must therefore be refined to indicate whose point of view is being represented, that of the media industries, journalists or the public.

Merrill's model is also useful in pointing out the fact that government regulatory attitudes are structured around a basic authoritarian-libertarian dualism. He suggests that while libertarianism tends naturally towards its extreme, anarchy, authoritarianism tends towards totalitarianism, at the other end. The observed cases of the these two poles could be used to rank the degree of freedom or control which exists within a particular society.

An improved model may also benefit from the input of the European tradition. While American scholars, whose media are overwhelmingly privately owned, stress the interests of the media, Europeans, where broadcast ownership is public, focus on the power of the media. Williams' analysis, it will be recalled, identifies four communications systems: authoritarian, paternalist, commercial and democratic. Of those, only the latter is particularly interesting for our purposes here because it underlines the importance of giving the means of control to the majority, namely the audience. Williams refers to the traditional control of programs by private media owners as being

undemocratic. This is partly right, since the media cannot be viewed as private property in the same sense as automobile factories. After all, the broadcast media utilize scarce frequencies which are publicly owned in all democracies. Certain social responsibility criteria, such as programming access for all, program variety to suit various tastes even if it is not profitable, public affairs coverage to provide necessary information for voting etc. are integral to the operation of democratic governments. In all of these cases as Williams suggests, the public should be consulted. Concern with the needs of the public may be used as a rationale to rank types of control.

Finally, to make the model even more adequate, one should focus on the overall mass communication process which includes both communicators and receivers. Except for Williams, all the reviewed American models are biased in favor of the media owners, because no mention is made of the audience. This perspective, focusing on media freedom and self-control , ignores the receiving counterpart in the total mass communication process. Therefore, when representing government control of the media, one should consider the media and the audience, especially because each control attitude does not have the same impact on both groups.

Two examples will clarify this point. To begin with, a libertarian control attitude suggests two different effects: (1) less control for the media and (2) more control for the audience. As a matter of fact, when more control of mass communication is left to the media, it can be expected that the interests of media owners will be given priority over those of the audience. The commercial system, identified by Williams, is interesting because it illuminates the

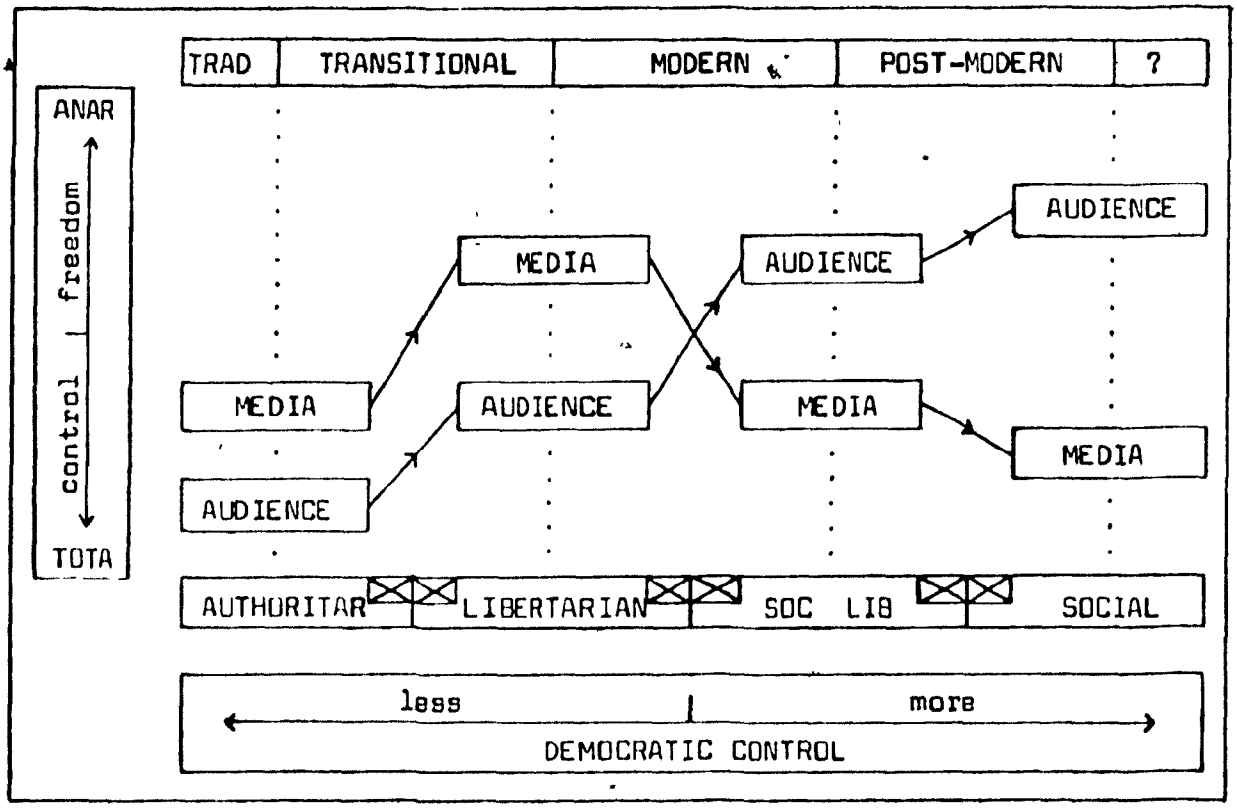
interrelationship between ownership and media content in commercial media. More specifically, a libertarian control attitude may give rise to low-cultural content or low-quality programs, because they are most profitable and thus impose constraints on the needs of the audience. A social libertarian attitude, on the other hand, can be perceived as constraints on the media, because it imposes obligations to the audience. Thus it is believed that a social libertarian attitude leads to curtailment of freedom for the media. Thus when governments opt for social responsibility the result is an increase of the control of the media, on the one hand, and an increase of freedom for the audience, on the other. It therefore seems that a particular control philosophy may yield two different impacts, depending on the perspective one takes. Thus a model which does not take into account the totality of government-media-audience relationships misses the point and misrepresents reality.

Figure 3 represents our own "government-media-audience divergency" model which attempts to incorporate all of the above suggestions and control factors. The model is a dynamic multi-factor attempt at representing divergent evolutionary implications of a plurality of governmental control attitudes, which are sometimes overlapping. It also takes into account the needs of the audience.

To begin with, the model is dynamic. This means that it represents a process, in this case the evolution of politico-philosophical rationales. More specifically, it traces the progress of the implications, on both media and audience, of several control attitudes through four stages of societal development: traditional, transitional, modern and post-modern. Second, in contrast with

FIGURE 3

GOVERNMENT-MEDIA-AUDIENCE DIVERGENCY MODEL



NOTE

TRAD: traditional
AUTHORITAR: authoritarian
SOC LIB: social libertarian
ANAR: anarchy
TOTA: totalitarianism

previous models, which are either linear, cyclic or circular, this one is divergent. It postulates that a governmental control attitude affects media and audiences differently, resulting in two converging then gradually divergent positions along the freedom-control axis. The process is the following: as government control progresses towards more participation by the public, the media become more controlled. Thus media freedom appears to be inversely proportional to audience freedom. On the basis that government-media-audience relationships are influenced by several rationales, ranging from authoritarianism to socialism, it is suggested that the two elements of mass communication, media and audience, are affected differently and become more divergent as societal development advances.

As suggested in the model, control rationales, in a traditional society, are authoritarian. While the impact of this rationale restricts media freedom, it implies even greater control for the audience, because public needs and interests are not at stake. The control here is considered less democratic than in a transitional society. It is easily understood that when the media situation tends towards control on the freedom-control axis, the situation of the audience is even worse, thus closer to the totalitarian pole.

Leaving the initial stage of development, a society becomes what Merrill calls transitional. It is characterized by three control attitudes: authoritarian, authoritarian-libertarian and libertarian. The laissez faire approach, giving more power to the media, results in greater freedom for the media owners. The situation of the audience is also improved because the media become interested in their audiences for various reasons: profits, ratings, etc. However,

compared to the media owners, the audience is still at a disadvantage. At this stage of development, the total control package is more democratic than in the traditional society, because the needs of the majority, in this case the audience, are becoming important factors.

After the transitional stage, societies move to what Merrill calls a modern stage. Three politico-philosophical attitudes are found in these societies: libertarian, libertarian-social libertarian and social libertarian. The social libertarian attitude is equivalent to the social responsibility theory. In this case, while the obligation to be socially responsible is perceived as a constraint on journalistic freedom, it gives audiences greater say in the definition of their needs and interests. This is why government control rationales begin to merge as soon as these focus on the audience, in a libertarian-social libertarian situation. But the two impacts change direction and begin to diverge when social responsibility is considered more important in the social libertarian phase. In modern societies, then, the audience is less controlled than the media. When the social libertarian phase is reached, the control is considered democratic, since the interests of the mass are becoming influential in the development of governmental rationales.

What lies ahead in the future is not easily identified. Lowenstein calls the future "utopia". In our model, the next stage is called "post-modern". It is characterized by several rationales. First by social libertarianism, but also by the coming rationale: socialism. Thus three attitudes are predicted: (1) social libertarian, (2) social libertarian-social and (3) social. The latter consists

of greater participation by the audience in the policy-making process of the mass media. This results in an increase of freedom for listeners and viewers, but greater control for the media. As one can see, the positions of the media and the audience are much further apart. In fact, an increase in the power of the audience majority limits the freedom of the elite media owners. At this stage, the control is thus much more democratic than in the modern stage. In summary, beginning with the libertarian-social libertarian rationale, the implications of government control on the media and the audience reverse in favor of the former. It is believed that this tendency will continue in future stages of development, thus bringing media control closer to totalitarianism and audience rights closer to anarchy.

In conclusion, let us ask whether our model better describes community cablecasting control in Canada, the U. S. and Great Britain than those mentioned previously. First, evidence suggests that in all three countries the setting is modern. Second, the three countries, representing four regulatory structures, are characterized by the following politico-philosophical rationales: libertarian, libertarian-social libertarian and social libertarian. Third, government-media-audience relationships are at a turning point, as tastes, interests and needs of the audience are becoming important in the mass communication process. This situation is represented in the model by the reverse in polarity in terms of the freedom-control axis. However, there are still, in the U. S., certain libertarian elements which are represented by the converging evolution of impacts. Finally, in terms of control, evidence suggests a tendency towards more democracy,

which means more power for the mass. All of these facts would indicate that our model is on the right track and that the audience is an important element in evaluating the types of control which occur in the new broadcast technologies.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the adequacy of government-media models in representing the reality of community cablecasting control by the governments of Quebec, Canada, the United States and Great Britain. Two models were assessed: Lowenstein's progression typology and Merrill's media-national-political development . In terms of control, this study focused on the policies and regulations of the Régie des Services Publics (Quebec), the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (Canada), the Federal Communications Commission (United States) and the Home Office (Great Britain).

Three things had to be done: (1) answer four research questions, (2) identify control rationales and (3) evaluate the adequacy of two government-media models. To begin with, let us focus on the research questions. The first one concerns the chief purpose of community cablecasting. Evidence suggests that cable TV access , in the three countries, is related to the discovery of truth and the raising of conflict to the plane of discussion. Furthermore, the Americans and the British are not opposed to selling through advertising.

The second one has to do with the right to cablecast. Data lead one to believe that anybody who has something to say, in North America, except Quebec, may use the production and distribution

facilities of cable TV systems. Such a free access is however limited to five minutes in the United States. For longer access periods, only those who can afford it may cablecast.

The third question inquires about the type of control. The analysis reveals that community cablecasting, in the three countries, is indirectly controlled by government licencing of cable TV systems. More specifically, community cablecasting is controlled by (1) community opinion in Quebec, (2) cable operator's censorship and community opinion in Canada, (3) self-righting process of truth in the United States and (4) public and private censorship in Great Britain.

The fourth question is related to forbidden content in community cablecasting. The study shows that forbidden content includes (1) obscenity and indecency in the United States and Great Britain, (2) defamation in the United States, (3) sedition in Great Britain and (4) serious invasion of private rights and important social interests in Canada and Great Britain.

Secondly, the analysis of government-community cablecasting relationships indicates that the four control agencies are using several rationales to control cable TV access. This pluralism includes: authoritarianism in Great Britain, libertarianism in the United States and Great Britain, and social responsibility in all three countries. Policies and regulations also suggest that the control philosophies are characterized by category-overlapping. Two types of combined rationales are found. The first one, in Canada, tends towards authoritarianism and social responsibility. The second one, occuring in all three countries, is oriented towards libertarianism and social responsibility.

Thirdly, the evaluation of the government-media models of Merrill and Lowenstein permits us to evaluate the adequacy of the theoretical representations. It seems that the reality of community cablecasting control is much more complex than the progression typology indicates. As a matter of fact, the identification of authoritarian and libertarian rationales, as well as category-overlapping, contradict the predicted control attitude, namely social libertarianism.

In contrast, the media-national-political development model of Merrill is capable of representing all the control rationales found in Canada, the United States and Great Britain, even combined philosophies. Though the model does not match reality totally, it is not far from it. Comparatively, Lowenstein's progression typology is too narrow for cross-cultural comparisons. Merrill's approach however appears more useful, because it represents the pluralism of concepts and category-overlapping.

The weaknesses of the models of Lowenstein and Merrill helped in the clarification of the factors which influence regulatory attitudes. These factors include: (1) societal development stages, (2) overlapping rationales, (3) the pluralism of control philosophies, (4) the freedom-control axis, (5) the totalitarianism-anarchy dichotomy, (6) the type of control and (7) government-media-audience relationships. In order to improve the adequacy of the theoretical approaches, this study proposes the "government-media-audience divergency" model. More specifically, it traces the progress of the implications, on both media and audience, of several control attitudes through four stages of development: traditional, transitional, modern and post-modern.

Basically the model postulates that media and audience are affected differently by governmental control attitudes. This implies two gradually divergent positions along the freedom-control axis. In other words, media freedom appears to be inversely proportional to audience freedom. It is suggested that this divergency will increase as societal development advances towards the post-modern stage, resulting in more power for the majority, in this case the audience, and less power for the media industries.

Evidence suggests that Canada, the United States and Great Britain are in the modern stage, which consists of three control attitudes: libertarian, libertarian-social libertarian and social libertarian. As indicated, government-media-audience relationships are at a turning point, as the needs and interests of the audience become more important. Thus community cablecasting, in general, is characterized, on the one hand, by an increase of media industry control, and, on the other, by an increase of audience freedom. In the next stage, the social responsibility concept will develop and become socialism gradually. Therefore, access to the media, especially community cablecasting, announces better days for the masses than in previous years of traditional broadcasting.

However, certain predictions of the government-media-audience divergency model will have to be tested in other studies. First, the model may not correspond exactly to control rationales in new or moderately developed societies. Second, the model will have to be tested in the post-modern stage. For instance, socialism may become much more democratic than expected and appear later than predicted. Therefore, the question of adequacy is still open.

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