COMMUNICATION POLICY AND 'CULTURAL IDENTITY' IN CANADA AND MEXICO

by

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ABSTRACT

Canada and Mexico conducted public debates on communication and culture during the years of 1981 to 1983. This thesis examines the "leading ideas" and arguments manifested via those "official forums" in which cultural identity was discussed through the questions of cultural dependency and marginality. This thesis also stresses the public hearing process itself as an important mechanism for public participation input in the communication-cultural policy process. The hearings examined here are: a) The Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee 1981-1982 (Applebaum-Hébert Committee), and b) Los Foros Nacionales de Consulta Popular 1982-1983 (National Forums for Popular Consultation).

By way of an analysis that draws upon materials from these two public hearings, this thesis 1) examines the perspectives emerging in both countries in regard to communication and culture; 2) stresses the role of the public hearing in the process of policy-formation wherein it constitutes not only the starting point but also an important channel for the manifestation of public concerns; and 3) examines the symmetry between the two countries' concerns over and reactions to American cultural penetration via the broadcast media and across their common borders with the United States.

RESUME

Entre 1981 et 1983, le Canada et le Mexique ont tous deux convoqué des commissions d'enquête publique sur la communication et la culture. Ce mémoire examine les "idées principales" et les arguments présentés devant ces "lieux officiels" où fut débattue l'identité culturelle en se référant aux questions de dépendance culturelle et de marginalité. Il examine aussi le procédé d'enquête publique lui-même en tant que mécanisme important de participation publique à la formation de politiques communicationnelles et culturelles. Les enquêtes étudiées sont: a) Le comité d'étude de la politique culturelle fédérale (la Commission Applebaum-Hérbert, 1981-1982) et b) Los Foros Nacionales de Consulta Popular (Comités Nationaux de Consultation Populaire, 1982-1983).

En se fondant sur une analyse inspirée de documents tirés de ces enquêtes publiques, ce mémoire: 1) examine les optiques qui en ressortent dans chaque pays en ce qui concerne la communication et la culture; 2) souligne le rôle de l'enquête publique dans le processus de formation de politiques où elle constitue non seulement le point de départ mais aussi une voie importante de manifestation de soucis publics; et 3) examine la symétrie entre les inquiétudes et les réactions de deux pays devant la pénétration culturelle américaine au moyens des médias de diffusion et devant le fait de leur frontière commune avec les États-Unis.

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PREFATORY NOTE

The present thesis attempts a cross-cultural comparison of Canada and Mexico at a particular moment in their communication policy's history. The comparison is based upon the most recent public hearings each country held on the question of communication and culture. (In Canada, the hearing conducted by the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee, known as the Applebaum-Hébert Commission, 1981-1982; and in Mexico Los Foros Nacionales de Consulta Popular, (National Forums for Popular Consultation), 1982-1983.[1]

During the hearings similar concerns were manifested in both countries on the question of cultural preservation and fostering of national identity through the media, in which broadcasting received special emphasis, since as neighbors of the United States, Canada and Mexico are subject to American cultural influence via the airwaves.

The arguments presented during both hearings are treated as representative of cultural and communicational goals and preoccupations in a particular point in time for both countries, where the issues of "national identity", cultural dependency and marginality, emerge as main points of discussion.

This thesis also addresses the analysis of the public hearing as central in policy-making since it constitutes a channel through which public participation is imputed into the policy- making process. The notion of public hearing is taken here as a form of inquiry, as suggested by Salter (1981), where inquiries are

mechanisms through which commissions and committees acquire the information they need in order to produce their policy proposals. The public hearing is one option they have for undertaking their inquiry. Therefore, all public hearings usually include inquiring purposes, but not all inquiries take the form of public hearings, or "official forums" as Crean (1976) calls them.

Policies are the general outcome of policy-making processes; they can be considered recommendations for public action produced by committees and commissions after a process of inquiry has taken place. These recommendations constitute policy proposals, which in turn are submitted to higher courts of decision, (Parliament or its legislative equivalent) in order to be adopted as public policies.

Public policies are generally expressed in policy documents which, according to Salter, are "the public face of public policy", but which as the products or endruns of a normal policy process are "systematically unrepresentative of the interactive, dynamic emerging nature of the policy process".[2]

Hence, the thesis aims to capture some of the policy-making dynamic nature by adopting the public hearing and the policy proposals as the focal point of the analysis rather than the static outcome of the document itself.

By examining 1) the Applebaum-Hébert hearing and 2) Los Foros Nacionales de Consulta Popular on communication policy and culture pertaining to two countries and to comparable topics mechanisms of

discussion, the thesis appears to extend Salter's and Slaco's initial undertaking in their analysis of public hearings in Canada.[3]

The "leading ideas" presented during the above mentioned hearings appear to be linked intellectually to the broader thematic of cultural identity (addressed in Chapter One) and to be focused practically through the mechanism of the public hearing (as an official forum for discussion) upon the narrower tasks of policy formation and communication and culture.

The content of the public hearings is discussed through the use of descriptive categories which were useful in selecting data within the range of available material (as explained in the Introduction). These categories are then used for the analysis of the two public hearings (presented separately in Chapters Two and Three). In Chapter Four the two hearing processes are reworked in order to develop the macro-analytical categories necessary for cross-cultural comparisons.

Thus, the Introduction of this thesis examines the history of the public hearing as a form of inquiry within the different communication policy processes of both countries as relates to broadcasting and culture. It also explores briefly the structure of broadcasting in both countries, and defines the categories of analysis developed for the study.

The first chapter provides a background to the notions of cultural and national identity as manifested from the point of view of particular Canadian and Mexican philosophies of culture.

The second and third chapters examine those

Canadian and Mexican public hearings chosen for the study and pinpoints the leading ideas expressed by the presenters on the subject of cultural identity, along with some specific policy proposals derived from the inquiries.

The fourth chapter compares the two public hearings as perceived through descriptive categories, interrelates these categories, and develops a macro-analytical schema for future analyses.

Notes

1. The Applebaum-Hébert Commission produced a report which was the result of the hearings on communication and culture and which was made public in November of 1982. As for Mexico, the public hearings were called in early 1983 and are likely to produce an evaluative report by mid-1984. The present analysis, however, uses their respective summaries of Briefs and Hearings (Canada 1981 and Mexico 1983).

2. Liora Salter. Lecture given on Communication and Policy-Making at McGill University, Nov. 2, 1983.

3. Liora Salter and Debra Slaco. Public Inquiries in Canada. Science Council of Canada, report no. 47, Ottawa, 1981.

INTRODUCTION

Defining the subject of study

Canada and Mexico share borders with the United States and both are affected by the political, economic, and cultural moves of their imperial neighbor. When broadcasting was first introduced, both countries felt the influence of American technology through imitation of American ideas and broadcasting standards in programming. This influence has had a lasting effect on the tastes of the Canadian and Mexican publics; to date both continue to be dependent on American cultural imports in broadcasting. Recently this "cultural dependency" and the "alternatives" proposed to reduce it were the subject of public hearings on communication and culture in Canada and Mexico, both undertaken with the express purpose of evaluating and redirecting public policy (1981-1983).[1]

Cultural dependency in Canada and Mexico is commonly associated with a sense of loss of national/cultural identity experienced by both countries. Cultural identity itself is conventionally linked to communication-cultural policy often in the form of a regulative ideal. This double-sided issue of cultural dependency-cultural identity has been of particular importance in these debates directed at broadcasting and broadcasting policy. Within the public-formation process, the public hearing itself is an important mechanism of public access to policy-discussion. From the point of view of the present thesis, documentation

from these public hearings on communication-culture constitute a valuable source for research into the public dimensions of policy formation. Thus, for the limited analytic aims of the thesis, the public hearing constitutes a valuable source of information in policy analysis since records of public hearings usually include a considerable amount of raw material which is filtered after the process of discussion has taken place and the policy has finally been formulated.

Thus, in the case of this thesis, the public hearing:
a) properly defines questions of method by determining the scope of the analysis and therefore suggesting ways in which to examine the material;
b) establishes the nature of the research, namely the examination of the material available (briefs and hearings) through the use of categories developed according to the subject of analysis, i.e. the "notion of cultural identity";
c) serves as a suitable vehicle for the comparison of two different broadcasting systems and cultural environments.

The scope of comparison, however, is limited in two significant ways: 1) there is emphasis upon the Mexican case due, in part, to the author's knowledge of the Mexican case, and, in part, to the fact that the public hearing chosen is the first full use of this mechanism in the area of communication and culture. By contrast, Canada is well known for its long tradition in the use of public inquiries and hearings in the matter of policy formation. The Canadian case is, therefore, crucial to providing a well-grounded perspective to compare and contrast the Mexican case. Mexico currently is coming to terms with the importance of public

participation and discussion outside the legislature and thus is beginning to get acquainted with the notion of the public hearing as a means for obtaining valuable information that previously was available only through private forms of inquiry.

This thesis does not undertake tasks other than the analysis of cultural concerns as expressed in the opinions of individuals and groups who presented their views during these public hearings. Because broadcasting was singled out by presenters from both countries as a vehicle of radical cultural influence stemming from foreign sources, the thesis focuses on testimony that concerns the preservation or imperilment of cultural identity through broadcasting. In analysing the content of these "testimonials," the thesis adopts three approaches:

1) An approach pertaining to "nativist" philosophies of culture in order to trace similar concerns over communication and culture in both countries.

2) A structural approach aimed at describing the form, pattern and mandate of public hearings in each country in order to place their claims into an appropriate context of possible influence over communication policy.

3) A methodological approach in which the categories developed for the analysis are justified and explained.

The first perspective is concerned with the elaboration of the notion of cultural identity and its preservation as that is expressed through philosophies of culture; the second perspective looks at how individuals, groups, and associations have conceptualized the problem and at the proposals they have made in order to translate their concerns

into concrete policy alternatives; and the third perspective approaches the subject of study, namely the hearings, by selecting the categories which will appropriately describe and explain the issues raised during the analysis.

1) Why Canada and Mexico? The philosophical approach

The question of 'cultural identity' and broadcasting

Both Canada and Mexico have consistently manifested concerns over the defense of their cultural identity vis-á-vis North American cultural products. As border neighbors of the U.S., both nations are heavily influenced by American communication media, especially broadcasting. Proximity and a history of accomodating trade and communication policies have allowed a largely unimpeded cross-border flow of information.

Although cultural penetration may often be more economic than social in nature, concern over cultural identity has been strong enough to permeate proposals for communications policies in both countries.

The relationship between the loss of cultural identity and the communication media is clear in that nations consume whichever cultural products are presented by their media and that in some cases such cultural products do not correspond to the society in question.

In the case of Canada and Mexico, a great percentage of their broadcast programming has its origins in the United States. This fact is independent of the state of technology

in either country. Furthermore, the relationship can be a direct one: technology can expand the impact of cultural penetration instead of diminishing it. As Melody, Salter, and Heyer put it:

> Today, Canada finds itself in the anomolous position of being the world's most modern developing country. It is an advanced industrial society, pioneering in the development of telecommunications technologies - space-biased technologies that encourage the extension of empires. But it also has the problems of developing nations. Its history has been one of dependency upon the British and American empires. The dominant forces influencing the course of direction of the Canadian economy are the United States economic policy and the decisions of multinational corporations that control Canada's branch plant economy. Canada continues to operate primarily as a supplier of natural resources at the margin of the world economic system.[2]

The influence that the U.S. exercises on both Canada and Mexico is an outcome of the economic and political power it posseses. Though it is now aided by the media, imperialistic countries have exercised foreign cultural influence before: Great Britain and France in the case of Canada, and Spain and France in the case of Mexico.

As the Mexican thinker Leopoldo Zea points out, Latin America has borrowed foreign models because foreign models were thought to represent a superior culture. Frequently, however, such models could not be adapted to the native reality. Thus Mexico remains anxious to find its autonomous cultural identity, and on the other hand, the search for nationhood has been related to the painful recognition that other cultures are better than the native one, with the consequent success of foreign models. Therefore, because

culture and nationhood are functions of social and economic progress, as Zea points out, the Mexican nation ceased looking for models of its own. This state of affairs will not change and a true philosophy of culture will not emerge until some basic economic problems of underdevelopment can be solved.

In a sense, to admire others is to begin to be able to recognize one's own lacks, but awareness of limitations can also encourage a fruitful search for identity. Such questioning can be transformed into an anguished cry, a lament, an illusion that everything is determined by fate. Thus, the Canadian philosopher George Grant stated:

> To use the language of fate is to assert that all human beings come into a world they did not choose and live their lives within a universe they did not make. If one speaks in this way, one is often accused either of being pessimistic or of holding a tragic view of life. Neither of these accusations is correct (...) It is quite possible to use the word 'fate', and to think that nature is good, and not contradict oneself. It is in my opinion a sensible way to talk about events, though obviously it is far from the liberal dogmas within which most people are taught to think.

Whether as a question of fate or history, Canada and Mexico exhibit parallel struggles to adopt the basic technology of broadcast media from the U.S. while attempting to adapt the uses to more indigenous ends. The date of the introduction of broadcasting technology in both countries show that:

> "regular radio broadcasting began in Canada, as it did in the United States in 1919 when station XWA in Montreal received a licence to broadcast",

Just two years later, in 1921, Dr Adolfo Gómez Fernández used radio to broadcast from Mexico City for the first time.[5] Actually, it was Sandal S. Hodges, colonel of the U.S. army who convinced Raúl Azcárraga Vidaurreta (from the Azcárraga family that to this day monopolizes commercial broadcasting in Mexico) of the convenience of installing a radio station in Mexico. Azcárraga then went to the United States to receive radio training and founded the "Casa del Radio" in 1923, the same year in which the Mexican government began licencing commercial radio stations.[6]

In Canada, during the early twenties, the development of broadcasting was beginning to speed up: "By 1923 (in Canada), sixty-two private commercial broadcasting licences had been issued. As early as 1925 many Canadians had begun to be concerned over the cultural effects of the predominant use that was being made of foreign entertainment programming on Canadian stations."[7]

In Mexico, the American company RCA, which had introduced and distributed records, phonographs and radios, served as an official aid to Azcárraga for the creation of the first commercial radio station XEW in 1934, which was automatically affiliated with NBC. In 1938, with the introduction of radio station XEQ, CBS started to compete with NBC in Mexico, but by 1945 both CBS and NBC abandoned their plans in order to devote themselves to the marketing of the newly introduced medium of television.[8]

Mexico officially initiated its television broadcasts in 1950, whereas "the first Canadian television station CBFT in Montreal went on the air on September 6, 1952 (...) although Canadians first exposure to television was through

transborder reception of American broadcasting services which began to operate earlier than Canadian television stations".[9]

In spite of national programming produced in both Canada and Mexico, American influence is difficult to avoid. Moreover, the commercialization of broadcasting encouraged the importation of American programming, firstly, because viewers received the programming over the air anyway, and, secondly, because buying costs were lower than production costs. The difference in language, as in the case of Mexico mattered little: this country developed a high quality "dubbing system" which translates foreign material into Spanish.

The Canadian and Mexican broadcasting systems are characterized by the interplay of a public and a private sector, in sharp contrast to the United States. In Canada the public sector is constituted primarily by the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), and in Mexico mainly by Radio México, Televisión Rural de México, and channel 13 which are government-owned radio and television stations.

The private sector plays an important role in the overall broadcasting performance of the two countries, especially in Mexico where it is responsible for more than 70% of the total broadcasting production, whereas the public sector is left with the task of producing culture and responding to other needs.

In both countries, the private sector was primarily responsible for the introduction of foreign commercial programming, and in both countries, the public sector has essentially followed the trend with few effective attempts to resist it. The following tables show the relationship between those two broadcasting systems in terms of size and

performance.

Percentages of viewing time devoted to imported programming, as well as the number of hours used to broadcast it, are significant both in Canada and Mexico, regardless of the difference in coverage and number of stations existing to date.

Table 1

Total of broadcasting stations in Canada and Mexico by type.

	AM	FM	TV	SW	NT	CANCON	TOTAL
CDN	747	624	1229	0	51	240	2891
MEX	656	197	128	21	0	0	854

Sources:
CRTC 1981-82 Annual Report
and
Cámara Nacional de la Industria de la Radio y la Televisión.

Table 2

Percentage of distribution of viewing time

Program Category	Canadian	Foreign	Total
ENGLISH			
News	13.16	1.09	14.25
Current affairs	1.93	0.49	2.43
Information	1.05	0.11	1.16
Sports	5.47	1.14	6.61
Entertainment	8.72	66.18	74.90
Other	0.20	0.46	0.66
Total	30.53	69.47	100.00
FRENCH			
News	14.31	0.00	14.31
Current affairs	4.04	0.00	4.04
Information	0.78	0.00	0.78
Sports	4.70	0.00	4.70
Entertainment	30.28	45.72	75.99
Other	0.09	0.08	0.17
Total	54.20	45.80	100.00

Source:
Special Report on Broadcasting 1968-78
and CRTC Research Directorate, television viewing patterns during prime time.

Table 3

Programming categories of "Televisión de la República Mexicana" Channel 13

(number of braodcast hours using the national federal microwave network)

	Hours 1981	Total (%)	Hours 1982	Total (%)
Entertainment	1477h13m	23.21	1062h56m	16.87
News	1449h25m	23.25	1355h11m	21.52
Cultural affairs	752h17m	12.07	743h26m	11.80
Education	2107h14m	33.80	2705h25m	42.95
Others	478h26m	7.67	432h13m	6.86
Total	6234h35m	100.00	6299h11m	100.00

Source: Departamento de programación y continuidad. Dirección de Televisión de la República Mexicana.

Table 1 shows the differences in size between the two broadcasting systems. It should be stressed that lack of technology has placed Mexico at a disadvantage since the number of stations barely covers its extensive territory.

Table 2 shows clearly the preference of Canadian viewers for foreign entertainment programming, while Table 3 shows the efforts of government-owned Mexican television stations to produce educational programming even though cultural affairs programming receives fewer hours of broadcast time than entertainment programming. It is important to note, however, that a large percentage of entertainment programming is foreign in origin. Mexican government official data is unfortunately unavailable on this matter.

As shown in the tables above, the relationship between the size and development of the broadcasting system and dependency upon foreign cultural products is unclear: communication technology should mean autonomy in the production of native material; however, at least in the case of Canada, this does not seem to be the case, and with respect to Mexico, this country depends not only technologically but culturally on the United States.

Future policy-making attempts should assess this question, as Paul Audley points out:

> (...) because the role of the broadcasting system is so central to any

> strategy for cultural development in Canada or for the expansion of the cultural identity of Canadians, a successful broadcasting policy focused on clearly-stated cultural goals is of primary importance to Canadian cultural policy.[10]

Canada has proven successful in its quest for telecommunications advances, yet its relationship with the United States is still perceived to be a dependent one. As for Mexico, its dependency upon American technology and culture is more acute than ever. Nevertheless, the same import can serve as an instrument to transform and sustain the characteristics of each society's uniqueness.[11] Therefore, technological dependency should no longer be associated with cultural and developmental goals.

2) Why public hearings? The structural approach

Role and structure of public hearings in Canada and Mexico.

Canada has a long tradition of public inquiries as a substantial part of its policy-making process. Some of them take the form of public hearings though most of them can, generally, be considered as inquiries. The main characteristic of an inquiry is that it involves assessment of policy and the opportunity for participation.

A public hearing requires representation from the public As a form of inquiry, the public hearing is a mechanism within reach of the members of a commission or committee for the acquisition of valuable information to be inputed into the policy-discussion process. However, participants to

public hearings are not always representative of the public at large. As a phenomenon already acknowledged by Salter and Slaco (1981), in hearings where public input is required, the degree of participation can vary, the same people associated with the subject under discussion tend to form a well known group of participants.[12] But in spite of the eventual formation of these closed groups, they convey information and raise questions that could have been overlooked when policy-making occurs behind closed doors. The calling of a public hearing implies a mandate to include direct public participation in the policy-making process, usually because of the complex nature of the issue involved.

One can distinguish different types of inquiries depending on the nature of their form, pattern, and mandate. For example, in Canada, some inquiries are instituted by Royal Commissions, others become part of the everyday practice of regulatory agencies, and so on. In general, however, most inquiries lead to policy recommendations or proposals. It should be pointed out, though, that inquiries do not seem to follow any particular pattern. Their procedures and forms appear to be dictated by the subject(s) under study. The public hearing has been a standard procedure for gathering information in the policy-making process regarding broadcasting, dating back to the Aird and the Massey-Lévesque Commissions, which are the immediate predecesors of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee which, in 1981, was appointed for that same task.

The Massey-Lévesque Commission was created by mandate as a Royal Commission, and formally called for an inquiry. The FCPRC was mandated by the Minister of Communications and

chose to conduct a series of public hearings based on written submissions which were to be further examined and discussed.

Table 4

Main commissions to deal with broadcasting in the history of communications policy in Canada

1. Aird Commission (1928).
2. Special Parliamentary Committee on Radio Broadcasting (1932).
3. The Massey-Lévesque Commission (1949-51).*
4. The Fowler Commission (1955).
5. The Glassco Commission (1960).
6. The "Troika" Commission (1963).
7. The Advisory Committee (1964).
8. The Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. (1981-82).*

* These are the two main Commissions to have given emphasis to cultural policy matters.

The use of inquiries in policy-making in Mexico has its own characteristics. Most inquiries are conducted behind closed doors by members of the legislature, and public hearings as chosen forms of inquiries are not common.

Most inquiries are performed by commissioners or members of appointed committees who undertake private investigations and hand in their reports, e.g. the informal Presidential commission given to intellectual Salvador Novo (see Table 5). Where more formal procedures are required, like elaboration

of Acts and Amendments, the report is submitted for discussion to a higher court (Cámara de Senadores ó Diputados).

Basically, there are two different kinds of commissions:
a) one whose mandate comes from the legislature, that is, a commission formed by members of the legislative power, charged with an investigation, and which must report to the same house of representatives, or
b) one whose mandate comes directly from the President of the Republic whose members are selected from different sectors of society (usually involved with the issue) to discuss a problem and report to the President.

The following table provides a basic overview of crucial policy-making examples on the basis of the nature of the commissions appointed and depicts their relation to broadcasting and cultural policy discussion.*

Table 5

Commissions to Undertake Tasks on Communication Policy in Mexico

1. President Miguel Alemán commissions intellectual Salvador Novo to examine a Mexican alternative to the newly introduced medium of television, in order to ensure its appropriate use for the country (informal commission) (1948)*.

2. Commission on the elaboration of the Mexican Broadcasting Act and the creation of the National Broadcasting Council (formal commission) (1958-1960).

3. Commission to amend the content regulations of the Broadcasting Act (formal commission) (1970-72).

4. President López Portillo mandates the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a series of public hearings to discuss a recently amended article to the Constitution which guarantees the right to inform/be informed in Mexico (formal commission) (1978-1980)*.

5. President De la Madrid mandates a popular consultation aimed at discussing a National Development Plan which includes the elaboration of a new communication policy (formal convocation) (1983)*.

The last two commissions resulted in wide public participation. The first one did not examine questions of culture and communication directly, but concentrated more on the political and legal implications of the incorporation of a right to inform/be informed into the Bill of Rights of the Mexican Constitution. The second commission contemplated the wider scenario of media and culture.

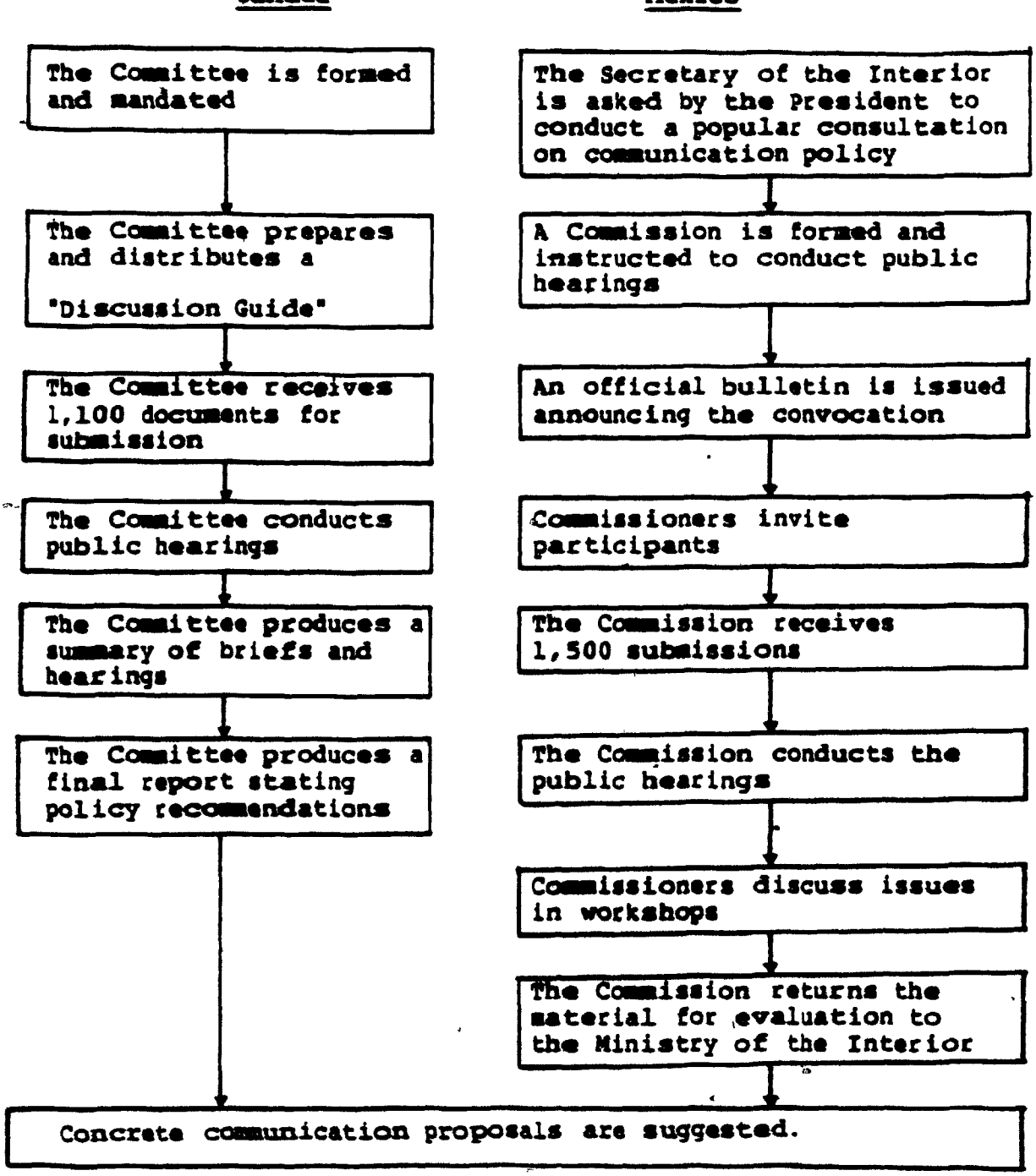
On the basis of the most recent inquiries which resulted in public hearings, that is, the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee of Canada (1981-82), and the public convocation for popular consultation in Mexico (1983), the structure of the procedures involved is as follows: both had a mandate to undertake a review of the state of communication and culture in their respective countries, and both gave special consideration to the question of broadcasting. The

Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee was also asked to issue a final report stating specific policy recommendations, and in the case of Mexico, the members of the committee were instructed to conduct the hearings and provide the Ministry of the Interior with further details on the discussion though no final report has been produced to date.

Both inquiries started on the basis of written submissions to be presented during the public hearings. The Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee (FCPRC) consisting of 20 members received up to 1,100 documents for consideration. The Mexican Committee consisting of 4 members coordinating the areas of radio, television, press and film, organized the presentation of over 1500 submissions.

The FCPRC presided over hearings in 18 Canadian cities, while the Mexican committee split itself into 4 important urban centers in which the presentations were heard. While the Canadian committee obviously travelled a lot more, and the Mexican committee was constrained by a larger bureaucratic apparatus in charge of making everyone meet in a single place, the procedural structure of the two inquiries followed a similar pattern:

Diagram No. 1
Structure of the Procedure of the Canadian and Mexican Hearings.



3) The examination of public hearings in Canada and Mexico. The methodological approach

Analytical categories developed for the thesis.

The analysis of the Canadian and Mexican public hearings is done in terms of the briefs presented before the committees. Although the policy-making process covers much more than the submission of a presentation, this thesis focuses on the issues examined during the hearings and therefore on the public participatory aspect of policy.

With the purpose of analyzing the material available, five categories were developed after careful readings of the briefs and hearings. These categories are by no means exhaustive, they are only meant to be useful to the researcher in selecting the material for examination. The above mentioned process helped in bringing to the surface important qualitative data. It helped in determining what Canada and Mexico have in common in terms of concerns manifested during the public hearings, but they were useful as well in providing contrasts and differences.

Thus, the categories are nothing more than a division of the main subjects raised during the hearings, and can be considered descriptive but valuable for the analysis. The subjects are then broken down into primary arguments or "leading ideas". Most of these are taken directly from the presentations themselves, others are paraphrasings of a

combination of arguments sharing a common concern.

Table 6
Themes involved and number of arguments presented.*

Theme	Number of arguments: Canada	Mexico
A) New communication technologies and availability of information	6	4
B) Freedom of communication (freedom of speech;freedom to inform/be informed)	6	5
C) The economics of the broadcasting industry	3	4
D) Roles of comm. institutions	2	1
E) Fostering of national identity and cultural sovereignty	7	6

* The numbers represent the number of arguments related to a given theme. Although any number of people may have intervened on a given theme, they always repeated the same limited number of arguments.

The importance of these hearings resided in the fact that many groups, such as representatives of isolated communities, other than those directly involved, i.e. broadcasters, had the opportunity to talk about media-related matters. Moreover, to a certain extent, the question of American cultural influence was present in a majority of

arguments and at every level, from the situation of the broadcasting trade-market to the need for an increase in national productions in order to foster cultural identity. (The issues of Canadian and Mexican proximity to the U.S) and of American influence were set forth as important parameters from which the comparison between the two countries became possible.

Finally, the findings of this study into public hearings are important enough to allow us to acknowledge not only the differences but also some of the coinciding cultural and communication perspectives of these countries as well.

The next chapter provides the reader with material found in the works of Mexican and Canadian philosophers of culture and dealing with the questions of cultural identity and nationality. This material makes clear that concern over national identity was present in both cultures long before its current re-emergence within the framework of recent policy discussions. It will also resurface in chapters 3 and 4 through the opinions of presenters to the hearings expressing their concern on the subject and also when "the leading ideas" posed during the Canadian and Mexican hearings are further examined.

Notes

1. The two public hearings which will be analyzed hereafter are: the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee, also known as the Applebaum-Hébert Commission (Canada 1980-81), and the Foros Nacionales de Consulta Popular (Mexico 1983).

2. William Melody, Liora Salter and Paul Heyer. Culture, Communication and Dependency. The tradition of H.A. Innis, Norwood, New Jersey: Albex Publishing Corporation, 1981, p. 11.

3. George Grant. Technology and Empire. Toronto: House of Anansi, 1969, p. 63.

4. Paul Audley. Canada's Cultural Industries: Broadcasting, Publishing, Records and Film. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, publishers in association with the Canadian Institute for Economic Policy, 1983, p. 183.

5. Fátima Fernández Christlieb, "La Industria de la Radio y la Televisión," in Revista Nueva Politica, vol. 1, no. 3, Jul-Sept. 1976, p. 238.

6. Ibid., p. 238.

7. Paul Audley. Canada's Cultural Industries. Broadcasting, Publishing, Records and Film. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, publishers in association with the Canadian Institute for Economic Policy, p. 183.

8. Fátima Fernández Christlieb, "La Industria de la Radio y la Televisión," in Revista Nueva Politica, vol. 1, no. 3, Jul-Sept. 1976, p. 244.

9. Paul Audley. Canada's Cultural Industries. Broadcasting, Publishing, Records and Film. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, publishers in association with the Canadian Institute for Economic Policy, p. 253.

10. Ibid., p. 332.

11. Solomon Lipp interpreting Leopoldo Zea. Leopoldo Zea: From Mexicanidad to a Philosophy of History. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980, p. 10.

12. Liora Salter and Debra Slaco. Public Inquiries in Canada. Science Council of Canada, report no. 47, Ottawa, 1981, pp. 199-208.

CHAPTER ONE

The notion of "cultural identity" in Canada and Mexico

This chapter explores the notion of "cultural identity" as defined by Canadian and Mexican scholars and writers from the point of view of their respective philosophies of culture.

During the present analysis of the cultural identity concept, several notions seem to arise as importantly related, namely those of cultural expression, nationality, and national sentiment. Their definition varies according to the position and particular philosophy of culture involved.

Nevertheless, independently of the conceptualization attempts of Canadian and Mexican philosophers and writers, their examination of the "cultural identity" notion seems to convey the discussion of two main issues: cultural dependency and marginality, where strong references are frequently made to the American cultural pressure [Grant, 1969, 1970; Zea, 1968, 1974; Crean, 1976; Paz, 1967; Audley, 1983].

Canadian and Mexican attempts to define cultural identity have recently regained importance as part of the policy-discussion processes of 1981-83 in which subjects such as cultural penetration and cultural self-expression were brought up again during the Canadian and Mexican hearings, and particular policy proposals were made. It was made clear that cultural expression should become an essential part of any nation's cultural policy. Yet, those two terms are seldom defined. It is obvious that each country will use

different parameters to evaluate how this particular goal is achieved. For the purpose of this work, however, culture as well as cultural expression will be referred to as the basic ingredients of the notion of cultural identity. As Paul Audley points out:

> (...) our culture is expressed not just in works of art or entertainment, but in all forms of expression that reflect attitudes, opinions, values and ideas, and in information and analysis concerning the present as well as the past. Just as an awareness of our collective past is an essential component of cultural identity, so too is an awareness of what is happening now.[1]

Thus, if a given culture and cultural expression are the basic ingredients of a distinctive identity, an awareness of our collective past and future are the procedures to preserve it. Solomon Lipp has stated:

> The search for identity, the attempt to define oneself - the result of the individual's sense of alienation - is not restricted to contemporary man alone; nor is it exclusively peculiar to the period of anguished questioning which follows the Second World War. It can also be applied to national groups, if not an entire continent.[2]

Canada and Mexico share aspects of their past with the U.S. in quite different ways. For Mexico, the same story has been ongoing: its destiny was once built by mother Spain and now by the "empire of the North". For Canada, a split nation which used to look back either to the British Empire or to France, it is also time to create its own destiny while the United States looks over its shoulder. In both cases there are economic factors forcing the nations to accept what might

be called 'powerful suggestions'. This is not to say, however, that only economic improvements can bring the situation of these countries to consciousness. According to the Mexican Leopoldo Zea, it is precisely when dependency relations become self-conscious that an authentic philosophy of culture can emerge. It is needless to point out the importance of this statement to the formation of a true notion of cultural identity.

For both Canada and Mexico, the search for nationalism is part of their history and is therefore integral to their future development. It is not clear how long this feeling has been alive, nor how one could pinpoint the exact moment in time when it appears. This feeling can certainly be related to the birth of a country as a nation but it can also be related to the process by which a country begins to search for the optimum use of its resources. A concern over resources and their optimum use is usually associated with the discovery or the elaboration of distinct cultural goals. It is for this reason, therefore, that the emergence of national consciousness is often associated with the introduction of technology. Following this line of thought, it is clear that the role of the media needs to be explained in the process of national consciousness formation for not only are the communication media a basic technology but they also carry the lifeblood of society: information.

From the time communication technology flourished in the U.S., American culture started to flow rapidly across borders. Thus, communication technologies have frequently been perceived as the key to the question of cultural

intervention. Although politically independent, Canada and Mexico have repeatedly adopted foreign (American) policies and formulas. It appears as if adopting American standards would guarantee economic success, and Canada and Mexico opted for competition on the same grounds as the U.S. though neither could avoid being affected by the strong influence of American culture.

With the rapid growth of the U.S. during the nineteenth century, Canada and Mexico started to become dependent on American technological and industrial conquests. At that point such influence was impossible to resist for almost everything required American equipment, i.e. telegraph, telephone, radio, etc., and operating standards which were established in the U.S. and then adopted by Canada and Mexico.

The adoption of communication technologies was important to Canada which rapidly realized their importance in linking a vast territory. Canada thus adopted measures not only to govern the importation of technology but also to develop its own telecommunications system itself. Even now Canada remains immersed in a great paradox: despite its advances in the field, it is still dependent on the United States as regards communication contents. As Williams, Salter and Heyer put it:

> Although at the frontier of telecommunications technology, Canada has been, and continues to be a major victim of the consequences of space-based technology. Communication technology has permitted the Canadian communications environment to be permeated by the United States content. Canada is already several steps down the road toward

cultural colonization via communications.[3]

If Canada is dependent on the United States, it is in part because it has borrowed American production patterns and must now conform to them. It must, in addition, increase its efforts to produce national programming, but being unable to meet its own needs, it imports American material. Because Mexico did not have the resources to improve its technology, it depends in a more "primitive" way on American imports. Either way the United States cultural export has been filling the programming charts of Canadian and Mexican stations for over twenty five years, and the mixture of cultures has led to interesting results. Even though it can be enriching, the threat of the mixture of cultures must not be underestimated. It enriches the array of experiences of people pertaining to a nation, but can minimize the opportunities for native cultural expression.

Both George Grant and Octavio Paz criticize the tendencies of Canada and Mexico to devote themselves to the wills of other empires which, according to Grant, in Canada is the consequence of the alliance into technology. It is not easy to share a border with a powerful economic empire whose technological developments are within easy reach of Canadians. To share the U.S. power is to share the supremacy of the West. For Mexico, Paz says, it has been only a matter of changing masters: yesterday Mexico obeyed Spain, now it turns to the United States. The submission of Mexicans to foreigners is as natural as the blood that flows through their veins. It is this cry for autonomy in the

philosophers' voice which is almost indistinguishable from one country to the other, and which is yet permeated by a culture and as well as by those accidents called 'circumstances in history'. As Grant puts it:

> The supremacy of the American empire in the western world was important for Canada not only in the geographic and economic senses that our nation had to try to exist in the very presence of the empire, but in the much profounder sense that the dominance of the United States is identified with the unequivocal victory of the progressive spirit in the West. The older empire had some residual traditions from before the age of progress - the French more, the British less. The United States is the only society that has none. The American supremacy is identified with the belief that questions of human good are to be solved by technology; that the most important human activity is the pursuit of those sciences which issue in the conquest of human and non-human nature.[4]

The survival of the dependency pattern is rooted in history. To be independent in this sense will be to murder history, and to be able to create a present powerful enough to transcend others; but one cannot murder one's own past unless one is ready to define and accept one's real identity.

As Octavio Paz says:

> The history of Mexico is the history of man seeking his parentage, his origins. He has been influenced at one time or another by France, Spain, the United States and the militant indigenists of his own country, and he crosses history like a jade comet, now and then giving off flashes of lightining. What is he pursuing in his eccentric course? He wants to go back beyond the catastrophe he suffered: he wants to be a sun again, to return to the centre of that life from which he was separated one day. (Was that day the Conquest? Independence?) Our

> solitude has the same roots as religious feelings. It is a form of orphanhood, an obscure awareness that we have been torn from the All, and an ardent search: a flight and a return, an effort to re-establish the bonds that unite us with the universe.[5]

It is the overall structure of thought of the two philosophers which conveys a sense of predestination. For them, the relationship between their countries and the 'empire' has always been an unbalanced one, with Canada and Mexico in a position of inferiority in relation to the United States.

The Canadian position is that of the friendly partner, or perhaps more than that: Canada is like the relative that has inherited wealth from his rich cousin; they belong to the same family because they both share the same roots although their goals in life have been different. Nevertheless, still related, the rich cousin keeps trying to protect his investments in what he has lent the other, because the inheritance turned out to be a simple loan. As George Grant says:

> Nevertheless, below the surface the movement towards integration continues. The immediate reason for this is our position in the empire. We are not in that empire as are the exploited colonies of South America, but rather with the intimacy of a younger brother status. We have all the advantages of that empire, the wealth which pours in from all over the world, the technology which comes to us through the multinational corporations. Yet, because we have formal political independence, we can keep out of some of the dirty work necessary to that empire (...) Like most other human beings, Canadians want it both ways. We want through formal nationalism to escape the disadvantages

> of the American empire (...) The distinction will surely be minimal between two nations which share a continent and a language especially when the smaller of the two has welcomed with open arms the chief instruments of its stronger brother - the corporations.[6]

The Mexican case is different because this country is not related to the American empire in any way. Consequently, even though Mexico resists it, their relationship of dominator and dominated is more evident.

It is as important as it is painful to admit dependency. For Grant, Canada's younger brother status can impede the achievement of autonomy, but it is better than nothing. Canada can still participate in the alliance and receive the benefits of it in return. The Mexican philosopher Octavio Paz is more sarcastic. For him the pain of his people can easily be translated into a matter of benefit. To be exploited is to learn gradually the weaknesses of one's exploiter. Mexicans can certainly distinguish themselves from North Americans. Unlike Canadians, the people of Mexico can easily contrast their culture with the imperialistic culture; it is different although consciously integrated. In the following passage Paz articulates the difference in character between Americans (or what Mexicans call North Americans) and Mexicans, and he distinctly makes the dependency relation clear. Mexico is dependent because historically it has been dependent, and seems to enjoy it.

> And our differences do not end there. The North Americans are credulous and we are believers; they love fairy tales and detective stories and we love myths and legends. The Mexican tells lies because he delights in fantasy, or because he is

> desperate, or because he wants to rise above the sordid facts of his life, the North American does not tell lies but he substitutes social truth for the real truth, which is always disagreeable. We get drunk in order to confess; they get drunk in order to forget. They are optimists and we are nihilists - except that our nihilism is not intellectual but instinctive, and therefore irrefutable. We are suspicious and they are trusting. We are sorrowful and sarcastic and they are happy and full of jokes. North Americans want to understand and we want to contemplate. They are activists and we are quietists, we enjoy our wounds and they enjoy their inventions.[7]

In any case, the North American is someone to look up to either with envy or despair. It is hard enough to depend economically on others, or to glance across the fence just to see what one is missing. But this is the wound that can make us realize that we are not the ones who can provide the elements necessary to produce in both nations a durable identity.

Octavio Paz continues to examine the unsettled identity of his country and explains that part of the reason that Mexico is still dependent on foreign patterns is that foreign patterns have traditionally been imposed on Mexicans and the country feels unable to produce its own.

> In a certain sense the history of Mexico, like that of every Mexican, is a struggle between the forms and formulas that have been imposed on us and the explosions with which our individuality avenges itself. Form has rarely been an original creation, an equilibrium arrived at through our instincts and desires rather than at their expense. On the contrary, our moral and juridical forms often conflict with our nature, preventing us from expressing ourselves and frustrating our true wishes.[8]

Out of this struggle a sentiment of national identity had to grow in Mexico. Its birth was the product of a Mexican sense of inferiority and of the nationalistic efforts of a State debating with itself the consequences of cosmopolitanism which, during revolutionary times, seemed to be the only way forward for the Mexican nation.

> (...) it is wise to bear in mind that throughout the nineteenth century cosmopolitanism was a greater cultural force than nationalism, not only as the result of the continual interest of western nations in exploiting Mexico, but also as the manifestation of the Mexican's tendency to look to Europe and the United States as models.[9]

Hence, the development of a national sense of cultural identity in Mexico has traditionally been related to political struggle, when the country has been forced to re-direct its steps towards autonomy. Now progress seems to be taking place, as suggested by the analysis of the hearings on communication and culture. If compelling results are achieved in the future, this could mean a great advance in the nation's achievement of autonomy. Yet, the real formation of a cultural identity is not complete unless the feelings of belonging and communitarian sentiment are examined.

As for Canada, it has long debated nationalistic feelings, cultural roots and a sense of belonging. The British and the French presence left behind opposing cultural traditions, and, consequenlty, some groups in Canada are still divided. Nevertheless, for the rest of the world, Canada appears to be a solid, unified entity. As Herschel

Hardin puts it:

> Canada exists, but is invisible. There must be something wrong then with the way we look at ourselves.[10]

A double value is inherent in all efforts to achieve cultural identity: there is the quest for general values, and universal ideas, but there is also a need for personal identity. The search for cultural identity is one that unifies us with the rest of humanity while at the same time making us distinct from the mass of mankind. The process involves a thorough examination of our sense of history and reality. Finding a concrete identity would imply finding a concrete way to 'live' the universal values that the concept aims for. Perhaps the problem resides precisely in that one wants to achieve a concrete undivided image of national belonging without realizing the dynamics involved in the notion of cultural identity itself.

As Octavio Paz points out:

> The question implies a concept of the Mexican [or Canadian as the case might be] as a distinctive individual, a concept that makes up the second theme of this projected Mexican philosophy. We have never succeeded in creating a form that would express our individuality. As a result "Mexicanism" has never been identifiable with any specific form or tendency: it has always veered from one universal project to another, all of them foreign to our nature and all of them useless to our present crisis. Mexicanism is a way of not being ourselves, a way of life that is not our own. Sometimes it is a mask; sometimes it is a sudden determination to find ourselves, to gash open our breasts in order to release our true and most secret voices.[11]

Thus, for Mexicans as well as for Canadians, the crisis of identity is a plea for shared principles that are not foreign in nature. The desire for self-expression has always been adequately grasped by the intellectuals, who in turn frequently call for preservation of national cultural products against the infiltration of alien cultural imports. In any case, the 'intelligentsia' has its own internal fights about how to achieve cultural identity and debates over whether it has been achieved or not. Among Canadians as well as Mexicans, authors refute what other conclude; and the question of identity seems to be an ongoing philosophical struggle.

Herschel Hardin says of George Grant:

> (...) we are led to the conclusion that the Canadian identity does not exist any more. We don't any longer, identify as Canadians, or at least we're not supposed to. So funeral rites are in order, and many years ago were in fact prepared and delivered by the Reverend George Grant in his celebrated book Lament for a Nation. But Canada is alive and kicking as usual. And Canadians are as anti-American and nationalist as ever. Lament for a Nation is now a museum piece, valuable in insight but eclipsed by events. The picture of Canadians as an identifiably unique counterrevolutionary people, to the right of the United States, has now been overshadowed by a self-image on the left. Lipset suggests that in the long run this may "contribute strongly to eliminating the relatively small differences between the values of the two countries" for a democratic leftist ideology is synonymous with the social content of Americanism.[12]

As a counterpart, Octavio Paz presents Samuel Ramos' attempts to define the Mexican character:

> The majority of its observations are still valid, and the central idea - that the Mexican hides himself when he expresses himself, his words and gestures are almost always masks - is as true as ever. Ramos has given us an extremely penetrating description of the attitudes that make each one of us a closed, inaccessible being.[13] (My underlining)

Ramos used a psychological approach to the problem of cultural identity, whereas the ideas of Leopoldo Zea and Edmundo O'Gorman are more universal than particular in nature; they can approapriately be applied to Canada as well as to Mexico. O'Gorman defines Mexican cultural characteristics as part of a higher identity namely America, while Zea considers the main focus to be the unequal, unbalanced relationship between dependent countries and imperial powers. Thus for Zea the main concern would be not only how to achieve cultural identity but also how to preserve it:

> Zea has studied American alienation but although alienation is more basic to our character than our individual traits, it is now a condition shared by all men. We Mexicans have always lived on the periphery of history. Now the center or nucleus of world society has disintegrated and everyone - including the European and the North American - is a peripheral being. We are all living on the margin because there is no longer any center.[14]

The process of cultural identity contains inherent factors, one of which is consciousness of the position one occupies in relation to other nations, that is, the possible awareness of marginalization in which domestic and foreign interests engage in symbolic relationships.

Despite the fact that there is some kind of interdependency among nations that share partnerships, friendships or alliances, links should not change the status of independence and/or cultural identity. In some instances, however, such as the case of Mexico, nations depend upon other nations to define their independence and cultural differentiation. Let us remember that during the various internal political struggles of Mexico, successive governments invariably looked for North American approval in order to consolidate political or economic changes.

It has been widely agreed that Mexico forged its nationhood on the basis of values and guidelines imposed from abroad:

> It is the colonial thesis of its history that Mexico remains dependent upon foreign life at the intellectual as well as the popular levels. Whether the foreign party involved is Spain, France or the United States, the inference is the same: the Mexican expression is suppressed or destroyed. The evidence supports some dark pages of Mexico's history, while the country's efforts to overcome the foreign yoke illuminate some of the brighter pages. The concern of intellectuals and political leaders to diminish foreign influence has occasioned an official soul-searching whose warnings are aimed at reinforcing mass appeal.[15]

Nevertheless, history is not responsible for the cultural changes that time has operated upon Mexican nationhood. As in the case of other countries, nationality is shaped in dramatic and profound ways through economic and technological influences which frequently arise from the internal developments of more advanced societies such as the United States. Foreign models are thus responsible for the

core social modifications at such levels as technological infrastructures and modern ways of thinking.

Two concepts can be opposed to the issue of national achievement, namely internationalism and continentalism. They constitute approaches that can often be associated with a rationalization of unachieved nationalism, for they represent a justification of the unsolved problem of cultural identity which itself frequently refers to the symbolic world-wide alliance only beneficial to the West and which is more economic than cultural in nature. Continentalism suppresses individual autonomy in favor of American progress; internationalism substitutes national independence for a place in the modern world.

For Canada, continentalism tied the Canadian economy to American interests in the form of trade-partnerships with the U.S. For Mexico, internationalism was the only path available to provide ways of access to the trends of modernization.

This assumption is consistent with the idea of some Mexican thinkers who state that modernity brought into Mexico a passive acceptance of foreign elements and the inevitable pattern of looking abroad for the answers to Mexican problems.[16] For George Grant internationalism is indisputable, but for Leopoldo Zea it has only been an instrument of oppression. Both Grant and Zea consider the problem of U.S. influence over their respective countries as a fundamental one. Grant, however, maintains an implicit position in his "Defence of North America" in which he shares his country's destiny with that of North America, whereas Zea

contemplates the issue from the position of an outsider, i.e. of one who has never belonged to the first world and whose future is only explicable in terms of the parameters of 'alienation' of his country.

> Zea has no choice but to be marginalized. For Zea, modern history has been made by the Occident (...) His experience is not that of being caught up in the technological whirlwind, but that of being excluded from full participation in modern life, of being a means to alien ends (...) He believes that the United States has failed to serve its ideals and that the torch of progress has passed to the oppressed peoples of the Third World who will promote a richer vision of universality on which community will be founded in the shared condition of "solitude, suffering, and in the need to resolve the urgent problems which assail all men, just by virtue of the simple fact that they are men" (...) Zea claims the right of the Third World to try to do better with technology and democracy than the American and Soviet empires have done.[17]

Grant's and Zea's attempts to define the relationship of their countries with the United States are relevant to the creation of a philosophy of marginality, relevant to both Canada and Mexico, since both are oppressed countries which have historically agreed to dilute their cultural autonomy in favor of "higher" interests, namely continentalism or internationalism. Hence, Canada and Mexico share a marginal condition towards their imperial neighbor.

> (...) For Grant's generation exile prevailed over destiny and the greatest fruit of his vocation has been a "lament" for the absorption of Canada into the American technological complex (...) The Canadian contribution to social thought of the American empire has been great: Canadian liberals are the perfect

> exponents of the technological cosmopolis. Grant stands out against the cosmopolitan alternative, which he understands to mean service to the American empire. Yet, he understands that Canada's fate is to be an auxiliary of American projects (...) In contrast to Grant, Zea speaks as an outsider, one who has not been welcomed as a participant in American adventures, but whose nation has been used, so far as possible, as "prime matter", a "resource", an "instrument" by the United States.[18]

Hence, social, economic and technological conditions have made both Canada and Mexico peripheral to the United States. This is not just a matter of developed vis-á-vis underdeveloped countries, it is a matter of center vs. periphery which has translated Grant's claims into a lament, and Zea's into a meaningful cry over the marginalization of his country:

> Another trait which Zea criticizes is pride. Pride prevents the Mexican from developing projects he should never have undertaken in the first place. Mexico's past is responsible for wounded pride. To erase this past was the task of the nineteenth century. We tried without success to replace our discarded past, Zea reminds his audience, to repair our truncated being by attempting to emulate the political and educational models of the powerful neighbor to the North. But in vain. We keep on being the same. What we were did not coincide with what we wanted to be. Our projects did not conform to changed conditions. And so, out of pride we blame history, blood, race, and environment for our failures. But we refuse to change our projects. Instead of realizing ourselves culturally and materially in accordance with our possibilities, we prefer to lament because we cannot be equal or greater than Europe or the United States. And since we cannot be like them we prefer to be nothing (...) Instead of creating we prefer to imitate.[19]

Mexican imitation of foreign models has propelled the 'intelligentsia' to develop a philosophy of culture based on a 'non-imitation' rule and on the struggle for recognition. Zea is an outstanding figure in the movement critical of cultural imperialism in Latin America and in the Third World. This, Zea hopes, will reflect "the universalization of the Mexican problematic and the emergence of Mexico as a central factor in Third World politics."[20]

In combining the concept of nationality with that of economic, political and cultural exploitation of their countries by the American empire, Grant and Zea explain the dependency of their countries on the U.S. in terms of a theory of marginality. Marginality is here equivalent to peripheral existence, since both countries depend on actions taken by the center (the U.S.). Cultural dependency is the logical outcome of actions propelled from the center, such as the importantion and/or instrumentation of technological models which are foreign in nature to the peripheral countries.

> Two great nations, Canada and Mexico, border the United States, which is the most powerful empire in the contemporary world and, indeed, the greatest organized concentration of power in human history. The sheer military supremacy of the United States over the nations which border it is the primary geopolitical fact which determines the character of Canadian and Mexican marginality (...) In addition to its coercive superiority, the United States exerts economic domination over its neighbors through the trade and investment of its corporations, and a growing cultural hegemony secured through the influence of its communications media.[21]

In short, economic and technological reasons have made the American identity prevail over the Canadian and Mexican nations. It is the importation of this very same technological pattern which has made Canada and Mexico dependent on the United States and has made them foresake their cultural autonomy.

Debates on the impact of cultural imports and the preservation of national identity have taken place at all levels. The unbalanced relation between imperialistic and marginalized countries is discussed every day in international arenas. For example, as Paul Audley reminds us:

> Within UNESCO, the resulting debate has focused on the concept of a New International Information Order. In this context, information includes all aspects of what has been referred to above as cultural expression. The essential goal of the new order is to establish a pattern of more balanced two-way exchange in place of the largely one-way flows that characterize the relationship among many nations. Any move to alter the present imbalance, however, is predicated on government action in some form. The focus of a very heated debate has set those in favour of intervention against those in favour of free flow.[22]

Most of these arguments have cristallized into policy proposals or documents at all levels. The arguments examined here are valuable examples of Canadian and Mexican concerns and belong to several interested groups and private individuals who organized their ideas about national cultural expression.

The common core of the cultural identity dilemma seems to be the preservation of an essential autonomy against

others, be they a country, a group or any other cultural influence. Nevertheless, since the United States remains the biggest industrialized center of cultural production, its effects on the two border neighbors are considered inevitable. Concerning Canada, Susan Crean says:

> On reflection, it is entirely in keeping with our situation that our common boundary with the United States should be characterized in Canadian mythology as "the undefended border". Militarily as well as culturally, Canada has followed a policy of reducing defences to the point where this favourite epithet of speech-makers is close to being factual truth. (...) For Canadians, the myth of the undefended border thinly conceals a posture of surrender. The Americans are not swamped by a flood of Canadian culture; their media, their universities and schools, are not crowded with Canadian material and personnel, their culture is not confined to an unhealthy underground. But Canadians do suffer immeasurably from over-exposure to the U.S. The fact that the Canadian government submits to this by leaving the border undefended only makes the Americans' task that much easier.[23]

In Canada as well as in Mexico, a concern for cultural identity has been present in works of philosophy of culture. These philosophical themes in turn appear linked to cultural realities when public groups make their voices heard over matters of cultural expression. There are ways in which they can pose their claims more effectively, and official forums of discussion can be located at international as well as national levels. At a national level, the public hearings constitute the ideal place in which public input can be evaluated and discussed. The value of such hearings resides not only in the information they supply to the public policy

process, but also in the fact that they are a way in which governments can orchestrate the performance, while simultaneously recognizing the need for public discussion. Let us remember, however, as Susan Crean suggests that "special commissions and public inquiries play such an important role in (...) public life, for this is the one offical forum where discussion of our national situation and future options has been frank."[24]

In the following chapters two distinct examples of public input mechanisms in the form of public hearings will be presented. During the examination of the "leading ideas" and opinions manifested in the course of these "official forums" some of the above stressed philosophical themes recur in the form of tangible cultural realities for which policy discussion is required.

Notes

1. Paul Audley. Canada's Cultural Industries. Broadcasting, Publishing, Records and Film. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, publishers in association with the Canadian Institute for Economic Policy, 1983, p. xxi.

2. Solomon Lipp. Leopoldo Zea. From Mexicanidad to a Philosophy of History. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980, p. 1.

3. William Melody, Liora Salter and Paul Heyer. Culture, Communication and Dependency. The Traiditon of H.A. Innis. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1981, p. 11.

4. George Grant. Technology and Empire. Toronto: House of Anansi, 1969, pp. 71-72.

5. Octavio Paz. The Labyrinth of Solitude. Life and

Thought in Mexico. (translated by Lysander Kemp). New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961, p. 20.

6. George Grant. Lament for a Nation. The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1965, p. ix.

7. Octavio Paz. The Labyrinth of Solitude. Life and Thought in Mexico. (translated by Lysander Kemp). New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961, pp. 23-24.

8. Ibid., p. 33.

9. Henry C. Schmidt. The Roots of Lo Mexicano. Self and Society in Mexican Thought 1900-1934. College Station And London: Texas A&M University Press, 1978, p. 29.

10. Herschel Hardin. A Nation Unaware. The Canadian Economic Culture. Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1974, p. 8.

11. Octavio Paz. The Labyrinth of Solitude. Life and Thought in Mexico. (translated by Lysander Kemp). New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961, p. 169.

12. Herschel Hardin. A Nation Unaware. The Canadian Economic Culture. Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1974, p. 4.

13. Octavio Paz. The Labyrinth of Solitude. Life and Thought in Mexico. (translated by Lysander Kemp). New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961, p. 160.

14. Ibid., p. 170.

15. Henry C. Schmidt. The Roots of Lo Mexicano. College Station and London: Texas A&M Press, 1978, p. 57.

16. Martin Luis Guzmán, "La Querella de México," in Henry C. Schmidt. The Roots of Lo Mexicano. College Station and London: Texas A&M Press, 1978, p. 84.

17. Michael A. Weinstein, "Lament and Utopia: Responses to American Empire in George Grant and Leopoldo Zea," in Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory, vol. V, no. 3, (Fall 1981), p. 49.

18. Ibid., pp. 48-49.

19. Solomon Lipp. Leopoldo Zea. From Mexicanidad to a Philosophy of History. Waterloo, Ontrio: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980, pp. 47-48.

20. Michael A. and Deena Weinstein, "Marginality in Mexican Philosophy," in Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory, vol. V, no. 3, (Fall 1981), p. 22.

21. Michael A. Weinstein, "Lament and Utopia: Responses to

American Empire in George Grant and Leopoldo Zea," in Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory, vol. V, no. 3, (Fall 1981), p. 44.

22. Paul Audley. Canada's Cultural Industries. Broadcasting, Publishing, Records and Films. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, publishers in association with the Canadian Institute for Economic Policy, 1983, p. xxiii.

23. Susan M. Crean. Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture? Don Mills, Ontario: General Publishing Co. Ltd., 1976, pp. 269-270.

24. Ibid., pp. 273-274.

CHAPTER TWO

The Canadian Public Hearing (1981-1982)

As discussed earlier, historically Canadian policy-making has shown an important and perhaps growing concern over the performance of cultural institutions in Canada. It is not surprising, then, that such cultural themes happened to reappear when the public discussion over cultural policy began in the spring of 1981. The Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee chose to conduct its inquiry through public hearings, in which an important debate took place over the role of the communication media, especially broadcasting. Presenters brought out the issue of technological impact, often in order to emphasize its role as an instrument of cultural expression or cultural penetration. During the debate, much emphasis was put on its implications for the future of a culturally independent Canada.

The above mentioned debate is perhaps a symptom of the revival of Canadian nationalism, which it is said resulted from the publication of George Grant's Lament for a Nation.[1]

The ongoing relation between culture and technological development suggests, however, that the debate has been kept alive. Whether one institution or the other is in charge of cultural preservation, the feeling among Canadians remains essentially the same: more needs to be done.

The role of the communications media, particularly broadcasting vis-á-vis culture, seems crucial. Broadcasting

as a distinct means of technology can serve to fulfill cultural needs, those needs are not entirely defined for Canadians, since to a certain extent they accept North American cultural products as part of their culture. These commodities have not only caused a rupture in the economic balance of the broadcasting industry but are threatening the development of a Canadian cultural identity.

The Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee was frequently reminded that

> (...) broadcasting is important both because of the nature of its relationship to the other components of culture, and because of the sheer size of the audiences it attracts and the revenues it commands (...) [As the President of the CBC said:] Broadcasting (...) is the most powerful means by which modern nations and peoples share a common experience, learn about their national identity, learn about their culture, learn about themselves. But it is more than that, of course. There is a truly symbiotic relationship between broadcasting and culture. The two are inextricably bound together.[2]

The Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee has been the most important commission to undertake a national review of cultural and artistic matters since the Massey-Lévesque Commission of 1949-51.[3] The latter had stated that broadcasting is a public service and that as such broadcasters have a primary responsiblity to serve their public, thus rejecting arguments for control of the service as a private industry. The need for authentic Canadian programming was then seen as a priority in broadcasting and this priority seems to have recurred in every debate over communication and culture in Canada. This time, however, the

Federal Culture Policy Review Committee (FCPRC) stressed the importance of public consultation and community involvement in the development of particular policy recommendations. Indeed: "The Committee's task, therefore, was to make a representative choice from among the briefs received and accomodate them into a tightly scheduled public hearings itinerary that would include 18 cities between 13 April and 10 July 1981 within Canada".[4]

The basic goal of the Committee was to put the different regions of Canada in touch with one another and to listen to all the parties involved in cultural production, (artists, producers, industry executives and general public). A basic chapter within the briefs document produced by the Committee was devoted to the presentation of all the main issues regarding broadcasting and those were translated into a final report stating the Committee's communication policy recommendations.[5]

The dominant communications issues in those two documents will be further examined below, especially as they were originally presented to the Committee. The Committee's official view will be analyzed later on, with special emphasis on the re-emergence of certain issues, amongst others, in the policy recommendations framework. It is interesting though to note that one of the main questions examined during the hearings was the role of broadcasting in cultural production and the fostering of a national Canadian identity. (A basic parallel will be drawn in the next chapter with a similar public convocation just recently undertaken in Mexico).

From a cultural and political perspective, the efforts made by governments to assess the problematic of culture and its diffusion must be regarded as a step towards more realistic parameters of policy creation. One of the core assertions heard by the Committee was precisely that "communication policy (should be put) at the service of cultural policy."[6]

This wish or goal was repeatedly raised during the hearings, and took the form of 25 arguments which will be discussed. These arguments formed part of the following categorical issues:

A) New Communications technologies and availabilty of information.

B) Freedom of Communication (freedom of speech; freedom to inform/be informed).

C) Economics of the Broadcasting Industry.

D) Role of Communications Institutions. (Governmental institutions).

E) The Fostering of National Identity and Cultural Sovereignty.

The arguments to be examined below, however, seem to go hand in hand with a concern for the preservation of Canadian culture, which has long been considered a basic

communications policy issue in Canada. This basic notion has often been widely discussed during the several regulatory attempts made by the government of Canada to control the industry. The necessity of control derives from the fact that: "Canadian broadcasting has historically been shaped by four interrelated yet separate pressures: a) The geographical size and location of Canada; b) economic resources and the resultant tensions between private and public broadcasters; c) the proximity and pervasiveness of American broadcasting; d) technological change. The relative importance of these pressures, or of combinations thereof, has varied with the historical conjuncture".[7]

As an industry, broadcasting has received wide attention from all sectors of society: its economic importance in the life of Canada, its organizational structure and its cultural role have been, and will certainly continue to be, the subject of continuous political scrutiny. The results of Royal Commissions, Review Reports and politicians' statements will constantly be returned to the arena of the public debate. As Susan Crean puts it:

> Broadcasting has had a long and bumpy career in Canada. It has been the subject of passionate national debate, scheming and politicking at the highest levels. Since 1928 it has been studied by four royal commissions, a special senate committee and a succession of parliamentary committees, making it certainly the most scrutinized sector of our cultural life. This continuous political attention has produced no fewer than five separate broadcasting acts (in 1932, 1936, 1952, 1958 and 1968) - an acknowledgement that broadcasting has been percieved as a matter of national priority requiring government protection and regulation. No other cultural

undertaking in Canada has had this recognition.[8]

Nevertheless, the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee (FCPRC) is different from previous governmental regulatory efforts. Its importance resides in the fact that for the first time all the previous arguments expressed by former commissions were now brought into the public eye, and thrown along with political and private concerns into the same "melting pot".

The task of the committee was sufficiently difficult in that it had to rescue from the mass of individual claims the few recurring core issues. This thesis aims, however, to show how certain core issues and certain individual claims which will be the subject of a closer examination within the context of cultural identity goals.

The arguments presented before the Committee during the hearings are here dealt with as part of the previously mentioned analytical categories. The first of these is:

A) NEW COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES AND AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION.

Six different arguments were presented to the committee regarding the role of broadcasting and its improvements as a revolutionary communications technology.

1. Technological improvements should serve all Canadians.

This was an argument presented by the Canadian Cable

Television Association (CCTA) expressing the necessity of developing sufficient technological resources in order to reach Canadians in remote areas. The CCTA recalled that at one point the CRTC (Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission in charge of regulating and licencing broadcasting services in Canada) had decided that extended alternative services were a higher priority than the development of greater amounts of "Canadian content". In the CCTA opinion, new technologies should be used with this primary objective in mind, regardless of the nature of the content. The CCTA was therefore arguing that it is more socially valuable to reach all Canadians than to produce Canadian content.[9]

This argument was shared by the Centre for Television Studies and by the Video Exchange Society who claimed that the technological possibilities of broadcasting have not yet been widely exploited.[10]

As a counterpart to this, two more refined arguments were presented recognizing the importance of technology but assessing problems in the actual organization of the broadcasting system:

2. Centralization, particularly in broadcasting can overwhelm the culture of other regions.

Several individuals and groups presented ideas moving in this direction: Seymour Hamilton condemned the cultural bureaucracy of Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, which elects itself as arbiter of values and taste; Richard K. Pope of

Regina claimed the right for every Canadian to produce his or her own cultural mirror instead of borrowing the Toronto or the Montreal mirror for the two language groups respectively; and the Newfoundland Independent Filmakers' Cooperative (NIFCO) protested the overprotectionism of the CBC (The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) and the NFB (The National Film Board of Canada) as regards their own in-house productions.[11]

At the same time while responding to the organizational problems of media production, those presentations conveyed the importance of regional cultural expression free of inquiry or centralization. Under the same light another argument was set forth:

3. Community broadcasting services should be encouraged. Their role remains important, especially at a time when there is a strong swing towards concentration of media and centralization of programming.

This argument was expressed mainly in relation to radio, which is to be considered as "one of the great Canadian success stories" since this is still the only medium to reach listeners periodically on a national and international basis, as Betty Zimmerman, the director of Radio Canada International, pointed out.[12]

The production of cultural-community-interest programs resides mainly in its non-commercialization which of course conveys other kinds of resources and financial schema. The same topic seems to have been avoided during the hearings in

regard to television, where the existence of community stations poses greater difficulties. The community service television station in Canada has been replaced by cable television services.

4. Cable Television should be recognized as a third communications entity with its own distinct and complementary characteristics.

The Canadian Cable Television Association (CCTA) claimed for cable the "community-channel functions of public access and local origination and the selective nature of cable's special programming innovations". Cable should not be considered, they said, as the mixture of a common carrier and a broadcasting medium, though it should not be asked to contribute culturally, since it already complements the traditional broadcasting system.[13]

It was clear then that in the area of new communiction technologies, even pre-existing commodities such as cable would become subject to continuous legal revision. The committee acknowledged later that cable, satellites, dishes, master antennas and so on should be reviewed as part of more recent communications policies.[14]

5. Cable has an uncertain regulatory status.

In its written submission, the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) pointed out that because of its rapid growth and its particular technological nature cable has

"circumvented the intent of the CRTC's Canadian Content Regulations: that the majority of programming delivered to Canadian audiences be of Canadian origin".[15]

It is well known that the success of cable is based on facilitating signal reception, selecting special features from American programming and making them available to Canadians. At first, cable was introduced in Canada in order to overcome a technical problem, namely the poor reception of television signals, but it has become the main deliverer of American communications products into Canadian homes. This continues as cable companies have tried to diversify their service by promoting top-rated American programming to their viewers. In this sense, the Canadian content quota established by the CRTC is being disregarded by the cable industry mainly in the case of pay-tv.[16]

6. Pay-television should strengthen Canadian (domestic) program production potential.

At the Toronto hearings the Canadian Film and Television Association posed the question of production of popular Canadian entertainment programs and of pay-television as the potential source of competition with the CBC and the National Film Board of Canada. It is precisely at the level of popular entertainment and children's programming that Canadians are most subject to American imports. The CFTA expressed the opinion that Canadian productions of this sort could take advantage of the benefits of pay-television and thus help to build a healthy industry currently dominated by

Americans. Yet, from another perspective, the Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) declared itself oppossed to any pay-tv organization which was not both independent and publicly owned.[17]

Indeed, it is the development of appropriate technology which acts as one of the main forces to shape communications policy. Canada has fostered advances in technology because of its vast territory and because international pressures have pushed it to remain one step ahead of its Southern neighbor in high technology communications devices, even though this has not always been the case, since the appearance of broadcasting in Canada was late as compared to U.S. broadcasting innovations during the 30's 40's and 50's. Today's political concerns center on catching up through greater technological specialization.

Paul Audley points out that:

> all recent indications suggest that the preocupations of both the CRTC and the Department of Communications are economic and technological. A 1980 study published by the C.D. Howe Institute noted that: 'The Department of Communications remains the lead agency for communications policy-making within the Federal Government, but its basic character seems to be changing. The Department is coming to be perceived more as a science-based unit promoting an increasingly important aspect of Canada's overall industrial strategy and less as a culture-oriented unit responsible for managing the instruments whereby Canadian identity is shaped.'[18]

As George Grant would put it, in this sense technology is truly giving meaning to Canadians' existence. For them, the myth of progress is not only part of the liberal dream

itself, but also a way to share the benefits of American culture which in its democratizing efforts gives a possibility for self-differentiation.

As Grant says

> Indeed our involvement in the American empire goes deeper than a simple economic and political basis; it depends on the very faith that gives meaning and purpose to the lives of Western men. To most Canadians, as public beings, the central cause of motion in their souls is the belief in progress through technique, and that faith is identified with the power and leadership of the English-speaking empire in the world.[19]

The English-speaking empire refers notably to the United States.

The second set of arguments presented during the FCPRC hearings can be found grouped under the following category

B) **FREEDOM OF COMMUNICATION (FREEDOM OF SPEECH; FREEDOM TO INFORM/ BE INFORMED)**

Six arguments were presented to the committee concerning what we have called here "Freedom of Communication", i.e. the preservation of the independence and the sovereignty of the Canadian broadcasting system against political, economic or cultural intervention from American or any other sources. The term "freedom of information/communications" will also be examined extensively within the Mexican arena as part of the corpus of this thesis, although the reader will have to put into perspective both cases and realize that this is an essentially political notion. Consequently, the kind of

freedom of communications that one can find in the Canadian system differs considerably from the one in the Mexican. The notion is thus dyed with political tinctures depending on the structure of power of the nation involved. Nevertheless, its importance within the framework of this analysis resides in its recurrence as one of the main political arguments raised in communications policy proposals and as such it should be assessed. Therefore, emphasis will be put on those arguments in which freedom of national cultural expression prevails over other concerns for those are areas of the freedom of communications concept in which the Canadian and the Mexican claims coincide.

1. This nation should establish its own Canadian broadcasting system in the true sense.

Broadcasting was often referred to as one of the 'cultural industries' during the FCPRC hearings The marketplace for Canadian cultural works was described as weak and peripheral. In that sense, even the president of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) asserted that

> we really do not have a Canadian broadcasting system today. We have a radio system which is Canadian; we have a French-language television system which is Canadian, or substantially so. But we have an English-language television system which is substantially American.[20]

Consequent to the above, argument 2 reads as follows:

2. There is an unbalanced flow of communications goods in the international market.

This idea is not exclusive to the Canadian arena. Its implications should be acknowledged both politically and economically, and as such they have been extensively discussed within UNESCO which has produced several recommendations for a more balanced world information order. In this case, however, every position taken is valid. The open Canadian relationship with the United States has taken the country into an unbalanced partnership, for, as was stated by the Canadian Association of Talent Representatives, Canada does not prevent free flow of U.S. talent, whereas the U.S. does prevent the free flow of foreign talent.[21] Economic reasons have nurtured the existence of this kind of situation, as other arguments during the hearings clearly demonstrated.

3. Culture should not exist in any concentrated form but should be evenly and homogeneously distributed accross Canada.

This belief was asserted in relation to federal intervention in the production of culture. According to the Théatre d'Aujourd'hui, Canada's national culture should not be broken down or compartmentalized into regional subcultures. But Toronto's Carmen Lamanna Gallery took the argument further in stating that this promotes English-French segregation. It was obvious for the committee that the

defition of region was being severly questioned, since, in the opinion of some presenters, this was a term constructed mainly for geographical, political or economic but certainly not cultural purposes.[22]

On the other hand, from the point of view of its universality, the strength of the argument was lost by its presenters in favor of production, distribution and commercialization proposals for cultural works in Canada. The role of the Government as provider for regional cultural expression was not specified.

4. Canadians should be free to choose from the variety of programming made available through the broadcasting media.

This is an argument that springs directly from the liberal concept of freedom of expression although many variants have been developed such as the comparison between of broadcasting and the press, wherein broadcasting is considered to be a source of information and opinion much like the press and is, therefore, considered to be necessary for the well being of a free society.[23]

Another variant is the idea that to control the broadcasting industry would be to prevent the Canadian public from acquiring information and that this would go against the freedom of choice principle, which Canadians essentially defend, as was stated during the hearings by the Canadian Cable and Television Association (CCTA).[24]

On the other hand, the Canadian broadcasting industry and the Canadian cable companies claim no responsibility for

low levels of Canadian content consumed by their viewers. They state that over half the people of Canada are able to receive U.S. programming directly off-the-air. The Americans are, therefore, the ones to be blamed; Canadian programmers are only responding to the realities and influences of competitive broadcasting.[25]

5. The availability of American programming poses problems for public-policy making and the administration of regulations.

This argument could be viewed as a consequence of the previous one due to the fact that a competitive broadcasting system relies on specialization to succeed, and that consequently there follows an inevitable fragmentation of the audience. This idea was presented at the hearings by Peter Herrndorf who reminded the committee that: "For the policy-maker, there is the complex problem of deciding how these new services, like pay-television, can be best administered, and how their proceeds should be controlled and invested".[26]

6. Cultural industries do not appropriately reflect cultural diversity.

This argument embodies the claim of an equal/democratic access to cultural expression, and was presented to the committee mainly by Canadians with no direct professional interest in broadcasting but who nonetheless agreed that "the

broadcast media reflect a distorted -or at least incomplete- image of our society and institutions". For its part, the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and Citizenship suggested that help was needed in providing a cultural balance for the images presented on radio and television.[27]

In sum, this category of arguments underlines the fact that Canadians should be enabled to keep their cultural individualism while at the same time preserve their freedom of choice and of expression. Thus, for policy makers in Canada, the task is to encompass both: Canadian identity and cultural self-expression though they appear not to be in agreement with each other. As Northorp Frye stated insightfully:

> When the CBC is instructed by Parliament to do what it can to promote Canadian unity and identity, it is not always realized that unity and identity are quite different things to be promoting and that in Canada these are probably more different than they are anywhere else. Identity is local and regional, rooted in the imagination and in works of culture; unity is national in reference, international in perspective, and rooted in a political feeling (...) Assimilating identity to unity produces the empty gestures of cultural nationalism; assimilating unity to identity produces the kind of provincial isolation which is now called separatism.[28]

The third set of arguments expressed at the FCPBC hearings will be grouped here into the following category:

C) **ECONOMICS OF THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY.**

Three related arguments can be found under this heading.

Again, the categorical division is made here for methodological purposes although the reader may well find that each argument has ramifications that can be viewed from different secondary perspectives.

1. The United States is simply too big to compete with.

When confronted with the fact that Canadians are exposed to too much American programming, broadcasters, especially private ones, consistently claimed that the market did not favor Canadian communications products, and that U.S. experience and technology were simply too developed to compete with. Writing as an individual, Gordon Inglis of Newfoundland made the comment that "the arguments that if we make a good enough cultural product, then Canadians will want it, or buy it, or read it, is naive".[29]

The reasons for the lack of Canadian cultural products may vary but in general they all coincide in that the impact of American cultural penetration is much too important.

2. The marketplace produces a double 'dis-incentive' that works in favor of American programming.

This could be considered a variant of the preceeding argument on which broadcasters rely in order to justify their production standards. They do not suggest that Canadian programs are of lower quality but they do indicate that the cost of production of national material exceeds their benefits and their responsibility to serve the Canadian

public. The Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) and the Canadian Film and Television Association (CFTA) admit that American programs are 'dumped' at a fraction of their production cost.[30]

3. Private broadcasting must be a successful business before it can effectively embrace public service requirements.

Such pleas were used to remind the committee of the nature of private broadcasting in Canada. While the government inisits that broadcasting is a public service and that the allocation of frequencies is granted to private broadcasters in the form of a licence, private broadcasters are firm in maintaining their unwillingness to loose money in order to preserve policy goals. Thus, to force them to observe regulations would be to ruin the industry. Their only responsibility, according to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) is to the advertising community and to their viewers: "if private broadcasters obtain a greater or equal viewing share when compared to the CBC for their Canadian programs, what is the justification for requiring detailed regulatory involvement in a station's scheduling policy?"[31]

Hence, cultural provisions in communications policies have little or nothing to do with the financial interests of private broadcasters,[32] as Paul Attallah has pointed out:

> Clearly the linchpin in the evolution of the Canadian broadcasting system has been the role of the private broadcasting sector. The private sector, as regards television at least, did not introduce

> American programming, but it did turn the economic pressures which favoured its importation into the sine qua non of Canadian broadcasting. The private sector has consistently evaded regulatory intentions, always in the name of economic necessity, and the regulatory agencies, again in the name of economic necessity have refused to enforce regulations or to revoke licences.[33]

Though this attitude is not rooted only in the private broadcast sector, it is certainly more evident there. Early media, such as the press and publishing, were established by businessmen. It was, therefore not surprising to see private broadcasting grow as another legitimate area for profit-making. Broadcasting is not only an industry but also a cultural undertaking. This precisely defines the incompatibility of its nature: culture and business simply do not mix, unless culture produces money, in which case the nature of its intentions is thrown into question. The fact is that if the industry's goal were to foster cultural development, it would not in all likelihood be profitable, and would therefore need to be subsidized as is the case with the CBC. The CBC's own performance was very much questioned during the hearings because of its tendency to commercialize its programming in order to compete.

The Canadian broadcasting industry, like any other industry, has to move with international communications industries. George Grant in Technology and Empire would argue that within the American industrial hegemony over the Western World, Canada is an easy victim for domination.[35]

D) ROLE OF COMMUNICATIONS INSTITUTIONS

The next set of arguments presented before the FCPRC deals with the role that communications institutions should play in the Canadian broadcasting system.

The most questioned institutional roles during the meetings were those of CBC and the NFB. Their performance was evaluated in terms of the mandate they were given and the kind of function they perform. In this sense, the private sector was not subject to trial, their objective as profit-makers was clear to the Committee from the beginning. Two main arguments were used to evaluate institutional performance:

1. Governmental institutions have failed to fulfill their role.

Several groups such as the Atai Arctic Creative Development Foundation, the Canadian Film and Television Association (CFTA) and the Newfoundland Independent Filmakers' Cooperative (NIFCO) stated that the CBC and the NFB had failed to carry out a mandate that includes "the responsibility to relate both the national and regional cultural mosaic which is Canada and Québec" and that these institutions are "narrowly stylized, bureaucratic and centralist in orientation".[36]

2. One of the main reasons why these institutions have failed to accomplish their mandate is the lack of financial

resources.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) expressed its concern over insufficient funding for its projects, despite the large amounts it received from Parliament. At the same time, the Canadian Broadcasting League and David McQueen of York University expressed their concerns over the CBC's lack of success in fulfilling its cultural mandate, while the National Arts Centre went so far as to denounce the fact that "the government identifies cultural affairs as a separate area of policy and planning within the financial-administrative system".[37]

This last remark is important for it poses problems which go to the foundation of the CBC. As it stands now, Cultural Affairs is part of Social Welfare policies leaving the Corporation with the task of coping with commercial competition in order to obtain revenues and report them to Parliament. As a genuine cultural institution, the CBC's three objectives in Canada, according to the Report of the Massey-Lévesque Commission (1951) are:

> (...) an adequate coverage of the entire population, oportunities for Canadian talent, and for Canadian self-expression generally, and successful resistance to the absorption of Canada into the general cultural pattern of the United States.[38] (My underlining).

On the other hand, the present Broadcasting Act (1968) enforces on the CBC the parameters of balanced information and entertainment, which as objectives, are not applied to the private sector. According to Paul Audley, the objectives

of the 1968 Broadcasting Act suggested for the private sector are extremely vague, such as requiring that stations and networks be Canadian-owned and that programs be of high quality using predominantly Canadian creative sources, and cannot be considered successful.[39]

For the CBC then, the failure to fulfill its mandate can be due to unclear legislation as well as to the existence of administrative problems in the allocation of financial resources. The above mentioned inconsistencies were acknowledged by the Committee in the final report, and recommendations were suggested in this area.

And finally in this succinct review of arguments presented to the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee, a large number of important reports during the hearings dealt with what we have called here the category of:

E) THE FOSTERING OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY.

A total of seven main arguments on this subject were presented to the FCPRC during its hearings. They all coincided in that steps must be taken to construct and preserve Canadian national identity. The understanding of the meaning of Canadian identity and the ways and suggestions offered to the committee varied considerably, however.

There were clearly two positions on this matter: there were those who claimed that Canadian self-expression as such is unnecessary since that would result automatically from the exposure of Canadians to quality and high culture regardless of its origin; and there were those who maintained

that Canadian self-identity should be fostered by letting the various Canadian cultural groups express themselves thereby avoiding all kinds of foreign, mainly American, influences.

The following arguments constitute interesting examples of Canadian concerns over nationalistic feelings, self-identity and the preservation of national culture.

1. Cultural objectives must be looked at in broader terms than just those of Canadian programming content.

The Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) and the Canadian Cable Television Association (CCTA) agreed in exposing the benefits of varied programming to all parts of Canada despite CRTC requirements for Canadian content quotas.[40]

This view, supported mainly by private broadcasters, underlines the efforts made by the industry to provide a wide range of choices to the Canadian public, and proposes cultural policy parameters different from those based exclusively on the origin of the material as the key notion in regulation.

2. Quality should be put before nationalism.

The Canadian Film and Television Association reminded the committee that if Canadian products are to be sold in the international market they ought to have quality, and that: "By meeting international standards of excellence, we are not being less Canadian".[41]

The same argument goes hand in hand with the notion that when Canadians are presented with quality they automatically ask for it every time. And by the same token it can be said that art recognizes no boundaries and what in that sense, broadcasting should be awarded artistic privileges.

3. The universal interest lies in the power of the particular experience.

Maurice Yacovar, dean of the Division of Humanities at Brock University, argued that "by addressing Canadians with Canadian concerns and issues, Canadian arts can attract international respect", and Moses Znaimer suggested that such Canadian art could attain universal significance precisely because of its natural emergence.[42]

For their part, there were those who made emphatic critiques and proposed alternatives to the threatening influence of American cultural products. These arguments were exposed along these lines:

4. There is a strong necessity to cease imitating foreign models.

A general concern in the need to foster Canadian individuality was expressed through particular cases such as the example of the recording industry. Canadian cultural industries, it was said, ought to succeed in order to reflect the Canadian cultural experience.[43]

Up to this point the Canadian thrust towards the

preservation of its cultural experiences is fairly obvious national identity has become one of the main cultural political issues in Canada. Some particular and institutional viewpoints exclude the American influence as being threatening; others propose to assimilate what is good from it into the Canadian cultural stream, but of course the question of the meaning of 'good' remains. Yet, the conjuncture seems to lie in the recognition that American cultural patterns affect the Canadian scene. Although official policy recommendations have always stressed the need for an independent Canadian broadcasting system, it is paradoxical that this broadcasting system cannot maintain itself without the aid of American broadcasting products.

The Special Parliamentary Committee on Radio Broadcasting said, in 1932, the following, which is even more applicable today as regards broadcasting as a whole:

> First of all this country must be assured of complete control of broadcasting from Canadian sources, free from foreign interference or influence. Without such control radio broadcasting can never become a great agency for the communications of matters of national concern and for the diffusion of national thought and ideals, and without such control it can never be the agency by which national consciousness may be fostered and sustained and national unity still further strengthened.[44]

The American sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset has elaborated the idea that Canadians are constantly looking for the virtues of being separate from the United States and that in a sense this Anti-Americanism fosters in them a vital need

for a Canadian identity[45] (in their words what they Canadians see are the benefits created by social envy). But this is just one of the ways in which Canada generates its own nationalistic feelings.

According to Herschel Hardin, there have been other modes for Canadian self-expression that varied with the times and the historical circumstances. The idea of cultural definition and the concern for Canadian self-identity is not in vogue by nature, it belongs to the same roots of North American history, as Grant, Paz and others have already explored. What remains interesting is that people seem to forget what this identity struggle has achieved in the past, for it is obvious that the subject recurs in Canadian public policy matters, and especially in the area of broadcasting.

As Herschel Hardin puts it:

> It is a peculiar anthropological puzzle that Canadians don't know who they are, although they have been trying to find out, by introspection, almost from the beginning of their history. Not that they suffer from a lack of imagination. The search for Canadian identity, and for a definition of Canadian nationalism, has gone on for so long, and is so gloriously rich in idiosyncrasy, that it constitutes one of the wonders of the world.[46]

Thus, general remarks as to how to develop authentic models instead of imitating American ones or petitions aimed at the preservation of Canada's cultural heritage are just a reflection of this natural drive for self-identity that Canadians have.

As regards broadcasting, the FCPRC heard from the Association for the Study of Canadian Radio and Television

ASCRT that "if we wish to build and maintain our Canadian cultural identity, it is absolutely crucial for us to preserve the national cultural record contained in the programs and background documents of our broadcasting institutions".[47]

From the previous statement it should be concluded that radio and television are to be considered crucial in the social and cultural development of Canada due to their significance in binding the different regions together and providing means for cultural expression. This is something rarely acknowledged of a communications medium and it ought to have repercussions on Canadian cultural policy-making for years to come. And to the broadcasting industry it will certainly provide considerations beyond the range of the information-and entertainment-institutions frontier. Broadcasting should take advantage of these modifications in order to expand its abilities in the communications technology race. Information without meaning is a danger hanging over the heads of many societies including Canada. Foreign programming can sometimes be considered 'information without meaning' since it does not convey any sense to the society it is meant to inform.

5. Canadian policy in broadcasting has attempted to preserve Canadian cultural identity by means of Canadian content quotas.

The 1968 Broadcasting Act requires that the broadcasting service be "predominantly Canadian in content and character",

and that it contribute "to the development of national unity and provide for a continuing expression of Canadian identity" As mentioned earlier, such a statement, although vaguely defined and unevenly applied, is one of the CBC's basic mandates. Most of the presentations before the FCPRC stressed the poor fulfillment of the regulations by broadcasting, and demanded a clear definition of the terminology used in the Act. The FCPRC was also reminded that these regulations which currently apply only to licenced broadcasters and their affiliates should be extended to cover the cable companies which are largely responsible for increasing the consumption of foreign programming. The general consensus seemed to be that "only after arriving at an administratively clear definition of 'Canadian Content' can we proceed to make rules, regulations and decisions".[48] There were other groups, however, who despised an administrative (bureaucratic) definition of Canadian content, especifically in quantitative terms:

6. The basic problem is not how much Canadian content is desirable, but rather what kinds of Canadian content.

Various independent groups, filmakers, native Canadians and local artists' councils agreed that a qualitative definition of Canadian content was needed. They seemed, however, to acknowledge the fact that such parameters would bring even stronger institutional and administrative problems rather than solve the existing cultural dilemma. Nevertheless, they stressed the notion that quality standards

could enhance opportunities for regional self-expression and access to the presently centralized broadcasting system.[49] The existence of widely available quality content was also underlined. These groups also recognized that growing responses to foreign material create a vicious circle and fortify dependency ties with American culture.:

> Another perspective was provided by Vancouver's Cineworks, whose written brief described Canada culturally as "an occupied country". It said, moreover, that "only by taking a radical stance, and by maintaining this stance, can the federal government hope to create a Canadian culture". The Director's Guild of Canada thought Canada "was losing its cultural awareness and warned that "the largest influence in this diluting effect on a Canadian heritage is the immense influx of media from other countries. While this media pressure, particularly from the United States, is greater on Canada because of (its) proximity (...)[50]

7. Communications policy should be put at the service of cultural policy.

It would be important to start the analysis of this final argument with one of Grant's recollections. In Lament for a Nation, he states:

> It has been said that the inability of a country to have an independent foreign policy does not prevent it from being a nation. This means that Canadians have to recognize the limitations on sovereignty in a nation that lives beside the most powerful country on earth (...) nor is it simply that the United States is the most progressive society on earth and therefore the most radical force for the homogeneizing of the world. By its very nature, the capitalist system makes

of national boundaries only matters of political formality.[51]

The implications of this particular remark were well reflected during the hearings of the FCPRC as different cultural groups reviewed self-expression through broadcasting and stressed that Canada's remote regions are suffering from an "isolation of the mind". They are by no means interconnected with the rest of the nation, and by the same token they do not have a relationship with the American nation either. Along these lines, groups like the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Canada (AMNSIS) saw specialized broadcasting facilities as an incomplete solution to the problem. The question resides more in a total redefinition of communications policy in order to take the specific cultural needs of the regions into account.[52]

These 25 arguments are only elaborations of the 5 main communications issues related to culture and broadcasting, which are: technologies; freedom of communications; industry; institutional roles and cultural identity. Of these, the ones referring to cultural identity, the preservation of national culture and cultural self-expression have been highlighted by this analysis. They constituted an important part of the overall presentations during the hearings and seemed to direct future policy recommendations from the Committee.

In the chapter referring to the Mexican search for cultural identity through communications policies, these five

main communications issues will be brought up again to review the presentations offered during the popular hearings that the Government of Mexico proposed as a first step towards constructing a new national communications policy. Similar concerns and directives parallel to those previously presented in the case of Canada will be examined although to date no final policy report has been handed in. In both countries, however, broadcasting plays an important role and should play a more relevant one if cultural identity is to be fostered.

As an industry, broadcasting constitutes a vital force in Canadian economic life, but whether the economic side of the question is regarded as important or not, the broadcasting potential must reside in its abilities as a source of information, communications and cultural expression. Broadcasting is the only cultural industry fully regulated by the government and the stance that the Government of Canada should take in regards to it must be a definite one. The FCPRC learned from the different groups, associations, and individuals involved that the broadcasting issue was to be crucial in cultural policy-making during the next few decades and that whatever recommendations were to be presented as a set of guiding-principles will have to give the government a basis for decision-making.

The Committee was reminded that the process of policy-creation affects all Canadians, and that its primary task would have to be the preservation of Canadian culture.

> North and South, East and West, the Committee found a concern that the benefits of Canada's cultural diversity would be lost unless the main different elements were brought in touch with each other. As the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council put it, a cultural policy must permit all Canadians, whether they are majority or minority group members to develop as they are and to be enriched by conctact with different peoples in every sector of human activity (...) Canadian culture should give to all Canadians a sense of proprietorship and pride and of reaching beyond themselves.[58]

The final report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee was made public in November 1982 and is now named the Applebaum-Hébert report after its co-chairmen. The report addresses immediate and long-range problems in its conclusions and recommendations. A great emphasis is placed on situating the recommendations within the framework of cultural preservation, intellectual heritage and artistic creativity in Canada. As regards communications, one of the key notions presented in the report was that: "one of the chief goals of cultural policy must be to establish strong and stable lines of communications between artists of all kinds and those who will see, read or hear their messages". In other words, in the area of broadcasting, besides listening to the claims of private and public broadcasters, the committee acknowledged the needs of the true producers of culture and its receivers:

> We believe, moreover that culture and the arts will best flourish in Canada when our artists are able to present their work to audiences with a fair measure of freedom from social, economic and

> political constraints" (...) "This idea has clear implications for the effects of public policy on cultural life; above all, that policy should facilitate self-expression rather than control or organize it.[54]

The Committee's remarkable tendency was to assess all its recommendations in terms of Canadian cultural improvement. The Final Report in its chapter on broadcasting stressed the importance of developing a completely new approach to the Canadian content question. It also proposed measures aimed at enhancing the CBC's contribution to cultural expression and rejected private broadcasting tendencies towards commercialization. It reminded broadcasters of their responsibilities to cultural programming and suggested more flexibility in the administration of regulations on the part of the CRTC. It even proposed the creation of a new Broadcasting Act which would implemented some of the recommendations of the Committee into a legal framework.

But perhaps the overall achievement of the report was to provide a view of the broadcasting environment different from past regulatory attempts which conceived the role of the government as a restrictive one. In the committee's opinion, restrictions are not the solution to the present broadcasting problem. A national broadcasting policy should recognize the Canadian public's tendency to demand from broadcasting more opportunities, more technology and more programming choices.

> But if Canada is to retain a programming presence in its own broadcasting and telecommunications system, it must use all its technological and creative resources to provide Canadian programs

> and services that Canadians want to see and hear, programs that are competitive in quality with those from other countries.[59]

The Committee's recommendations were used as the basis for a new document called "Towards a New Broadcasting Policy" produced by the Department of Communications. In this document the DOC proposes several directions for communications policy and promises to submit them to further public discussion. The new strategies adopted as part of this broadcasting policy can be summarized as follows:

The policies and proposals which constitute this strategy have three fundamental goals: 1) To maintain the Canadian broadcasting system as an effective vehicle of social and cultural policy in the light of a renewed commitment to the spirit of the broadcasting objectives set out in the 1968 Broadcasting Act. 2) To make available to all Canadians a solid core of attractive Canadian programming in all programming categories, through the development of strong Canadian broadcast and program production industries. 3) To provide a significantly increased choice of programming of all kinds in both official languages in all parts of Canada.

The Canadian strategy is built over two sets of policy proposals. The first set is called "New Policies" and includes the following:

1. Expand programming choice. The DOC believes, after the recommendations of the Applebaum-Hébert report, that the new policy should follow permissive parameters rather

than restrictive ones. Therefore, one of the key statements of this strategy is to guarantee wide availability of choices to all Canadians

2. Strengthen Canadian programming. The Government of Canada establishes through this policy a special Canadian Broadcast Development Fund intended to assist private production companies and independent producers in the belief that this will necessarily provide the means to fill the lack of adequate quality Canadian programming.

3. Direct CRTC on policy matters. The DOC recognizes the need to adjust broadcasting policy to meet the present needs of the broadcasting system. Therefore and in agreement with the FCPRC recommendations and the chairman of the CRTC the Department of Communications proposes that the Federal Government be given the ability to issue directives to the CRTC in broad policy matters. The CRTC however will remain autonomous in deciding how to apply these policies and will retain its responsibility for regulating and supervising all aspects of the Canadian broadcasting system, including Canadian content requirements.

4. Abolish satellite dish licencing requirements for individuals. In agreement with policy goal number one, individuals will be able to purchase small television earth stations (TVRO) or satellite dishes to improve

their programming services.

The second set of policies consists proposals for consultation, and can be summarized as follows

1. Private sector thrust. Intends to encourage the private broadcaster to improve the quality and quantity of Canadian programming given that new funds and assistance, namely the Broadcast Program Development Fund, will be available.

2. French-language broadcasting thrust. Stimulate exports of broadcasting produced by the French-language broadcasting industry in Canada as well as the importation of other French-language material. Examine the establishment of a second French-language television network in Quebec.

3. Export thrust. Establish the means to distribute Canadian broadcasting products in the international market.

4. Equalization of services thrust. Encourage equal distribution of services to all Canadian through adequate uses of available technology, (including microwave and satellites).

5. Native Peoples thrust. Respond to the needs of native people in terms of their language and culture.

6. Regulatory thrust. Ensure an adequate and more flexible regulatory environment. Change Canadian content requirements. The CRTC is expected to develop measures to this end (proposed changes to its Canadian content regulations were presented on January 31, 1983).

7. Legislative thrust Aims to realign Parliament's statutory objectives for broadcasting and proposes legislative amendments such as a re-elaboration of the 'broadcasting' definition in the 1968 Broadcasting Act.

8. CBC thrust. Intends to strengthen the performance of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and proposes a substantial increase in its Canadian content programming.[56]

The general concern over cultural identity is thus reflected more recently in the above mentioned policy documents in Canada. The strong tendency seen since the 1940's and 50's for the affirmation of national identity is transported into the 1980's as cultural policy matters. For the first time the Canadian government seems to recognize that all previous attempts directed towards a more restrictive regulation to safe-guard cultural identity were wrong and doomed to fail. The unavoidable impact of technology has forced the pendulum to swing to the other side where freedom of choice and greater availability of programming ought to be granted. The Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee (FCPRC) as well as the Department of

Communications (DOC) hope, in this manner, to achieve a clearer solution to the problem, or at least to try to keep up with the "technological revolution" and the challenges that it poses. It also seems clear, however, that the original public thrust expressed during the hearings underwent a process of dilution from the moment it was presented, as an individual concern, to the way in which it was finally reflected, if at all, in the policy documents. It would be the purpose of a more detailed analysis to examine the transformation that the original arguments experienced from their presentation to the form they finally acquired within the official 'jargon', and still another to analyze how these policy statements are finally applied. Nevertheless, it is crucially important to assess here the similarity of the various public concerns voiced by Canadians over the need to preserve their cultural identity.

Previous statements by philosophers of culture and several other intellectuals have shown a remarkable similarity to the Canadian uneasiness about cultural identity. The enormous task with which the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee was confronted, reveals that this society is concerned with its social-cultural identity deeply enough to make it the vehicle for public policy changes. At least as regards the chapter on broadcasting, it seems fair to conclude that the cultural identity/sovereignty/foreign influence issue was the dominant aspect through which all the rest of the communications goals were put in perspective.

The importance of such hearings resided precisely in their ability to give direction to policy matters. When the

report was made public the reaction was impassioned, especially from the CBC, which claimed to be doing the best it could, and from the private broadcasters who threatened to do nothing more. After things calmed down the Department of Communications produced its Broadcasting Strategy document with which it attempted to please all parties involved while at the same time envisaging a renewed broadcasting policy for Canada. The results of this strategy will be visible only in the years to come. The main orientation, which is the recognition that the alliance of culture and technology can work for Canada, is a re-elaboration of the Massey-Lévesque report of the 50's. The concrete policy proposals, however, except for the establishment of the Canadian Broadcasting Fund, promise to maintain the status quo for broadcasting in Canada.

As was stressed before, not only through philosophical remarks but also in the form of public concerns, Canada needs a strong stance, and as regards culture Canadians are the ones who should define the means for self-identity.

> If Canadians do not produce their own writing, music, theatre, films and television programs no one else will.[57]

A strong emphasis is being given in international arenas to the issue of cultural expression, and Canada is just responding to the internal concerns of such a need. Its cultural policies and the steps taken to fulfill those policies will have an impact in the near future, not only in the lives of Canadians but also in the way international communications are talked about. Some other countries are

trying to take a stance vis-á-vis cultural intervention and the preservation of their own cultural expression. The route selected in this strategy could lead to the promotion of one or the other. Governments' willigness to adopt recommendations in this direction could mean the success of cultural policies as a true representation of the public will.

Notes

1. John Badertscher, "The Prophecy of George Grant," in Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory.

2. Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Summary of Briefs and Hearings. Information Services: Department of Communications. Government of Canada. January, 1982, p. 213.

3. The Massey-Lévesque Commission was to examine a number of organizations and institutions including broadcasting relating to cultural development in Canada. For more information on broadcasting commissions see: Hindley, Martin & McNulty. The Tangled Net. Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd.,1977; Shea, Albert. Broadcasting the Canadian Way. Montreal: Harvest House, 1963; Weir, Ernest Austin. The Struggle for National Broadcasting in Canada. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965; and Smith, Anthony. The Geopolitics of Information. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980. The latter will give the reader a wider scope in relation to American domination and cultural dependence in Canada.

4. Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Summary of Briefs and Hearings. Information Services: Department of Communications, Government of Canadá, Jan. 1982, p. iii.

5. For the purpose of the structure of this thesis, the present chapter will examine in detail the main broadcasting issues stressed during those hearings, leaving the discussion of general remarks between the Canadian and the Mexican case for the final chapter. This methodological division aims to stress the cultural concerns presented in the public arena as opposed to the institutional (governmental) views which will be

evaluated as national policy statements later on.

6. Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Summary of Briefs and Hearings. Information Services: Department of Communications, Government of Canada, January 1982, p. 228.

7. Paul Attallah. The International Flow of Television Programming and Structures of Broadcasting in Canada. Université de Montréal. Unpublished paper, May 1983.

8. Susan Crean. Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture? Don Mills, Ontario: General Publishing Co. Ltd., 1976, p. 27.

9. Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Summary of Briefs and Hearings. Information Services: Department of Communications, Government of Canada, January 1982, pp. 221-223.

10. Ibid., p. 235.

11. Ibid., pp. 13-14 & 231.

12. Ibid., p. 215.

13. Ibid., pp. 218-219.

14. A new regulatory framework has been established by a DOC document called "Towards a New National Broadcasting Policy", February, 1983. The above mentioned document is here referred to only as a secondary source and will not be examined in full as part of the cultural thesis expressed in this work.

15. Paul Attallah. The International Flow of Television Programming and Structures of Broadcasting in Canada. Université de Montréal. Unpublished paper, May 1983. "As regards Canadian programming, the CRTC requires all Canadian television stations to carry 60% Canadian content between 6 PM and 12 midnight, averaged anually. It requires the CBC to show 60% Canadian content, averaged anually, between 6 PM and midnight. It requires private stations to show 50% Canadian content, averaged anually, between 6 PM and 12 midnight. Canadian content continues to be very loosely defined".

16. The subject of Canadian content is particularly important as part of the arguments in cultural development and the fostering of national identity through the media, and will be discussed extensively later on.

17. Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Summary of Briefs and Hearings. Information Services: Department of Communications, Government of Canada, January 1982, pp. 223-224.

18. Paul Audley. Canada's Cultural Industries: Broadcasting, Publishing Records and Film. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, publishers in association with the Canadian Institute for Economic Policy, 1983, p. 252.

19. George Grant. "Canadian Fall and Imperialism," in Technology and Empire. Toronto: House of Anansi, 1969, p. 64.

20. Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Summary of Briefs and Hearings. Information Services: Department of Communications, Government of Canada, January 1982, p. 4.

21. Ibid., p. 9.

22. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

23. For further comments on this see: John Porter. The Vertical Mosaic. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965, pp. 457-490, where he examines the broadcasting-press analogy as suggested by Gladys Coke Mussen (1960) in her Ph.D. thesis.

24. Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Summary of Briefs and Hearings. Information Services: Department of Communications, Government of Canada, January 1982, pp. 224-225.

25. Ibid., pp. 219-221.

26. Ibid., pp. 222-223.

27. Ibid., p. 233.

28. Northrop Frye. Preface to the Bush Garden. Toronto: House of Anansi, 1971, p. 11, as quoted in: Hindley, Patricia, Gail M. Martin and Jean Mc Nulty. The Tangled Net. Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1977, p. 8.

29. Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Summary of Briefs and Hearings. Information Services: Department of Communications, Government of Canada, January 1982, p. 9.

30. Ibid., pp. 219 & 229.

31. Ibid., pp. 219-220.

32. In Montreal alone, during the period of Jan. 31 to Feb. 13, 1983, the CTV network with its affiliate CFCF Channel 12 devoted more than 50% of its entire broadcasting time to U.S. programming.

33. Paul Attallah. The International Flow of Television Programming and Structures of Broadcasting in Canada. Université de Montréal. Unpublished paper, May 1983.

34. For a more detailed discussion of the history and structure of power in Canada see: John Porter. The Vertical Mosaic. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965, pp. 466-467.

35. George Grant. Technology and Empire. Toronto: House of Anansi, 1969, pp. 63-64.

36. Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Summary of Briefs and Hearings. Information Services: Department of Communications, Government of Canada, January 1982, pp. 227-228.

37. Ibid., pp. 26, 33 & 2.

38. David Ellis. Evolution of the Canadian Broadcasting System: Objectives and Realities 1928-1968. Department of Communications, 1979, p. 30.

39. Paul Audley. Canada's Cultural Industries. Broadcasting, Publishing, Records and Film. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, publishers in association with the Canadian Institute for Economic Policy, 1983, p. 302.

40. Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Summary of Briefs and Hearings. Information Services: Department of Communications, Government of Canada, January 1982, p. 221.

41. Ibid., p. 8.

42. Ibid., p. 89.

43. Ibid., p. 8.

44. Patricia Hindley, Gail M. Martin & Jean Mc Nulty. The Tangled Net. (on the special Parliamentary Committee on Radio Broadcasting, 1932). Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd, 1977, pp. 48-49.

45. For a more detailed view on the sociologist's ideas see: Seymour Martin Lipset. Revolution and Contrarrevolution. New York: Basic Books, 1968.

46. Herschel Hardin. A Nation Unaware. The Canadian Economic Culture. Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1974, pp. 2-3.

47. Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Summary of Briefs and Hearings. Infotmation Services: Department of Communications, Government of Canada, January 1982, p. 236.

48. Ibid., pp. 214-218 & 220-221.

49. Ibid., pp. 227-229.

50. Ibid., p. 4.

51. George Grant. Lament for a Nation. The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism. Toronto: The Canadian Publishers, McClelland Stewart, Ltd., 1965, p. 42.

52. Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Summary of Briefs and Hearings. Information Services: Department of Communications, Government of Canada, January 1982, p. 228.

53. Ibid., p. 16.

54. Ibid., p. 4.

55. Ibid., p. 282.

56. Towards a New National Broadcasting Policy. Department of Communications: Government of Canada, February, 1983.

57. Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Summary of Briefs and Hearings. Information Services: Department of Communications, Government of Canada, January 1982, p. 228.

CHAPTER THREE

The Mexican Public Hearing (1983)

This chapter will examine the recent popular convocation on communications and culture organized by the Government of Mexico from March through May of 1983. Its purpose was to hear opinions and proposals for the formulation of a general public policy known as the "Plan Nacional de Desarrollo," and which included a chapter on communications policy. For that purpose, the Ministry of the Interior (Secretaría de Gobernación), invited representatives of workers' organizations, peasants' associations, professionals, universities, journalists, and the public to express their views in a series of hearings known as the "Foros Nacionales de Consulta Popular". These were to be held nationally and were to be the starting point of a permanent process of popular consultation.

Unlike Canada, this is the first time in Mexico that the government made a strong effort to hear all the parties involved in media-related production, broadcasting, and analysis.[1] The hearings were divided into different committees depending on the subject under discussion. These committees were consituted by members of some of the different associations and institutions involved (mainly universities and government agencies) who had been appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. Their job was to coordinate the hearings and to produce a summary of the

proposals which were to be presented in written form before being presented in public. The written presentations have since appeared as several volumes divided according to the main subject discussed, from which it is particularly important to mention just a few: a) Sovereignty and national identity; b) Information, culture and entertainment; and c) Social participation.

This chapter will examine a sample of the above dealing with the question of cultural identity as viewed from the communications perspective. The reader will find arguments which coincide rather surprisingly with those presented before the Federal Policy Review Committee in Canada and which convey a similar preoccupation as to the direction to be taken in the upcoming years in order to preserve culture and national values through the broadcasting media. The categories developed for this analysis will be the same as those used in the preceding chapter:

A) New Communications Technologies and Availability of Information;

B) Freedom of Communication (freedom of speech; freedom to inform/be informed);

C) The Economics of the Broadcasting Industry;

D) Roles of Communication Institutions;

E) The Fostering of National Identity and Cultural Sovereignty;

These were the issues to be addressed by the Mexican hearings, and they are common to the policy-making process in

both Canada and Mexico. For almost every Canadian argument posed under the above mentioned categories, Mexican presenters had something to say as well. In spite of differences in culture, in administrative procedures, in the degree of development of the communications media, and in the procedure of the hearings themselves. These two countries both pose the notion of cultural identity as a focal point for the evolution of policy trends. This is perhaps a reflection of wider cultural policy concerns now being manifested internationally.

In Mexico, land of contrasts, the urban population seems to be more homogeneous than the rural one. The country is essentially the product of a mixture of two cultures: the Spanish and the Mexica or Aztec. It furthermore happens to share a common border with the most powerful country on earth, i.e., the United States. Mexico is also the door of access to the rest of Latin America, with which it shares a heritage, a language and the many Indian roots of its own culture. In fact, whatever Latin American problems might exist, Mexico reflects them to its neighbors and to the rest of the world; its role is like that of the official spokesman for Third World countries in America. It is just now that Mexico is beginning to make its presence felt: its economic power during the 70's and its financial disaster during the 80's forced it to assume a definite position towards itself and towards others.

As suggested in earlier chapters, the Mexican philosophy of culture emerged as a result of the need to define the cultural limits of the nation, at a time when it did not have

the resources to nurture this philosophy and produce an impact on the rest of the world. This tendency had been latent since then.

When Samuel Ramos spoke about the Mexican as being inferior to other peoples,[2] he meant that Mexican culture tended to import foreign cultural models because of the lack of confidence in the local ones. During the 30's and 40's a nationalistic movement resulted as a reaction to the continued importation of inadequate foreign cultural models. The outcome of such a dichotomy has not constituted an advantage for the country, it has served rather as a vehicle for cultural isolation and has facilitated cultural penetration. Mexico went through three different stages in the history of its philosophy: a) from the adoption and importation of European thought and then of the American 'way of thinking' to b) the nationalistic outcome and rejection of all the above which gave as a result a true philosophy of 'lo mexicano' to c) further isolation from the rest of the world which left the country out of current cultural practices and therefore made it vulnerable to cultural penetrations through new technological means.

> It can now be asserted that the philosophy of lo mexicano has served as an opium in the sense that it has appropriated the intellectual labor of Mexican thinkers, thus averting their impact on the material conditions of the country. This appropriation has been determined by subjective positions typified by an avoidance of critical thought, rejection of foreign ideas, low status in international academic circles, a symbolic relationship with the government, lack of institutional support and isolation from current philosophical practices.[3]

Thus Mexico began to feel isolated from others. Economically, culturally, and technologically it fell behind the rest of the industrialized world. As with the rest of Latin America, its response was the creation of the 'philosophy of marginality' which was an answer to ineffective nationalistic efforts aimed at achieving cultural independence. But even though the notion of philosophy of marginality seems to be distinctive and identifying, it can also "be a sign of more intensive economic and political exploitation". Therefore it is not a Latin American or Mexican characteristic but "a gift of the centre to the periphery. Consciousness of their marginality has made Mexican and more generally Latin American philosophers hypercritical with regard to the nature of their work and has caused them to doubt their vocations".[4]

There was a reminder of all of these meanings of marginality and of indignation during the Mexican hearings. There were also false pride and gestures towards the government for what it had done or not done. There were clear divergences within the views expressed by participants whether they were intellectuals, media professionals, critics of the status quo or conservatives, but in general they all had a clear and obvious awareness of their cultural marginality.

The political implications of "los Foros Nacionales de Consulta Popular" will be hard to forsee; for the most part, this political move has gained the present government a vote of confidence. It is, however, very unlikely that drastic changes in the Mexican communications system will soon result, but the cultural effect of this popular participation

in a policy making process should bring a renewal of social efforts to the nation.[5]

The most important area of debate in which clear parallels between the Canadian and the Mexican cases can be drawn concerns sovereignty, national identity and culture. More than 200 presentations were devoted to these topics, that is to say 60% of all presentations concerned with radio and television. This underlines the fact that broadcasting, as compared to the other communications media, plays an important role in Mexico and must thus be considered the main subject of any future communications policy dealing with culture.

As regards the communications issues dealt with during the Mexican hearings, the positions of the presenters will be argued within the framework provided by the already developed analytical categories:

A) NEW COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES AND AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION

Four main arguments were presented in this area dealing with how Mexico has taken advantage of its technology and/or the sectors in which its technology has to be improved.

1) Mexican broadcasting although owned by nationals depends on foreign ways of production and distribution of information.

One of the main focuses of the presentations on this

subject was the business corporations, all transnational in origin, which have made technological advances available to the country.[6] Concern over cultural penetration typically takes the form of inquiry into the ownership of the means of production rather than denunciation of the cultural origin of the programming itself. This is because the capitalistic seed planted in young communications/production entrepreneurs not only encourages to adopt foreign programming contents but also causes them to be subject to foreign forms of ownership and control. (This argument will be examined further when we review the economics of the broadcasting industry in Mexico).

As a result, a second argument that aims to prevent further technological and communications dependency not only of Mexico upon foreign nations but also of outlying regions upon the capital of Mexico as well, reads as follows:

2) Regional and municipal broadcasting should be promoted as a means of avoiding centralization and strengthening local media.

The process of regionalization will strengthen local media as well as help in promoting the development of regional cultural characteristics by allowing them cultural expression. It is a central concern that communities which have become isolated should be recognised and should be able to make their voices heard. The participants in the hearings emphasized that in order for communities to achieve cultural self-expression it is necessary that appropriate channels be created.[7]

> La comunicación son partes y propiedad de los grupos sociales. El Estado debe intervenir para garantizar la participación popular en los medios. Las organizaciones populares deben ganar los medios, utilizarlos e integrarlos al conjunto de sus actividades. ¿Qué clase de país, qué clase de gobierno, qué clase de profesionales somos que permitimos con indolencia la utilización de los medios de comunicación para intereses mercantiles y tan mercenarios cuando la educación y el fortalecimiento de la cultura y la identidad nacional son tan urgentes?[8]

Communications technology is not as extensively developed in Mexico as it is in Canada. Except for regular broadcasting using transmitters and master antennae, there are no other advanced technological means of broadcasting. Mexico is planning to have its own satellite for telecommunications purposes in the near future, and is struggling with the as yet uncertain status of cable television. Cable television in Mexico was introduced by the private broadcasting company called Televisa, (which is the largest communications monopoly in the country originally founded by Ascárraga) as a distributor of American programming (in English) to individual suscribers.

3) Cable television in Mexico is a direct threat to national cultural identity.

In Mexico mass marketing in broadcasting has always been equivalent to commercial success; and the only way stations could achieve commercial success was by including foreign, mainly American material, in their programming schedules. It was stressed during the hearings that such programming ought

to be reduced to a minimum and replaced with national productions. As an issue this brought up the question of cable television which is mainly a distribution service of foreign signals.

> También la difusión de programas de carácter pedagógico en que resalten nuestros valores estéticos no mitificados ni comercializados (musica clásica, danza, canto, teatro, etc) para contraponerlos a los que por conducto de la televisión comercial nos envían del extranjero con su nociva influencia, asi como los que llegan por Cablevisión y sus filiales y subsidiarias en el país, en los que solo se programan canales extranjeros en lengua inglesa, siendo solamente uno de ellos cultural.[9]

It was also suggested during the hearings that the Mexican cable companies be forced to provide the same amount of national material on the American program service they currently distribute.

4) Mexicans should set an example in joining efforts to serve the nation with the available broadcasting technology.

Mexico's broadcasting system is constituted of both private and public elements. These are essentially, one private monopoly which controls all commercial television and radio stations, and one public broadcasting monopoly composed of two television channels (one broadcasts cultural programming and the other tries to compete with the private channels), as well as production facilities for governmental purposes.

Broadcasting in Mexico is taxed by requiring stations to

devote 12.5% of their air time to public services. This rule applies mainly to private broadcaters since public stations are frequently government owned. The 12.5% of air time should serve to broadcast government-produced programs and ads. Nevertheless, such quotas are never filled and the regulation does not specify that it be retroactive or cumulative.

During the hearings, presenters belonging both to governmental institutions and to private broadcasters stressed the fact that Mexican broadcasting should continue to perform its function within this framework, and that whatever improvements may be deemed necessary, be carried out in a joint effort between all the parties involved.[10] It was pointed out, however, that since the private sector (Televisa) has provided most of the technological infrastructure, the government could not, in return, make strong demands in other areas. In fact, it has been quite the opposite: the State has always payed the private sector back with gratitude and renewed licences.

> En octubre de 1980, 'en comunidad de propósitos y esfuerzos', el gobierno federal y el monopolio privado de Televisa firmaron un convenio para 'obtener, en meta común, la cobertura por televisión de todo el territorio nacional'. Televisa se comprometió a instalar 46 estaciones terrenas para enlace con satélite, recurso tecnológico que preocupa aún a los defensores de la soberanía nacional. En el acto de la firma quedo de manifiesto el espíritu de armonía existente entre funcionarios gubernamentales y Televisa... Seis dias antes de abandonar su cargo, el 24 de noviembre de 1982, el presidente José López Portillo otorgó a Televisa la concesión para instalar 95 estaciones mas en 23 entidades federativas, cuando el

> consorcio monopólico ya contaba con 61 repetidoras y 67 transmisores de baja potencia.[11]

The above mentioned private broadcasting sector is responsible for much of the American programming being broadcast on Mexican airwaves. By 1980, the private corporation Televisa, formerly Telesistema Mexicano, owned or sold programming to 72% of all Mexican television and radio stations while exporting material to the rest of Central and South America. Social values, the formation of cultural consciousness, and national sovereignty via the airwaves depend, in Mexico, on the views of the private sector, which essentially defends its own enterprises, and on the centralist vision of the government which responds to the unilateral view of the political party in power. On this, Florence Toussaint has said:

> Una sola empresa privada, no puede compartir a partes iguales con el Estado un patrimonio que debe estar equitativamente repartido entre todos los mexicanos.[12]

On the other hand, Mexico is preparing its entrance into the era of the telecommunications revolution by scheduling the launch, by NASA in 1985, of its own "Morelos" satellite (named after a national hero), with which it expects to serve national needs better. This event has already provoked very heated debate, if not within the overall discussion provided by the hearings, at least within the community of Mexican communications researchers. The researchers claim that the subject was not officially put up for discussion as part of the popular process of consultation created by the

government.

Fátima Fernández Christlieb head of the Asociación Mexicana de Investigadores de la Comunicación, A.C., (AMIC) gave a presentation which was specially important in this respect since it also emphasized that the previous government had asked for consensus when delimiting the national communications policy, and that at the time AMIC gave a report called "Bases Estratégicas para la Construcción de un Sistema de Comunicación Social" which was not taken into consideration at all. This time, AMIC questioned the role of the "Morelos" satellite in a broadcasting environment which has always responded to private interests and in which public consensus has never had any value.

By having its own telecommunications satellite, AMIC said, Mexico could become independent and foster its national autonomy. The satellite could, however, also reinforce dependency ties already in existence. The AMIC representative said:

> No se trata de rechazar viseralmente los avancés tecnológicos. (...) Sabemos que un satélite es al mismo tiempo tecnología de guerra. Baste recordar que en los últimos diez años Estados Unidos y la Union Soviética gastaron 300,000 millones de dólares para poner en órbita 1,736 satélites que en un 76% han sido destinados a usos militares. Poseer un satélite propio podría significar para México un acto de autonomía respecto a Intelsat o a la Western Union, pero de utilizarse con la lógica vertical de nuestro actual sistema de comunicación social, no se traduciría jamás en un acto de soberanía nacional, seria un simple puente espacial entre cúpulas empresariales y estatales al margen de la sociedad.[13]

This statement reflects the overall performance of Mexico during the past 40 years as regards technology and modernization. While acknowledging that technology can raise the living standards of society, Mexican thinkers fear the loss of national identity and traditional values, and recall that Third World countries have always been subject to the imposition of foreign values by imperialistic powers. These are concepts contained in the notion of national sovereignty as suggested by Fernández Christlieb. The role of technology in this case, remains the same as before: whether it is the introduction of new agricultural methods or the possiblity of nation-wide telecommunications, Mexico realizes the dangers involved in its adoption:

> Mexican history could be examined from its native circumstances or from its dependence upon foreign powers. While the truth rests on both internal and external factors, the notion of the pernicious effect of foreign influence on Mexico has been a major theme in the search for national identity. The foreign model provided Mexico with a developmental dilemma: entry into the modern world depended on a rationale and an infrastructure derived from advanced Western technology, and this created a conflict between progress and tradition.[14]

In fact, the question of cultural dependence associated with technology has a very simple solution: 'if we abolish the introduction of new technology we will abolish automatically the effects of further cultural penetration'. Mexico, however, is beginning to feel the urge for participation in a changing world, and traditional attempts to cut down on imperialistic advances by isolating the

country are now discarded. Mexico needs to develop its communications infrastructure in order to link the various parts of the country. Unfortunately most of this technology has to be imported because, unlike Canada, Mexico has not succeeded in the area of technological production for communications.

B) FREEDOM OF COMMUNICATION (FREEDOM OF SPEECH, FREEDOM TO INFORM/BE INFORMED)

This notion has been a subject of primary importance for Mexico since the concept of freedom of information was created and discussed under José López Portillo's presidential regime during which the right to inform/be informed was added as an amendment to the 6th constitutional article. Unfortunately the debate did not cristallize into any definite policy. Thus, the concept was revived as part of the "foros nacionales de consulta popular". Several presenters stressed the need for a clear communications policy on this matter. The arguments favorable to the notion of freedom of communications underlined the fact that Mexico ought to have a true communications system through which collective expression and national cultural broadcasting would be possible. Some of those arguments also outlined consequences related to the possible dangerous outcome of cultural dependency.

1) <u>Broadcasting in Mexico should serve the purposes of a sovereign nation</u>.

Presenters to the hearings condemned Mexico's governing elite for handing the country's destinies over to foreign interests. The fact that Mexico is dependent upon imperial powers (namely the U.S.) is not due to the domination of foreign enemy forces but to Mexico's own transcultural tendency which has paved the way for foreign domination. Evelina Dagnino states:

> Los efectos de la dependencia cultural en las vidas de los lationamericanos no son consecuencia de una 'invasión dirigida por un enemigo extranjero', sino por una elección hecha por su propia clase dirigente en nombre del desarrollo nacional. Mediante esa elección, la vida nacional y la cultura nacional son subordinadas a la dinámica del sistema capitalista internacional, sometiendo a la cultura nacional a una forma de homogeneización que se considera un requisito para el mantenimiento de un sistema internacional.[15]

Therefore, it is vital for Mexico as a nation to recognize its internal tendency to allow foreign cultural forms of expression to become overlaid upon those of national origin. To understand and enjoy foreign cultural expressions is not wrong, as was stated during the hearings, what is wrong is to deny the same opportunity to one's own.[16]

2) <u>There is an unbalanced international flow of information which affects Mexico</u>.

It was said during the hearings that the importation of technological and cultural products has made Mexico a passive receiver of information belonging to a culture which does not correspond to its reality and with which Mexicans can not

identify. As a consequence, Mexican culture is undervalued since not only is Mexico receiving information through American media trespassing upon its borders but is also reproducing this information within the framework of its own internal communications system.

The fine line dividing developed from underdeveloped countries, according to some presenters at the hearings, seems to be technology. To obtain technology means attaining modernization, but it also could mean the loss of cultural sovereignty.

> (..) son los países desarrollados los que en cierta manera controlan el flujo de los mensajes en el ámbito internacional. Su capacidad en materia tecnológica y técnica en comunicación los posibilita para ello. Esto da como resultado un marcado desequilibrio entre los países desarrollados y los que aún están en vias de desarrollo; mientras los países desarrollados controlan tanto la tecnología de los medios como el flujo de la información, a la mayoria de los países en vias de desarrollo se les ha asignado un papel de receptores. Tanto en la transferencia de tecnología como en la de productos socioculturales, los países desarrollados estan fomentando un modo de vida que muchas veces no responde a la realidad de los países receptores. De esta manera la dependencia económica se traduce también en una dependencia intelectual y cultural. Esto tiene grandes implicaciones en la identidad nacional. No es posible conservar una cultura propia que sea constantemente influida por mensajes que no se adecúan al contexto social de una nación, puesto que en cada nación se desarrolla una política, cultura y vida nacional.[18] (My underlining).

It is clear then, as presented by the "foros" that culture, national life and identity are to be regarded as crucial in any national communications policy which takes

into consideration alternatives to the introduction of new technological imports.

3) Mexicans should be talked to in "their own language".

In the opinion of some presenters, the essence of the threat to Mexico's culture resides in the fact that programming is conceived as independent from community or national conerns, interests or needs. It is, therefore, essential that programs broadcast within the national territory respond to these requirements. At present, not only is foreign material being broadcast via Mexican airwaves but stations are also licenced to broadcast in languages other than Spanish; it is not surprising then that one can see peasants wearing "I love NY" t-shirts without even knowing what they mean.

The concerns voiced by presenters at the hearings emphasized the need to foster social participation in the media. They also stressed that such an achievement can only be possible if the people are allowed to speak about what is important to them instead of listening to what is important to others. Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid has said that cultural nationalism is an indispensable condition for the social independence of the nation.[19] During the hearings, presenters from all social and political groups reminded the government of its committment to national broadcasting goals as well as of its failures. Some even recognized that the task is too big to be done by the State alone.[20]

4) Mexico's Northern border situation presents a challenge to local broadcasters.

Most of the towns bordering the United States are rich in industry or tourism. There is a free-flow of broadcast programming between the two countries within a limited range of the border. Mexicans receive American programming and Mexican broadcasters transmit to a large number of Spanish-speaking Americans living particularly in Texas and California. According to the representatives of local stations, however, the American influence is much too hard to resist: people living in communities near the American border can no longer relate to either culture.[21]

5) Mexican cultural broadcasting institutions do not respond to actual cultural needs.

There were essentially four ways in which culture was broadcast in Mexico: a) on radio, via the government station 'Radio México', b) via the one-hour weekly program 'La Hora Nacional' produced by the government and heard nationally on Sundays at 10:00 P.M., c) via Channel 13 (television) which is State-owned, and d) via Channel 11 (television) which belongs to the Mexican Polytechnic Institute. Private broadcasters had remained non-partisan as to the task of producing culture. Their main goal had always been and will always continue to be business through entertainment. It was not unexpected, however, when in March of 1983 the private monopoly Televisa decided to transform one of its four

nation-wide channels into a cultural one by agreeing to let the National University of Mexico use its (Televisa's) installations for the production and broadcasting of cultural programs.

The above mentioned agreement was seen with displeasure by almost every university, political party or communications analyst. Most of them agreed that it had been a political move carried out in order to avoid the revocation of its licence which was due to expire in the near future by pandering to the government and helping it in its cultural goals. *(Licences are granted for a period of 30 years under the Mexican Broadcasting Act). The subject was brought up for discussion during the national hearings on communications:

> El experimento falló rotundamente. Al parecer Televisa no esta preparada para transmitir cultura. Sus teóricos, sus concepciones, su ideología, su actitud ante los valores del país se lo impiden. Para que realmente pudiera hacer cultura y contribuir a la educación de México sería indispensable que modificara sustancialmente su postura ideológica y se desembarazara de sus graves prejuicios, lo que es imposible. Televisa, pese a todo, seguirá representando los aspectos mas negativos y retrógrados. Ahora bien, si Televisa no hace cultura, al Estado le le corresponde encargarse de dicha tarea. Es evidente que, -pese a saber el daño que le hace al pueblo mexicano- el gobierno no tocará ni presionará al consorcio televisivo. Entonces, con la televisión comercial al frente, a los canales estatales no les queda mas que, como dice la voz popular, predicar con el ejemplo. Si estos tienen éxito habrán descubierto un gran campo. Asi, quizás obliguen a la iniciativa privada a modificar sus criterios.[22]

As a conclusion, one could say that the private sector in Mexico cannot be asked to change its commercial goals and transform them into cultural goals without leading into failure. Governments seem to be left with the task of producing culture and making appropriate use of broadcasting for cultural purposes: and yet their efforts appear not to be enough.

Mexican identity is being diluted due to an unbalanced relationship with the United States. Whether or not Mexico's presence is being felt in the rest of the world hardly matters to the U.S. which has responded with indifference to matters of mutual interest. This attitude has had a counterproductive effect on Mexican cultural building since "contempt or opposition incorporate at least acknowledgement of the other. Indifference and ignorance dissolve a dimension of the other's being, that dimension which William James called the "social self".[23]

C) THE ECONOMICS OF THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY

Whatever the private radio and television monopoly does, affects the overall performance of the broadcasting industry directly. State-owned stations frequently have to follow up private sector patterns and ideas without really being able to compete just in order to share in a percentage of the audience.

Internationally, however, Mexico does contribute to the overall input of the programming of other Spanish-speaking countries, although internally the country is a victim of the

Americanization phenomenon, i.e. American programming constitutes an important part of its viewers' and listeners' preferences. During the hearings, presentations on the subject reflected much of the above mentioned phenomenon.

1) Mexico's poor economy and technology do not allow the country to compete (with the U.S.).

It has been said repeatedly that Mexicans receive a dangerous influence from foreign programming but no one has offered compelling results. Nonetheless, during the hearings it was recalled once more that the country ought to fear cultural penetration, and that the only way to balance the scales was to control the quality of national productions so as to improve the opportunities given to the people for cultural representativeness and expression.

> El libre flujo de la información, tan predicado y apoyado por los países desarrollados, en especial por los Estados Unidos, no representaría amenaza para nuestra identidad nacional si no fuera por la tremenda diferencia que existe entre la gigantesca corriente de información que nos llega de afuera y la que producimos aquí. Nuestra precaria economía y tecnología no nos permiten producir tanta comunicación como para competir con los gigantes, pero sí podemos controlar la nuestra de manera que aumentememos las opciones para el pueblo a fin de que exista una mayor representatividad de las corrientes culturales e ideológicas propias que hasta ahora se han visto relegadas por los actuales medios de comunicación en México.[24]

The trouble with such a course of action is that the Mexican public has always shown a strong preference for

American programming which is consumed by Mexican viewers and listeners in high proportion when compared to national productions. It is very unlikely that people will start wanting or liking material that traditionally has only been a poor copy of the original foreign productions. Mexican producers have always chosen the option of 'the proven formula' instead of trying new ideas themselves.

Thus, the argument applies to Mexico almost in the same sense as it did in the case of Canada.

2) The marketplace produces a double "disincentive" that works in favor of American programming.

The presenter from the National University of Mexico, Delia Crovi, among other statements, reminded members of the committee on television that there can be no fostering of national identity through the broadcast media so long as broadcasters continue to purchase American programming and translate it into Spanish, instead of contributing to the range of choices available via national productions. The lack of comittment on their part, she said, resides mainly in that the Mexican Broadcasting Act is unclear about its national content requirements for programming. Therefore, the permissiveness of the legislation has encouraged the country to borrow a form of ideology which is not native to it.

> Sabemos que a los empresarios de la TV les sigue resultando mucho mas barato y sobre todo menos riesgoso, comprar series producidas en los Estados Unidos, reproducidas hasta el cansancio,

> promoverlas por todos los medios y luego distribuídas por un Tercer Mundo que lucha por lograr un Nuevo Orden Informativo y por establecer claras Políticas Nacionales de Comunicación que garanticen, justamente, la soberanía e identidad nacional (...) Asi las costumbres populares representadas en hábitos y modos de ver la vida propios de la identidad nacional, van siendo reemplazadas por nuevas formas de comportamiento, presentes siempre en los mensajes que transmite la TV en forma de difusión o entretenimiento.[25]

The whole phenomenon of the consumption of American broadcasting material can be characterized by the following form of reasoning: Broadcasters claim they give the public what it wants when in reality they have trained people to like what they broadcast. It would, at this point, be very difficult to reverse such an effect since such viewing habits have been encouraged and nourished over the years. Similarities between this phenomenon and the case of Canada are quite interesting.

3) <u>There should be ways to encourage private broadcasters to fulfill their roles adequately</u>.

The private sector in Mexico has been reluctant to embrace the task of production of culture through the airwaves. Private enterpreneurs believe this is a job that ought to be done by the government, and that if the government fails to fulfill its role this should have nothing to do with the success of commercial broadcasting. The private broadcasting monopoly, Televisa, has sometimes agreed to lend air time for public service purposes, but only if it

is acquitted as part of its taxation requirements or when there is the prospect of other deals.[26]

It was said during the hearings:

> Los empresarios tratan a la información como mercancía y a la realidad como espectáculo, respondiendo asi a intereses muy definidos: asegurar sus propias ganancias.[27]

Hence, national identity is not something that interests the private broadcasting sector, nor the public one for that matter. Each one is just trying to cŏmpete with the other. However, as was constantly emphasized during the hearings, the government should find a wāy to encourage them to carry out their responsibilities.[28] Moreover, the leading argument under this category which summarizes and explains the underlying notion is the following one:

4) <u>The ownership of the media (who is profiting from what and under what legal framework) is the real core of Mexican broadcasting</u>.

In Mexico, the dichotomy between the private and public sectors is beginning to fade. Contrary to the general opinion put forward by some presenters at the hearings that the evil tendencies of the private broadcasting sector are colliding with unsuccessful governmental efforts to preserve culture, a new social class is in fact being born, i.e. the dominant class constituted by joint private and public

interests which help each other and which have transformed the broadcasting activity into a class monopoly. It is obvious, then, that the geographical proximity of the United States is not the sole cause for the gradual loss of cultural sovereignty. The internal alliance between public and private sectors of power is evident and is related to corporations which are transnational in nature.

> Al margen de la frecuente manía determinista (se sabe que los medios no son la única causa de la conformación cultural de un país), hay que reconocer que no es mas sugerente la condición de zona geográfica que la de clase social para dilucidar hipotéticamente, la relación de los medios televisivos con la soberanía y la identidad nacionales. Lo que importa es la propiedad de los medios, a quiénes pertenecen, quiénes son los dueños, bajo qué régimen jurídico se explotan. Y es evidente que, como prácticamente todos los medios, la televisión en México es un monopolio de clase. Que se disimule mediante el artificio retórico de las expresiones "sector público" y "sector privado", aparentemente opuestas, no altera en lo esencial esa práctica del poder por una misma clase dominante. Asi, en ninguna area de la vida nacional se ve de manera tan dibujada la colusión entre los sectores público y privado como en el manejo de la televisión: el solapamiento de las sucesivas administraciones priístas* a la creación y la consolidación del monopolio de Televisa.[29]

* Pertaining to the PRI, that is, the Revolutionary Institutional Party, which has been in power in Mexico since 1929.

Governmental reluctance to amend the Broadcasting Act which dates from 1960 and which has become obsolete, can be

considered sufficient proof of the argument just presented. Whether the participation of the State in private enterprise is questionable or not, the fact remains that licensing in broadcasting has traditionally been seen as a gift of commercial success from here to eternity,[30] and the revocation of the licence will always remain only as a last resource, (since deals are always possible). It is not surprising then, that broadcasters have always taken advantage of such a long period of time, and have made good use of it.

> Desde hace muchos años, y desde diversas posiciones ideológicas, se viene cuestionando la transculturización, la pérdida de la identidad nacional y el deterioro de los valores propios que ha propiciado fundamentalmente la televisión concesionada en México a los particulares.[31]

Finally, considering the question of the economics of the broadcasting industry in Mexico, it all comes down to: a) there is a loss in national identity and cultural values through the media; b) private broadcasters have fostered that loss by promoting foreign (American) programming instead of producing material of their own, and c) the government has allowed the private sector its present power status because in the end it has benefited from it as part of the same structure of class and power. In fact, as Solomon Lipp pointed out in referring to Zea:

> To sum up, the nature of Mexican, and by extension Latin American identity, is intimately tied in with the solution of two types of conflict which Zea designates as: (1) vertical, in the sense of marxist class struggle within a given

country, and (2) horizontal, i.e. the struggle between colonial peoples and the more developed imperialist nations.[32]

D) ROLES OF COMMUNICATION INSTITUTIONS

On the basis of some of the arguments presented above, the general conclusion reached by the presenters at the hearings was as follows:

1) Cultural institutions in Mexico in relation to broadcasting media have not adequately fulfilled their roles.

There are very few television and radio stations (one TV station and two radio stations) which can be considered exceptions to this rule. (Canal Once, Radio México and Radio Educación). The rest have devoted their efforts to commercial marketing. In an attempt to share a percentage of the audience there have been some governmental efforts to produce educational and cultural material, but in the end, even public stations have followed the lead of commercialization.

Two clearly different positions were stated by the presenters in regard to this matter: one position insisted that the private sector be forced to contribute to the broadcasting of culture and popular expression, and the other stated that this is a task best undertaken by the State, even if so far it has failed to make good use of the 12.5% of air time that by law corresponds to public service broadcasting. If the government cannot meet this need, maybe educational

institutions can.

> Sería trascendente que el 12.5% fuera reglamentado para el uso de las instituciones educativas, con el fin de que éstas cumplieran con un doble objetivo: el de otorgar al pueblo los medios adecuados para que esten informados y conozcan sus raíces, cultura y tradiciones que conlleven al encuentro de nuestra identidad nacional.[33]

In spite of a clear understanding of the problematic involved, the presenters called for cultural production and thé creation or rehabilitation of the cultural institutions involved. A majority of them stated that cultural identity should be a primary goal of programming.

> The search for identity is characteristic of peoples bound in some common way and compelled to understand themselves in terms of their history and their relationship to the rest of the world.[34]

E) DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY

This topic emerged as the main issue brought up by the "Foros Nacionales de Consulta Popular", containing as many as six principal arguments discussed during the hearings and followed only in importance by the debate on freedom of information.

There were several interesting attempts to define national identity and cultural sovereignty among the presenters. Some of these are presented below in translated form preserving the general meaning of the statement; others are quoted literally:

> El principio denominado identidad nacional, se entiende, a nuestro juicio, como aquél que se refiere a la formación de una conciencia de pertenecer a un pueblo, agrupado como nación, y que atiende a una industria y a similares patrios que le son afines, a un destino común impregnado de un sentimiento de solidaridad y ayuda mutua, que como principio y anhelo constituye la principal meta del trabajo diario de gobernantes y gobernados.[35]

> -Sovereignty and national identity are to be referred to as the cohesive links that should exist among the inhabitants of a territory who share common values and history.[36]

> -The concept of identity is an invention of the State; a necessity created by the Church; a matter of family business and an enforced aid of capitalistic growth. It is also a mythic fortune within reach of the mass media, and at the same time, identity is the only cohesive element which people have.[37]

> La identidad nacional (...) es el conjunto de características sociales, políticas e históricas que conforman la voluntad de afirmar el caracter propio, de cobrar conciencia de lo que se es, de asumir los problemas, de la capacidad indiscutida de mantener una unidad política y cultural que nos distinga de los demas pueblos de la Tierra. Esto es la razón y el sustento de la tarea permanente por la independencia económica, política y cultural de México.[38]

The above mentioned definitions were elaborated in the course of the hearings as a personal attempt on the part of the presenters to clarify the concept of national and cultural identity for themselves. All of them, in spite of conceptual differences, agreed that the fostering of national

sovereignty and cultural identity were the only alternative to foreign cultural penetration.

The first main argument to be exposed during the hearings represents a consensus since it includes the ideas presented by members of different political and professional associations and by communications scholars alike:

1) We should encourage any attempt towards national identity goals within the media.

Presenters to the hearings emphasized the fact that Mexican culture should be reinvigorated by reviving forgotten traditions and promoting contemporary thought.

It was also stressed that a nation achieves its cultural identity when it finds its characteristic values, and that the communications media have the responsibility of promoting and diffusing such values since they have the power to give back the culture now being displaced by another which is foreign in nature.[39]

The battle for sovereignty, if any, should be fought not in terms of defence of territory but in terms of values being infiltrated into the Mexican nation.

> Con el avance de la técnica y el surgimiento de los medios de comunicación colectiva, la lucha nacionalista se da en términos de la defensa de una soberanía amenazada no tanto en los limites territoriales, sino en la persistente penetración de valores extranjeros ajenos a las necesidades y alcances de la sociedad mexicana.[40]

In the end, the above mentioned arguments oscillated

between two ideas: one underlined the importance of the cultural identity question, the other proposed concrete alternatives to solve the problem such as the ones described in the following notion:

2) There is a strong need to promote national identity in Mexico.

The two concrete alternatives proposed on the subject were the following:

a) to create series and produce programming based on Mexico's history, heritage and tradition;

b) to establish community groups in charge of supervising the contents of the audiovisual material being broadcast via the media so as to avoid those that do not correspond to the reality of the country.[41]

These suggestions were made as a starting point for discussion which emphasized that the communications system has always been overlooked by previous Administrations while directing their efforts to the creation of national policies. The presenters underlined that one of the principal goals of the present Administration must be the fostering of national cohesion, the increase in social participation and the promotion of cultural identity.[42] Even though it is clear that the government must find means to achieve such goals and that the process will only have long term results, it is of paramount importance that the subject be asserted and cristallized into concrete policy proposals.

3) Let us not demand the isolation of the country, only the appreciation of its national culture and its future healthy development.

One of the presenters made an extraordinary remark reminding those attending the hearings that national identity should not mean nationalism, ethnocentrism or cultural isolation. He even mentioned Leopoldo Zea when he stated that his philosophy of culture conceptualized any culture as a dynamic participant in the whole universality of culture. Thus, in that sense the Mexican culture should take sustenance from the benefits of the universality while looking for ways to particularize itself.

> (...) la malformación o formación de la cultura nacional, (esta dada) por todos los medios de difusión y las instituciones encargadas de captar y generar la cultura; asimismo, quiero aclarar que no pretendo que la región se convierta en una isla, sino que, retomando las palabras de Leopoldo Zea, es en base a una cultura nacional que se puede asimilar una cultura universal o lo que ésta tenga de asimilable, que no implique la disolucion de la cultura propia sino que propicie su desarrollo.[43]

Mexico realizes that its culture cannot be reduced to traditional conceptualizations of folklore and native expression. Mexican culture has always been a mixture of local and foreign traditions. It has been sustained by European and American thought alike. Hence, it should continue to benefit from them in order to enhance and develop until it reaches its own definition. This cannot be done unless national expression is given preeminence over other

kinds of expression. Consequently, one of the claims that resulted from the hearings was that of the poor quality of the national material being presented via the airwaves.

4) It is of primary importance to establish clear regulatory parameters to promote the production of quality national content for programming.

The Mexican Broadcasting Act is not clear in specifying the amount of national programming to be broadcast; it mentions however, that the relationship between commercial advertising and other kinds of programming be fair and contemplate an "adequate balance" for the viewers' sake. Therefore, presenters to the hearings proposed that new requirements be specified and that programming fostering national identity values and cultural expression be stepped up.[44]

Nevertheless, the question of national content requirements is just one side of the problem; there are other issues at stake in revising the legislation. In fact, the government has not considered such a possibility even though a suggestion in that sense has frequently been made. At the hearings, it was made again:

5) New broadcasting legislation should be created.

Several concrete proposals were made concerning what the new legislation should contemplate as important and include as part of a new communications policy. These proposals

were to:

a) reformulate the actual regulatory framework as to respond to present needs;

b) delimit the objectives of the different governmental agencies involved in broadcasting to avoid confusion;

c) encourage national productions and control the importation and distribution of foreign material;

d) train communications professionals who can promote new ways of expression and revitalize those which correspond to the Mexican identity.

It was also stressed during the hearings that a clear governmental stance on this matter would bring an end to violations, inconsistencies and ambiguities in broadcasting.

> Sólo operando profundos cambios al interior de los sistemas de comunicación, se puede proteger la identidad nacional. Estos cambios deben ser avalados y garantizados por el Estado mediante la promulgación de una legislación que represente una verdadera protección a la soberanía, pero que al mismo tiempo permita y fomente la expresión de todos los grupos sociales.[45]

Finally, the creation of a new Broadcasting Act or the corresponding amendments to the present one, would have to represent the starting point of more profound alterations, namely the formulation of national communications policy parameters, or vice versa.

6) Mexico ought to have a thorough examination of the communications framework operating at present.

With American technology, Mexico has also adopted

outside ways of life. In the communications arena, such ways of life, values and culture have been made part of the regular input of the broadcasting system, and the system has promoted, recreated and benefited from them. Such is the communications scheme operating at present. But if national culture and identity ought to be preserved, the scheme has to evolve and be modified in order to respond to other more compelling needs.

> (...) es aconsejable que el poder político, como representante legítimo del interés nacional, empiece por delimitar formas y métodos para el uso de los medios de comunicación, de modo tal que sin lesionar los derechos constitucionales, México este en posibilidades de preservar su identidad y reorientar su desarrollo socio-cultural. Aunque no hay todavía un parametro ideal para definir cuál debe ser el concurso del Estado en el espacio comunicador, sí hay un sentimiento social que revela la necesidad de instaurar una política de comunicación que tienda a restañar las heridas que en el ser nacional ha causado la irresponsabilidad de la radio y la televisión privada.[46]

Governmental efforts to address the problem had already been set into motion, even before the convocation for the national hearings was made. On March, 24, 1983 the Ministry of the Interior re-structured the state of the federal communications system by creating three new institutes, one for television, one for film, and another for radio. The objectives of such governmental institutions were not made public at the time, nor the reasons for the absence of an institute for the press. The very same day, activities for the national public hearings, known as "Foros Nacionales de Consulta Popular" were set into motion. Obviously the

majority of the participants at the hearings were ignorant of the changes, and the ones who knew about them protested the very purpose of the hearings, which was: popular consultation!

On September 1, 1983, President Miguel de la Madrid made his first official address to the nation in the form of a Presidential Report. He did not mention the outcome of the hearings, but only implied that a general popular consultation had taken place in order to provide directives to his Administration, and that he was deeply interested in establishing clear objectives for the National Development Plan (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 1983-1988) which generally includes the proposals of the Executive to be delivered during his administration. He also addressed the people of Mexico stating that Mexican culture should be elevated in quality and that Mexicans should look for the outstanding values that their culture has to offer:

> Mi gobierno parte de una concepción amplia de la cultura entendiéndola como el proceso de enriquecimiento, afirmación y difusión de los valores propios de nuestra identidad nacional y como el proceso de participación democrática de los individuos, de los grupos y de las comunidades en la creación y disfrute de los conocimientos.[47]

The debate over cultural identity and national sovereignty as manifested during the hearings is nothing more than the continuation of a historical search for expression. Mexico, like other countries which used to be colonies of imperialistic powers, has frequently lost grasp of its own identity and started looking for models or parameters to

imitate.

Independence does not necessarily mean autonomy; the sharing of roots and heritage does not have to mean cultural dependence. However, in the process of forging its own values a country takes the risk of losing those values or displacing them in favor of more popular or more impressive ones. If native values are not sturdy enough to hold the country together they are less capable of shaping a cultural identity process on their own.

As a country born from the mixture of two rich traditions, the Spanish and the Indian, Mexico is desperately looking for something other than the hybrid result of two different cultures. As Octavio Paz says:

> It is astonishing that a country with such a vivid past -a country so profoundly traditional, so close to its roots, so rich in ancient legends even if poor in modern history- should conceive of itself only as a negation of its origins![48]

Hence, it is unclear what Mexico is really trying to rescue from its past in order to construct a national identity, and as the process advances it will be less clear. But as one of the characteristic features of this culture, Mexico can oposse its very process searching to the American social determinism, meaning that:

> (...) man is not simply the result of history and the forces that activate it, as is now claimed, nor is history simply the result of human will, a belief in which the North American way of life is implicitly predicated. Man, it seems to me, is not in history: he is history.[49]

Notes

1. The other two main occasions on which the public was invited to express an opinion concerning communications in Mexico were the following: in 1948, President Miguel Alemán commissioned the intellectual and artist Salvador Novo to figure out a Mexican alternative to the existing system of broadcasting and production for the recently introduced medium of television. Novo proposed a "descentralized monopoly of the State with the plural participation of all the groups that compose the Mexican nation." Alemán did not follow his advice (as mentioned in Comunicación Social, vol. 2., p. 125).

   The other attempt to encourage popular participation in a communications policy process was made by President José López Portillo between 1978 and 1980 during which a long series of popular hearings was conducted before Congress in order to define an already approved amendment to the 6th article of the Constitution. The amendment read as follows: "Freedom of information will be guaranteed by the State". Nobody knew at the time what the concept 'freedom of information' was supposed to mean, and the President did not define it. Hearings at the time stressed the ambiguity in which such a concept had seen the light of the Constitution, and posed a number of problems related to its formal adoption. Congress finally concluded that the nation was not prepared for such an advanced adendum to the Bill of Rights and that appropriate mechanisms for its adoption did not exist. Ultimately, Congress abandoned the attempt to define the concept even though it was adopted and stands in the Constitution.

2. See Samuel Ramos. El Perfil del Hombre y la Cultura en México. México. Editorial Pedro Robredo, 1938. This work has led Mexican thinkers in many directions since it was the first approach to define in socio-psychological terms the characteristcs of "the Mexican".

3. Francisco Vázquez H, "Philosophy in Mexico: the Opinion of the Intellectuals for a Prophetic Insight?" in Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory, vol. 4., no. 3, p. 39.

4. Michael and Deena Weinstein. "Marginality in Mexican Philosophy," in Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 23-24.

5. If all sectors of society are given the opportunity to participate in national policy matters such as this, it is logical to assume that a demand for further participation will appear. At least in this case, however, the socio-political momentum and the issues under discussion are such that if the hearings are not successful in helping to implement a definite policy this time, it is unlikely that social participation will

be seen at work again.

6. Subsidiaries of American corporations operating in Mexico are in essence considered as transnationals. American subsidiaries surpass in number any other group of transnationals which is not North American in origin. According to data published by Miguel Basáñez, La Lucha por la Hegemonía en México 1968-1980 (Siglo XXI eds, 1982), there are at least 170 of these transnational companies operating in Mexico, and of these, a minimum of 7 are communications related or sponsors of broadcasting.

   During the 1983 hearings, Maria Victoria Storms Reyes, representative of El Colegio de Sociólogos de México, expressed her concerns as quoted in regards to the role of transnationals in the future of broadcasting. Comunicación Social, vol. 4, July 1983.

7. Francisco J. Martínez, Comunicación Social. vol. 5, August 1983, p. 152; and Claudia Solís, Comunicación Social, vol. 3, July 1983, p. 209.

8. Fernando Buen Abad D., Comunicación Social, vol. 4, July 1983, pp. 149, 153.

9. Miguel de Anda Jacobsen, (Director de la Casa de la Cultura de Ensenada, B.C.), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 135.

10. Federico Campbell (journalist), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, pp. 122-125; and Eduardo Alspuro Beltrán (journalist), Comunicación Social, vol. 4, July 1983, pp. 121-124; and Héctor González Pérez (news reporter), Comunicación Social, vol. 4, July 1983, pp. 192-196.

11. Federico Campbell (journalist), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, pp. 124-125.

12. Ibid., p. 125.

13. Fátima Fernández Christlieb (representative of La Asociación Mexicana de Investigadores de la Comunicación, A.C.), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, pp. 137-141.

14. Henry C. Schmidt, The Roots of Lo Mexicano, College Station and London: Texas A & M University Press, 1978, pp. 57-58.

15. Luis Ramiro Beltrán y Elizabeth Fox de Cardona, Comunicación Dominada, México, Editorial Nueva Imágen, 1980, p. 43.

16. Alfonso Maya Nava (broadcaster), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, p. 83.

17. Miguel Antonio Meza Estrada, (representative of the

Centro de Estudios Fronterizos del Norte de México), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, p. 89, June 1983.

18. Rogelio Cuevas Huerta (radio producer), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 35.

19. President Miguel de la Madrid H., "Plan Básico de Gobierno 1982-1988 sec IV," as quoted by Ruben Adolfo Fernández González, Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 144.

20. Fernando Buen Abad D and Héctor Ibarra González, Comunicación Social, vol. 4, July 1983, pp. 145, 151, 201.

21. Gustavo E. Astiazarán (representative of La Cámara de la Industria de la Radio y la Televisión, delegación Baja California) and Miguel Antonio Meza Estrada (representative of El Centro de Estudios Fronterizos del Norte de México), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, pp. 21-23 and pp. 88-90 respectively.

22. Mario Arras Rodriguez (architect), Comunicación Social, vol. 4, p. 138, July 1983.

23. Michael and Deena Weinstein, "Marginality in Mexican Philosophy," in Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory, vol. 4, no. 3, (Introduction to a series on Mexican philosophy), pp. 21-22.

24. José Asunción Cortés Rivera. Comunicación Social. vol. 5, August 1983, p. 127.

25. Delia Crovi (representative of the Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 130.

26. As in the case of Televisa's cultural channel supposedly created as part of a deal with the Mexican government in exchange for renewed broadcasting licences.

27. Delia Crovi (representative of the Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 129.

28. Alfonso Maya Nava (broadcaster), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 86.

29. Federico Campbell (journalist), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, p. 123.

30. According to the Mexican Broadcasting Act licences to broadcast are granted for a period of 30 years; (only one television station has been renewed so far).

31. Fernando de Ita (journalist), Comunicación Social, vol.

4, July 1983, p. 181.

32. Solomon Lipp, Leopoldo Zea. From Mexicanidad to a Philosophy of History, Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980, p. 96.

33. Irma Aguilar Fernández, (communications researcher), Comunicación Social, vol. 5, August 1983, p. 29.

34. Henry C. Schmidt, The Roots of Lo Mexicano. Self and Society in Mexican Thought 1900-1934, College Station and London: Texas A & M University Press, 1978, p. ix.

35. Jesús Ruiz Muñoz (broadcaster), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 98.

36. Francisco Javier Sánchez Campuzano (chairman of the Administradora de Medios de Comunicación, S.A.), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 107.

37. Juan Rivero Valls (representative of the Universidad de Veracruz), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 107.

38. Francisco Alcalá Aguilar (representative of the Centro de Estudios Políticos Económicos y Sociales de Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 107.

39. Fedra Cabrera y Rodriguez (representative of the Secretaría de Educación Pública de Quintana Roo), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 25.

40. Francisco Javier Sánchez Campuzano (chairman of the Administradora de Medios de Comunicación S.A.), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 102.

41. Francisco Alcalá Aguilar (representative of the Centro de Estudios Políticos, Económicos y Sociales de Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl) and Luis H. Galindo Carrillo (representative of the Colegio de Profesionistas de la Comunicación de Saltillo, A.C.), in Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 118 and respectively.

42. Jaime Hernández García (journalist), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 55.

43. Rodolfo Pichardo García, (professor of Universidad de Sonora), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, pp. 95-96.

44. Tatiana Galván (communications scholar), Comunicación Social, August 1983, p. 143.

45. Delia Crovi (representative of the Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, pp.131-132.

46. Eduardo Aispuro Beltrán (journalist), Comunicación Social, vol. 4, July 1983, pp. 122-124.

47. President Miguel de la Madrid H.,First Presidential Report, Excélsior, Sept. 2, 1983, p. 13-D.

48. Octavio Paz, The Labyrinth of Solitude. Life and Thought in Mexico, (translated by Lysander Kemp). New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961, p. 87.

49. Ibid., p. 25.

CHAPTER FOUR

Canada and Mexico: a cross-cultural comparison of policy formation-processes in communication

The present chapter will provide the descriptive comparison of the "leading ideas" as presented before the Canadian FCPRC and the Mexican committee presiding over the national popular convocation already examined in the previous chapter. The analytical categories developed for the examination provided a way of handling the extensive amount of work submitted and of selecting valuable material. At the same time, they brought to the surface arguments underlining the Canadian and Mexican positions concerning cultural identity.

These arguments can be viewed from two quite distinct perspectives: a) a Mexican perspective which acknowledges the Canadian case as a valuable example of the use of inquiries and public hearings in the process of policy-making; b) a Canadian perspective which addresses the fact that whatever actions the Canadian government might take in policy matters can set precedents for other societies.

The Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee's actions can be considered a key step in the evolving pattern of the history of policy creation in Canada, and a brand new contribution to the creation of procedures and parameters in establishing inquiries and public hearings as channels for

social participation. This study has shown that neither Canada nor Mexico is alone in its cultural struggle; each can learn a lot from the other, first, by assessing the possible repercussions of every measure on the way other nations achieve their own goals, and second, by taking valuable insights from the approaches of other countries to the problem.

Mexico is currently exploring new ways of formulating its public policies, which, especially in the case of cultural and communication policies can mean a radical change from and a possible improvement over previous achievements.

It took Canada 30 years to re-examine its cultural institutions since the time of the Massey-Lévesque Commission. It took Mexico 26 years to realize that the objectives established in the existing regulation on broadcasting were merely technical in nature and mostly restrictive without contemplating or even envisaging a national cultural policy.

The hearings before the FCPRC and the national popular convocation are important advances in cultural policy-formation. Both exposed similar concerns over how the Canadian and Mexican cultures are being affected by the American cultural imports. Both restore the importance of the public hearing as a primary part of any policy-formation process. In short, the above mentioned hearings are tangible counter-examples of the traditional policy-formation process in which the role of the public in policy discussion is often forgotten. Without the public, policy-making becomes an elitist process responding to the private interests of

government and media owners.

A debate over communication and culture cannot pose adequately the questions of cultural definition, cultural identity or cultural preservation unless it brings into the discussion representation from every sector of society. This is where the relationship between public hearings, communications, and culture becomes more evident.

Canadian and Mexican concerns over culture and identity are not far apart from each other. Although Canada is technologically a more advanced country while Mexico lacks precisely the means to create its own technology, both countries escape the limits of a First World/Third World distinction based on economic development standards in that each shows similar examples of deculturation despite the differences in their development.

Throughout this study the notion of cultural dependency has been subjected to different levels of analysis, mainly by situating it in relationship to cultural issues discussed during the hearings. This notion is now examined in the light of new macro-analytical categories developed with the purpose of placing Canadian and Mexican concerns on a cross-cultural dimension of analysis.

As mentioned earlier, the analytical categories of a) communication technologies, b) freedom of communication, c) economics of the broadcasting industry, d) role of communications institutions and e) fostering of national identity, can be viewed as a methodological approach aimed at bringing qualitative matters into perspective. Once the contents of the hearings have been "abstracted" from the

policy-formation itself (this process of abstraction can be achieved only to a certain extent), they are to be contrasted with each other while bearing cross-cultural implications in mind.

The analytical categories revealed an interesting symmetry between the arguments presented at both hearings. The new macro-analytical approach makes the overall picture much sharper: they show not only what Canada and Mexico have in common, in terms of cultural concerns, but also how they differ in the implementation of policy resources due to their political and economic histories.

For instance, what makes Canada and Mexico differ is not their culture alone, it is the state of development of their economies; what makes them similar is their relationship of dependency with the United States, because dependency and marginalization - contrary to what dependency theory may have stated - are not solely rooted in economics.

The question of cultural identity is now viewed by Canada and Mexico as a means of transforming their respective societies, since the definition of this issue alone can either break or strengthen dependency. Consequently, public participation in such policy matters is of radical importance.

Unless mechanisms of cultural dependency are discovered and brought to the surface, any improvement in national identity is unthinkable. These mechanisms cannot be unmasked outside the scope of a particular philosophy of culture and of a critical sociology which would underlie it. Only then can they assume the personalities with which they are

presented in the real world.

The following diagram shows the arguments presented during the hearings by both Mexican and Canadian intervenors on the issues of culture and broadcasting. The arguments are listed here according to the analytical categories developed for the study. They unfold a variety of viewpoints ranging from the availability of technology to the goals and uses of that technology.

Diagram No. 2
Correspondence between Canadian and Mexican arguments presented at the hearings by category

A) NEW COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES AND AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION.

Canadian arguments	Mexican arguments
1) Technological improvements should aim to serve all Canadians (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 221-223, 235)	4) Mexicans should set an example in joining efforts to serve the country with the technology available (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, pp. 124-125, 137, 140-141, Vol. 4, pp. 121, 192-196)
	1) Mexican broadcasting although owned by nationals depends on foreign ways of production and diffusion of information (Comunicación social, Vol. 4, p. 113)
2) Centralization, particularly in broadcasting, can overwhelm the culture of other regions (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 13-14, 149 153, 231)	2) Regional and municipal broadcasting should be avoid centralization and strengthen local media (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, p. 90, Vol. 3, p. 209, Vol. 4, p. 52-53, Vol. 5, p. 152)
3) Community broadcasting services should be encouraged (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 215)	
4) Cable television should be recognized as a third communication entity with its own distinct and complementary characteristics (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 218-219)	3) Cable television in Mexico is a direct threat to national cultural identity (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, p. 135)
5) Cable has an uncertain regulatory status (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 218)	
6) Pay-TV should serve to strengthen Canadian program production potential (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 223-224)	

B) FREEDOM OF COMMUNICATION (FREEDOM OF SPEECH; FREEDOM TO INFORM/BE INFORMED).

1) Canada should implement its own broadcasting system in the true sense (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 4)	1) Broadcasting in Mexico should serve the purposes of a sovereign nation (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, pp. 48, 82-85)
2) There is an unbalanced flow of communication goods in the international market (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 9)	2) There is an international flow of inforamtion which affects Mexico (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, pp. 35, 56, 89, 99, 164, Vol. 4, p. 164)
3) Culture should not exist in any concentrated form; it should be evenly and homogeneously distributed across Canada (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs Hearings, p. 14-15)	3) Mexicans should be talked to in "their own language" (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, p. 144, Vol. 4, pp. 53, 145, 151, 201)
4) Canadians should be free to choose from the variety of programming available in the broadcast media (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 219-221, 224-225)	
	4) Mexico's Northern border situation presents a challenge to local broadcasters (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, pp. 21-23, 88-90, 94)
5) The availability of American programming poses problems for public policy-making and the administration of regulations (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 222-223)	
6) Cultural industries do not reflect cultural diversity appropriately (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, P. 223)	5) Mexican cultural broadcasting institutions do not respond to actual cultural needs (Comunicación social, Vol. 4, pp. 88-89, Vol. 5, p. 29)

C) THE ECONOMICS OF THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY

1) The United States is simply too big to compete with (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 9)	1) Mexico's poor economy and technology do not allow the country to compete with the U.S. (Comunicación social, Vol. 5, p. 127)
2) The marketplace produces a double 'dis-incentive' that works in favor of American programming (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 219, 229)	2) The marketplace produces a double 'dis-incentive' that works in favor of American programming (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, p. 130)
3) Private broadcasting must be successful business before it can effectively embrace public service requirements (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 219-220)	3) There should be ways to encourage private broadcasters to fulfill adequately their role (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, pp. 86, 129) 4) The ownership of the media (who profits from what and under what legal framework is the real core of Mexican broadcasting) (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, p. 123, Vol. 4, pp. 181, 190, 238)

D) ROLE OF COMMUNICATIONS INSTITUTIONS

1) Governmental institutions have failed to fulfill their roles (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 227-228, 230-231) 2) These institutions have failed primarily because of lack of financial resources (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 22, 26, 33)	1) Mexican cultural broadcast institutions do not adequately fulfill their role (Comunicación social, Vol. 5, p. 29)

E) THE FOSTERING OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY

1) Cultural objectives must be looked at in broader terms than just those of Canadian programming content (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 221)

2) Quality should come before nationalism (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 8)

3) The universal interest lies in the power of the particular experience (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 9)

3' Let us not demand the isolation of the country, only the appreciation of its national culture and its future healthy development (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, pp. 95-96)

4) There is a strong necessity to cease imitating foreign models (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 8, 236)

2' There is a strong need to promote national identity in Mexico (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, pp. 55, 118, 14-

1' We should encourage any move towards national identity goals within the media (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, pp. 15, 25, 33, 35-36, 49, 102, 127, 133, 149, 162, Vol. 4, pp. 42, 68, 125, 180-181, 196, 214, 236, Vol. 5, pp. 103, 125, 177, 186)

5) Canadian broadcasting policy has attempted to preserve Canadian cultural identity by means of content quotas (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 214-218, 220-221)

4' It is of primary importance to establish clear regulatory paramaters to promote the production of quality national content programming (Comunicación social, Vol. 4, p. 122, Vol. 5, p. 143)

6) The basic problem is not how much Canadian content is desirable but rather what kinds of Canadian content (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 4, 227-229)

7) Canadian communication policy should be put at the service of cultural policy (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 16, 228)

5' New broadcasting regulations should be created (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, pp. 131-132, Vol. 4, p. 143)

6' Mexico ought to have a thorough examination of the communication model currently operating (Comunicación social, Vol. 4, pp. 122-124)

From the preceding, it should be clear that the Canadian case conceives of communication policy in broad terms, namely those of cultural policy. This is understandable in light of the mandate of the FCPRC. On the other hand, the Mexican arguments tend to stress the unavailability of technological resources and the problem of media ownership. Thus, the issue of economic marginality is more evident from the perspective of a Third World country. Nevertheless, the Canadian arguments situate the failure of governmental institutions (CBC, NFB) in their lack of financial resources, while the Mexican position simply denounces the poor performance of governmental institutions with the full acknowledgement that an increase in financial resources is unthinkable.[1]

Moreover, with respect to the question of American programming flowing over the border, the Mexican side considers it a problem and gives special emphasis to the counterweighting efforts of Mexican broadcasters in the boarding areas, while Canada considers it part of the range of choices available to the Canadian public.

Centralization in broadcasting production is a problem common to both countries: Toronto and Mexico City fulfill the main production and distribution roles. Nevertheless, both countries encourage regional efforts by local communities to produce their own programming.

On the other hand, and in terms of the fairness/unfairness of the market, Canada denounces its inability to compete with the U.S. not because of lack of technology but because of the amount of national production

it can dispose of for competition on the American market. For its part, Mexico lacks the technology to compete, but it can export programming to a limited number of Spanish-speaking communities in the U.S. At present Mexican exports occur via satellite through the UNIVISION network interconnecting Spain and several Latin American cities with Spanish-speaking areas in the U.S.

In economic terms, Mexico can be viewed as a microcosm of the consumption pattern experienced in Canada. Although on a smaller scale, Mexican producers repeat pattern of purchasing American programs and broadcasting them for the same financial reasons: it is easier and cheaper than producing their own.

In both cases, an increase in the national productions of Canada and Mexico is viewed as the only sound alternative to promote cultural identity. The means to achieve such a goal, however, differ in substantial ways from one country to the other.

One of the proposals stated in the DOC document, based on recommendations of the FCPRC, was precisely to create a Broadcast Program Development Fund with which to help Canadian broadcasters enhance their national production and give Canadian talent an opportunity for access to the broadcast environment. As for Mexico, due to a lack of financial resources, the government cannot provide any substantial subsidy for such matters, and must consequently rely on the private sector's efforts to improve existing cultural production.

The unwilligness of the Mexican government to change its

sturdy relationship with private broadcasters was the main motif that gave a harsh tone to the arguments on ownership and control during the Mexican hearings.[2] In the end, it only provoked the unanimous conclusion of presenters who demanded a drastic change in the regulations so that better performance could be enforced on the part of the private broadcasters.[3]

Broadcasting in Mexico reproduces more advanced imperialistic patterns. Mexico itself is imposing them on the rest of Latin America. In that sense, the question of cultural policy is starting to be viewed in terms of political economy rather than simply as an internal public policy question.

On the one hand, debate about legal ways to control the private sector and its role in cultural preservation seems to lead to the recognition of structures of domination operating within society, but on the other hand, the circle closes itself when critics recognize that the technology is owned exclusively by the private sector and that the task should not be removed from it unless the government is prepared and willing to make a comittment and respond accordingly.

In short, the debates over communication and culture that took place in Canada and Mexico between 1981 and 1983 are similar in that they both identify the question of cultural identity as central to the creation of any cultural policy process; they both identify a danger in cultural penetration via the media, and they pinpoint the peak of the cultural crisis, namely the tacit acceptance of national deculturization.

The two inquiries differ, however, in means and goals: the Canadian commission in charge of the hearings was meant to produce a final report stating concrete proposals for communications and culture. The proposals essentially reinforced the current state of affairs and only suggested the creation of a broadcasting fund to help independent producers disseminate Canadian culture. On the other hand, the Mexican hearing was set up as an opportunity for discussion, and had no intention of producing any particular report or document - at least as far as the government was concerned. Nevertheless, due to social pressures, a final report is expected soon, though it is very unlikely that it will contain any proposals for substantial change.

From the arguments presented to the hearings, it can be seen that Mexico sees the solution to its broadcasting problems in the government; for Canada, it lies in the hands of the private broadcasters. Furthermore, the Canadian and Mexican problematics can be viewed more extensively with the aid of three main macro-analytical categories derived directly from the categories already used. These categories can define more clearly the views expressed during the hearings. The macro-analytical categories are:

a) control,

b) capitalization, and

c) skills.

At the moment the main Canadian and Mexican issues of culture and broadcasting can be examined in the light of these interrelated categories, as follows:

Diagram No. 3

Canadian and Mexican issues derived from the arguments by macroanalytical category

1) Control.

A) Canadian Issues:
- -centralization of information/ culture in a few centres of production
- -unfair competition from the U.S.
- -Excessive concern over amount of content instead of quality

B) Mexican Issues:
- -Centralization of information/ culture in a few hands (private ownership)
- -Dependency on foreigh patterns and means of production
- -Lack of precise regulations concerning broadcasting

Analytic conclusion:

Canada's concern is not with who owns the media but with how concentration operates to serve the country

Mexico's concern is with who owns them and under which permissive legal framework

2) Capitalization.

A) Canadian Issues:
- -Need to support independent producers to enhance creative cultural programming
- -Lack of financial support for cultural institutions
- -Need to break into the American market

B) Mexican Issues:
- -Need to support the present broadcasting scheme (majority of private ownership) while at the same time encouraging cultural trends instead of commercialization

Due to its economic problems Mexico has to rely on an increase in national production to counterweight American influence Canada uses financial support to compete in the American market

3) Skills.

A) Canadian Issues:
- -Need to encourage native talent and provide access to the media
- -Need to foster independent centers of production

B) Mexican Issues:
- -Need to encourage the production of national material
- -Awareness that it is indispensable to produce material according to the needs of the people

Both countries consider national production a viable alternative to cultural penetration Canada has to channel its resources effectively Mexico has to develop them

The macro-analytical categories derived from this study, namely the questions of control, capitalization, and skills, can be considered valuable for future analyses of communications systems. In the case of Canada and Mexico, they proved effective in helping define levels of technology, ownership and control which appeared to be crucial during the hearings and which subtended the "leading ideas" expressed by presenters.

1) For instance, in the question of control, Canada's main concern is the effectiveness of the concept of the "single-system" expressed in its 1968 Broadcast Act.[4] This concept holds that the Canadian broadcasting system is composed of public and private elements operating as full and equal partners in the achievement of policy goals. On the other hand, Mexico's past attempts to enforce private sector participation in policy matters have failed. The country experienced a period of unlimited free-enterprise in which the private sector was left to grow under the sole dictates of the market (1920-1976). Mexico is now looking for ways in which to reduce private sector influence and achieve cultural goals. Total nationalization is out of the question because it would turn the present communications model over to inexperienced government hands.

2) As for the question of capitalization, Canada has opted for increased financial support through the creation of a national development fund. This measure might help the country produce enough quality material not only to meet internal requirements but also to enter the American market. Contrary to this, Mexico stands in a difficult position: its

only alternative for fighting American influence is to produce national material but it lacks Canada's financial resources to create a national fund for producers. It must thus appeal to the private sector and convince it to take on the task. Naturally, this puts the government at the mercy of private broadcasters and undermines any future attempt to regain control of the industry.

3) At the level of skills, the contrast is more acute between the two countries: Canada has the resources, technical, financial, and creative to produce its own material. Its main problem is to provide access for these resources to the present system of production and distribution. Mexico, on the other hand, has the creative talent and some technical training, but lacks financial resources to sustain production. It is thus limited in its output of national material, and has to develop more precise guidelines for the goals it wants to achieve.

In terms of their concerns over cultural identity, both countries realize that it cannot be fostered and that cultural penetration cannot successfully be resisted unless these three main aspects of control, capitalization, and skills are solved beforehand.

Canada blames most of its loss of cultural identity on an overflow of American quality programming. Mexico blames it on the general economic dependency from which it, and the rest of Latin America, both suffer. In either case, Canada and Mexico have become peripheral to the United States despite their differences in economic development.

Philosophers like Grant or Zea would remind us that

cultural dependency is a logical outcome of marginality. When a country expands its sphere of influence both economically and culturally, its neighbors are the most likely to be affected.

A positive stance, however, has been taken by Canada and Mexico. It is not to accept a position of cultural defenselessness but rather to opt for alternative ways of confronting the problem. Clearly, the realization that more national production is needed and the idea of fighting centralization with diversification are their two decisive resources.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The analysis of the two public inquiries into cultural policy in broadcasting conducted in Canada and Mexico confirmed that two themes represented in the philosophical and political literature of both countries, i.e. cultural dependency and marginality, are also to be found in public testimonies occasioned by public hearings, or as Crean calls them "official forums" for public response and debate.

Both were treated in rather different ways during the hearings: Canadian presenters reminded their committee of the American presence by assessing the unfairness of the trade market for Canada; Mexican presenters denounced the detrimental effects to their culture due to American cultural influence via the airwaves.

Canada's friendship with the United States makes the fight for Canadian identity both more difficult and more decisive because the fostering of a Canadian native culture can only be accomplished within the framework of a stable, cordial relationship with the United States.

On the other hand, Mexico has tended to view its relationship with the United States as one of domination. Scholars have studied extensively the issue of Latin American dependency upon the imperial neighbor, and Mexican presenters to the hearings frequently reminded their committee that proximity to the U.S. makes the relationship more acute.

The issues brought forth during the course of the hearings varied from the technicalities of the availability of the communication media to the content of broadcast programming. Nevertheless, they seemed to concur on two main statements: a) decentralization of the media, and b) support to national cultural productions.

These statements, which appeared to be inherent to the hearings debates, resulted from an increased awareness of the needs of cultural identity, and can be seen as the core contribution of the inquiries to the policy-making process in both countries.

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In writing this thesis, I have attempted to address a complex problem namely that of national identity and cultural penetration.

For Canada and Mexico, it also poses questions of both a particular and a universal nature.

The questions are universal in that they are not exclusive to Canada or Mexico, but common to all countries. They also reflect a communication problem, i.e. Canada's or Mexico's performance/communication with others depends on two central questions: a) how do these countries perceive themselves, and b) how are they perceived by others.

By defining these two important questions, Canada and Mexico are attempting to delimit their cultural identity.

Cultural identity must be contrasted with others in order to become strong and inorder to resist other powerful

cultural influences. In the case of Canada and Mexico, the main influence, strengthened by geographical circumstances, comes from the United States.

Hence, the universal concern over cultural identity acquires particular dimensions when these countries are confronted with the need to assess the problems and take concrete policy actions.

The subject of this thesis has been to address two examples of concrete policy action in the form of public hearings on communication and culture in which the "leading ideas" have made the universal concern over a loss of cultural identity more evident.

The particular theme chosen for the study was broadcasting, since it is assumed that among the communication media, it is through broadcasting that cultural penetration and or cultural preservation can have a more profound effect, a belief confirmed by presenters to the Canadian and Mexican public hearings.

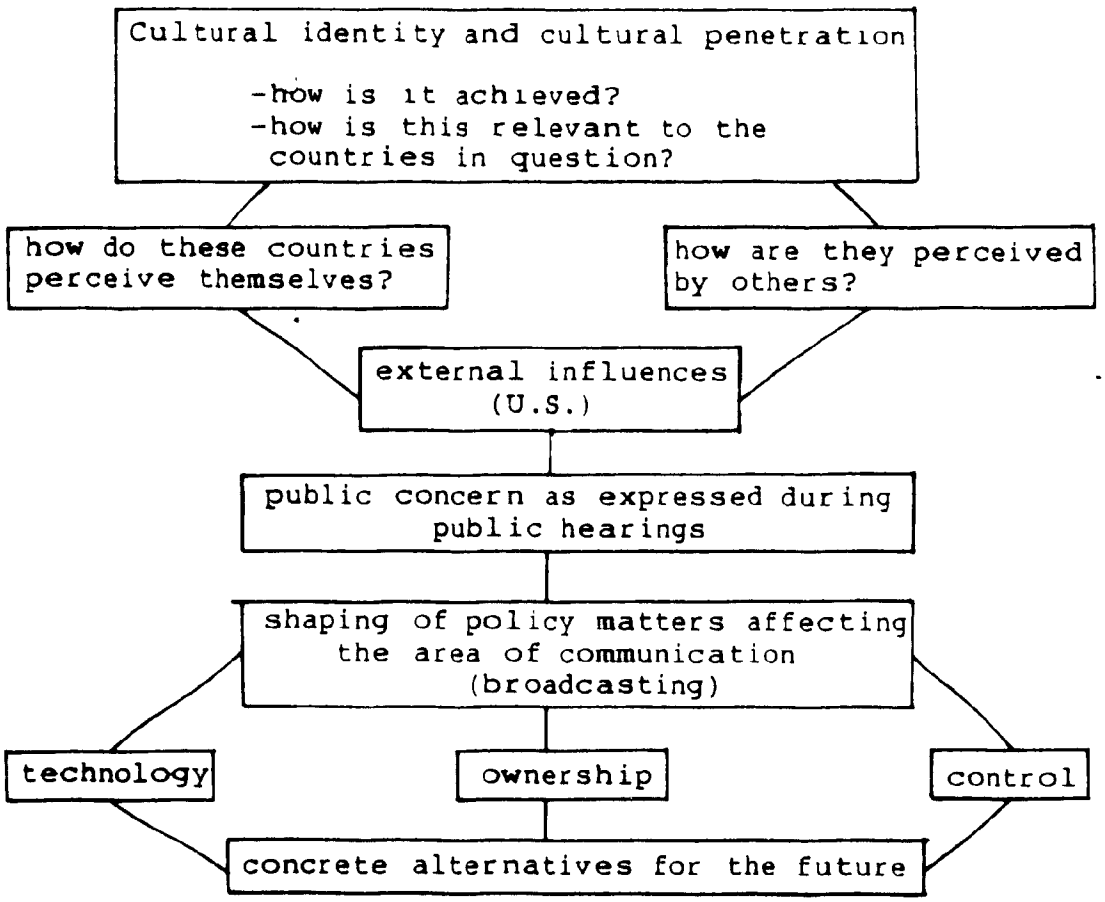
During the course of the analysis, certain issues remained central, as catalysts speeding up or slowing down the process of cultural penetration, and, consequently, as priority areas in which action must be taken if these countries want to achieve a cultural identity. The analysis done through the macro-categories of skills and capitalization shows that perhaps two of the areas in which policy-discussion will be sure to take definite steps are technology and ownership. These two are the foundations on which the industry of broadcasting can be said to grow and/or to orchestrate changes in its present performance. In all

likelihood, the changes required will have to stem from modifications in these two areas.

In short, the problem of cultural identity and cultural penetration as affecting Canada and Mexico, has been studied here from the point of view of the issues disclosed through the mechanism of recent public hearings in both countries, which addressed concrete policy proposals and alternatives.

The overall structure of the issues addressed in this thesis can be summarized as follows:

Diagram No. 4



Whether the alternatives proposed in either of the two cases will suffice to resolve the existing problematic or not

will have to be determined in years to come. For the moment, these two cases can be taken as revealing instances of public discussion in policy-formation.

For Mexican scholars, this thesis may provide insight into the formation of communication policy, in that it tries to situate the Mexican case in a comparative frame of reference in terms of which an important example of a long-standing national project to achieve cultural identity through the media can be evaluated

For Canadian scholars, it is my wish that it will contribute interesting materials which will enrich future studies on their country; but above all, this thesis aims to inspire the examination of these and other related questions in a more illuminating light

Notes

1. According to Mexican presenters at the hearings (see argument no. 1 on the Role of cultural institutions, chapter three), cultural institutions, and especially governmental institutions do not respond adequately to Mexican cultural needs. The government, however, has responded by reducing financial support instead of increasing it, because from the point of the State, cultural needs are not considered a priority in times of economic crisis (which the country suffered from 1982 to the present).

2. The relationship that the private sector built with the Mexican government dates back to the very beginning of broadcasting in Mexico (the 1920's) but was made more evident with the introduction of television as a new communication medium (1950). The Mexican government originally adopted a very permissive attitude towards the private sector but has been trying to reduce its power ever since. Nevertheless, the private broadcasting monopoly has always found ways of increasing its influence. For more details on this

matter see: Raúl Cremoux. "A este lado de Televisa," in El Desafío Mexicano. Ediciones Océano, S.A., 1982, pp. 283-295, and Fátima Fernández Christlieb. Los medios de difusión masiva en México. Juan Pablos, editor. México, 1982, pp. 87-173.

3 There are no performance criteria established by the Mexican government or the Broadcasting Act except for the articles that loosely define that programming should contribute to the good taste of the public and be balanced in nature. The latter are not defined as categories of performance evaluation. To date these criteria have been applied according to the perceptions of broadcasters and the subjectivity of government officials

4 Section 3 a Part I of the 1968 Broadcasting Act, "Broadcasting Policy for Canada," Chapter B-11, p 2

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