

**THE PRODUCTION OF MEXICAN
TELEVISION NEWS**

**THE SUPREMACY OF
CORPORATE RATIONALE**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of
PH.D. ON MASS COMMUNICATIONS.**

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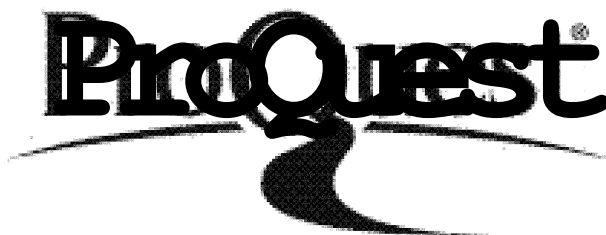


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CHAPTER ONE: CORPORATIVE, BUREAUCRATIC AND PROFESSIONAL
CONTROL OVER THE PRODUCTION OF TELEVISION
NEWS.

1. Introduction

The basic theme of this study is the control of television in the developing world. It challenges the way broadcasting in the Third World has been traditionally conceptualised as a "State Apparatus" or a field primarily connected with the logics and policies of a national State. In contrast, this thesis presents the case of a strong and successful private broadcasting consortium -TELEVISA- that owing to minimal government regulation, concerted entrepreneurship and various stages of consolidation has emerged as a "State within a State", operating according to its own corporate policy and concerns and establishing an emerging type of relationship between broadcasting and the State.

This study also challenges a basic assumption of the Cultural Imperialism paradigm. In recent years, TELEVISA, Mexico's private television consortium, has not only decreased its imports from the traditional American sources but has also emerged as a major regional exporter of television programming, becoming the biggest seller and producer of Spanish-language television worldwide. This implies that we can no longer talk about a one-way television

flow from North to South but must take into account the emergence of regional television giants entering (and contending for) the international media markets.

The study also contributes to the knowledge we have about the processes of the production of television news. Drawing on extensive fieldwork carried out at TELEVISA's Directorate of News in Mexico City, it argues for a perspective where institutional, bureaucratic and professional dimensions of control are integrated into a comprehensive framework. The basic proposal states that news is not only a product of bureaucracies or "operative" anticipatory arrangements, nor is it the result of professional culture or institutional policy alone. News, it is argued, is the result of the combination of these three dimensions of control but with one of them exercising a privileged domination over the others.

And last but not least, this study is unique in that it represents the first major attempt to uncover the internal structures and processes within a media organisation in Latin America. With that, it opens up an entirely new area of thinking for research in the region.

For years, Latin American analyses of the mass media have overwhelmingly tended to look at the media from the outside. In the hope of accounting for the nature of the policies behind programming and content, research has relied almost exclusively on depicting the facade and external movements of the media industries. This study portrays the various

dimensions of internal control and management which make both content and programming intelligible.

Finally, the relevance of these findings must also be set against the salience of TELEVISION in the Spanish-speaking world. We are talking about a media organisation that has conquered the hearts and minds of audiences throughout Latin America and the Latino population in the United States, becoming the single most important producer of Spanish-language television and perhaps the biggest television outlet in the emerging regional markets worldwide.

2. Who controls television in the developing world?

The bulk of research so far has tended to portray a picture of the media in the Third World dependent upon -and controlled by- the policies and logics of national States. This view is illustrated by the influential work of Katz and Wedell (et al. 1977), and exemplified in the collective work of Summers and Summers (1982), Martin (1983) and the communication specialists gathered by UNESCO in the late seventies (Ortega and Romero, 1976; Fonseca, 1976 and Camargo and Noya Pinto, 1975).

Katz and Wedell claim in Broadcasting in the Third World (1977) that "The mass media in the developing countries have gradually abandoned the element of autonomy from government control which was explicit in most models of broadcasting structure transferred from the West. Almost without

exemption, the media are by now in direct or indirect service of the government of the day" (p.vii). This idea was consistently emphasized in the analysis they conducted of 91 media systems worldwide.

Noting that in some countries the birth of the mass media was due to government reaction to the growing self-awareness of popular movements, Katz and Wedell found that the State controlled media systems throughout the Third World from Latin America to Africa and Asia.

In an earlier work, Summers and Summers were ready to acknowledge that "outside Europe, broadcasting is under the direct control of a government minister" (p.14). In a similar vein but regarding news in particular, Ganley and Ganley ((1982)) noted that in Third World countries news was any statement or reported event that can be used to advance State objectives. And for some other commentators, such as Head and Sterling ((1982)), the influence of the State was thought to be so pervasive that the media operated according to a "political philosophy" (p.4). Finally, Martin and Chaudhary ((1983)) sum up the influence of the State over news, writing that "In the Third World, the decision to publish is based primarily on ideological and political criteria" (p.4), and that "in the Third World, objective, truthful, and comprehensive coverage of news is difficult to achieve because the journalistic profession is regarded mainly as a governmental function" (p.9).

The view that in the developing world broadcasting is mainly linked to government or State control also received strong support from the accounts of the media specialists who reported to UNESCO in the late 'seventies. Examples of that view are the reports by Fonseca ((1976)) who saw the State in Costa Rica "conserving the control over the electronic media,, which will not come out of the State's domain even if it is exploited by private interests" ((p.28)). On the Peruvian broadcasting system,, Ortega and Romero ((1976)) indicated that the State,, by owing 51% of the shares at the time,, controlled 95% of all stations ((p.54)), and referring to the Brazilian case,, Nelly de Camargo and Noya Pinto ((1975)) wrote that the State had in Brazil control over broadcasting thanks to strict legislation regulating content and the management of stations (p. 24).

This critique of the UNESCO sponsored commentators needs to take into account the fact that many of the nations they were talking about were under military rule at the time ((Guimaraes and Amaral,, 1988)) and that consequently there was a closer relation between the State and broadcasting than in Mexico,, which has enjoyed an unbroken run of civilian governments since the 1910 Revolution.

However,, the thinking exemplified by these commentators conceives State control over broadcasting as strict and comprehensive. The operation of the media is regarded as closely associated with the logics of the State and less connected with the logics of the media themselves. In this

study however,, I will attempt to show that in the Mexican case, the internal logics of TELEVISA are paramount to the consortium's operation and that accommodating to the interests of the State though important,, is a secondary concern. The extent to which the predominance of corporate logics can be applied to countries which have recently experienced a transition from military to civilian rule is an important question which will be discussed in the final chapter.

3. Counteracting the Imperialism paradigm.

The publication of Herbert Schiller's Mass Communications and American Empire ((1969)) was perhaps the beginning of a line of thought that has,, for the last twenty years,, contended that the flow of communication between the industrialised world and the developing countries is unbalanced and a tool for cultural domination.. Schiller saw it as a global American electronic invasion,, writing that "what is involved is the cultural integrity of weak societies whose national,, regional,, local or tribal heritages are beginning to be menaced with extinction by the expansion of modern electronic communications, television in particular emanating from a few power centres in the industrialized world." (p.109). Concerned about the transference of the American values embodied in the communication exports,, some other commentators worried about large Third World audiences receiving in their homes "rations of fifth-hand American pseudo-culture like donations of cast-off clothing" ((Smith,,

1973:280).

The Cultural Imperialism paradigm identified at least three phenomena linked to the operation of non-national, particularly American, media institutions in the Third World (Beltran and Fox de Cardona, 1979:57-8). First of all, it noted that the distribution of communication resources in the world is strongly disproportioned to the distribution of population and people's information needs. Secondly, it argued that the total flow of communications from the industrialised world to the developing countries is highly asymmetric. Thirdly, it suggested that this unbalance may serve as a tool for economic and ideological domination of the developing world.

Luis Ramiro Beltran and Elizabeth Fox de Cardona even argue that the unbalance in the flow of communications may be as high as 100 times the exports of the developing world to the industrialised nations (~~ibid~~).

While respecting the general claim concerning the unbalanced flow of communications from North to South, and television programming in particular (Nordenstreng, K. and Varis, T. 1974), this study portrays what may be called an exemption to the rule arising from the emergence of big regional communication exporters within the developing world. As it will be seen in the following chapters, the Mexican television industry is an example of this trend. While in the early 'sixties it imported nearly 70% of its programming, the

introduction of 'indigenous formats' (crucially in the form of 'telenovelas') together with a further stage in the conglomerate's consolidation, enabled it to reduce imports gradually to the present figure of 35%, and at the same time to increase exports to an estimated 21,000 hours in 1984. The evidence presented by this study strongly challenges the thesis of a one-way flow from North to South and demands that attention be given to the emerging flow of communication from South to North and from South to South, where regional exports may complement or even substitute for the traditional American influence.

4. Corporative, bureaucratic and professional control: an integrated perspective.

To a large extent, shifts in the way the production of news has been analysed reflect variations in the ways that the internal operations of the mass media more generally have been approached in the last few years. Paul Hirsch (1977) summarises these changes in terms of three major perspectives: the first focuses on occupational roles, career trajectories and the interactions between mass media organisations and the individuals they employ; the second takes the organisation as a whole as the object of analysis; whilst the third examines the relationships between organisations or professions and the larger societal environment in which they operate.

However, since most analysis of media production have

advanced particular components -legal, technological, or commercial- "to the virtual exclusion of the rest." (Adams, W. 1978:Int.), most studies to date have combined a shift in the level of analysis with a wide range of explanations of newsmaking, drawing on such diverse sources as phenomenology, analyses of "goal-oriented" behaviour and functionalism. These various accounts have not only expanded our empirical knowledge of how news is produced; they have also opened up some interesting debates.

Underlying these heterogeneous approaches however, we can detect three main lines of enquiry each of which emphasizes a particular dimension of news production. First of all, there has been considerable interest in exploring the ways in which newsmaking is governed by its own internal rules and operating practices. Secondly, as news organisations are becoming increasingly integrated into more broadly based communication conglomerates, commentators have developed a particular concern with the broader institutional demands placed on newsmaking; thirdly, and equally important, have been the studies which have taken off from the general literature on professionalism, to investigate the interaction between newsmen, their craft and their employing organisations.

(a) The operational dimension: phenomenological and "craft-related" explanations.

Early sociological work in the "gatekeeping" tradition

(White 1964; Carter 1958; and Gieber 1960, 1964) tended to focus on the decision-making track along which stories ran in their passage from assignment to presentation. Located at a predominantly micro level, these studies conceived control over newsmaking as a collection of filters located at various positions within the news organisations and personified in a number of "Mr. Gates". The major task for research was therefore to examine the criteria upon which their selections or exclusions were based, although the more comprehensive studies did include some reference to "observable" pressures and influences on acts of selection.

Criticism of the "gatekeeper" studies have often pointed out that although they were easy to conduct and systematic in analysis, they reduced the news production processes to the study of deliberate manipulation. In addition, they seemed to assume that impartiality and objectivity would be secured simply by removing the various overt pressures and constraints upon journalists. More importantly, by centering solely around individual action and decision-making, these studies bypassed the crucial organisational settings which, as later research has shown, modulate the newsmaking process in modern complex organisations. Warren Breed (1955) was one of the first analysts to go beyond the individual and consider the "policy" affecting the decisions of newsmen. By so doing, he pioneered the task of uncovering the broader institutional dynamics of modern news operation.

With the declining credibility of the "gatekeeper"

perspective, researchers increasingly turned to the second model of analysis, where the organisation's operational needs became a starting point for the study of the news process and the individuals participating in it. The first wave of such studies was initiated by Gaye Tuchman ((1972, 1973, 1976, 1977, 1978)) and followed by other commentators ((see Mark Fishman 1980, 1982)), showed a clear orientation to phenomenological approaches. For example, Gaye Tuchman's notion of "News as Frame" bears a strong affiliation to I. Goffman's "Frame Analysis" ((1975)). In contrast, subsequent commentators, most notably Schlesinger ((1978)), Golding & Elliot ((1979)) and some others including Altheide ((1976)), Roscho ((1975)) and Westin ((1982)) have focused on the "craft-related" logics inherent in the news-cycle. While phenomenologically oriented research is primarily concerned with the role of journalists' own "typifications" or "frames of reference" ((granting them a certain degree of autonomy)), these "craft-related" explanations consistently focus on the organisational needs of the news medium and how journalists accommodate to them.

Despite these differences however, both approaches shared a common concern: the news organisation's need to combat uncertainty. As Gaye Tuchman put it in her guiding questions: "(1) How can an organisation routinely process unexpected events? (2) How do newsmen decrease the variability of events that form the raw material of news?" ((1973:110)). Sociologists of organisations often stress that uncertainty represents a bureaucracy's "worst" enemy. Its critical role in the

everyday life of an organisation has led analysts to consider it as a decisive factor in the internal power-struggle. Michael Crozier, for instance, notes: "Individuals or groups who control a source of uncertainty, in a system of action where nearly everything is predictable, have at their disposal a significant amount of power over those whose situations are affected by this uncertainty" ((1964;192)). Similarly, Paul Rock observes that "the business of any bureaucracy is the routine production of sequences of activity that are anticipated and guided by formal rules" ((1981;64)). If it was obvious that routines were essential to any modern bureaucracy, the extension of that claim to news organisations had a number of implications. Most importantly, by examining the influence of the bureaucratic mechanisms underpinning the production of news, this type of analysis moved decisively away from the search of deliberate "bias" and manipulation and centered discussion firmly around the problem of non-deliberate control and determination.

A particular merit of these studies was the discovery that, unlike other commodities, news is greatly marked by the methods utilised to manufacture it. Whereas in industrial organisations the impact of specific routines is primarily related to productivity and efficiency but does not have a substantial effect on the nature of the product itself, in mass media enterprises -particularly news organisations-, it becomes clear that these routines also influence the range and content of the material gathered, selected and presented. By extending the study of routines to the "manufacture" of

news, these commentators succeeded in re-addressing the problem of determination with valid organisational parameters.

Within this research tradition, time-cycles and anticipation became recurrent issues of interest as findings indicated that they constituted an important regulatory mechanism within news planning structures (see for example: Tuchman 1972, Epstein 1973, Schlesinger 1978, Golding and Elliot 1979). These studies consistently showed "a heavy reliance on a planning structure which creates a routine agenda of predictable stories which provide the backbone of each day's production requirement" (Schlesinger 1978:79)..

The expectations that newsmen develop through the repetition of a stable set of routines subsequently became a complimentary aspect of the problem. In order to achieve a greater degree of control over their occupation, professionals in news organisations were seen as anticipating the likely unfolding of their assignments. Amongst other things, this insight invalidated the common journalistic belief that news "could almost be called random reactions to random events" (Wheale 1970:510).. As Gaye Tuchman put it: "Like any other complex organisation, a news medium cannot process idiosyncratic phenomena. It must reduce all phenomena to constructed classifications, much as hospitals "reduce" each patient to sets of symptoms and diseases and teachers view individual students in terms of categories pertinent to learning" (1977:45)..

Phenomenological explanations (eg. Tuchman 1978 and Fishman 1980, 1982) have suggested that anticipatory arrangements are embedded in the occupational culture of journalists in the form of "typifications" or "schemes of interpretation", categories which allow reporters to act fast and produce a story within prespecified standards. Gaye Tuchman's study of New York reporters, for example, argued that "typifications" were regularly evoked to distinguish between "hard", "soft", "spot", "developing" and "continuing" news (1978:47-49).

From a similar standpoint, Mark Fishman built on the work of Molotch and Lester ((1974)) to underline the conventional value of news stories and examine more carefully the mechanisms which weave the "news net". He suggested that at the core of the definition of a newsworthy event was a collection of "phase structures", which are nothing more than schemes of interpretation shared amongst newsmen. These guarantee the consensual character of newsworthiness criteria and uniformity in the newsroom. Individuals who do not share the same schemes of interpretation "can see different events in the same displays of behaviour" (1982:221). "Non-events" are therefore those which can not be seen under a certain scheme of interpretation but can be seen under a different one.

From a "craft-related" perspective, Altheide has also argued that stories are pre-defined by the 'news perspective': "a convoluted way of simplifying events"

(1976:9) whose adoption is encouraged by the practical organisation of news. While asserting that events become news when transformed by the news perspective and not due to their objective characteristics, he goes on to argue that events are altered by newsmen's anticipations of what is most important or by retrospective connections to other events (see ibid:9-173 and his story of Nixon's fall)..

A second important consequence of the study of routines, anticipation and the expectations of newsmen is that it opened up a debate on the validity of journalistic claims to "objectivity" and "impartiality".. As Golding and Elliot note (1979), journalists regularly operate a distinction between the two. "Objectivity" implies comprehensiveness and is often associated with the "Mirror Metaphor": the notion that news performs the function of a mirror of society, that it is events, not news organisations, what determine the content of the news. "Impartiality", on the other hand, is linked to notions of "neutrality" and "bias" and relates more to the form of presentation than to gathering and selection mechanisms..

Studies of the "operative" context of news production -particularly in broadcasting- highlighted a number of barriers to the attainment of "comprehensiveness".. Firstly, they pointed to constraints stemming from the newscycle.. In his 1978 study of the BBC, Philip Schlesinger found that the constraints of time influence not only newsmen's production concepts but also the form and the content of news (see

1978:83-105)). Similarly, Av Westin notes that "Television news is obsessed with time...the major factor is the number of stories that have to be included weighed against the amount of time it takes to tell them properly" (1982:55).. Secondly, they drew attention to newsmens' heavy reliance on regular beats and a fixed repertoire of sources. As Roscho as explained "Reporters are concentrated at those locations where there is a promise of maximal return, in publishing news, for their investment in time" (1975: 72).. Hence, "The exigencies of news-gathering thus result not merely in the press routinely concentrating its coverage upon certain beats to the exclusion of possible others. A further result is to induce the press to narrow its routine coverage to a relatively small number of individuals whose location in particular organisations or institutions maximises the probable news value of the information they can provide" (op cit: 74). Thirdly, they emphasized the pressures stemming from the differential availability of material ((Golding and Elliot, 1979) and of sources (Altheide, 1976) and, in the case of broadcast journalism, the sheer complexities of the medium (Epstein, 1973 and Schlesinger, 1978)).

As a result, "objectivity" has come to be seen as a part of an occupational strategy (Tuchman 1972). As Tuchman argues, "in discussing content and interorganisational relationships, the newsmen can only invoke his news judgement: however, he can claim objectivity by citing procedures he has followed which exemplify the formal attributes of a news story or a newspaper....'objectivity' may

be seen as a strategic ritual protecting newspapermen from the risks of their trade," (ibid:660)..

(b) The institutional dimension: the economic and political logics of organisational life.

The limitations of studies emphasizing "newsworthiness" criteria as the key principles guiding the business of newsmaking have also been exposed by studies whose main concern has been with the broader institutional imperatives operating upon news organisations..

These studies go a step beyond the "operational" dimension to analyse organisations' central interests, their external environment and the ways in which both shape its internal structure. Researchers working in this area have been inspired by various fashions of organisational theory. Early contributions were greatly influenced by Talcott Parson's idea of an organisation as a "goal-seeking" entity (1960). Recently, this notion and other dominant categories have come under close scrutiny. Zey-Ferrell & Aitken (1981:6-7), for instance, argue that amongst other things, this notion; (1) assumes that organisations are rational; (2) implies that there is "consensus" over its goals; (3) personifies organisations ("only individuals, not organisations, have goals"). However, the central aim of investigating an organisation's guiding rationales remains fully justified.

The central importance of economic performance as indexed by advertising revenue has been demonstrated by studies of newspaper organisations (eg, Hirsch and Gordon 1975). One of the innovations introduced by Jay Epstein's News from Nowhere (1973) was to extend this preoccupation to the analysis of television network news. In Epstein's own words, "Before...news can be properly analyzed as a journalistic enterprise, it is necessary to understand the business enterprise that it is an active part of, and the logic that precedes from it" (1973:79)..

His account of this "economic logic" shows that news is heavily influenced by a principle which privileges the maximization of viewing figures as the organisation's primary goal. The logic is fairly simple: with revenue primarily deriving from the sale of commercial slots to advertisers and fixed operation costs, the value of network programming is dictated by the viewing figures the programmes are able to secure. Strong competition, an overriding concern with ratings, together with the assumption that the primary audience follows a routine channel flow, influence the scheduling of news and produce a consistently restricted news geography.

Epstein's study also reveals that with the maximization of ratings as the prime goal, the enhancement of news audiences is promoted through strategies of scheduling rather than by investing in greater news diversity.

A complimentary set of pressures emanates from the organisation's external dependency on regulatory agencies. Broadcasting organisations in particular often operate within a system of concessions and permits, awarded by the State, and sanctioned by specific laws. Unlike the press therefore, broadcast journalism is subject to additional restrictions, which together constitute an important part of the external environment within which it operates.

(c) The Professional Dimension.

The question of professionalism among journalists is often conceived as the padding that fills the gap between newsmen and their audiences. Drawing on his study of the BBC News, for example, Philip Schlesinger writes that "there is a missing link between the producers and consumers of news.... the evidence also tells us a good deal about the way in which the gap between producer and consumer does not pose severe problems because it is filled with the conventional wisdom of a professionalism which is largely self-sustaining." (1978:p134). Evidence has shown conclusively that in the reporting of news, the contact between journalists and their audiences is minimal. Bauer (1964), was one of the first commentators to point out that journalists address themselves not to the manifest audience but rather to key reference groups -including news sources. Similarly, McQuail (1969) and Schlesinger (1978) have stressed the role played by the professional ethos and ideologies in mediating the relationship between newsmen, audiences and the organisation.

Irrespective of the particular emphases of different researchers, there is a general consensus that the "missing link" is not a neutral gap. The occupation of broadcast journalist, an organisation's political system and career structure, the mechanisms of control and the broader social structures all are important sources of determination. What follows attempts to assess, albeit briefly, the contexts within which this "missing link" needs to be evaluated.

Newsmen's judgements have important implications for the selection of facts, their processing and presentation. Yet, the question of whether journalistic values are those of individuals or those of the organisation they work for has opened an interesting debate amongst media sociologists. The crucial question remains; "Which way do values run in a large organisation" ?.

One position holds that newsmen's values are nothing more than the sum of their individual orientations. This line of argument is illustrated by the views of a former Vice-President of CBS who is quoted in Epstein ((1973:200-201)) as saying that television news is "clearly liberally oriented" because the "overwhelming number of people who go into creative... and...news side of television tend by their instinct to be liberally oriented". This view is not confined to media executives. It is shared by some academics. In an evaluation of Jay Epstein's work, for example, Michael Robinson notes that "despite what has been a comparatively

polemic tradition in this type of television research, we should go back and further investigate the controversial premise that network news is influenced by the political values of those who produce it. And, despite our debt to Edward Jay Epstein for showing us the importance of organisation, in the future, social scientists ought to reexamine the extent to which (and the circumstances under which) political, demographic, or attitudinal variables of the news people influence the content of network news" ((1978:200)).

In contrast to this "personalised" view, other commentators have insisted that within broadcast journalism, as in any modern complex organisation, individuals tend to commit themselves to their organisations more than to broad principles of autonomy. Philip Elliot for one, has proposed that broadcast journalism encourages a type of professionalism in which "the work of the professional journalist is subordinate to the overall goals of the organisation" ((1978:184)). Epstein also follows this line of reasoning, arguing that at NBC "newsmen are supposed to conform to a certain image of news reporting, even if it means modifying their own values" ((1973:202)).

If we accept this position, we are immediately confronted with the question of how organisational goals are communicated. What are the mechanisms that guarantee consensus? A proper understanding of this problem requires us to examine the organisation's control systems, career

structures and internal political systems. To do this we need to locate the effective power centres and analyse the bargaining strategies engaged in by individuals and groups within an organisation ((see Crozier, 1964:175)).

Recent work in the sociology of organisations has focused on the ways in which authority is exercised, with a number of authors proposing variants up Andrew Friedman's 'Responsible Autonomy' and 'Direct Control' models. 'Responsible Autonomy' strategies attempt to foster "the adaptability of labour power by giving workers power to make decisions and encouraging them to adapt to changing situations in a manner beneficial to the firm. To do this managers give workers status, authority and responsibility. Top managers try to win their loyalty, and co-opt their organisations to the firm's ideals ((that is the competitive struggle) ideologically" ((1981:183)). In contrast, 'Direct Control' strategies try to limit the scope for labour power responsibility. Whereas the first type of strategy attempts "to capture benefits particular to variable capital, the second tries to limit its particularly harmful effects and treats workers as though they were machines" ((ibid:183)). Although media sociologists have tended to neglect this problem, there have been some important contributions. Warren Breed's essay Social Control in the Newsroom ((1955)) is perhaps the earliest example, with more recent contributions coming from Warner ((1971)), Sigelman ((1973)), Schlesinger ((1978)), and Elliot ((1980)).

A parallel approach to the problems of internal

legitimacy, professional values and their sources of determination, has been offered by other currents within the sociology of organisations. First of all, a great deal of work has explored the idea that organisational life is plagued with irrationality ((Zelznick, 1949 and Gouldner, 1954). As Zey-Ferrell has argued; "A major reason that organisations are not totally rational instruments in their pursuit of goals is, as mentioned earlier, that people are not rational: they often do not have complete information; they seldom have a complete listing of alternatives; and they may not know the relationship between organisational means and ends." ((1981:8)) Other commentators have started from the notion that goals are not evenly shared within organisations. Tom Burns, for example, has maintained that it is necessary to conceive of an organisation as the simultaneous working of three social systems: a formal authority system, which derives from the organisation's goals, its technology and its attempts to cope with its environment; ((b)) a cooperative system with a career structure, where individuals compete for promotion; ((c)) a political system, in which individuals and departments compete and cooperate for power. One of his most important contributions is the insight that all decisions in the overt formal system are evaluated for their relative impact on the power structure as well as for their contribution to the achievement of the organisation's goals.

In his study of the BBC, Burns ((1977)) explores the interaction of these three systems. He sees it as a very segmented organisation, both horizontally ((there are a number

of departments) and vertically (there is a wide grading structure). In this situation, departments seem to be engaged in competition as much as in collaboration and executives appear to lose contact with the professional skills which they are meant to administer. Consequently, he concludes, the career and the political systems may become more important than the formal authority system. In the last few years, commentators from a ~~"negotiated-order"~~ perspective have even suggested that organisational arrangements are continually emerging through the interactions of participants in daily life, with the implication that "social orders are, in some sense, always negotiated orders" (Strauss, 1981:129) and that in unstable situations (eg. news organisations experiencing staff mobility, whereby newsmen leave and others are hired), actors are continually renegotiating their circumstances. Cyert and March ((1963)) have also stressed the political nature of organisations and characterised them as a collection of political coalitions. Lawler and Bacharach go a step further to distinguish between work-groups, interest groups and coalitions. According to them, an analysis of an organisation's political system "must be concerned primarily with the nature of power across groupings in the organisation and the specification of tactics and counter-tactics that groups employ" ((1980:9)).

At the same time, newsmen -just like employees in other organisations- are committed to their professions as well as to their organisation. In the press of most Western industrialized countries, this is exemplified in adherence to

notions of 'objectivity' and 'impartiality', which have become both an occupational strategy (Tuchman, 1972) and a yardstick for evaluating professionalism (Elliot, 1980). In contrast, in some Third World countries -where State control of the press is more direct- a totally different ideological support system has emerged in the last few years. The term 'Development Journalism' is often utilised to describe this alternative practice, where newsmen substitute the Western notions of 'objectivity' and 'impartiality' for the deliberate promotion of the interests of the State -whatever they may be. However, we are still left with the problem of analysing the ideological support systems in countries like Mexico where neither of these conditions prevails and some sort of democratic system is still in operation; What values -if any- are newsmen in those settings committed to?.

In the Mexican case, one must reflect on the extent to which professionalism in journalism refers uniquely to the values that journalists, as an occupational grouping, have developed in order to perform their job within certain parameters of competence.

In order to analyse the Mexican case, one needs to note the difference between professional values deriving from a 'cultural field' (an occupational grouping) or from the policies of a national State, and values derived from the logic of an organisation powerful enough to create a specific kind of professional performance that best serves its corporate interests. As chapter six will show, the

professional competence and practices of TELEVISA's reporters cannot be explained simply in terms of the prevailing models of either 'Western' or 'Development' journalism. TELEVISA's professionalism is chiefly orchestrated according to the organisation's corporative demands rather than the general principles of broadcast journalists, as they are found in other international contexts. Neither it is directly governed by the policies of the domestic national State as in many other Third World countries.

If this is the case, and I hope to show that it is, TELEVISA's story may represent the emergence of a specific type of television journalism, one which may develop within very powerful broadcasting organisations which are relatively free from Government control and which demand the use of news bulletins to advance their interests.

Finally, analyses of news organisations have benefitted considerably from attempts to link an organization's internal structures with more general structures and processes. In this area one finds particularly useful analyses of the way journalists compare with other professions in status, economic and social terms and the extent to which broadcast journalism as an occupation extends the traits of the press ((see Tunstall, 1970; Johnstone et al, 1976)).

One of the most important effects of Epstein's study was to stimulate similar efforts to capture the institutional contexts within which news takes shape. However, although

American network television news still poses relevant questions for research, an equally important phenomenon has been the rise and expansion of broadcasting organisations in the Third World, particularly in Latin America. A number of these have emerged as complex conglomerates, extending their reach across a wide area of the cultural and entertainment industries of their countries. As yet, however, the particular problems they pose for analysis have attracted little academic attention. Mexico's premiere broadcasting organisation, TELEVISA, represents a particularly interesting example of what Colignon and Cray ((1979)) have called "critical organisations", defined as those that "pose social questions, frame alternatives available, and provide the arena in which powerful interests compete to influence important decisions. Thus, to understand societal development, not only the external effects but the internal processes of the organisation must be examined" ((Colignon and Cray 1979:107)).

In the last decade, TELEVISA has emerged as the biggest television producer in the Spanish speaking world. Since 1976 it has been heavily associated with the Spanish International Network, where news figures as a crucial part of its "live" programming, both for export and domestic markets. And although television is TELEVISA'S single most important field of business its reach extends into radio broadcasting, the record industry, publishing and other sectors of entertainment. In contrast to "public service" organisations, and indeed to broadcasting organisations which derive their

funding from the State, most of its revenue derives from the sale of advertising. At the same time, while remaining a private undertaking -with three influential family groups as its most prominent shareholders-, it is subject to formal and informal government regulation. TELEVISA's virtual monopoly over the television industry in Mexico, coupled with the legitimacy needs of a government currently in crisis, make the relationship between broadcasting and the State particularly interesting.

Unfortunately, the bulk of research on the 'operative' dimension too, has concerned news organisations in the "First World" while those of emerging industrialised countries have been relatively neglected. However, the 'operative' dimension continues to pose a number of relevant questions, particularly in cases where the object of analysis is located in quite different social and organisational settings.

Similarly, in Mexico as in other Third World countries, there has been very little systematic work on the profession of broadcast journalism. Consequently, the relationships between journalism and television reporting still remain to be tackled. The question of control within and over TELEVISA makes such an enquiry both relevant and urgent.

It is in the light of the present state of the art and the development of these recent phenomena in Mexican mass communications that I propose an integrative approach, which analyses the production of news along the three main

organisational dimensions discussed above - the bureaucratic, institutional and professional. Implied in this proposal is the idea that in the Mexican case, the bureaucratic and the professional dimensions represent the foundations upon which corporate rationales can be exercised.

More particularly, focusing on the internal dynamics controlling the production of television news within TELEVISA, this study seeks to tackle the following questions:

1. What are the organisation's central economic and political needs and how does news attempt to satisfy them ?

2. How do these institutional rationales interact with journalistic claims to "objectivity" and "impartiality"?

3. What roles does news play in the context of the conglomerate's overall operations?

4. How has the profession of broadcast journalism in Mexico been shaped by TELEVISA'S needs ?

5. What are its formal and authority systems and how is authority exercised within TELEVISA'S Directorate of News?

6. To what extent is the news operation influenced by the internal political strategies of competing groups of journalists ?

7. What value systems, if any, are TELEVISA'S reporters committed to?

8. To what extent are TELEVISA'S operational arrangements similar or different to those of the major television news organisations of the Western World?

9, What consequences do they have for the range and content of the news?

CHAPTER TWO; TELEVISA: AN EMERGING PATTERN OF BROADCASTING IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD?.

This chapter examines the growth and expansion of TELEVISA, the World's biggest producer of Spanish-language television. It questions the ways in which broadcasting in developing countries has been traditionally conceptualised as subordinated to the State and its overall development policies ((Esteinou, J. 1982 & 1983; Tunstall, J. 1977)). The Mexican case, on the contrary, suggests the birth of an alternative pattern, where private broadcasting concerns experience remarkable success through the exercise of corporate and economic rationales.

1. The advance of TELEVISA.

((a) Stage One: An early television start..

The advent of television in Mexico followed the pattern already set by the radio industry. It was based on the North-American model of commercial use with little State intervention and private ownership backed by American capital and characterised by oscillating periods of intense competition followed by aggregation leading to cumulative concentration and consolidation. The account of the Mexican television industry which follows relies heavily on an investigation of the documents held at the headquarters of

the Agrupacion de Iniciadores de la Television Mexicana in Mexico City. I am most grateful to them for allowing free and complete access to their records.

From the beginning of the Mexican broadcasting industry in the early 'twenties up to the early 'forties, more than 200 radio stations had been established scattered around almost every part of the country. Intense competition between rival stations such as the XEW, the XEQ and the XEX in Mexico City soon developed into a race for association and the establishment of national networks. Radiocadena Continental, for instance, began linking ten stations. From 1940 onwards, when the country experienced its most dramatic industrial growth, the process of consolidation notably accelerated. Examples of this tendency include the network led by XEW, the first station to be granted an operating concession, with more than 1515 affiliates; XEQ with about 155 affiliates, and CYB with 20 stations. The first two had been able to expand their reach thanks to the help provided by the American networks (NBC in the case of XEW and CBS with regard to XEQ).

A few prominent figures emerged as virtual controllers of the industry. Nearly all had been closely related to the booming automobile, record and newspaper industries. Amongst them was the figure of Mr. Emilio Azcarraga Vidaurreta who had founded XEW La voz de Latinoamerica in 1929. Up until then he had been a distributor and affiliate of the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), seeing the emerging medium as a potential and promising outlet for his recorded music. His

new station was then affiliated to RCA's US radio division, the National Broadcasting Corporation.

An equally important figure was Romulo O'Farril Sr who had founded XEX and placed a special emphasis on its informative services. His business career included a close association with the Chrysler car company and with a national newspaper Novedades.

The advent of the television industry is marked by the formation of the first channels by leading figures in the radio business using revenue derived from their radio networks and from other areas of industry and commerce. It is characterised by an initial period of intense competition and a subsequent alliance which led to the merger of the three original channels and the formation of Telesistema Mexicano ((TSM)). This provides the background to a second stage in which TSM experiences its massive nation-wide expansion.

Mexico entered the television era in 1950, with the broadcast of the President's annual address to the nation on Channel 4, whose first licence had been awarded to Romulo O'Farril Sr. Three years earlier, both Azcarraga and O'Farril had asked for concessions from the government to set up television stations. After appointing a "high-level Commission to survey the television industries taking shape abroad, particularly in the United States and Great Britain" the then President of the republic, Miguel Aleman Valdes, as recorded by Noriega ((1979:20)), decided to adopt the

commercial model regulated by federal agencies and a small piece of legislation was then introduced, establishing amongst other things, that ownership of television channels was restricted to Mexicans only.

Shortly after the first broadcast, in May 1951, Emilio Azcarraga Sr founded Canal 2 with a rather larger investment than O'Farril. Finally, in August of the following year, a third competitor, Guillermo Gonzalez Camarena, inaugurated his Canal 5 with relatively smaller studio facilities.

As with radio, the first stage of the new industry was marked by intense competition between these three channels. For the first two years they engaged in a continuous battle to gain the rights to broadcast sport and special events, and engaged in aggressive scheduling, lining up their most popular programmes in direct competition. However, in 1955, faced with limited advertising expenditure and rising production costs competition gave way to consolidation and mergers. In that year all three channels agreed to form a partnership and create Telesistema Mexicano.

In 1958, the State's belated response to the rapid growth of the private television system took shape with the founding of a new channel, Canal 11. The permit for its operation was granted to the Instituto Politecnico Nacional (National Polytechnic Institute).

One of the factors that allowed commercial television to expand in this way was the Mexican State's minimal

intervention in controlling the industry. The relevant legislation defines a form of Government control over broadcasting which could be described as 'fragmented responsibility'. This basically means that responsibility is distributed amongst various Ministries and regulatory bodies, which in turn supervise specific areas and content.

The most significant piece of legislation regarding television, the Ley Federal de Radio y Television (Federal Law of Radio and Television) was issued by the Mexican Government in 1960, during the Lopez Mateos administration. A regulative appendix was then added in 1973 (Reglamento de la Ley Federal de Radio y Television) to clarify Government supervision of specified areas of broadcasting.

Through the Ley Federal de Radio y Television, the Mexican Government grants concessions to private investors to make commercial use of Mexican airwaves, using the infrastructure which is owned by the Mexican State. Requirements for a concession are very general: all applicant(s) must hold Mexican citizenship, they must provide documents attesting the company's legal existence; they must comply with the specified technical requirements; and they must provide evidence that the new service is needed.

With exemption of the State's own channels, from 1950 ((the beginning of television in Mexico)) to 1990, concessions for the operation of commercial national networks have only been granted and renewed to TELEVISA's shareholders.

Apart from establishing very general requirements for candidates to be awarded a concession, the Ley Federal de Radio y Television is weak, unclear and dispersed.

The Federal Law of Radio and Television establishes that broadcasting activities should be oriented towards fostering popular education and the transmission of culture; and strengthening Mexican principles, traditions and democratic convictions, so as to facilitate the progress and creativity of the Mexican people. However, the specific meaning of these goals has never been defined by the Mexican State. Furthermore, supervision of these areas is at a very general level and leaves a lot to interpretation.

The law also requires broadcasting organisations to maintain a balance between cultural, informative, entertaining and economic programming. This requirement has never been enforced. On the contrary, as the next pages will show, channels have increasingly segmented their audience, specialising on a particular type of programming.

Instead of centralising the responsibility for supervising television in a single regulative body, the Ley Federal has dispersed it amongst various Ministries and Government Offices. For example, the Ministry of Communications and Transport is responsible for issuing and revoking concessions, assigning frequencies and supervising the technical aspects of transmissions. The Secretaria de Gobernacion (the Mexican equivalent to the British Home

Office) is required to ensure that broadcasts are kept within the limits of respect to private life, personal dignity and morality, and that their contents do not interfere with the rights of a third party or promote crime or other activities that may disturb law and order. The Ministry of Education is responsible for promoting the transmission of cultural and educational programming and safeguarding authorship rights. Finally, the Ministry of Health is charged with responsibility for authorising the advertising of drugs, medical equipment, food and cosmetics and for promoting health education through the transmission of specific programming.

In 1973, the Mexican Government issued the Reglamento de la Ley Federal de Radio y Television. This is a complementary piece of legislation which specified some additional rules governing broadcasting. For instance, it asserted that the advertising of alcoholic beverages could only be aired after 10 pm and that all programming which included contests or raffles must be supervised by a Home Office representative. The Reglamento also created a National Council for Radio and Television, composed of members representing the Government, broadcasting organisations and their employees. The Council was charged with the task of promoting and elevating the moral, cultural, artistic and social qualities of programming. However, since its creation, the National Council has never made a significant recommendation that had contributed to the completion of the legislation's goals.

To sum up then, the State's minimal regulations for television are expressed in vague and superficial legislation and implemented through a system of 'fragmented responsibility'. In the absence of a single regulatory body, this situation has encouraged the practice of 'negotiation under pressure' whereby both the Government and the broadcasting organisations strike bargains knowing that each side has a repertoire of sanctions.

(b) Stage Two: The nation-wide expansion of Telesistema Mexicano.

Technological innovations, together with lack of competition in the capital and a series of widely publicised and very popular events brought about further consolidation of Telesistema Mexicano. The early 'sixties saw the introduction of video-tape, which allowed TSM to sell recorded copies of its programming both domestically and abroad. In 1955, Tele-Programas de Mexico was founded as TSM's export company and began to sell programmes in the Spanish speaking world.

Equally important for TSM's growth were a number of events of international appeal which assured a wide audience and consequently increased advertising revenue, which was used in turn to extend the consortium's size and reach. The first such event was the visit of the Pope Paul VI to the United Nations in 1964. Given the mainly catholic affiliation of the Mexican audience and the uniqueness of that visit

TSM's coverage was a complete success,, although its signal did not reach every area of the country..

The second major event was the XIX Olympiad held in Mexico City in 1968. By that time colour transmissions had already began and a number of television stations had been set up in the provinces.. Prior to the Olympic games however,, the government committed itself to constructing a high-capacity micro wave network between Mexico City and the U.S. border. They also built a satellite ground station for world-wide transmissions..

This step,, taken with the prompting of TSM,, made it possible for the television alliance to continue using the micro-wave network and to expand its reach to the regions through the conversion of provincial television stations into repeaters.. By 1970 TSM had secured almost blanket-coverage across the country.. Only those areas which could not be reached by micro-wave relays due to topographic circumstances remained outside TSM's orbit..

Important too were the NASA Space missions of the late 'sixties,, culminating with Apollo's landing on the moon in 1969. Live coverage of the launching using TSM's special envoys to the Houston Space Center and the Florida launch site,, commanded massive audiences even though it was broadcast in the early hours of the morning.. Finally,, the 1970 Soccer World Cup held in Mexico City,, like the Olympic games,, provided TSM with the opportunity to secure huge

domestic audiences and substantial deals for world-wide transmission.

As a result of these factors,, by 1970 the consolidation was very marked with Telesistema Mexicano controlling 63% of the stations outside Mexico City,, and having 11 repeater stations carrying the Mexico City signals to Guadalajara,, Aguascalientes,, Acapulco and other minor cities ((Gutierrez F. and Schement J. 1984: 245)),

((c) Stage Three: "Los Años Difíciles" ((the difficult years)): 1970-1972,,

Up until 1970 Telesistema enjoyed a unique position in the Mexican television industry as the single recipient of t.v. advertising.. At that time the advertising market was expanding primarily with foreign capital.. The twenty biggest advertising companies in Mexico were subsidiaries of transnational agencies,, and they managed accounts which were large enough to finance television advertising ((Bernal Sahagun 1978)). The massive advertising revenues collected during the coverage of popular events had provided the financial resources to expand TSM's operations both domestically and internationally.. Its' coverage of the nation through Canal 2 was almost complete and sales of its programming to the Spanish-Speaking world were on the increase.. But TSM's pre-eminent position was soon to be challenged..

The period between 1970-72 was marked by the advent of competition in both the provinces and in the capital. Competition in the provinces had started back in 1965 with the formation of Telecadena Mexicana, a network of three channels along the Mexican border with the U.S. created by the film producer Manuel Barbachano Ponce. By the early 1970's it was operating 15 channels in the northern and central states of the country (Noriega op cit;23). But Telecadena did not present a strong challenge to TSM's position. Indeed, increasingly, its advertising revenue was being transferred to TSM whose channels provided wider coverage, and it was not long before Telecadena found itself in financial difficulties..

Stronger competition for TSM arrived in 1968, when Grupo Monterrey, an important industrial conglomerate, moved into broadcasting as a part of its diversification drive. They established Canal 8 under the name of Televisión Independiente de México (TIIM). With the financial backing of one of Mexico's leading companies, Canal 8 was able to provide a wide range of programming and although restricted to the Metropolitan area in the first stages, it managed to capture a good share of the television audience and a healthy slice of the advertising cake.

The years between 1970 and 1972 saw an increasingly fierce competitive encounter between TSM and TIM in the shape of contests for the franchises of popular programmes, contracts with popular actors and entertainers and the rights

to cover sports and special events. Another new entrant to the market was Canal 13, created in 1968 by Francisco Aguirre, an entrepreneur with an important group of radio stations in the capital. Although, given his relatively weak position his strategy was to avoid head-on competition with the other two. Eventually, following a series of conflicts within Corporacion Mexicana de Radio y T.V., its legal owner, in 1972 Canal 13 passed into government ownership through the quasi-State enterprise Sociedad Mexicana de Credito Industrial ((SOMEX)) which had gradually become the largest shareholder.

(d) Stage Four: The merger of the century

TSM+TIM=TELEVISA.

The difficult years of the early 'seventies had a number of important consequences for the Mexican television market. While the costs of programme production rose considerably as a result of the constant competition for franchises and popular artists, television advertising expenditure remained steady ((as Mr. Miguel Aleman, TELEVISA'S Executive Vice-president at the time confirmed in an interview with the author on October 2nd 1984)). Moreover, the future prospects for both TSM and TIM were gloomy since a large proportion of their revenues was being "wasted" on competition, while advertising expenditure looked set to experience a slower than predicted growth in real terms. In addition, both companies were being subjected to a wave of criticism in the Mexican Press for the "quality" of their output. In their

efforts to reach the widest possible audience,, both were accused of pandering to the "lowest common denominator" and ignoring the educational or informative functions ascribed to broadcasting.

In response to this dark panorama the two companies undertook a joint assessment of their economic situation. The results provided the basis for a merging of their resources to create a new and all-encompassing venture: **TELEVISA**. An agreement was reached whereby the proprietors of TSM and TIM would lease their equipment and resources to the newly formed enterprise. The major initial shareholders in **TELEVISA** were then Emilio Azcarraga Sr., Romulo O'Farril Sr., Miguel Aleman Velasco and the Monterrey Group. According to well positioned internal informants,, from 1972 to 1982,, Grupo Monterrey held considerable stakes thanks to its early ownership of Television Independiente de Mexico. However,, following the Mexican financial crisis of 1982 and the virtual collapse of the Grupo Monterrey, which had massive debts in hard currency and suddenly saw its liabilities doubled as the peso fell sharply,, its television stakes were sold in order to help save the conglomerate from receivership. Those stakes went to another Mexican entrepreneur, Gabriel Alarcon,, a media entrepreneur who owns one of Mexico's national dailies, El El Herald de Mexico. His presence in **TELEVISA** was not to last long however. Following what the informants call a series of intense confrontations with Sr. Emilio Azcarraga Milmo,, then **TELEVISA**'s president,, Alarcon sold his shares to the Azcarraga family,, which is said to represent the largest

current shareholder.

The remarkable success of the new television concern was soon reflected in its share of advertising expenditure. By 1976, television accounted for an estimated 50 % of the total advertising expenditure in Mexico amounting to some US \$ 310 million ((Noriega, 1979:51)). Of this, TELEVISA captured 93% and Channel 13 together with the remaining independent stations, 7%.

Apart from the short term savings in production costs and the liberation from domestic competitiveness, which proved to be crucial for the birth of TELEVISA, the parties to the new group reached a consensus on long term strategy which centered on TELEVISA's consolidation in the international media markets through sales and transmission of its programmes via satellite. Close observers of the merger agree that TELEVISA's name is indicative of that final objective: ~~TELEvision-Via-Satellite~~. Although the basis for such a development had been laid years before by the creation in 1961 of the Spanish International Network by Azcarraga and his U.S. affiliate, Reynold V. Anselmo, it was not until 1976 that the international expansion of TELEVISA began to take full shape.

((e) Stage Five: TELEVISA's consolidation in the international media market-place and its domestic diversification ((1976-1985)).

According to the present coordinator of TELEVISA's International operations ((UNIVISION)), in the early 'sixties, Emilio Azcarraga Sr., then at the head of Telesistema Mexicano, discovered the potential market for his programmes provided by the Spanish-speaking population in the United States and commissioned Reynald Anselmo Sr. to find likely associates to set up and promote Spanish language television across the border. All versions have it that Anselmo was rejected by the major American networks, which discriminated against the Latino market not so much on the grounds of its size but because of its precarious purchasing power.

In 1955 Telesistema set up Protele as its export agency and although sales to Latin American countries were rising steadily -mainly in the form of "telenovelas" and dubbed American series- sales to the U.S. were disappointing from 1962 to the early seventies. In fact, Protele's early contributions to TSM's American operations were heavily subsidied for the initial ten years ((Gutierrez and Schement 1984)). Moreover, officers at the UNIVISION offices in Mexico City have indicated that the financial turnover of the American outlets was so poor that Azcarraga paid almost a million US dollars to Protele for the material it had sent them. An alternative strategy was then developed by Emilio Azcarraga Sr. In order to comply with U.S. Federal regulation (which limits foreign ownership of television stations to 20% of the shares).. He went into partnership with some American citizens to constitute a small group of television stations ((then limited to five by FCC rules)). It started with two

stations; KWEX in San Antonio, Texas, and KMEX in Los Angeles. That venture was later to expand and provide the basis for the Spanish International Communications Corporation (SICC), which until recently owned stations in most areas of sizeable Latino settlement (including New York, Miami, L.A. and Fresno). In line with the American Communications Act of 1934, which limits foreign ownership of stations but does not obstruct alien ownership of networks, Azcarraga's second step was to establish a Spanish-speaking network which, following the model of the three major American networks, would provide a free signal to as many stations as possible and finance its operation through the sale of advertising. This second undertaking, launched as the Spanish International Network, allowed Azcarraga to establish an important stronghold in the United States. Also, by virtue of Protele being the SIN's major supplier of relatively cheap programmes, a first-class market would be created for TSM's programming. Ownership of the SIN was in the hands of both Azcarraga ((75%)) and Raymond Anselmo ((25%)), whereas TSM remained as a partnership between Azcarraga, Romulo O'Farril Sr and Miguel Aleman. Azcarraga is said to have transferred his holding and made it a TELEVISA asset a few years later. Informants at the UNIVISION offices in Mexico City, although reluctant to provide an accurate description of current ownership, were prepared to stress the overall control that Mr. Emilio Azcarraga Milmo exercises over SIN operations.

Although the early years of the operation were difficult financially, SIN managed to achieve a modest growth in the

late 'sixties, and in 1972 four Californian stations were linked for live transmissions of television programmes <from L.A. to Fresno, Sacramento and San Francisco ((Gutierrez, op cit: 246)>. Not long after, it became Protele's biggest customer ((and the biggest outlet for TELEVISA programming in the U.S.)). The extent of this trend can be observed by looking at some of Protele's recent export figures. Unless otherwise indicated, the figures quoted derive from an analysis of a large collection of documents at TELEVISA's headquarters in Mexico City, which include memoranda and export summaries. Access was granted by Protele's executive officers.

In 1981 Protele was exporting a total of 19,593 hours to more than 23 countries, of which 2,587 ((13.2%)) went to the USA through the SIN. As can be seen from Table 1, in that year the SIN outlet together with Puerto Rico, represented 21.5% of Protele's total sales to the international market. Financially too, the difficult early stages were over. With relatively cheap production costs and sales at the comparatively high rates established in the international market, Protele was able to secure a turnover of 6.978 million U.S. dls. in 1981 with the lion's share coming from the SIN operations ((20.86 %)) which together with Puerto Rico represented 34.53% of the total.

The SIN's major expansion in the USA started to take shape in the mid-'seventies, with the merger of TSM and TIM, and the birth of TELEVISA, provided the financial backing

TABLE 1. PROTELE's 1981 EXPORT FIGURES

MAJOR COSTUMERS	HOURS OF PROGRAMMING SOLD	TURNOVERS IN US. DLLS.	ASA% OF THE TOTAL
------------------------	--------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	------------------------------

USA.....	2587.....	1,455.7	(20.86%)
Puerto Rico.....	1642.....	954.7	(13.67%)
Ecuador.....	3469.....	945.7	(13.55%)
Dominican Republic.....	1608.....	414.5	(6.0%)
Guatemala.....	1584.....	335.3	(4.8%)

TOTAL,

from 23 countries	19,593.....	6,978,119 US Dlls,
--------------------------	--------------------	---------------------------

for an expansion into the international markets.

On July 4th 1976, TELEVISA launched UNIVISION, an international transmission system which by 1984 reached more than 800 television stations in the Americas. In the early years, it sent a signal from Mexico City to California using the micro-wave network set up in the 'sixties. Since 1980, however, its signal has travelled via satellite and supplied the present undertakings in the USA ((the SIN and Galavision) with programming. The former carries TELEVISA's "live" programming, in the form of news and variety shows with some recorded material such as game shows and telenovelas. Galavision is a cable network set up in October 1979 using local cable systems in Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Florida, which transmits Mexican feature films and soap operas. Through rapid expansion, the SIN covered, by the end of 1980, almost every region in the US, plus Puerto Rico. In 1984, it had a total of a total of 277 affiliates covering 38 States of the American Union and reaching 86% of the Hispanic population in that country.

The system operates on the basic principles established by Protele, providing UNIVISION with domestically produced - and relatively cheap- programming. Univision channels the signal to the Mexico-US border and from there it is relayed to Texas, New Mexico and California where it is subsequently picked up and transmitted via satellite and also by cable. The Spanish International Network then buys the signal, offers it to local television stations and gets its revenue

from the sale of advertising. Galavision, however, buys the signal directly from Univision and transmits it through cable to subscribers free from advertising. Its revenue comes from customer subscriptions.

TELEVISA's international expansion has also included a major attempt to build a market for its programmes in Spain. In 1977 with the death of Franco, the Spanish and Mexican governments resumed relations after a long cool period following the Spanish Civil War. TELEVISA took full advantage of this thaw, launching operations in Madrid and collaborating with Radio Television Espanola. In the aftermath of the Mexican financial crisis, however, this venture has remained at a standstill.

Having acquired self-sufficiency in most major genres of television programming, TELEVISA's imports are restricted to; cartoons ((due to the fact that Mexico still lacks the infrastructure to produce them at lower costs than those bought from America)); action-adventure series such as Hart to Hart, Kojak, and more recently Hill Street Blues; the unavoidable romance series such as Dallas and Dynasty; and a number of feature films. However, the proportion of imported material in TELEVISA's domestic schedules has steadily declined, from a high point in the early 'sixties, when bought-in programmes represented almost 70% of the output. By 1981 that figure was down to 36%, with the rest of the programming ((64%)) being home-produced. Of course, that proportion varies considerably from channel to channel. In a

typical week of that year, Canal 2 transmitted only domestically produced programming, whereas imported material accounted for 64% of Canal 5's programming.

Short-term plans for the mid-eighties include participation in the "Morelos" satellite system, which initially consists of two geostationary satellites allocated to the Mexican Government. This system will enable TELEVISA to reach the whole of the country. These installations have already enhanced the company's performance in covering the 1986 soccer World Cup in Mexico.

((f) Domestic expansion and diversification.

TELEVISA's domestic broadcasting system consists of a network of three major national channels ((Canal 2, 4, 5) with an additional Metropolitan channel (Canal 9)), which used to be Televisión Independiente's main television outlet before the merger with Televisión in 1972. The channel with the widest coverage is Canal 2. This reaches an estimated 6.8 million households and has a potential audience of 50 million. Canal 4 covers the Metropolitan area around Mexico City reaching 2.6 million households and having a potential viewing public of more than 19 million. In 1983, Canal 5 covered half the country and had a penetration capacity of 5.4 million homes and a potential audience of 39 million. Finally, Canal 8 covers the 2.9 million households in the Valley of Mexico.

Since 1972, the year of its formation, TELEVISA has succeeded in developing programming that reflects a national image. This is particularly evident on Canal 2, which carries only domestically produced material.

The output consists mainly of news bulletins (Hoy Mismo and 24 HORAS), light entertainment, and last but certainly not least, soap-operas. These take the lion's share of afternoon and early evening transmissions (from 3.45 to 7.45 pm) with shows such as Amame Siempre (Love me forever), Mundo de Juguete (A fantasy world) and Los Ricos tambien lloran (Rich people cry too).

As well as a massive drive towards the international market, the latest stage in the development of Mexican television has also seen substantial expansion within Mexico itself. But whereas the international undertakings have been primarily -if not solely- concerned with selling television programmes, TELEVISA'S domestic operations have centred around diversification.

In a way this diversification follows a pattern exemplified by one of TELEVISA'S former shareholders, el Grupo "Alfa" -a part of Grupo Monterrey. With rates of return in the region of 50-52% in the late 'seventies (greatly influenced by one of the Mexican economy's greatest booms this century), Alfa was able to finance a great number of take-overs, and from 1976 to 1982, the total number of its companies rose 44 times, from 37 to 157. TELEVISA also

expanded its corporate holdings and had a total of 45 subsidiaries by 1977 (Noriega 1979:53). However, unlike Alfa, for whom the future turned out starker than first envisaged, TELEVISA was able to survive the economic crisis and consolidate its position thanks to its early entry into international media markets. By 1982 it had achieved an important base for expansion through Protele's sales, which provided a regular annual income of at least 7 million US dollars without counting the rising advertising revenue from the SIN operations. Also, unlike Alfa, TELEVISA was able to make useful economies of scale. Moreover, it actually benefitted from the financial crisis, as viewing figures -the conventional measure used to justify advertising rates- rose sharply, suggesting that more people were watching its programmes than before 1982.

The context for this expansion was provided by a period of internal reorganisation. TELEVISA's production facilities were re-grouped in its two headquarters, both in Mexico City. Presently, although local production has started to take shape in Canal 2 of Veracruz, programme making remains heavily concentrated in the capital. Most of the independent stations affiliated to TELEVISA in the provinces function primarily as repeaters of its mainstream programming. According to the company's own figures for 1984, TELEVISA's network of 114 relay and transfer stations take its signal domestically to more than 72 cities and 700 municipalities with a potential viewing public of 50 million. Since 1984, however, TELEVISA has started to promote regional television

production and has so far divided the country into 8 areas.

(g) TELEVISA's corporate composition in 1985.

Although TELEVISA's initial shareholders possessed extensive interests in other areas of mass communications, most notably publishing and radio, the last decade has seen an unparalleled diversification, not only into communications related areas such as sport and other types of leisure, but also into the transport sector and even into manufacturing.

Its' established subsidiaries include; Protele, which as well as operating as TELEVISA's exporting agency also produces domestic advertising slots; Tele-Guia, a weekly magazine which includes details of all television programming; Cable-vision, TELEVISA's cable company; Division Radio, its radio network; and Club America, one of the most successful soccer clubs in Latin America. The more recent acquisitions include Discos Melody and Laminados Especiales, TELEVISA's ventures in the record industry; Mesoneros de Mexico, one of the most profitable restaurant chains; Opecab, a night-club and variety show operator, Televiteatro, TELEVISA's stake in the commercial Mexican theatre and last but not least, Videocentro, a rapidly expanding video rental chain.

Although the full extent and nature of its domestic holdings remains difficult to ascertain with accuracy due to the corporation's secretiveness, a thorough examination of

official data provided by a number of TELEVISA's internal departments provided an approximate picture of TELEVISA's corporate composition in 1985. The list in Table 2 contains those undertakings in which TELEVISA holds a majority of shares and whose ownership is legally established as being affiliated to the corporate group.

This list produces a total of 1951 listed employees in 32 companies. Similarly, TELEVISA's network in the provinces reveals the presence of an important number of stations and repeaters which are either a part of the TELEVISA Group or are TELEVISA-controlled. According to information released by the Sales Department, in 1984, TELEVISA's provincial network consisted of 2929 stations which produced some local programming and 5252 repeaters. Of all these, TELEVISA owned 122 stations and 34 repeaters and held 9 additional repeaters in partnership -usually with TELEVISA acting as a leasee. Table 3 provides a more detailed account of the network with regard to the channels it owns in the provinces.

These two lists, however, do not include the personal interests of leading TELEVISA executives in a wide number of areas, since these are not legally part of the Group. For instance, Mr. Romulo O'Farrill Jr and Sr. Miguel Aleman Velasco, two key TELEVISA executives hold in partnership Noyedades, one of the most influential national newspapers. In addition, both have extensive holdings in Noyedades Editores, which publishes women magazines, comics and short-novels and in Editorial Diana, one of Mexico's biggest

TABLE 2: TELEVISAS'S CORPORATE COMPOSITION (*)

Name of the company	No. employees	Field of operation
PROTELE	264	Selling agency of TELEVISAS produced material
CABLEVISION	355	Producer of t. v. ads. Supplier of Cable T. V. in Mexico City's Metropolitan area.
FUNDACION CULTURAL TELEVISAS	48	Promoter of cultural and educational events.
RADIO DIVISION	1977	Radio-Broadcasting: five stations Mexico City
TELEVISCINE	200	Film making
VIDEOCINE	155	Video and film producing and marketing
TELEVISORA DE LA LAGUNA	255	T.V. channel in Northern Mexico
PRODUCCIONES ARTISTICAS		
LATINOAMERICANAS	222	Producer of radio programmes
CADENA RADIODIFUSORA MEXICANA	115	Radio stations in the provinces
RADIO MEXICANA DEL CENTRO	77	" " " " " "
TIM	55	T.V. Repeater
TELEVISION DEL NORTE	111	T.V. Repeater
CADENA TELEVISORA DEL NORTE	11177	T.V. Station in Northern Mexico
TELEVISION INDEP. DE JALISCO	66	T. V. Repeater
TELEVISORAS INCORPORADAS	33	T.V. Repeater
CADENA RADIO GUADALAJARA	44	Radio station in Western Mexico
RADIODIFUSORA MEXICO	66	Radio station
DISCOS Y CINTAS MELODY	1881	Record producer
LAMINADOS Y ACABADOS ESPECIALES	1145	Record producer
PRODUCCIONES DE DISCOS AMERICA	222	Record promotion
DUPLICASSETTE	300	Video duplicating
TELEVITEATRO	1088	Promotion and production of commercial theatre
MUSEO RUFINO TAMAYO	488	Exhibition hall and gallery
PRONESA	183	Promoter and producer of variety shows and entertaining
OPECAB S.A.	11122	Cabaret and night club operators
MESONEROS DE MEXICO	788	Restaurants (e. g. "Maxim's")
CLUB AMERICA	288	Soccer team (not including Players)
ESCUELA DE FUTBOL AMERICA	166	Soccer school (staff only)
IMPULSORA DEPORTIVA NECAXA	66	Soccer association (adm. staff)
JETS EJECUTIVOS S.A.	155	Small aircraft leasing
EXPORTACION Y REPRESENTACION SA	32	Chillies can-packing

(*) This list does not include UNIVISION, GALAVISION and SICC, the international operations of the conglomerate.

Numbers provide an indicator as to the subsidiaries' size in terms of the personnel they employ. Notes are provided in cases where a great number of free-lance, part time or occasional personnel is involved and not included in the figures.

TABLE 3: TELEVISA'S PROVINCIAL NETWORK.

LOCAL STATIONS.

Independent.	117
TELEVISA'S	122

CANAL 2 REPEATERS

TELEVISA'S	20
With TELEVISA as partner	9
Independent	7

CANAL 4 REPEATERS

TELEVISA'S	1
------------	---

CANAL 5 REPEATERS

TELEVISA'S	100
Independents	2

CANAL 2 of VERACRUZ

TELEVISA's repeaters	2
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CANAL 8 REPEATERS

TELEVISA'S	11
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TOTAL	81
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book= publishing houses. Prominent TELEVISA shareholders also retain important stakes in the automobile and transport industries.

2. Recent developments at TELEVISA.

Since 1984, when the main fieldwork for this study was completed, there have been some important new developments in the structure and advancement of the consortium. Of crucial importance are: (a) changes in the executive hierarchy; (b) the departure and subsequent comeback of 24 HORAS and Mr. Jacobo Zabludovsky; (c) the selling of the Spanish International Network; (d) TELEVISA's involvement in the Morelos satellite system and (e) the launching of TELEVISA's ECO, a world-wide news service.

(a) In 1986, Mr. Emilio Azcarraga left the Presidency of TELEVISA to become the President of a new venture, UNIVISA, which in turn became TELEVISA's parent company. UNIVISA also owns the consortium's international operations. Mr. Miguel Aleman, former Executive Vice-president, became President of TELEVISA.

(b) In January 1987, 24 HORAS ceased to be produced in TELEVISA, in what apparently marked the departure of Mr. Jacobo Zabludovsky from daily news. He was charged with responsibility over the production of special programmes under the auspices of ECO, a newly founded international news service. However, in March 1987, 24 HORAS came back with Mr.

Zabludovsky again in charge. This time, the bulletin experienced some format changes. The visual component of the programme was upgraded with a screen in the studio for live interviews. The sports section was separated from presentation in the studio. The female news presenter was also removed from the programme, leaving Mr. Zabludovsky do the anchorman's job alone.

((c) In the end of 1987, Mr. Emilio Azcarraga announced that due to a legal battle he faced in the U.S. where the Courts alleged that he was too involved in the southern American television stations, he had decided to sell the Spanish International Network to Hallmark International. Mr. Azcarraga pointed out that UNIVISA would still retain GALAVISION, as its cable network operating in the U.S.

((d) In an effort to expand its reach, TELEVISA got actively involved in the Morelos satellite system, which in theory has become Mexico's first satellite venture. Deciding in 1980 to install its own satellite transmission system, particularly to transmit the 1986 World Cup soccer games, TELEVISA participated actively in the construction of a direct broadcast satellite which is already in operation ((Esteinou, 1988)).

((e) Toward the end of 1988, TELEVISA began a global re-arrangement of its strategies to advance a further step in its penetration of the Spanish-speaking television market. The outcome was the launching of a 24-hour television service

called ECO1 which consists of 60-minute sections of a format which resembles the American CNN network. 24 HORAS is a vital part of that programming,, which is broadcast via satellite throughout Latin America,, the U.S. and Europe..

3. Conclusion.

As this chapter has sought to show,, TELEVISA has emerged as one of Mexico's most powerful conglomerates. Domestically,, besides its television concerns,, it has vast interests in radio broadcasting,, film production,, publishing,, record production,, distribution and marketing,, and its recent diversification drive has expanded its corporative activity to complimentary areas of the Mexican entertainment industry such as night-clubs ((cabaret and variety shows)) and the recent Mexican adaptation of the increasingly flourishing and profitable youth culture. It is also associated with food-processing,, services and transport. And unlike other important groups in the country,, which are primarily centred around manufacturing and operate predominantly in the domestic market,, TELEVISA's financial health -based on a consolidated domestic market coupled with a massive expansion abroad,, with production costs in pesos and revenue in dollars in a continuing devaluatory system -looks stronger than ever.

Understandably,, the private and commercial nature of TELEVISA's success story poses a number of relevant questions for further research: What kind of strategies has TELEVISA been able to design and implement to gain such an

advantageous position in the Latin American media markets? What are the mediating roles through which TELEVISA has been able to secure a good and stable relationship with the Mexican State? What roles, if any, has its television news operation performed in the development of its corporate composition? And finally: To what extent may TELEVISA establish a pattern in developing Latin American nations?..

These questions emerge at a time when private broadcasting concerns in Colombia, Venezuela and Brasil are also experiencing a positive drive towards international expansion. More academic attention and debate are necessary to provide adequate accounts of these emerging zones. Furthermore, analysis may benefit enormously from taking into account not only the relationship between broadcast industries and the State ((a focus that has been overemphasized by the recent Latin American literature)) but also from making the internal dynamics of media organisations an object for empirical enquiry..

CHAPTER THREE: 24 HORAS' UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF ACCESS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS.

1. Introduction.

This chapter's main objective is to provide an account of the general picture of the world and Mexican society provided by the content of 24 HORAS and to compare it with the other sources of electronic news operating at the time. It places a particular emphasis on the unequal distribution of the news space and access.

This exercise takes its departure point from Golding and Elliot's ((1979)) demonstration that news contains implicit differential criteria about the newsworthiness of particular geographical areas, actors and topics. It also stems from a concern about the political dimension of news. In an earlier study ((Molina, 1985)), I referred to news as a tool for distributing political access, in what a group of commentators have defined as news' "consensual paradigm" ((Halloran, J. et al 1970; Hall, S. 1981; Murdock, G. 1981)). This position reflects the idea that news reproduces or amplifies the views of actors who are considered as the 'primary definers of events'. Moreover, these commentators have introduced methods to analyse the way in which particular events are represented by the news. This chapter employs a similar perspective to analyse the unequal manner in which Mexican electronic news, particularly TELEvisa's, distributes its news space emphasizing certain geographical

areas as conventional sources,, as well as specific news actors and topics,, and thereby reproducing the views and definitions of a very particular kind of institutions.

2. Methodology.

The data to be presented derives from an analysis of 2,535 news items broadcast by a total of eleven news bulletins in September 1983 in Mexico City's Metropolitan area. These eleven bulletins constitute a stratified sample of the 314 bulletins being broadcast every day in Mexico City in that year. This sample was constructed on the basis of the bulletins' audience stratification. It consisted of bulletins which were relatively popular in audiences of high, medium and low socioeconomic level. It was thought that together with SIETE DIAS, 24 HORAS's competitor,, this news selection would allow us to establish a general distribution pattern against which the particular emphases of 24 HORAS could be specified.

As a first step,, news bulletins were analysed in terms of a set of four dimensions: geography,, news actors,, topics and the allocation of the space to define events. The sample for this exercise consisted of 1,873 news items deriving from 15-days of broadcasting -selected at random- by a total of nine radio news bulletins and two television programmes: TELEVISA'S 24 HORAS ((the evening edition)) and IMEVISION'S ((the State's Channel)) SIETE DIAS. The frequency distribution of news items amongst these bulletins appears in Table No.4

TABLE No. 4 SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS ITEMS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF GEOGRAPHY, TOPICS, NEWS ACTORS AND THE ALLOCATION OF ACCESS

TYPE OF BULLETIN	NEWS ITEMS	PERCENTAGE
RADIO		
'WHITE' STATIONS		
XELA 11.15 am	244	1133
XEUNAM 10 pm	296	1588
MID MARKET STATIONS		
XEW 7 am	35	1199
XEW 8 am	1700	991
XEEP 8 am	111	1677
POPULAR STATIONS		
XEBS 8 am	1844	9988
XEBS 11 am	488	2266
XEFAJ 8 am	633	3344
XEFAJ 11 am	488	2266
TELEVISION		
SIETE DIAS 10 pm	3922	21
24 HORAS	3022	16.1
TOTAL	188733	100 %

The second phase of the analysis was the news coverage of political parties, industrial strife, criminal offences, conflicts and war in Central America and the presentation of women. The sample for this part of the analysis consisted of 662 news items which were broadcast by the eleven sample programmes during a three-week period in September 1983. The frequency distribution of news items amongst these bulletins appears in Table No. 5.

This study was conducted with the assistance of a team of 10 coding assistants, all students of Mass Communications at the Autonomous Metropolitan University in Mexico City, in an attempt to analyse all news items at the same time. This team was trained over a period of two weeks and underwent reliability tests which produced a controlled error margin of .03. Coding for the first part of the analysis took 25 days and for the second part it took 30 days. Data processing and tabulation were carried out through SPSS routines at the Computer laboratory of the Autonomous Metropolitan University.

Although differences in news content between 'elite', mid market and popular broadcasts were found to be comparatively minimal, there is an emphasis in 'elite' newscasts to include a relatively greater proportion of news about political parties, in-depth news about the economy and industrial action. In contrast, popular bulletins seem to include a greater proportion of news about crime and sports. This trend is even greater in the bulletins of XEFAJ, which contain the

TABLE No. 5 SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION FOR ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENTATION OF:
POLITICAL PARTIES, INDUSTRIAL STRIFE, CRIME, WAR IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND WOMEN

NEWS BULLETIN	POLITICAL PARTIES	INDUSTRIAL STRIFE	CRIME	WAR IN CENTRAL AMERICA	WOMEN
	NEWS ITEMS	NEWS ITEMS	NEWS ITEMS	NEWS ITEMS	NEWS ITEMS
	%	%	%	%	%
XEW 7 am	2	1.9	8	3	19
XEW 8 am	15	13.9	24	6	17
XEBS 8am	17	15.7	16	2	24
XEPT 8 am	19	17.6	17	30	17
XEPA 8 am	4	3.7	14	7	15
XEBS 11 am	0	0	3	0	18
XEPA 11 am	0	0	30	0	30
XEUNAM 10 pm	9	8.3	3	25	20
SIGTE DIAS	25	23.1	25	30	30
24 HORAS	17	15.7	18	27	28
TOTAL	108	48	158	130	218
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

News: items analysed in this section total 662.

greatest proportion of crime news amongst all bulletins..

3. 24 HORAS' news geography.

24 HORAS's news shares the same basic news geography as the general flow of Mexican electronic news. There is a marked emphasis on news that comes from Mexico ((55%)), followed by news from the U.S.A. and Latin America ((12 and 17%)). There is less attention to Western Europe,, which accounts for only 5% of the total. The African continent,, together with Asia,, Australia and the East Block receive virtually no attention at all. At the time of the study,, news from the Middle East accounted for 5%, which represents more or less the same degree of attention as that given to news from all the countries of Western Europe. Table No. 6 summarises these trends..

Within news about Mexico,, a second trend shows a very marked centralisation of news sources in the capital,, Mexico City,, which all bulletins share. Of all news items,, almost 80% came from the Metropolitan Area,, 15% from the capitals of the Mexican States and less than 1% from the Municipalities of Mexico ((see Table 7)).

4. News Actors.

As many commentators have shown,, news is not only about geographical areas but crucially about news actors,, the public personalities to whom access and space is given. Here

TABLE No. 6 MAINSTREAM NEWS GEOGRAPHY

AREA	NEWS ITEMS	PERCENTAGE
Mexico	11023	54.6
Latin America	310	16.6
USA	224	11.9
Western Europe	117	6.2
Middle East	85	4.5
East Block	34	1.8
Asia	20	1.1
Africa	9	0.5
Australia	2	0.1
Nl. Identt,	49	2.6
TOTAL	18837	100.0%

TABLE No. 7 NEWS GEOGRAPHY AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

NEWS ORIGIN	NEWS ITEMS	PERCENTAGE
Mexico City	818	79.3
States-I	152	15.4
Municipalities	6	0.6
N. Ident. ■	48	4.7
TOTAL	1024	100.00%

we find some differences between the frequency distribution of mainstream news and that of 24 HORAS's news ((see Table 8),

From this table it is possible to see that the list of prominent actors in the mainstream of Mexico's electronic news includes the spokesmen for the Mexican Government ((offices at various levels in the bureaucratic hierarchy), State Ministers,, Sportsman,, the spokesmen of the CTM Trade Union movement ((linked to the ruling party)) and the Independent Trade Union movement ((with relatively higher attention to the former)), and at an individual level,, the President of Mexico,.

In contrast,, 24 HORAS gives higher attention to the President and to spokesmen of Mexican private sector ((representing the industrial and trade sectors)). Also obtaining higher attention figures are the officials of the PRI ((ruling)) party and spokesmen of the CTM ((also linked to the party in power)) with virtually no attention given to the independent trade union movement,, the opposition and the peasants' organisations.. Higher attention is also given to sportsmen and people from show business,, with practically no attention given to independent organisations and intellectuals..

The composition of news actors reveals a tendency already noted by Golding and Elliot ((1979)). News is about people and not institutions.. Data from Table No. 9 indicates that the highest proportion of news items deals with actors as

TABLE No. 8 NEWS ACCORDS

NEWS ACCORDS	24 NORAS'S NEWS	MAINFSTREAM NEWS	% DIFFERENCE (24 NORAS)		
	News Items	Percentages	News Items	Percentages	
Sportsmen	64	21.1	195	18.4	9.90
Government Spokesmen	57	18.8	284	22.4	-3.30
State Ministers	44	14.6	112	10.6	4.00
Spokesmen for the Industrial Sector	32	10.5	39	3.4	6.80
Trade Union Movement	29	9.6	65	6.4	3.60
Peasants in the Trade Sector	24	8	29	2.4	5.30
Peasants' Protest	22	7.2	62	5.8	1.40
Left (wing party) Officials	13	4.3	27	2.6	1.80
Show Business Celebrities	12	3.9	28	2.7	1.30
Intellectuals and Academics	3	1	40	3.8	-2.70
PAN (opposition) Officials	2	0.6	7	0.6	-0.10
PEUM (opposition) officials	0	0	6	0.6	-0.60
Spokesmen for the Peasantry	0	0	4	0.4	-0.40
Spokesmen for the Independent Trade Union Movement	0	0	47	4.4	-4.40
Independent Organisations	0	0	7	0.7	-0.70
Not-Institutionalised	0	0	2	0.2	-0.20
Opposition	0	0	9	0.9	-0.90
News Sources	0	0	140	13.4	
Others	0	0			
TOTAL	302	99.60%	1061	99.99%	

TABLE No. 9 THE COMPOSITION OF NEWS ACTORS

COMPOSITION	News Items	Percentages
Individual	668	40.2
Formal Organizations		
(National TVel)	538	32.4
Internal Groups	146	8.8
Countries	143	8.6
International Country Organisations	73	4.4
International Organisations N. Dept.	71	4.3
	80	4.8
TOTAL	1658	99.99%

individuals, followed by news about organisations at a national level. This tendency is shared evenly by all news bulletins.

5. The topics of the news.

Mexican News is predominantly about the economy, politics, international warfare and sports. Data gathered in Table No. 10 shows that the mainstream news flow devotes more than 40% of its space to the economy and politics; 24% to reporting the development of wars and armed conflict at the international level and 15% to sports. A smaller percentage of news items deals with the "human interest" story. In contrast, 24 HORAS' news scores relatively lower in stories about the economy and politics but markedly higher in news about sports and "human interest".

6. The allocation of access.

Institutions and personalities receive access in the news by appearing as subjects of its discourse. However, the amplification of their importance as news actors, and the intensification of their access, is attained by having their views aired "textually" by the news. This is achieved in the news story either by referring to what the news actor said or by having a part of their speech embodied in the story as an "insert".

The data shown in Table 11 indicates that 24 HORAS offers

TABLE NO. 10 THE TOPIC OF THE NEWS

24 HORAS'S NEWS MAINSTREAM NEWS

TOPICS News Items Percentages News Items Percentages % DIFFERENCE

Economy and Finance	107	35.4	177	41.8	-6.24
International Warfare	75	24.8	39	23.6	1.2
Sports	71	23.5	265	44.4	9.9
Science and Technology	33	11	91	4.9	6.9
Arts and Entertainment	16	5.3	276	15.3	-10
Other (including, crime, culture, show business, technology, etc.)					
TOTAL	302	100	418	100	

intensified access in a greater proportion of its content than the mainstream electronic news. Out of 302 news items, 226 reported the views of their actors ((74%)) as against only 566 out of a total of 1061 news items deriving from the other bulletins.

The privileged actors who command this 'intensified access' in the mainstream bulletins is headed by the spokesmen of the Government ((the actors who are responsible for airing the policies and measures taken by the Federal Government to tackle Mexico's financial and political crisis)). They account for 29%. The second group of actors is the team of State Ministers, who get 18% of this space ((both groups together totalling 47%)). They are followed by sportsmen, who get nearly nine percent. Finally, the President, alone, gets 7.4% of intensified access.

The distribution of intensified access within 24 HORAS' news shows some differences from mainstream news. Firstly, it allocates a greater proportion of this kind of space to sportsmen ((the majority of whom are football players and in many cases TELEVISA employees)). Government spokesmen, however get less access than in the mainstream news, 19.9% as against 28.8%. In contrast, the Private Sector ((represented by spokesmen for Industry and Trade)) get 20% of 24 HORAS's intensified access ((a figure nearly three times higher than the mainstream electronic news and representing a fifth of all intensified access allocated by 24 HORAS)).

TABLE No. 11 ALLOCATION OF INTENSIFIED ACCESS

News Actors	24 HORAS NEWS		MAINSTREAM NEWS	
	News Items	Percentages	News Items	Percentages
Government Spokesmen	45	19.9	163	28.8
State Ministers	44	19.4	101	17.8
Spokesmen of the Industrial Sector	25	11	30	5.3
Trade Union Movement	23	10.1	52	9.2
Mexico's President	22	9.7	42	7.4
Sportsmen	22	9.7	50	8.8
Spokesmen for the Trade Sector	20	8.8	13	2.3
PRI (ruling party) officials	13	5.7	20	3.5
Show Business Celebrities	10	4.4	20	3.5
Intellectuals and Academics	2	0.8	12	2.1
PAN (opposition) officials	0	0	6	1.1
PSUM (opposition) officials	0	0	6	1.1
Spokesmen for the Peasantry	0	0	4	0.7
Spokesmen for the CTM				
Spokesmen for the Independent Trade Union Movement	0	0	9	1.6
Independent Organizations	0	0		0.7
Not Institutionalised			4	
Opposition	0	0	1	0.2
News Sources	0	0	5	0.9
Others	0	0	25	4.4
TOTAL	226	99.50%	566	99.50%

Before closing this section, it is important to draw attention to another index of intensified access for the most privileged actors; those who get this type of treatment in the stories in which they appear as subjects of the news. Here, within 24 HORAS' bulletin's, the most privileged actors are the President of Mexico, and the spokesmen for the PRI (Mexico's ruling party) both of whom are quoted in all the stories in which they appear. The spokesmen of the Private Sector are given intensified access in 80% of their stories. Finally, sportsmen, who take the hellion's share of the bulletin's total space given to intensified access are given that special treatment in only 34% of their stories.

7. The coverage of political parties.

In general, the coverage given to political parties within Mexican mainstream electronic news is very very low, representing a mere 7% of all broadcasts; a trend that is shared by 24 HORAS. SIETE DIAS, its main competitor, however tends to include a relatively higher proportion of news about political parties in its broadcasts. Table No. 122 contains data derived from an analysis of all news dealing with political parties in both mainstream news and 24 HORAS during a period of 15 days.

Of all attention given to political parties in mainstream news, the PRI is featured in four out of five news items, with the PSUM taking 11% and the PAN 7%. Figures within 24 HORAS allocate a relatively higher proportion of news to the

TABLE No. 12 NEWS ABOUT POLITICAL PARTIES

PARTY	24 HORAS		MAINSTREAM		NEWSFLOW	
	News Items	Percentages	News Items	Percentages	News Items	Percentages
PMI (ruling party)	15	88.2	86	80	80	
PAN (right wing party)	2	11.7	8	7.4	7.4	
PSUM (left wing party)	0	0	12	11.1	11.1	
OTHER PARTIES	0	0	2	1.5	1.5	
TOTAL	17	99.90%	108	100%		

PRI ((88%)) and to the PAN ((12%)) with no attention given to the other opposition parties..

8. The coverage of industrial action.

The economic crisis of 1982 left Mexico with escalating inflation,, which in turn decreased real wages at a frantic pace. The second part of the following year saw the emergence of a political as well as an industrial crisis as opposition parties increased their criticism of government policies in Congress,, and trade unions threatened massive strikes. However,, the news of that time ((when this sample was taken)), minimised political news. The following part of the study intended to see how news reported the action of trade unions..

This part of the study reports on an analysis of a total of 48 news items which were broadcast by eleven bulletins during a 15-day period in September 1983. The first notable feature is the minimal attention paid by the news to industrial action.. While hundreds of strikes threatened to brake out throughout Mexico,, this type of story represented only 3% of the total news space. 24 HORAS shared that general trend. The only bulletin that included a greater number of stories about industrial action was the news from Radio UNAM ((a station that is part of the National Autonomous University of Mexico)). This coverage accounted for nearly 40% of all the stories in the mainstream electronic news..

Table No. 13 shows the distribution of news about

industrial action amongst mainstream electronic news and 24 HORAS. It is clear that both types of news minimised the news value of this kind of story, but within the small group of items included, all the bulletins paid overwhelming attention to strikes in the transport and communications sector. At the time one of the Mexican airlines went on strike and that story gained considerable attention. News about strikes in the social services sector came second, with 15% of the news space. Finally, there was practically no attention given to strikes in the industrial, business, trade and mining sectors, a trend that is particularly notable in 24 HORAS.

Although nearly all bulletins paid considerable attention to the strike at the Mexican airline, within 24 HORAS and the bulletins of XEW ((a station also owned by TELEVISIA)) that story was the only strike reported. During fieldwork, I learned that TELEVISIA'S Directorate of News places overwhelming attention to strikes in the two Mexican airlines due to the belief that such events affect a great number of people involving potentially high losses in revenue, particularly in the tourism sector. However, the coverage of this type of events addresses audiences in their role of consumers of the service rather than in the role of workers affected by the strike.

9. Crime News.

Together with political unrest and industrial strife, Mexico City suffered in the later part of 1983 from a wave of

TABLE No. 13 NEWS ABOUT INDUSTRIAL ACTION

SECTOR	24 HORAS		MAINSTREAM FLOW	
	News Items	Percentages	News Items	Percentages
Transport and Communications	6	100	27	56.3
Social Services (hotels, resaturants, tourism)	0	0	7	14.6
Manufacturing	0	0	4	8.4
Agriculture and Fishing	0	0	3	6.3
Mining	0	0	1	2.1
Banking and Insurance	0	0	1	2.1
Electricity, water and gas supply	0	0	0	0
Building	0	0	0	0
Trade and Commerce	0	0	5	0
Other	0	0	5	10.2
TOTAL	6	100%	48	100.00%

increased criminal offences,, the highest proportion of which were robberies.. This was reported by the Office of Crime Statistics at the Delegacion Alvaro Obregon and Benito Juarez.. Consequently,, it was important to register the proportion of news in both mainstream bulletins and 24 HORAS which was devoted to the coverage and reporting of this type of story.

Altogether,, there were 158 items during a 15-day period,, representing a higher proportion than political or industrial news. Table No. 14 reports the distribution of stories according to the identification of the offender.. Contrary to the trends shown by official statistics,, the news tended to emphasize news about official corruption,, minimising other types of criminal offences.. In mainstream news,, stories which identify the offender as a government official represent nearly 50% of all stories.. Within 24 HORAS,, this trend is even greater.. They account for nearly 75% of all offenders mentioned in stories.. Finally,, all news tended to identify the victim of crime as Mexico itself and its institutions and,, to a lesser extent,, ordinary people..

24 HORAS almost never includes crime news,, except when the alleged victim is either an institution or the country itself and the story has already been picked up by the press.. This,, as fieldwork later revealed,, has to do with at least three beliefs commonly shared by newsmen..

First,, TELEVISA's newsmen operate in the belief that

TABLE No. 14 NEWS ABOUT CRIME

	24 HORAS		MAINSTREAM FLOW	
	News Items	Percentages	News Items	Percentages
Identification of offender as a:				
Government official	113	72.2	45	47.8
Other (ordinary people, bands youngsters, rioters, etc.)	5	27.7	42	44.7
Businessman	0	0	3	3.2
Peasant	0	0	2	2.1
Unemployed	0	0	1	1.1
Professional	0	0	1	1.1
TOTAL	118	99.90%	94	100.00%

crime which victimises ordinary people does not qualify to be "news", as a reporter told me: "Just imagine if we were in the business of reporting all the crime that is produced in this city; we would never finish telling the complete story".

A second belief inside the newsroom concerns an attitude assumed by TELEVISA's newsmen to be "cautious" about the possible effect of reporting crime. A reporter summarised this notion saying "people would be frightened if they heard over and over again on the news the extent of crime there is in a violent city; they would just be afraid of leaving their homes".

Thirdly, reporters say that stories concerning corruption are almost never the product of their investigative reporting. Decisions on whether or not to include a story about corruption derives from specific instructions which come from the higher echelons of the organisational hierarchy, namely the Director of News and the Executive President.

10. News about conflict in Central America.

September 1983 was a month of intense insurgent activities in Central America, particularly in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Rebels in each of these nations engaged in fierce combat with governmental troops. For Guatemala, it was a case of rebels fighting against dictatorial rule. In El Salvador, the rebels had reached the

peak of their armed struggle against the Salvadorean Government. And in Nicaragua, it was the beginning of the long "Contra" war against the Sandinista regime.

Hence, it was a particularly appropriate time to analyse the extent and the manner in which Mexican mainstream electronic news and 24 HORAS reported armed conflict in Central America. A 15-day period was chosen in the second half of that month, including a total of 130 news items.

Results from Table No. 15 indicate that mainstream electronic news gave equal space to the conflicts in these three countries, while 24 HORAS devoted more space to the war in Nicaragua. As for the treatment, mainstream electronic news reported the views of both the Government forces and the rebels in the three countries. 24 HORAS, on the contrary, gave access only to the accounts and views expressed by Government officials in Guatemala and El Salvador, omitting accounts of the fighting provided by the rebels in both countries. Conversely, in the case of Nicaragua, it gave voice to the accounts and views of the "Contra" movement and concealed the views of the Nicaraguan government. This was particularly significant at a time when Mexico's foreign policy recognised the struggle of the rebels in Guatemala and El Salvador but also defended the sovereignty of the Nicaraguan Government, whereas American foreign policy condemned the attacks of the rebels in Guatemala and El Salvador but gave credit to the struggle of the "Contra" forces.

TABLE NO. 18 NEWS ABOUT CONFIDENCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

MAINSTREAM NEWS

Intensified access given to:	Guatemala		El Salvador		Nicaragua	
	News Items	Percentage	News Items	Percentage	News Items	Percentage
Government Forces	43	100	43	100	44	100
Rebel Troops	43	100	43	100	44	100

24 HOURS

Intensified access given to:	Guatemala		El Salvador		Nicaragua	
	News Items	Percentage	News Items	Percentage	News Items	Percentage
Government Forces	9	100	8	100	1	9.9
Rebel Troops	1	12.5	0	0	34	100

11. The news presentation of women.

A final design allowed an analysis of the extent to which news items reported women as the main news actors. During a 15-day period, there were a total of 218 news items from ten news bulletins and 24 HORAS. In general, as is shown in Table 16, women attract comparatively little attention as news actors, with the exception of XEFAJ and XEBS. This trend is shared by all bulletins, but with relatively higher percentages in 24 HORAS and SIETE DIAS.

Although, XEFAJ and XEBS included more stories where women appear as main actors, these cases represent stories concerning crime. As is noted above, XEFAJ's 11am bulletin concentrates almost exclusively on crime news, therefore presenting women in the role of offender in 13% of the news.

12. Conclusion.

As the preceding discussion has shown, in general there is a similarity between the output of 24 HORAS and the output of mainstream electronic news in Mexico. This similarity includes:

(a) The construction of a news map which highlights, as permanent news sources, Mexico itself, the USA and Latin America and on the domestic side it gives disproportionate attention to the capital, Mexico City, with virtually no

TABLE No. 16 THE PRESENTATION OF WOMEN AS NEWS ACTORS

News Bulletin	No. of News Items	Percentage
XEW 7 am	19	8.7
XEW 8 am	17	7.8
XEBS 8 am	24	11.1
KEEP 8 am	17	7.8
XEFAJ 8 am	15	6.9
XEBS 11 am	18	8.3
XEFAJ 11 am	30	13.8
XEUNAM 10 pm	20	9.2
SIETE DIAS 10 pm	30	13.8
24 HORAS	28	12.8
TOTAL	218	100.00%

coverage of the provinces and the small cities.

((b) The allocation of considerable attention and access to Government officials,, Ministers and the President.

((c) An emphasis on the economy,, politics and sports as main news topics,, and on individuals as news actors.

((d) The relative neglect of political parties,, industrial action and crime news in their real contexts.. Allocating a higher proportion of space to news of the ruling party and paying rather less attention to the opposition.. Covering a minimal spectrum of industrial unrest,, concentrating on strikes that occur in the transport and communication sectors but neglecting stoppages in other crucial sectors.. Drawing a distorted picture of crime by emphasising official corruption and fraud and neglecting the commonest offences.

At the same time,, 24 HORAS also distinguishes itself from mainstream electronic news in several important aspects:

((a) It allocates a higher proportion of space to the representatives of the Mexican private sector,, the trade union movement linked to the ruling party and to the President,, with minimal attention given to opposition parties (particularly the PSUM,, Mexico's biggest left wing party),, independent trade unions and organisations,, intellectuals and academics.. On the contrary,, 24 HORAS gives more space to personalities from showbusiness and sports.

(b) Generally, 24 HORAS pays little attention to stories about political parties but when it includes them, it gives the lion's share of its space to the PRI (Mexico's ruling party), with the virtual exclusion of the PAN (the major right wing party) and the absolute neglect for news of the other opposition parties.

(c) With regard to industrial action, 24 HORAS appears sensitive only to the strikes which all bulletins and major newspapers have covered. In the period under study, it only reported the strike at one of Mexico's airlines, with the exclusion of other types of strikes.

(d) Regarding the coverage of the armed conflict in Central America, 24 HORAS awarded its access exclusively to governmental spokesmen in Guatemala and El Salvador, while quoting the definitions provided by the rebels in Nicaragua. This journalistic behaviour correlates highly not with Mexican foreign policy but with that of the American Administration.

The results of this analysis indicate that 24 HORAS not only distributes its access in an unequal manner amongst possible actors and institutions. It particularly favours Government spokesmen and the Private Sector with the virtual neglect of all opposition. Likewise, it concentrates heavily on economics, politics and sport.

However, as the empirical evidence derives from a content

analysis,, it can only serve to pose questions about the production processes that shape the news,, in line with either institutional,, bureaucratic or professional pressures..

Perhaps the overwhelming attention paid to sports is due to a strategy to capture an increasing share of the audiences and to make the bulletin look "popular".. Also,, the considerable news space given to the views of Government officials and the representatives of the Private Sector may be linked to a corporative demand to serve,, within a news format,, the interests of institutions and actors allied to TELEVISA. Finally,, the alignment of 24 HORAS with American foreign policy in Central America may be linked to the fact that an increasing proportion of 24 HORAS' audience is located not in Mexico but in the United States,, obliging it to produce coverage that can compete in the American market.. These conjectures,, together with an account of the internal structures and processes that bring 24 HORAS alive within TELEVISA are the starting point for the following chapters..

CHAPTER FOUR; THE INFLUENCE OF CORPORATE IMPERATIVES.

This chapter examines the role of corporate imperatives in the production of news. Over the years, TELEVISA has consolidated its position as one of the most influential economic and ideologic power centres in the Latin American region. In this process, its television news programming has ceased to be an area of production primarily governed by individual or journalistic criteria of "newsworthiness" and has increasingly fallen under the control of general corporate imperatives. The "Direccion de Noticieros" -a specialised branch with responsibility for the production of all of TELEVISA's news output- is instructed to pursue central corporate goals in a myriad of strategic fashions. Corporate influence is expressed in at least four inter-related processes: ((1) Segmenting the audience; ((2) The centralisation of corporate spokespersonship; ((3) The promotion of corporate interest; and ((4) Making the news a popular form of entertainment.

1, Segmenting the audience:: maximising the advertising manna.

Over the last three decades the Mexican television industry has witnessed an oscillatory movement between competition and integration, with a final stage of consolidation, as TELEVISA, the leading conglomerate, expanded its reach to the international market. There was

vigorous competition from the early years of television to the formation of Telesistema Mexicano, and again from the birth of Televisión Independiente and Canal 13 in the late sixties to the final unification of 1972. However, taken together, the periods in which a fusion of some kind was present outscore in length those of strong competition. At 37 years of age, Mexican television has seen only 9 years of competition and 28 of consolidation.

Competition has negative connotations within the Mexican television industry because of its unfavourable economic implications.

In the first place, competition brought about higher operating costs. As one of the key owners of TSM related in interview, the years of head-on competition produced an unproductive bargaining process which inflated the costs of their programmes and reduced profit margins. It weakened companies' economies by engaging them in a constant fight to scoop popular artists, directors or specialised personnel, whose salaries reached unprecedented figures. Competition for the franchises of popular international programmes made them pursue higher levels of investment than originally predicted, whilst the incessant battle to gain blanket coverage made them more vulnerable to Government pressure and influence.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly for TELEvisa, which gets the bulk of its revenue from advertising, competition led to an "inefficient packaging" of audience

groups. An initial concern amongst television executives in Mexico derived from the fact that advertisers favoured means of communication with both a mass audience and a high degree of audience specification. In a period of competition, television programming among the different channels tended to become homogeneous. Scheduling was primarily determined by looking at what the competition offered. Channels were competing for similar audiences and thus a similar type of advertising. This was widely seen as an "economically inefficient" use of television time-slots.

If the Mexican television system was to expand, it was necessary for companies not only to increase the overall penetration of their television signals, thereby increasing the number of households they reached, but also to make their services more attractive to advertisers by achieving a greater degree of audience segmentation. Unification, unlike competition, offered a number of economically welcome alterations.

By pooling their television slots and by ceasing to operate according to the logics of incessant competition, the emerging television undertakings were able to make both savings and a more "efficient" use of their resources. Savings in production costs were made by gaining almost full control over the fees paid to staff, actors and other professionals and to a lesser extent their career structure. But again, more important than that, unification enabled them to pursue more effective uses of television as a commercial

venture.

The merging of the three channels in 1955 to form Telesistema Mexicano began a gradual process of audience segmentation. Each of the participating channels concentrated on a particular type of programming, which together aimed to reach every significant audience grouping. Canal 2 specialised in variety shows, situation comedies, drama, and game shows. Canal 4 showed telenovelas ((soap-operas)), foreign feature films, Mexican oriented news and sports. Finally, Canal 5's programming was entirely composed of children's programmes with both animated cartoons and foreign material such as action adventure series and feature films ((Moriega, 1979: 21-22)).

In 1972, with the merger between Televisión Independiente and Telesistema, which formed the four-channel alliance TELEVISA, a further step was taken in audience segmentation. Canal 2 was identified as the "Canal Nacional" ((the channel with nation-wide coverage)), its programming consisting of domestically produced news, variety shows, entertainment and a strong daily dose of telenovelas ((soap)). Canal 4 was intended to ~~serve the lower-middle class~~ and saw the inclusion of a good number of old Mexican feature films as a daily feature of its programming. Canal 5 aimed to cater for urban audiences, particularly the young ((with the inclusion of cartoons and adventure series)). It also incorporated adult programming in the form of fiction and sports. Finally Canal 8 was allocated most foreign feature films and series, and

intended specifically for the metropolitan area. Following recent re-arrangements,, it has been converted into a "cultural channel" ((exempt from taking advertising slots)) and sponsored by TELEVISA as its first "non-commercial" enterprise..

The pursuit of audience segmentation has several implications for the production of news. Firstly,, it helps to determine the number of bulletins to be produced during a given period of time. Secondly,, it often generates guidelines as to the overall style of selection and presentation to be employed. Finally,, it sets the news bulletin's timetables and length. Since 1970,, the year in which 24 HORAS -TELEVISA's flagship news programme- was launched,, the segmentation of audiences has been one of the major factors accounting for the limited number of newsbulletins. The scheduling pattern adopted after the merger between TSM and TIM stipulated that news was to be a part of only one channel,, with a minor presence on one other channel. As the Vice-president of News put it "the considerable length of 24 HORAS ((60 minutes in 1984)) must be set in the context of a differentiated pattern of channel programming".. Hence,, what in other broadcasting systems amounts to an hour spread over several bulletins in various channels in TELEVISA amounts to an hour in one single go. In 1984,, Canal 2 was responsible for airing the two editions of 24 HORAS and Hoy Mismo,, an early morning magazine newsprogramme which represented TELEVISA's complimentary dose of day-time news. The latter was geared toward those who stay at home,, particularly housewives,, the elderly or the

unemployed across the nation. In contrast, 24 HORAS aimed at the head of the household, mainly men, and generally the middle classes.

Audience segmentation criteria also contribute towards setting the "programmes" general tone. For instance, Paco Ignacio Taibo, a former producer of Canal 5's early evening bulletin recalls that due to the channel's audience composition (mainly children or teenagers) a particular emphasis was laid on making the programme look "young and fresh, just like its target audience". Similarly, a director of that bulletin noted that the channel's particular audience profile (children and urban young people) meant that "hard news, specially those relating to serious economic matters or bloody events, were to be avoided and set aside for inclusion, perhaps, in the subsequent Canal 2 programme".

Finally, scheduling considerations also influence the bulletins' size. Every day, the script writer of 24 HORAS receives a detailed list of the contents of the commercial breaks. The number of ads per programme or break often varies from day to day and with it the total number of admissible news stories. A day with less breaks or ads equals a greater number of stories and, conversely, a larger repertoire of ads implies a limited news agenda. This arrangement provides the parameter within which the script writer accommodates the day's list of events.

2. From multiple news patronage to centralization; the construction of corporate spokespersonship.

It was Sr. Gonzalo Castellot,, on July 26th 1950,, acting as newscaster of one of the initial experimental news broadcasts who became the first person to appear reading the news on Mexican broadcasting. Sitting alongside him,, Sr. Aurelio Perez became the first Sports correspondent,, commenting on matadores and recent bullfights,, an integral part of Mexican popular entertainment.. With only five receivers,, this constituted the pioneering news broadcast of Mexican television.. Later that year,, the service opened officially with the President's annual address to the nation,, for which 500 receivers were imported..

The history of Mexican television news reveals a sharp shift from diversity to centralisation.. From the advent of television to the late "sixties,, there were a large number of news bulletins with a wide variety of styles of presentation and political inclinations.. Modifications to the organisational structure of Telesistema,, which led to the creation of the Directorate of News just at the end of the "sixties,, brought about an opposite phenomenon,, namely,, a concentration of all news producing resources,, personnel and equipment under one single roof..

The first stage of news production in Mexico can be characterised by a system of multiple news patronage.. With an almost total lack of material,, the television channels opted

to reproduce in the new medium the system already established in radio broadcasting, which was composed of three elements: advertisers, producers and channels. Channels, associated with producers, offered and sold their time slots to independent advertisers who, on behalf of companies, included television in their media campaigns.

The first bulletins were patronised by the press, which saw the newly born medium as a promising extension of their existing business. This was the case with "Noticiero Novedades", created in 1950, when channel 4 was concessioned to Mr. Romulo O' Farril Sr. owner of the "Novedades" newspaper. This, the first regular newsbulletin on Mexican television, was financed by his paper and was the house's news-programme. It was aired at night (10 pm) with a duration of 15 min. Unwilling -and perhaps unable- to launch a similar programme on the same channel as of one of its leading competitors, "Excelsior", another national paper, preferred to wait until the formation of the second television station, Canal 2 in 1953, to start its own news bulletin (Noticiero Excelsior) and offer head on competition to "Noticiero Novedades" by broadcasting at the same hour.

This subordination of television news to the press was expressed not only in the system of patronage, but more crucially, in their gathering mechanisms, as the title of one of the early programmes, "Tele-periodico" (Tele-newspaper) reveals. Most stories were provided by press journalists. Indeed, in many cases, bulletins consisted of newspaper

cuttings which were simply read by the newscasters..

Manufacturing firms also saw broadcast news as a good context within which to advertise their products and became the second major sponsoring group. In November 1950, the second regular bulletin was born with the "General Motors" newsprogramme. Like "Noticiero Novedades" it was broadcast on Canal 4 but scheduled earlier, at 7.45. Its production team included some of the names which were later to make a considerable impact on news broadcasting, including Jacobo Zabludovsky, Pedro Ferriz and Guillermo Vela. This strategy was subsequently adopted by other companies and resulted in bulletins such as "Noticiero Moctezuma", sponsored by the Moctezuma brewery; "Noticiero Pemex-Sol" backed by the State-oil company, Pemex; "Celanese Mexicana" sponsored by the chemical plant of the same name; and "Chrysler-Philco" (on the newly born Canal 5) supported by both a car manufacturing company and an electronics firm.

While news formats were inherited from radio, with extensive coverage and little use of image and composition, gathering mechanisms and most stories were borrowed from the press, with staff coming from both industries. Understandably, their sources of information were almost exactly the same. Foreign footage was received from the American networks CBS, NBC and was sent by plane every day. Most visual images comprised still slides projected onto a screen. Little domestically shot film was shown. Reporters often acted as cameramen and film-processors. Similarly,

script writers were known to be acquainted with the chores of editing film.

By 1955, the initial years of television had provided enough time for channels and patronising agencies to establish a healthy competition. The rivalry between "Noticiero Novedades" and "Noticiero Excelsior" represented almost an extension of the competition taking place between the dailies outside, in the street stalls and newsagents. Similarly, the intense competition between channel 4's "Noticiero General Motors" and Channel 2's "Noticiero Celanese Mexicana" expressed the constant rivalry between the channels at this stage of the television industry.

Faced with little innovation, lack of material and similar sources, competition was based upon the creation of a personalised image of the bulletins. For instance, Ignacio Martinez Carpintero, newsreader for "Noticiero Excelsior" used to close his bulletin with a frivolous wink, which became a familiar "trademark" among the public. Another well known case is Olga Carlota Escandon, a reporter who up to the present day is associated with appearing at the close of her stories always wearing a hat. Here, again, this served to create the peculiar -even extravagant- personal style cherished by producers of that time.

As we noted earlier, the fusion of the three existing channels, which led to the formation of Tele-Sistema Mexicano in 1955, produced an initial segmentation of the audience by

creating a particular identity for each channel. This new arrangement also changed the timings and nature of some news programmes. After 1958, during the Lopez-Mateos administration, television news started to include Presidential tours as a daily staple of news content. By 1965, there were 11 bulletins in Mexican broadcasting, Telesistema accounting for 9 of them. Important additions were: two afternoon editions one on Channel 2, the other on channel 4, the popular "Question de Minutos" with Enrique Figueroa and Fernando Marcos, and "Tele-Mundo", a Sunday magazine news-programme chaired by Miguel Aleman Velasco and Jacobo Zabludovsky, concentrating heavily on NASA's space voyages.

Newsprogrammes were far from constituting a popular genre of television programming, however. In 1965 news was able to capture only a fifth of the available audience. At the same time, entertainment programmes like the US imported "Los Locos Adams" ("The Addams Family"), were securing a share of more than 40 points in the ratings. Later that year, however, an important addition was introduced in the form of "Su Diario Nescafe" an early morning bulletin, again, sponsored by an adventurous advertiser, in this case the Mexican branch of Nestle. Jacobo Zabludovsky who appeared in both "Su Diario Nescafe" and "Noticiario General Motors" was increasingly emerging as the leading news editor and presenter of that time. In 1969 he was given the opportunity to create a 2-hour long Sunday magazine news programme "De Domingo a Domingo" on Canal 2. His sponsors, Hermanos Vazquez, aimed to advertise

their furniture warehouse shop. The programme was a great success.

By July 1970, the schedule of news bulletins for an average day was as follows:

Channel		Programme	Sponsors
2	7.30 am	Su Diario Nescafe	Nestle .
2	8.00 am	La opinion de Hoy	Various.
4	3 pm	Noticiero Social de Morelos.	State of Morelos
2	3 pm	Dia con dia	Various..
4	7.15 pm	Noticiero General Motors	General Motors..
2	7.15 pm	Noticiero Domecq	Casa Pedro Domecq.
8	7.15 pm	Noticiero 15 minutos	Various..
8	11 pm	Tele-Periodico Notimex	Notimex..
2	11.30 pm	Noticiero W.T.W..	Various..
13	11.30 pm	Noticiero Trecevision	Canal 13..
2	12. pm pm	Agenda de Medianoche	Various..
4	12.35 am	Noticiero de Cierre	Various..

Altogether, there were a total of 13 news bulletins assembled by more than nine producing teams, which normally made them independently. Weak efforts were beginning to be made by the channels themselves to modify the system and start selling 30 or 60 sec. slots instead of 15 min. sectors of their programming. However, it was not until the end of the 'sixties that a major re-organisation of all news

resources took place following the formation of Telesistema Mexicano.

The era of multiple patronage of news production had a number of important characteristics from the point of view of corporate control over news. Perhaps the most important is the fact that the structural separation between sponsors, producers and television channels granted newsmen a relatively wide-ranging autonomy. There was little -if any- interference with producers from the other two elements of the system. Autonomy was particularly marked in the case of bulletins which were sponsored by companies other than news organisations.

It was during this period that the occupation of broadcast journalist and its associated professional ideology was taking shape. Creativity distinguished one bulletin from another, whether in abundance or in shortage. In the case of those bulletins which were produced and financed by the press, news broadcasts would in many cases simply extend to television those policies and reporting styles characteristic of the papers themselves.

Toward the end of the 'sixties, Telesistema Mexicano had been considering the possibility of a gradual shift from the system of multiple sponsorship to a new model, in which the television company acquired full control over the production of news. This system would be financed by the sale of smaller time slots ((30 or 60 sec. long)) as opposed to the traditional

sale of half hour and one hour segments. In fact such a policy not only included news but the sale of its entire programming schedule. By then, Telesistema had expanded its in-house production capabilities very considerably. The years of the "Colgate Palmolive" comedy, the "General Motors" news-programmes, the "Bimbo & Marinela" children programmes and the "Ford" specials were coming to an end.

Instead, advertising scheduling would become more flexible and offer greater revenue potential, particularly for the television company. Although this shift had already started in other areas of television production, television news lagged some way behind. However, political events gave an added impetus to change.

The student revolt that revolutionised the consciousness of the Western World in the late 'sixties reached the Mexican streets just prior to the Mexico Olympics. Tension had built and on a number of occasions the police had intervened with massive use of force to prevent crowds of students demonstrating on the streets of Mexico City. The confrontation between students and the Government-of-the-day culminated in early October when the army crushed and killed hundreds of students in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Tlatelolco. These events not only undermined the legitimacy of the Mexican State, they also underlined the important role that the newly established mass media -and news in particular- could play in times of crisis.

As Miguel Aleman Velasco, a key figure in the re-structuration of Telesistema's news production noted in interview, the events of 1968 acted as a trigger for that shift, "The '68 took us by surprise. Suddenly we realised that we did not have a voice, a version, a position towards those critical events which we could put forward and sustain before the nation. The problem for this enterprise was that it did not have news programmes to canalise its opinion". The practical problem was that all time slots were sold well in advance and the company was not prepared to breach its contracts.

Eventually, Emilio Azcarraga Sr., then President of Telesistema and one of its principal owners, called Miguel Aleman and in phrases that he still recalls, said to him: "Look Miguel, we have a problem with news-bulletins. They are very costly, do not have sizeable audiences and contain various other problems. Do you accept this responsibility?". Miguel Aleman was then given the job of creating the information agency that Telesistema had realised it did not have.

The first problem he faced was that the existing sponsors of news bulletins were very pleased with the three element system and worried by the prospect of losing control over a key means of information and publicity. Particularly adamant were the press. Again, Miguel Aleman recalls that during the tragic events of '68, Excelsior presented its own point of view, which rarely coincided with that of Telesistema.

Eventually,, however,, contracts expired and were not renewed. Not surprisingly,, this led to criticism of Telesistema in the national press. But so strong was the conviction of the need for a corporate medium that no way back was even considered. The objective,, in Miguel Aleman's own words,, was to "liberate information from advertising",, and,, by the same token,, place it under corporate control. To this end he took charge of designing the institutional shape of a centralised body which would produce all of Telesistema's news.

One of the first steps was the centralisation of all news gathering resources under a single roof and the creation of a synchronised departmental complex which would be responsible for different stages of the news assembly line. For instance,, shooting of film,, editing and the assembly of visuals and sound were formerly carried out by a single occupation,, that of cameramen. The new structure separated each function and created a specialised institutional branch to deal with it. On the other hand,, under the new system some personnel gained new functions. Hence,, editors not only edited news items for a single programme as in the old days but for all news programmes. Similarly,, reporters not only gathered news for a single programme but rather for all of Telesistema's news output. Cameramen and likewise cameramen and film classifying personnel also began to work on a company wide basis.

The creation of the Directorate of News not only involved a process of specialisation of occupations. It also required

the formation of a more broadly based news gathering system comprised of a network of foreign and domestic correspondents and a team of full-time reporters. The whole effort was intended, in the words of Miguel Aleman, to "bring Telesistema's news into the present century, give eyes and ears to an otherwise deaf and blind country". Tours were organised so that leading figures in this new team could visit production centres in both Europe and the States. The production procedures and routines of the three American networks, plus the BBC, ITV, VISNEWS and other important Western news agencies were all observed at first hand by Telesistema's newsmen. A team of television producers was also installed with the sole purpose of enhancing the visual character of the programmes, their formats, music and special effects.

The creation of the Directorate of News offered important advantages to Telesistema. First of all it allowed a more efficient use of news gathering resources, providing greater depth and a wider range of news stories. It also made it possible to make production more efficient in economic terms by reducing the unit costs of news stories in the long term. Additionally it facilitated a more efficient use of the company's overall policy of segmenting audiences by channel by instituting single morning, afternoon and evening bulletins on one channel only.

The era of multiple sponsorship ended on August 28th. 1970 with the last emission of "Su Diario Nescafe". The era

of news centralisation started a few days later,, when on Monday September 7th,, 24 HORAS saw the light of day with an unprecedented duration of 90 minutes.. Hoy Mismo, Telesistema's morning news programme was launched nearly a year after,, on August 30th 1971,, and the ~~afternoon edition~~ of 24 HORAS was available a few months later..

During the two years following the re-organisation of Telesistema's news operations,, its emerging rival,, Canal 8, was undergoing a similar process,, which culminated in the launching of En Punto, TIM's flagship news programme.. Unable to reach nation-wide coverage,, however,, its competition with Telesistema's news bulletins was restricted to the area around Mexico City..

The merger between TIM and TSM brought about the incorporation of all of Canal 8's information resources into TSM 's Directorate of News.. A further degree of specialisation was achieved with the ~~creation of a Wires~~ Departament and the appointment of an additional number of reporters and cameramen.. With enhanced resources,, a virtual lack of competition and a fourth channel,, the newly formed TELEVISA implemented a further degree of audience segmentation and to that effect almost all of Canal 8's bulletins were axed in favour of a new schedule,, heavily dominated by Telesistema's strongly supported news programmes.. With plans to make Channel 2 the "Canal Nacional", with nation-wide coverage,, TELEVISA embarked on the audacious project of concentrating resources on a single

outlet which, travelling through Canal 2's signal, was to become a nation-wide channel of Telesistema's point of view on ~~issues~~ of national concern. As the creator of the Directorate himself acknowledged "Our purpose was to create a national channel, with 100% Mexican-made programming and give it all the information strength so that the people could orientate their views in terms of TELEVISA's point of view ". What in the ~~beginning~~ had ~~seemed~~ a wider and greater information infrastructure to enhance the range of news material available to a number of news bulletins ended up in an amplification of the news infrastructure for the privileged benefit of TELEVISA's main news programme. In the words of Aleman Velasco, "all our effort was put behind 24 HORAS".

Since its creation, 24 HORAS has enjoyed a privileged position within the Directorate of News. Certain correspondents and reporters can only serve 24 HORAS and no other TELEVISA bulletins. Domestic news coverage is geared towards producing stories primarily for 24 HORAS, and economic judgements are often bypassed when it comes to supplying the bulletin with material which the Director of News considers of relevance for the programme.

3. The Promotion of Corporate Activity.

Appearing on 24 HORAS, with favourable coverage, in a country with a population of 70 million and on the most credible outlet of mass communication is a privilege that

very few personalities can afford. Yet bulletins regularly publicise TELEVISA's other corporate activities. Indeed, in addition to complying with requirements set out by audience segmentation criteria and performing the role of purveyor of corporate positions on politically sensitive matters, news is expected to contribute towards the advancement of the conglomerate as a whole. That is one of its principal functions.

The structured promotion of corporate activity has become entrenched in the occupational knowledge of newsmen as a particularly valuable attribute of stories and events. In a profession with highly variable standards of performance, TELEVISA's reporters feel more committed to the organisation than to the abstract principles of objectivity and impartiality that seem to be a part of the corporate ideologies of other news organisations (see Schlesinger 1978). This is a point which Philip Elliot was ready to stress ((1978)) noting that broadcast journalism encourages a type of professionalism in which "the work of the professional journalist is subordinated to the overall goals of the organisation" ((1978:184)). As a Mexican press reporter put it: "Our profession is a quite peculiar one. Anyone could be a journalist in Mexico. We don't have widely accepted and standardised qualifications. What actually takes place -and the important thing about our profession- is a commitment to a particular kind of institutional policy". Similarly, TELEVISA's Chief of Reporters acknowledged: "I work for this company and therefore it is my job to protect and safeguard

its interests".

At the level of news gathering and selection, corporate promotion has become a category for the routine appreciation of stories' news value. In news terms that means requesting coverage of stories which are considered as potentially favourable to the interests of the conglomerate. The routine problem consists of identifying those "potentially promoting stories" out of the universe of daily events. That constitutes a part of newsmen's job and become a standard for measuring their efficiency. In the newsroom, for instance, key personnel spend some of their time up-dating information about corporate composition and corporate life. Information classified as "sensitive" within TELEVISA is officially canalised to the key decision makers in the Directorate of News through authorised channels of the Authority structure ((crucially by both the Vice-presidents of News and Sport)).

Similarly, promotion is mediated through both the centralization of control and the subsequent lack of investigative reporting. There is a form of consistent neglect for coverage of stories with a potentially damaging effect. Open discussion about the types of events that should be not covered very rarely take place. There is no need, since reporters acknowledged that "it would be erratic to produce stories which you know from the outset are not going to be included. In organisational terms it amounts to a waste of resources". Through the influence of the economic logic, at the level of newsmen, stories which appear to be

non-favourable to TELEVISA are automatically termed as completely news-worthless.

Promoting and safeguarding corporate interests is also entrenched in the guidelines for the selection and presentation of stories. There are a number of actors, personalities and institutions whose appearances in the news consistently receive particularly favourable treatment due to their relationship with TELEVISA. The corporation's subsidiaries represent one such privileged group. For instance, news about exhibitions or other major activities at the Museo Tamayo, one of TELEVISA's art ventures, are particularly likely to be included. Similarly, the Regent of the Federal District Department, which rules over Mexico City is considered as a quasi-permanent recipient of favourable journalistic attention due to the fact that TELEVISA, and particularly Sr. Azcarraga Milmo, its President ((in 1984)), "has a lot of strings with it and a lot of concerns in Mexico City which require a favourable attitude on the DDF's part", as a reporter remarked. Veteran reporters also noted that the Mexican Institute of Social Security ((which provides health and recreation services for employees of private companies which in turn are legally bound to register there)) was also included in this privileged list, since allegedly it allows TELEVISA preferential treatment in payment quotas. However, it was not possible to obtain other evidence to corroborate this.

More generally, the private sector as a whole constitutes

the commonest response to positive journalistic attention. A senior reporter indicated that in recent times the President of TELEVISAA has emerged as the leader of the entire business community, a position formerly occupied by the President of Grupo Alfa: "Didn't you know that after the President of the republic's annual address on September 1st (1984) all leading representatives of the private sector came to TELEVISAA to analyse the discourse and draw up courses of action?". So strongly upheld is that role that the Coordinator of news notes that "the real opposition in the Mexican political system derives from the private sector. They are the ones that put the strongest pressure on the production of news, either by lobbying the President of the company or by directly complaining that a true representation of the private sector's views is not being efficiently put across on the news". Positive promotion is also granted to individuals or institutions with which TELEVISAA has been associated for some years. For instance; during a meeting of the International Banking Community, "Intermoney", organised by a number of international and domestic banks, attention was focused on the participation of a former TELEVISAA executive occupying a central position in one of the recently nationalised banks. Before coverage, the Coordinator of news requested the reporter assigned to cover that event to "record all of his speech".

So important is this corporate addition to conventional journalistic criteria of newsworthiness that, at the level of news selection and script writing, a particular task of the

Coordinator of news ((one which he himself acknowledges) is the continuous gathering of intelligence information about the interests and concerns of TELEVISA and its key shareholders. "That is a particularly personal chore as no one hands you a manual listing them. You have to discover ways in which you personally become aware of those interests and act accordingly. On the other hand, they are almost self-evident to you. You would need to be quite stupid not to see them. They present themselves to you in quite varied and obvious manners".

Indirect ways in which promotion is secured include the definitions of TELEVISA's favoured group of intellectuals. In recent years, and crucially after the repeated wave of criticism of TELEVISA's composition and role in Mexican society, the company initiated a process of cultivating a selected number of intellectuals, a function assigned to a newly created Vice-Presidency of Education. An assistant to the Vice-president noted that one of its "political" functions is to foster a cordial relationship between TELEVISA and leading intellectuals with the alleged purpose of employing them as "primary definers" of events or "accredited sources" in matters concerning the role of television in Mexican society.

Promotion of the conglomerate's interests is also secured by the direct and active interventions of TELEVISA's key executives. This participation is either positive-when it requires coverage of a particular event, or negative-when

non inclusion of particular stories is urged. It would be easy and misleading to exaggerate the proportion of this kind of story in the mainstream of TELEVISA's news. During two periods of observation, out of the total number of available stories for coverage and inclusion on a single day, this particular group represented a very small minority (one or two each day) and there were times when no direct participation was registered on the part of TELEVISA's executives. However, as well as providing direct instructions for the coverage of a particular event, these kinds of interventions define guidelines for covering stories of the same kind. In fact, this is one of the sources of intelligence through which both the Coordinator of news and the chief of reporters "learn policy".

Generally, instructions derive from four crucial positions: the President of TELEVISA (either personally or through his intelligence unit); the Executive Vice-president (generally through his assistant or his secretaries); the chief of the Board (generally through his private secretary); and either of the two Vice-presidents of News to whom the Directorate of News is directly accountable. Some journalists believe that a model could even be suggested to differentiate types of executives' active involvement. A veteran reporter noted that requests from the President of the company almost always refer to coverage of highly sensitive political matters. They often take the form of instructions concerning treatment of stories relating to heads of political parties and government activities.

The President of TELEVISA is also known to provide instructions regarding the presentation and coverage of stories which deal with TELEVISA's business and trade partners. For instance, in early January 1984, an interview was requested with a visiting Indian Junior Minister for Communications, with whom the President of TELEVISA was due to have dinner earlier that day. A reporter was assigned to conduct the interview at the Indian Embassy in Mexico, where the Indian Minister took the opportunity to glorify the educational uses of TELEVISA's telenovelas.

Requests from the Executive Vice-president on the other hand, display a particular concern with maintaining a favourable public presence for the Aleman family. A number of examples were observed during two periods of fieldwork. For instance, in late September 1984, great importance was attached to the setting up of a trust named after Sra. Beatriz Velasco de Aleman and coverage was requested by the office of the Executive Vice-president.

Finally, requests from the Chief of the Board often refer to the commercial achievements of firms with which he is financially related. Again, a number of examples were observed during fieldwork. On a particular occasion, in September 1984, a dinner was offered to AeroMexico (a Mexican airline) to celebrate its 50th anniversary by Whitney and Pratt, a leading airplane engine manufacturer. A memo arrived at the Chief of reporters' desk a few days before the event. It was sent by the Chief of the board's private secretary. It

said: "through my liason,, the ((Chief of the Board)) kindly requests you to give instructions for the coverage of the event described in the enclosed invitation". It later became known that the Chief of the Board had for some time held stable business relations with Whitney and Pratt in Mexico.

A further kind of promotion takes the form of deliberately orchestrated campaigns. They often consist of a set of instructions for the repeated coverage,, either positive or negative,, of specific news actors,, institutions or issues. In some cases a particular duration is specified. Campaigns are generally suggested by the President of TELEVISA or by the Vice-presidents of News,, or by both. Their nature and the scale of the journalistic resources that they require makes them a rare occurrence,, although it is widely known amongst newsmen that resources do not constitute a practical obstacle for TELEVISA's high ranking decisions. The Coordinator of news acknowledges that "long term campaigns-which indicate alliances between TELEVISA and other institutions or personalities- are rare indeed. TELEVISA does not generally compromise on a permanent basis,, on the contrary,, it compromises on a daily basis".

Campaigns often relate to TELEVISA's own interests or those of its near associates. During fieldwork,, for instance,, the President of TELEVISA requested the elaboration of a favourable campaign to boost the image of the Estado de Mexico. The Governor of that State had telephoned him asking him for his support. The president agreed and instructions

were distributed amongst the key positions at the Directorate of News. The Chief of reporters assigned a reporter to the coverage of the entire campaign. He was also briefed by one of the Vice-presidents of News and Sports. The Chief also received an agenda from the State of Mexico containing the list of events to be covered. They included inaugurations of public services and works, State policies to raise family income and the announcement of development plans in both urban and rural areas.

A final type of promotion relates to the programme's largest advertising clients. Although very rare indeed, on a couple of occasions during fieldwork, coverage of events was demanded on the grounds that the organisers were important clients of 24 HORAS advertising slots. In both cases demands were made directly to the Chief of reporters in the shape of a formal invitation. In September 1984, for example, Casa Pedro Domecq, one of the leading clients, submitted an invitation to a painting exhibition organised by them. A reporter was sent and the story was duly covered.

4. News as entertainment: a structural imperative.

Perhaps the Director of News' single most important contribution to broadcast journalism is that he made news a popular genre of television programming. As revealed by TELEvisa's executive Vice-president, the Directorate of News set out to achieve two main aims. First, the constitution of a credible television outlet. Second, and equally important,

the establishment of news as a profitable area of television production. Since TELEVISA's revenue derives primarily from the sale of advertising time and the production of broadcast news is characterised by high amounts of investment, it is required to attract high audience viewing figures.

In 1970, two problems stood in the way of this second aim. First of all, up until the late 'sixties, the visual potential of television was almost ignored. Formats drew extensively from the early radio bulletins and newscasters were often limited to reading newspaper cuttings. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, Mexican audiences were not regular users of news.

Making news a popular form of television programming had been the responsibility of two crucial people within the then Telesistema Mexicano: Miguel Aleman and Jacobo Zabludovsky. The operational strategies were left to the latter when shortly after the creation of the Directorate of News, Miguel Aleman became one of TELEVISA leading executives. Mr. Zabludovsky's long term aims, which had in fact derived from the core of the television consortium, were to make news a genre of programming which was: "(a) entertaining; (b) informative; and (c) credible".

Making news entertaining was almost equivalent to giving it popular appeal. His strategy was two-fold. Firstly, it involved the development of an entirely different format. "News had to cease being dull and boring, it had to be

versatile and modern-looking" according to a veteran female reporter and founder of the Directorate of News. "Production" was born as a departmental branch in charge of the overall image quality of the programme. That included the selection of a musical theme, logos, and other television tricks to give the programme a sense of drama and speed.

But perhaps more importantly, the task of making news a popular genre of television programming implied a process of selectively incorporating Mexican 'popular culture': "making news the Mexican way". To this end, Mr. Zabludovsky initiated a gradual integration of elements which appeared to him as common to a wide spectrum of the diversely constituted audience.

A "comic" section, to contrast with the apparent "seriousness" of the rest of the programme, was introduced in the form of a "cartoon of the day" produced by "VIC": a prominent television caricaturist. It illustrated a comic interpretation of a leading story. Mr. Zabludovsky's regular question: "What is today's cartoon, VIC ?", became a popular catch phrase.

In a self-declared macho society, femininity seemed a compulsory and singular attraction. An elegant lady was subsequently included reading the day's horoscope. And at some point during the programme it became common for Mr. Zabludovsky to ask: "Has Paula arrived yet?", a phrase which audiences immediately made so popular that a popular song was

available with that title within weeks. Finally, in the aftermath of the merger between TSM and TIM, a young and blonde former Canal 8 newscaster was introduced to present 24 HORAS, alongside Lic. Zabludovsky.

A prominent role in the search for popularity was also played by the amplification of dramatic and human interest elements, another characteristic of Mexican culture assumed to be generalisable to a wide spectrum of the population. One day, for example, a young girl was killed in a car accident. She had been run over on a busy major road in Mexico City. The driver had run away. For several days afterwards, Zabludovsky reminded the audience of this horrifying incident and emphasised that the "criminal is still at large". So great was the build-up of the story and the popular concern it generated that the driver eventually gave himself up to the police due, he claimed, to "the unbearable pressure of the bulletin".

A final part of the strategy was the consistent reference to sports activities and issues of proven popular appeal. Bullfights, for example, had enjoyed the widest popular appeal for a long time. Not surprisingly, news about "toros", interviews with leading "matadores" and other sports stars became part of the staple diet of television news. Similarly, leading popular actresses, singers, dancers paid regular visits to the studios of 24 HORAS and figured prominently in the structure of the bulletins.

5. Conclusion.

As has been argued in the preceding pages, since 1970 TELEVISA has been able to obtain and secure an influential television space for the promotion of the interests of the conglomerate as a whole, its allies and its central key shareholders. In an strategy based on centralising news resources and increasingly segmenting its audience, it has made news a popular, credible and profitable genre of television programming.

With that, TELEVISA has set a pattern which may be followed by the emerging private television companies in Latin America and the rest of the developing world. 24 HORAS depicts societal action according to TELEVISA's corporate rationale.

However, 24 HORAS, as a credible and popular television outlet, is also used to grant support to the institutions which need legitimization and the massive diffusion of information. In that role, it can be argued that 24 HORAS may also serve as a potential mediating agency between the interests of TELEVISA and those of the State. The merit of 24 HORAS in having achieved a large audience and high credibility may be traded by TELEVISA as a political commodity in exchange for favourable treatment and respect for its television concessions. The State, on the other hand, may use the programme for fast diffusion of its activities and favourable promotion of its policies.

A second potential political role for 24 HORAS consists of mediating the triangular relationships between the interests of the Mexican State,, TELEVISA,, and those of its allies. In 1984,, for example,, TELEVISA emerged as the clear leader of the Mexican private sector. Promoting the interests of a particular sector may also imply playing roles traditionally reserved for political parties.. With that,, TELEVISA may represent a strong political force in an emerging system of "pressure group" politics..

The mediating role of 24 HORAS between TELEVISA and the Mexican State,, together with the potentially contradictory nature of triangular relationships still stands as a problem for subsequent research. However,, what the previous discussion has attempted to show is that TELEVISA has successfully built 24 HORAS as an influential news bulletin overwhelmingly controlled by its own corporate logic. What is still to be seen in the following chapters is the journalistic audiovisual language that TELEVISA has created and employed to convey its corporate message in a professional manner. Accordingly,, chapters five and six will analyse the operative and professional dynamics of production together with the inherent limitations they impose on the exercise of absolute corporate domination..

CHAPTER FIVE: THE BUREAUCRATIC DIMENSION OF TELEVISA'S NEWS OPERATION.

1. Introduction.

Within debates on the production of news, there is a particular concern with the extent to which news is the necessary and predictable outcome of bureaucratic behaviour. This chapter takes up this issue and attempts to identify the operative regulations as a first context within which production arrangements can be assessed. As well as describing the distribution of newswork at its Directorate of News ((DN)), I want to examine the influence of routines and expectations on the processes of gathering, selection and presentation. In TELEVISA, as in any other large news organisation, newsmaking has become a highly complex activity, one that requires high levels of efficiency and cooperation in a rather pressurised environment. Taking into account journalist staffing alone, it involves the participation of some 300 people both in Mexico City and abroad.

The most relevant questions for this analysis are: What are the operative mechanisms that TELEVISA employs to cope with an extremely chaotic form of television production? And, to what extent is news a captive of its own "operative" cycles ?

2, TELEVISA'S 24 HORAS.

In 1984, TELEVISA's news output consisted of three editions of 24 HORAS, its flagship news programme, an extended morning magazine programme called Hey Mismo (Just Today), a mid-night bulletin called En Contacto Directo (In Direct Contact), and a few five-minute news-capsules called Antena Cinco (Aerial 5) and Notivisa. In addition, it produced a couple of current-affairs programmes and occasional special documentaries or reviews on particular themes.

24 HORAS is not only the most influential news programme in Mexican broadcasting, it also has the largest audience of any television bulletin in the wider Spanish-speaking world. In Mexico alone, it commands a potential audience of 8.5 million households. In the U.S., through the SIN, it reaches a further 3.5 m households, and in the Caribbean basin, where it is relayed to the Dominican Republic, it is received by a potential 300,000 strong audience.

In Mexico, 24 HORAS is transmitted by the network of Canal 2, the TELEVISA channel with the widest coverage in Mexico. As mentioned previously, its programming consists wholly of Mexican produced material, including the prescribed daily doses of telenovelas, sport and variety shows as well as news.

The afternoon edition of 24 HORAS is just for Mexican audiences as is the second evening edition. The first evening

edition however,, is tailor-made for the Spanish International Network ((and can be seen in Mexico only by TELEVISA's cable subscribers)).

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The production of TELEVISA's television news depends in its entirety upon the Directorate of News,, a special institutional branch created in the early 'seventies to coordinate the business of news-making.. The Directorate is a branch of the Vice-Presidency of News,, Sport and Special Events,, one of three divisions commonly regarded by TELEVISA executives as the 'key' Vice-Presidencies out of the total of 21. According to the Director of Corporate Communications,, for example,, the "key" Vice Presidencies are; Operaciones Chapultepec,, Operaciones San Angel and News and Sport..

During the last decade,, the Directorate of News has experienced the changes common to all expanding organisations.. Its sheer size almost trebled,, generating modifications to both the occupational structure and journalistic codes of practice.. From the day of its creation,, when its Director and a dozen reporters and cameramen constituted its soul and body,, to the present day,, when it hosts more that 10 internal departments,, this dramatic expansion has transformed the Directorate from a mere recipient of international news to being an important source of Latin American images and stories world-wide.. Table 17 shows the Directorate' position within the company as a whole..

3. The format of 24 HORAS.

On-screen presentation is almost exclusively awarded to the Director of News, a pioneer of broadcast journalism in Mexico. A female newscaster compliments the cast with the presentation of the "minor stories" of the day.

The three editions of 24 HORAS consist of six basic sections. First of all, there is a presentation slot, in which the programme, its director, and the producing company are introduced. Secondly, there is a ~~summary news~~ presentation in which the director presents short accounts of the programme's main stories. Next, there is a section ((identified as "bloque principal")) which deals more fully with the main stories of the day. Then the female newscaster presents a "much news in a few words" section, which includes shorter stories and deals with those items not considered important enough to be included in the "bloque principal" but which are newsworthy enough to pass the news threshold. Finally, there is a section devoted to sports, normally presented by the Chief of the Sports department.

The initial brief presentation of the day's main stories may be followed by either the main, short or sport news section. Such flexibility provides an element of "novelty", according to the script writer. The two domestic editions and some of the American ones also allow for a phone-in section.

These are "live" calls and are heralded by a female

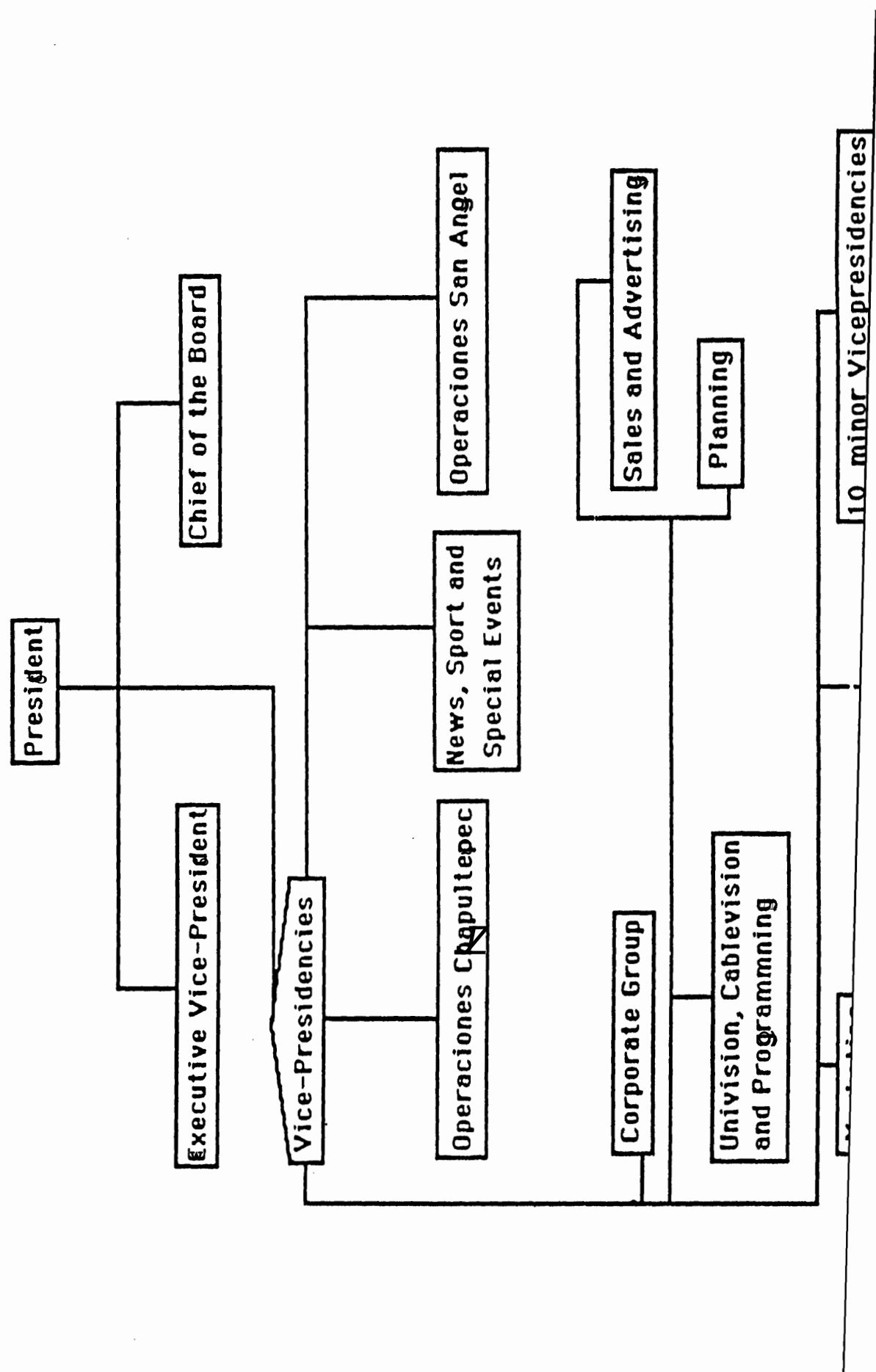
receptionist. Finally, the two-evening editions contain two additional sections. The first consist of an in-the-studio interview with a "news personality", normally conducted by the director of news.

4. The Directorate's internal structure.

For sixteen years from 1970 to 1986 24 HORAS revolved around its creator, the Director of News, Mr. Jacobo Zabludovsky. A pioneer of television news in Mexico in the early 'fifties, with an unprecedented record in Mexican broadcast journalism, he acquired over the years a marked lead in audience credibility and popularity in both Mexico and the Hispanic community of the U.S. A combination of personal talent and long-standing approval from the corporations's heads gained him a unique position within TELEVISA, particularly at the Vice-Presidency of News and Sport.

Having consolidated the position of his programme within TELEVISA's schedule, the Director of News has delegated responsibility for a large portion of the news-making process to two important figures: the Chief of reporters and the Coordinator of news. They are the Directorate's other two key figures. The former is responsible for setting the domestic news gathering agenda and controlling TELEVISA's team of reporters. The Coordinator's job, on the other hand, is to set the programme's agenda and write the script.

TABLE 17. TELEVISA'S DIRECTORATE OF NEWS WITHIN THE CONSORTIUM (1984)



Internally,, the Directorate of News includes no less than ten different departments,, whose collective operation represents the news assembly line shown in Table 18. Stories produced by the Information Department are used by both television and radio. The editing department is responsible for assembling both the visual and sound elements of stories. Its everyday function is to concretise the agendas issued by the Coordinator of news. The Cameramen department,, while subject to the assignments of the Information department,, is in charge of obtaining TELEVISA's domestic visual stories. The Wires and Correspondent departments are responsible for submission of text for international and provincial stories while staff at the translation department are charged with providing a Spanish language version of material arriving in other languages ((mostly English)). Finally,, while the Production department functions as a liason between the Coordinator of news and the editing teams,, staff at the "departamento de realizacion" ((visual production department)) are responsible for arrangements for the actual transmission of the bulletin and developing its overall image.

5. The news-net: gathering mechanisms and resources.

As far as domestic stories are concerned,, news text derives from the work of 25 full-time reporters and a network of 51 correspondents scattered in all major cities and most towns of sizeable population in Mexico ((see Table 19)).

**TABLE 18..THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE
DIRECTORATE OF NEWS.**

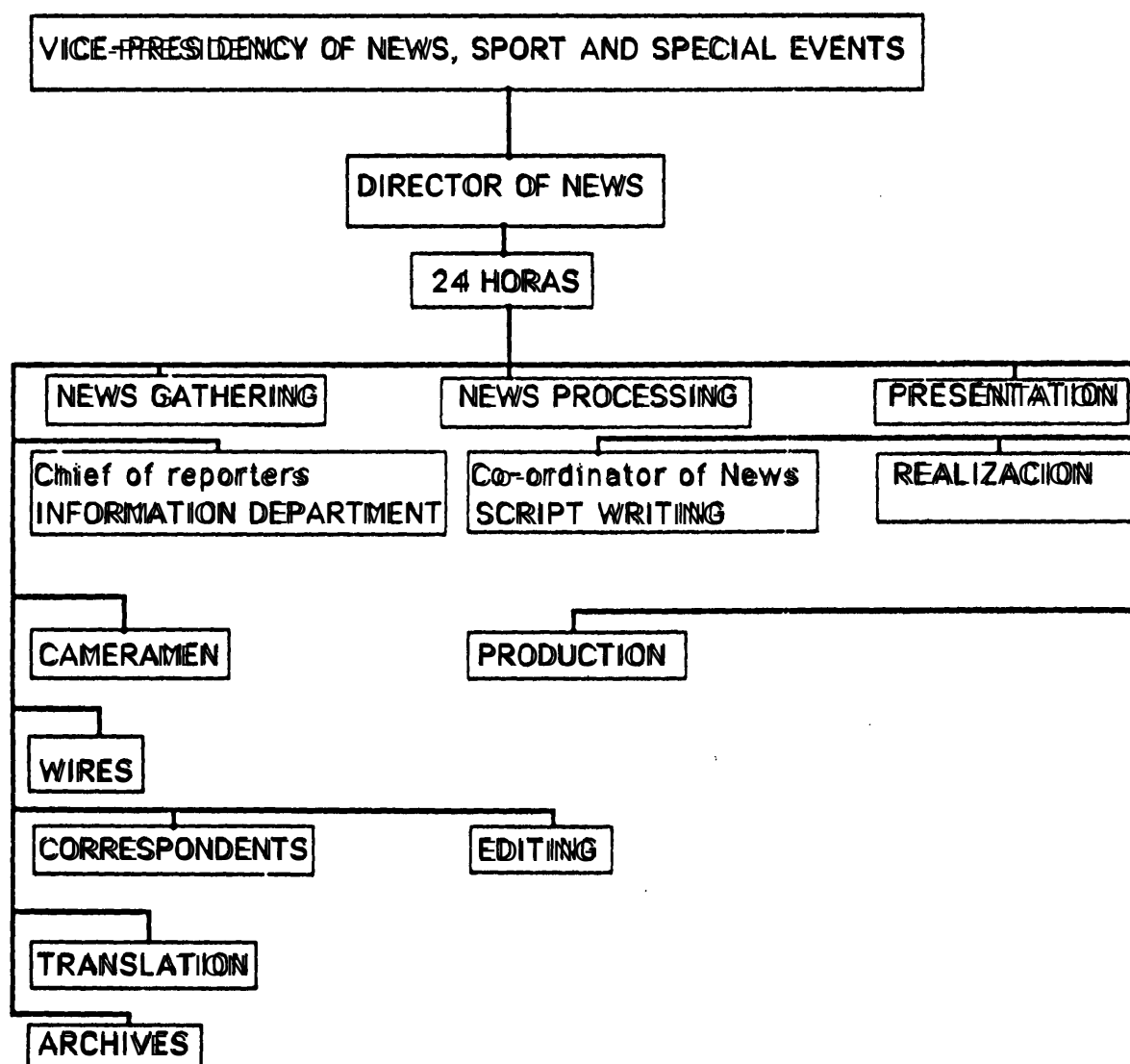


TABLE No. 19 TELEvisa's DEPLOYMENT OF DOMESTIC CORRESPONDENTS

CITY	STATE	NUMBER OF CORRESPONDENTS
Aguascalientes	Aguascalientes	1
Ensenada	Baja California Norte	1
Tijuana	Baja California Norte	1
La Paz	Baja California Sur	1
Ciudad Juarez	Chihuahua	1
Chihuahua	Chihuahua	1
Saltillo	Coahuila	1
Colima	Colima	1
Hermosillo	Sonora	1
Nogales	Sonora	1
Ciudad Obregon	Sonora	1
Monterrey	Nuevo Leon	1
Ciudad Victoria	Tamaulipas	2
Tampico	Tamaulipas	1
Mazatlan	Sinaloa	1
Culiacan	Sinaloa	1
San Luis Potosi	San Luis Potosi	3
Zacatecas	Zacatecas	1
Tepic	Nayarit	1
Uruapan	Michoacan	1
Morelia	Michoacan	2
Guadalajara	Jalisco	2
Queretaro	Queretaro	1
Celaya	Guanajuato	1
Veracruz	Veracruz	1
Jalapa	Veracruz	1
Pozos Rica	Veracruz	1
Puebla	Puebla	2
Quemavaca	Morelos	1
Toluca	Edo. de Mexico	2
Acapulco	Guerro	1
Chilpancingo	Guerro	1
Oaxaca	Oaxaca	3
Tuxtla Gutierrez	Chiapas	1
Tapachula	Chiapas	1
Villahermosa	Tabasco	1
Campeche	Campeche	1
Merida	Yucatan	2
Cancun	Quintana Roo	2
Durango	Durango	1
TOTAL: 51 FREE-LANCE DOMESTIC CORRESPONDENTS		

Usable text for domestic stories is also supplied by the two Mexican news-agencies; INFORMEX and NOTIMEX. Finally, telex is utilised most notably by Government departments, when stories need to be communicated urgently.

Original imagery is provided by a team of 20 cameramen. Images from stock are supplied by the film and video archives, which house a copy and a cross-reference classification of all news items produced by TELEVISA since the introduction of videotape in 1978, together with a film version of all bulletins produced prior to that year.

The sources of international news images include, first of all, the Servicio Iberoamericano de Noticias ((SIN)) which provides in average a dozen visual stories daily. SIN is a news exchange system operated by the Ibero-American Television Organisation ((OTI)), in which TELEVISA participates as a prominent member. Through OTI, TELEVISA has a working relationship with the television stations of all the Spanish-speaking countries. The Servicio Iberoamericano de Noticias was created to supply members with a service containing the visual elements of the leading stories of the day in the most economically efficient manner. Members include Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Portugal, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela. The organisation promotes "live" satellite link-ups for the transmission of variety shows, beauty and song contests and other programmes as well as news.

The coordination of SIN is financed through a sum fixed yearly which members pay over and above their own satellite fees. Overall, the SIN operation resembles the Eurovision news exchange. There is a "shared preferences" system, through which members form a daily pool of stories with potential international appeal. A voting procedure then takes place and those items which are most widely preferred become SIN's agenda for the day. SIN then offers Eurovision on the Ibero-American agenda in exchange for the European material. The complete set of visual stories is then transmitted via Intelsat satellite to each member at 7,pm (GMT).

International news images also arrive at TELEVISA with the NBC's Today Show and its early evening newsbulletin, together with CBS's Dan Rather News Bulletin. These editions are received daily via-satellite and the use of their contents by the Directorate of News is allowed in 24 HORAS' domestic editions thanks to an agreement between TELEVISA and the American networks. On arrival, this material is quickly classified and its text translated. Because of the crucial value attached to the visual element of stories in television news, the agendas contained in both the SIN news exchange and the CBS and NBC news bulletins are heavily relied upon by the Coordinator of news as a starting point for determining the composition of the day's agenda for international news.

Text for international stories derives primarily from TELEVISA's own network of correspondents based abroad (see Table No. 20). Unlike the visual component of a story, the

**TABLE No. 20 DEPLOYMENT OF TELEVISA'S INTERNATIONAL
CORRESPONDENT NETWORK**

CITY	COUNTRY	NUMBER OF CORRESPONDENTS
EUROPE		
Madrid	Spain	4
London	England	3
Rome	Italy	2
Cologne	West Germany	1
Paris	France	1
Amsterdam	Holland	1
Brussels	Belgium	1
Friburg	Switzerland	1
		1 SUB TOTAL = 14
MIDDLE EAST		
Tel Aviv	Israel	2
EASTERN EUROPE		
Moscow	Soviet Union	1
ASIA		
Tokio	Japan	1
NORTH AMERICA		
Washington	USA	2
New York	USA	2
Los Angeles	USA	2
San Diego	USA	1
San Francisco	USA	1
Chicago	USA	1
Phoenix	USA	1
San Antonio	USA	1
Miami	USA	1
		11 SUB TOTAL = 12
LATIN AMERICA		
Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	3
La Paz	Bolivia	2
Cochamba	Bolivia	1
Bogotá	Colombia	1
San Salvador	El Salvador	1
Lima	Peru	1
Asunción	Paraguay	1
Buenos Aires	Argentina	1
Guatemala	Guatemala	1
Quito	Ecuador	1
Panama	Panama	1
Santiago	Chile	1
Managua	Nicaragua	1
		11 SUB TOTAL = 16

A TOTAL OF: 46 FREE-LANCE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS

absence or unavailability of text at a given moment of the day does not represent a major difficulty for the Coordinator of news. On a regular basis, image takes precedence over text in the area of international news. Television stories whose visual element is available through any of the news exchanges stand a better chance of being included in the programme's agenda than those where only text is available. Generally speaking, the correspondents' stories coincide with the topics covered by the exchange material. However, where visual stories and correspondents' contributions do not match, the text is usually tailored to fit the visual story. For instance, on one occasion, NBC included a story about Mexican immigrants in Texas. The correspondent attached to San Antonio, where the visual story had originated, sent a report on another story; the adverse weather conditions there, a topic which had been high up the agenda for the previous days. Favouring the availability of the visual story, the Coordinator of news instructed the correspondent to supply the newsroom with information regarding the immigrant story.

A second source of news text for international stories are the agency services. The Directorate of News has for some time subscribed to four major international wire services, AP, UPI, AFP, EFE, and has recently taken out subscriptions to two others, DPA (Deutsche Presse Agentur) and Hsinhua (New China News Agency). In addition to providing their regular service, they also make available in-depth coverage of particular stories using their extensive network of

correspondents. TELEVISA is a well established customer of EFE's services. On some occasions, when agency material is considered to lack depth, further information is sought. For instance, following Turkey's 1983 General Elections, the Director of News felt an ad-hoc service should be requested. However, at an estimated cost of 115 US dollars for a three paragraph story this was regarded as a relatively expensive option.

Contrary to claims about the almost "omnipotent" influence of international news agencies within the Third World ((see Harris 1976)), the wire services are far from the "primary definers" of world events within TELEVISA. Rather, their role is limited to satisfying three internal needs. First, they are appreciated as "international news breakers". One night, for example, the evening shift at the Wires Department was particularly proud of its services when shortly before transmission time, AP disclosed that Mr. Richard Stone had left his post as the U.S. Special Envoy to Central America. In a matter of seconds, the Director of News had been notified and 24 HORAS was the first bulletin to break the news. Secondly, the wire services play an important role in helping the Coordinator establish the day's international news agenda ((by his own account, they allow him to "take the World's pulse" several times during the newscycle)). Finally, the wire services are regarded and utilised as inexpensive and reliable sources of detailed information such as names, figures, places and dimensions.

6, A typical day at the newsroom.

An ordinary day comprises three news-cycles,, one for each edition of 24 HOURS. Apart from setting the pace at which journalists work they also make intelligible the news operation.. During the night,, a lone operator at the correspondents' department has been receiving the early sporadic calls from newsmen located in the Far-East or Eastern Europe,, and shortly before six in the morning,, personnel at the wires department have prepared the first summary of the day's copy.. This is distributed within the newsroom by 7.30,, coinciding with the arrival of the Chief of reporters..

A careful scan of the national press is alternated with the revision and completion of the assignment list which the Chief of reporters began drafting the night before.. From 8 to 10 am reporters ring the newsroom or call personally to learn about the events they are assigned to cover..

The Coordinator of news arrives at 10.30.. The national press is already on his desk,, together with the two first copy summaries of the day,, a list of the expected stories from the SIN and a copy of the reporters' assignment list.. His collection is completed shortly afterwards by the lists of stories from the Today Show and the correspondents' department..

In the light of all the material already available or

likely to be available later, the Coordinator of news draws up a preliminary agenda for the afternoon edition of 24 HORAS. This document also becomes an editing schedule, which guides work at the editing department.

Next is a meeting between the Director and the Coordinator of news. It normally takes place around 11 o'clock. Mr. Zabludovsky supervises the preliminary agenda and provides a few comments. Generally, these refer to either including or "dropping" one or two stories, although there are days in which the list is approved in tact. Upon approval, this list then becomes a definitive agenda.

The Coordinator of news begins writing the script with those stories whose inclusion is definitive, although changes occur during the two hours preceding the broadcast of the afternoon edition. Reporters begin to arrive at the newsroom, often with more news than expected. Some have been able to produce two stories, while those who have not arrived promise to deliver "an advance" in the "live" phone-in section. The Coordinator of news alternates between writing the script and supervising stories.

At 1 pm, close to the first edition's transmission deadline, the Coordinator of news is informed of any changes in the SIN agenda, and the last modifications take place then. Each change is immediately conveyed to the editing department to allow time for the adequate assembly of the programme's visual content, which is sent to the Channel's

master-control cabin just before 2,30. The afternoon edition almost always goes through last moment changes due to the "live" phone-in from reporters. This section is almost invariably extended pushing out some pre-scheduled items.

Before leaving for lunch, the Coordinator of news sets the preliminary agenda for the first evening edition of 24 HORAS. This consists largely of those stories which arrived earlier from the SIN and the Today Show, since international news constitutes the greatest proportion of news for that bulletin.

The second cycle begins just after 5 o'clock with the arrival of reporters, cameramen and the Coordinator of news. The latter has, by now, up-dated summaries of the wire copy, and the material from correspondents and reporters, and shortly after 6 pm he adds the list of contents of the CBS and NCB first evening news bulletin. In the light of this material and the likely availability of a few more domestic stories, the Coordinator makes the necessary modifications to his preliminary agenda. That, again, becomes definitive after a second meeting with the Director at around 6.300 pm.

In the passage from the original list of stories to the definitive agenda a number of modifications have taken place. Stories have been included, displaced, up-graded and down-graded, like highly perishable commodities in a rather unstable market-place. At around 7 o'clock, script writing begins once more. Ideas for illustrative material sometimes

derive from the Coordinator of news but are normally suggested by the production personnel. At 8 pm the script is distributed to all people involved in screening the bulletin. Thirty minutes later it goes on the air, this time including a "live" interview.

Completion of the international edition triggers off a third cycle: the production of the domestic evening edition of 24 HORAS. The issuing of the preliminary agenda is automatic. Almost all stories have now arrived in the newsroom and all the international news items have even been edited. Normally, the Mexican edition would carry most of the SIN edition with a few additional stories which are considered to have domestic appeal only. Script writing begins at 9 pm. The programme goes on the air at 10.30.

7. Anticipating news: the planning of stories.

Broadcast news in TELEVISA is a highly predictable journalistic form. The technical complexities and requirements that it entails ((filming, sending a crew, etc.)), the short length of the newscycle, and the demand for a constant flow of news, combine to prompt the organisation to plan its coverage of events in advance whenever possible.

For its domestic coverage, the limited availability of camera crews ((20 in all)) means that only a restricted number of events can be successfully covered, although the Chief of cameramen vividly recalls the exceptional day when an all

time record of 40 stories were covered by his men in just one 24-hour cycle. Normally however, internal criteria of newsworthiness within the D.N. are substantially constrained by the availability of operative resources. Consequently, in practice, the number of stories it is possible to cover is entrenched in the working knowledge of the Chief of reporters as an unquestioned departure point.

The game consists of allocating the scarce journalistic resources in a configuration which may capture the highest possible number of newsworthy stories. Within the Information Department, whose primary function is to produce the domestic stories of the day, the routine strategy for playing and winning that game centres around the procedures for devising the assignment list. In an occupation where time is a scarce raw material and where uncertainty represents the organisation's worst enemy, story planning becomes a useful and valuable asset.

The efficiency of the Chief of reporters' performance is measured largely in terms of his capacity for anticipation. The more he can predict events, the easier and more productive the allocation of newsmen becomes. This need is satisfied through a process whereby sources inform him about likely newsworthy events. Such notifications may arrive within hours, days, weeks or even months before the event.

The Chief of reporters fills in the assignment lists at various points during a newsday. Generally, they follow the

rythm imposed by the newscycle. Before he leaves his office, just after the deadline for the last evening edition, he has completed a list of those stories whose coverage represents the next day's "compulsory" gathering agenda. He would normally keep the list for himself unless the coverage of a particular story calls for travelling or prior preparation on the part of the reporter, in which case he would inform a reporter of his next day's assignment. During the three hours following his departure, a team of two journalists would keep a record of all calls, decisions and events that have unfolded. This document welcomes his arrival early next morning.

From 7 to 9 am the list of assignments experiences the final additions. At that time, a copy is produced for the various production teams within the Directorate. Anticipation procedures pose a number of important questions: Where and how does the Chief of reporters learn of the development of particular events? What are his sources? Is the setting of the news-gathering agenda as unpredictable as some reporters would make us believe?

The task of setting the news-gathering agenda is seldom the result of an exhaustive examination of a comprehensive list of a day's events in the light of broadly defined criteria of newsworthiness, and even less the product of a comprehensive effort to capture the "daily reality" of Mexico. Rather, it is rooted in highly repetitive and predictable organisational behaviour. A four-week analysis of

the assignment list, together with extensive observation and interviews with veteran reporters, reveals a pattern of consistent reliance on seven different and regular types of sources;

(a) The professional milieu. The Chief of reporters often learns of the possible or likely unfolding of a particular story at the regular meetings of the Club Primera Plana (Front Page Club) which brings together the editors of leading Mexican news organisations.

(b) Official Press departments. Almost any organisation of some size -particularly within the Public Sector- has a newly refurbished branch of press advisers, which liaises between the organisation and the media, with the aim of controlling and managing external flows of information. These officials regularly notify the Directorate of News about the latest activities of their organisations.

(c) "Specialized" reporters. Within the Information Department there is a system of "permanent" and "temporary" assignments to cover specialised types of institutions or 'beats'. The Presidency, the Congress, the private Sector, the Police, trades unions, airports and some financial institutions, each have a reporter assigned on a permanent basis to cover any unfolding event. Specialist reporters have a duty to carry out a routine daily check of their sources and find out what major events are expected to unfold or indeed have unfolded. It is therefore reporters themselves

-via the mediating operation of their sources- who learn about immediate or future events through their constant contact with press officials,, PR agents and the like. They in turn,, inform the Chief of reporters and represent a third regular source of news intelligence..

(d) "General" reporters.. Although not as frequent and consistent as the former,, a fourth regular source of planning derives from general reporters who happen to discover or be told of the likelihood of a particular event. For example,, a reporter who was covering a dinner offered by the Chamber of Commerce to the Regent of Mexico City because of the absence of the private sector reporter,, happened to learn that an art exhibition was being held the following week at the same venue. She was then able to pass this information on to the Chief of reporters for further action..

((e) The Mexican Press.. All morning and once in the evening,, the Chief of reporters receives fresh copies of the national and metropolitan press.. A careful and exhaustive reading is a sacred ritual,, as he himself acknowledged when being asked a question during his "news-reading" time: "Newspaper reading is a big part of my job. You know,, an average person can spend twice as long and read whatever he pleases. I just can't afford that.. Reading the newspaper is a very important part of my job".. A veteran reporter noted: "Newspapers are to him a kind of a thermometer of public life". Through the press he learns of the likelihood of some public and private events and,, perhaps more importantly,, he

imagines the audiences' likely interest in the issues of the day.

(f) Press releases and dispatches. A further regular source of stories is the news-dispatch. In spite of being considered as some kind of "second class" notification of likely events, bulletins and dispatches often facilitate the task of agenda planning through the supply of texts and official speeches. Often, they also include the daily, weekly or monthly schedules of leading Government personalities, which the Chief of reporters needs only attach to his diary for daily consultation. The most important of these press releases are the ones issued by the Presidency and the Ministries, giving detailed accounts of the events, times and places where government officials will be present.

(g) Privileged information. This final source for planning functions through reliable contacts in either the private sector or the government. These sources often make available to the Directorate of News copies of key documents which have not yet been disclosed publicly. On September 22nd 1984, for instance, the Ministry for Commerce handed out a copy of its National Food Supplies Plan to a veteran reporter of the Directorate of News, five days before it was made public. This gave 24 HORAS an important "exclusive" with which it could open an otherwise "dull" Saturday bulletin.

The continuous operation of these regular sources, together with a daily organisational demand for more news,

leads the Chief of reporters to concentrate his attention and his resources overwhelmingly on highly predictable events whose coverage is determined by an equally predictable set of routines and expectations.

Ad-hoc coverage of domestic stories often takes the form of a short-term assignment, where a reporter is asked to devote himself to a particular story over a period of a few days. In contrast to regular coverage, reporters here are able to carry out more investigative reporting as their assignment lasts longer. Examples of ad-hoc coverage are the "campaigns" built up around particular personalities, events or issues.

At this stage, one can begin to draw a few initial conclusions on the planning of stories and the consequences that operative demands and requirements have on the characteristics of TELEVISA's news content. First, perhaps one of the most solid observations is that the news cycle poses a constant organisational demand to produce an important number of news items in a rather short period of time, thus creating and promoting a firm reliance on regular sources. Secondly, the size of available resources (in terms of personnel and budgets) sets a limit to the scope of journalistic criteria of newsworthiness as determining factors in the gathering processes. Thirdly, the system of assignments coupled with the heavy reliance on regular suppliers makes production highly routinized and predictable with the same types of sources and events taking the lion's

share of journalistic space and attention.

8. Planning International news.

International news stories are usually gathered through either the news exchanges and/or TELEVISA's own reporters. News from the network services -CBS and NBC- are not normally planned, as TELEVISA only receives their final product. In the case of the Servicio Iberoamericano de Noticias ((SIN), the gathering agenda is often planned one day ahead for stories whose occurrence seems certain. The SIN's Coordinator at TELEVISA is known to "suggest" a number of stories one or two days ahead to the General Coordination of SIN. However, because of the way the network operates, SIN members manifest their preferences by voting for the inclusion or exclusion of items rather than by actively promoting the gathering of particular stories.

TELEVISA's overseas correspondents normally have more scope than domestic reporters to set their own gathering agendas as generally there is no system of assignments for them. However, as we noted earlier, they are sometimes asked to submit further information about particular events ((generally those prompted by the wires services)).

Some ad-hoc planning of international stories also takes place within TELEVISA's Directorate of News. These are normally exclusive interviews or events such as conferences whose coverage requires long-term preparation and lobbying of

key sources. An example of this kind of planning was the exclusive interview given to TELEVISA's Director of News by Henry Kissinger at the beginning of September 1984, a few minutes after he had presented his report on Central America to President Reagan. That particular story was planned well in advance. Initial conversations and negotiations are alleged to have taken place between sources close to Dr. Kissinger and leading executives of TELEVISA, weeks before the release and presentation of his study. The Director of News had flown to Washington a few days prior to the interview to supervise the overall preparation. Satellite links and studio equipment had also been booked in advance. Other examples of this kind of extended forward planning include the "live" coverage of key NASA missions and the coverage of the International Monetary Fund annual meeting.

9. Setting the programme's agenda.

As noted earlier, the selection of news items for the preliminary agendas is the prerogative of the Coordinator of news. The supervision of these, by virtue of which the agenda becomes definitive, is the exclusive right of the Director of News.

The Coordinator's role revolves around news-cycles. When asked about his job he tends to underline its seemingly chaotic nature. From his point of view the whole process appears as a rather intricate and disorganised activity, and with some justice. He is constantly approached by reporters

who would like to see their story included,, phoned by a diverse assortment of people,, ranging from his own superior executives to the most remote correspondent who reports to check on an instruction which he or she has received. In addition he is lobbied by people outside the organisation who would like to have their case put forward in the news. Added to which there are constant pressures caused by the delayed arrival of materials and the sudden upsurge of an unfolding event,, which if included,, needs to be edited and illustrated. And in the middle of all this,, he is required to conduct the crucial task of selecting the news. Nevertheless,, the selection of news items revolves around a routinised look at the available material..

The Coordinator's situation does not allow for long and detailed evaluation of a story's newsworthiness or its likely impact on the audience's consciousness. In order to deal with the complexities of his job,, he has designed and introduced regular routine bound procedures that are intended to improve the efficiency of his performance and,, very simply,, make life easier.

This is not to say that in his work,, creativity and spontaneity "shine by their absence".. On the contrary,, it is precisely because there is a system underlying his work that he is able to incorporate,, from time to time,, strategies for investing the news with the appeal of flexibility,, change and freshness..

The process of news-selection is a function of two crucial factors. First, the availability of material suitable for inclusion and, secondly, the evaluation which takes place as a result of applying a set of "news values". Unlike the organisations described by Golding and Elliot (1979) in their comparative study of broadcast news production, where story selection is the product of three factors: the availability of news material; a set of newsworthiness criteria; and newsmen's notions about their audiences; in TELEVISÃO'S Directorate of News images of the audience are almost totally irrelevant. Although reporters try to imagine the interest of the audience in order to develop a 'news angle', during the entire time I spent in the newsroom, reporters never showed nor mentioned their interest to identify who their audience was, what their needs and characteristics were, or the likely impact of the bulletins. Selection, however, is highly dependent upon the other two factors.

The process begins with a quick reading of the agency copy which is made available by the wires department every three hours during the newscycle. From this initial scanning, the Coordinator gets an idea of what the big international stories of the day are likely to be. Secondly, he looks at the provisional list of contents for the SIN emission, which arrives at the Directorate at seven in the morning. Next, if it is available, he looks at the content of the Today Show. After this, he goes to form a preliminary agenda of international news for the afternoon edition of 24 HORAS.

Next comes a quick look at the "assignment list" and the "list of available material" which is produced by the Information Department and comprises those stories which have already been covered that day. By this time, the Coordinator will also have looked at the national press and developed an idea of what the main "follow ups" may be. These two documents allow him to draw up a preliminary list of domestic stories for the afternoon edition. A crucial intervening factor is the likelihood that a story will arrive before the deadline, which is around 1.30 pm. Stories which are already available in the early hours of the morning, or those considered "likely" to arrive in time stand a better chance of being included.

The Coordinator also knows that particular reporters will not be able to get to the studio but will be able to deliver their stories "live" by phone, so he is also able to expect their calls and these count as stories whose availability is likely or predictable. This initial agenda is subject to later transformations as the newscycle approaches its deadline and in practice no preliminary agenda goes unchanged in some way or another.

Changes to the preliminary agendas of the three editions of 24 HORAS were observed to take place due to the following seven factors:

(a) The unexpected breaking of a story which is thought to demand inclusion;

(b) The eventual arrival and inclusion of stories which were thought of as "worthy of inclusion" but whose availability was considered as unlikely;

(c) A sudden newsworthy turn to otherwise "dull" events;

(d) The late arrival of stories expected earlier;

(e) Intervention on the part of TELEVISA's executives to include or drop a particular story;

(f) Intervention on the part of the Director of News to include, drop, emphasize or tone-down a particular story;

(g) Lobbying on the part of reporters to have their stories included.

The setting of the preliminary and definitive agendas for the evening international and domestic editions of 24 HORAS follow the same procedures, with the additional consideration of the contents of the CBS and NBC bulletins later that day and the arrival of most of the domestic expected stories.

A second operative factor that impinges upon the selection of news is an ill-defined and never formally articulated set of news values which are embedded in the occupational knowledge of the Coordinator of news and allow him to take quick decisions on the inclusion and exclusion of particular stories. The subordination of these kind of

criteria to corporate rationales has been discussed in the preceding chapter, but at this point it is worth reinforcing the point made earlier, that news is about very specific people, often personalities in public life or the worlds of sport and entertainment.

In the case of international news, decisions are guided by a particular geopolitical map of the world whereby stories from certain countries or regions are given a higher value than others almost irrespective of the nature of events themselves. The Coordinator of news notes that as far as TELEVISA is concerned, news from the United States, Spain, Latin America and the Middle East has the highest priority "because of the relationships that bind us together - that is in commercial, cultural, even language terrains and the conflicts in some countries of these areas-". This view was corroborated by a veteran reporter and correspondent who indicated that preference was given to: news from "the First World" (meaning the United States and Western Europe) and news from certain countries of the Spanish-speaking world. These include; Spain itself ((the ties between Mexico-Spain being well recognised in TELEVISA'S newsroom); Argentina; Chile ((due to the resistance to Pinochet's regime); Venezuela ((which like Mexico, is an oil producer); Colombia ((which has been a prominent figure of the Contadora Group of which Mexico is a leading member); and the problematic neighbouring countries of Central America -El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua ((because of the guerrilla warfare in their territories)..

Turning to news coverage more generally, this study confirms that there are certain attributes that help a story to raise its value and break through the news threshold. Many of these operating within TELEVISA are similar to those found by Golding and Elliot ((1979)). They include: ((a)) Size. The greater the number of people involved in or affected by a news item the more worthy of inclusion a story is; ((b)) Entertainment value. News items which portray bizarre events are worthy of inclusion under the principle that they can be used to hook and keep the audience; ((c)) Recency. The more immediate a story is the higher its value, after all, news has to maintain its credibility as a record of "what has just happened"; ((d)) Familiarity. The more a story relates to contexts already familiar to the audience, the higher its value. Often the press makes events so popular that television is almost obliged to refer to them; ((e)) Disasters. Unfortunately, bad news is good news, and the ghastlier, the higher the news value.

10. Routines and expectations.

The arrangements for gathering and selecting the news are in large part a response to the technical complexities of broadcast journalism. Stories need not only to be written and recorded but also edited, mixed, kept to a standard length, illustrated and presented. With limited resources and personnel, only a small number of stories can be processed over a certain period of time.

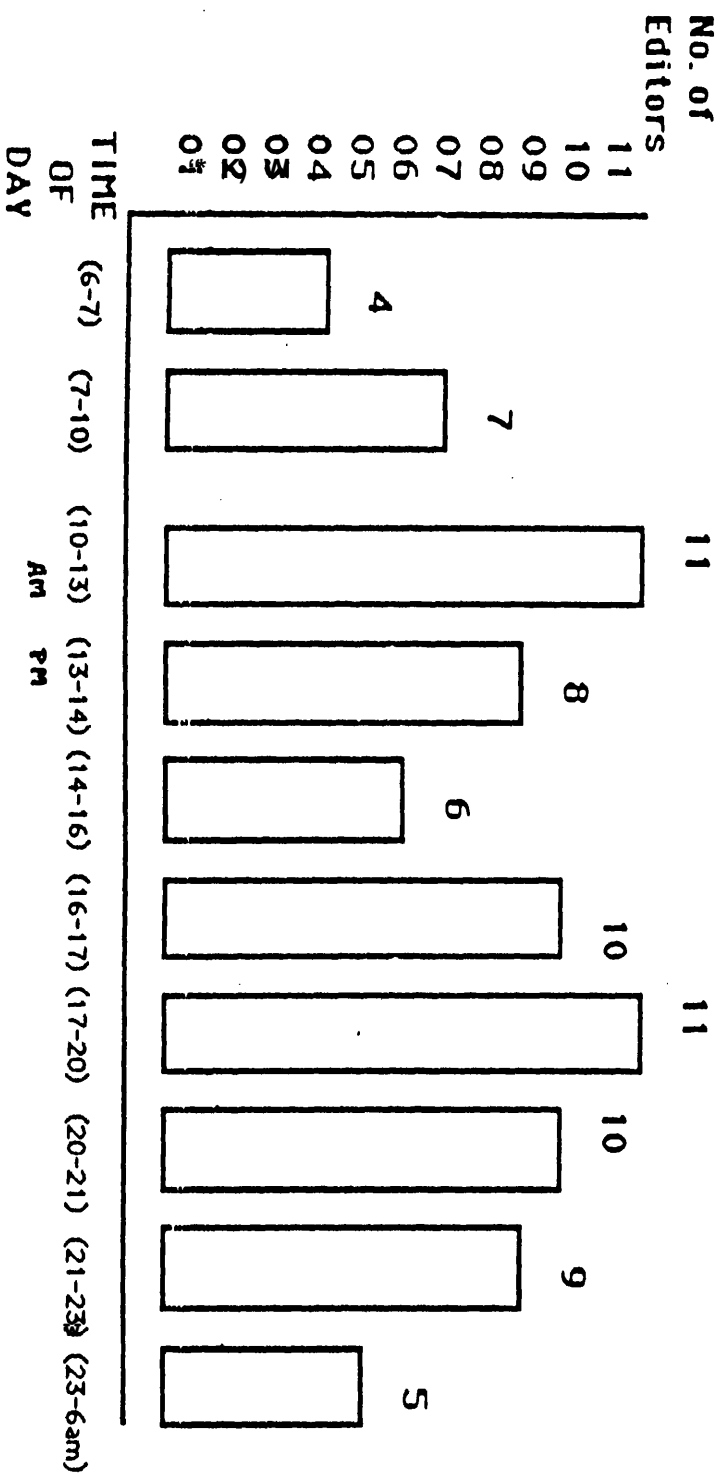
In their fight against uncertainty, TELEVISA have introduced stable routines of production and fostered the development of expectations. Routines represent the operative context in which newsmaking takes place and expectations provide newsmen with guiding criteria as to how to control the unexpected.

The crucial role played by expectations may be best illustrated by looking at the deployment of resources in those departments charged with the processing of the news.

First of all, let us look at the task of editing news material and mixing image with sound. This is performed by the Editing Department which consists of a Coordinator and 27 full-time editors distributed in 9 work-shifts of seven hours each. Within this department, expectations about the arrival of material proves to be the most important feature in resource allocation. As Table 21 shows, there is a clear and heavy concentration of resources between 10 am and 1 pm and again between 6 and 8 pm - the times at which the largest number of stories is expected to arrive.

This pattern of personnel deployment reveals assumptions about the timings around which most stories are supposed to unfold. It shows that the arrival of stories is expected to decrease in the afternoon, then rise in the evening again and completely decline after 9 pm. This implies that, in organisational terms, the Directorate of News is better able to cope with arrival of stories at certain times and clearly

TABLE NO. 21 DEPLOYMENT OF EDITING PERSONNEL



unable to respond at others..

The distribution of employees amongst the various shifts at the Audio Department,, which is in charge of recording reporters' and correspondents' stories and then making tapes available to the Editing Department,, reveals the same pattern of expectations. Altogether, it employs 10 people on 6.40 hrs shifts covering a 24 hour period. Work is concentrated between 10 am and 11 pm and then from 4 pm to 8 pm when six audio operators are working,, the largest number of any shift.

The deployment and concentration of cameramen also reveals clear expectations about the times when stories unfold. Work shifts normally last 7 hours,, and once again cover a 24-hour cycle. However,, from 9 am to 2 pm there is a heavy concentration of cameramen at work ((14 crews)), whereas from 12 pm to 6.30 am there is only one crew on duty and from 7 am to 9 am just 2 crews. Again,, this shows that TELEVISA's news gathering arrangements for visual material are best equipped to handle stories which unfold from 9 am to 2 pm rather than those breaking early in the morning or at night.

11. The semiotics of 24 HORAS.

Broadcast journalism in TELEVISA has a coding system of its own which allows stories -and particular aspects of events- to be highlighted,, underestimated or presented in more standard fashions..

A first set of rules specify: (a) length -either standard ((60 sec)) or enlarged ((2 min. or more))-; (b) composition -whether the image should be accompanied by a sound recording of the reporters' or correspondents' commentary or consist of image only with the accompanying text being read by the newscasters..

A second type of rule governs the order in which items appear and which of the two main news presenters should read them.

It is part of the editorial policy that the order of the programme's sections should be alternated. Hence,, on one day the bulletin opens with sport while on another it begins with the "many news in a few words section",, and on a third with the main news section, and so on. The aim is to make the programme look "innovative",, "fresh" and "versatile".. This policy was a response to a crucial observation made by the Director of News. The Coordinator of news recalls the day when the Director summoned him to his office to tell him one of his precious secrets for professional success. "News" -the Director said- "is the same thing everywhere.. Look,, we receive the wire copy that goes to millions of subscribers worldwide.. It is how you present the news what makes you different,, unique and successful."

These various rules combine to give stories varying symbolic weights. Stories which are intended to appear as important and serious are usually read by the Director of

News and consist of a short presentation followed by the full edited version with image and sound ((the longer the more important)). Stories considered to be of secondary importance are also presented by the Director of News but consist of presentation and image without recorded sound. Less important stories do not appear in the main news section. They are placed in the "many news in a few words" section and are read by the female newscaster..

That section also includes news items which are regarded as "funny", "cute" or "entertaining", together with international items which are not considered as worth grouping with the main stories of the day. As the female newscaster is also a founder and main promoter of the protection of animals pressure group,, any news item dealing with animals automatically goes in this section too. Stories tend to be shorter in this section -averaging some 30 seconds- and are generally not accompanied by a recorded text. The short presentation of the main stories of the day,, at the very beginning of the programme,, introduces those items which are thought of as being the most important. The earlier they are mentioned in that section the more emphasis is placed upon them.

Taken together,, they create a symbolic hierarchy amongst events and stories and constitute the basis for the semiotic structure of TELEVISA's news discourse..

These are the most important elements out of the

available universe of options for the constitution of a particular news-sense..

12. Creating the image of 24 HORAS.

The relationship between the Coordinator of news and the editing teams is mediated by the occupation of "producers" (or "realizadores"), whose incorporation into the news assembly line is a relatively recent phenomenon. 24 HORAS employs one producer and three assistants..

In TELEVISA's occupational jargon the term "producer" refers to the people who are responsible for making available the whole audiovisual contents of a news programme. These consist of video cassettes containing edited stories with or without recorded text, which are then delivered to the master of a channel for broadcast. The Chief of the Production Department is also in charge of developing the long-term visual image of the bulletins and designing and changing formats, rhythms, logos, and so on. The programme producer, however, is not concerned with long-term planning. His task is to oversee the technical quality of the material in particular bulletins. He is also responsible for making sure that changes in the agendas are operationalised. His assistants are then responsible for supervising the editing and ensuring the final availability of a number of particular stories. They are the ones who tell the editors to include particular clips or leave out parts of an image.

A more creative side of this recently emerged occupation is the role assigned to the staff engaged in putting the final touch to the bulletin during the "post-production" and "studio managing" stages..

Very often news items need illustrations,, such as maps,, figures or tables,, and their style and incorporation is the responsibility of the "post-production" personnel.. Their work is widely regarded within the profession as a major factor in 24 HORAS' success.. A former TELEVISA reporter now working for the competition freely acknowledged that post-production was one of the main areas in which her bulletin was outclassed by TELEVISA's and was perhaps the reason why the latter was more popular..

Special effects play a particularly important role in giving the bulletins an air of versatility and improving the programme's overall image.. That involves the design of logos and creating the special effects which give the bulletins an air of versatility,, vitality,, modernity and fashion.. When the bulletin is first introduced,, for example,, the programme's logo together with the name of the Director of News superimposed comes up on the screen and at commercial breaks,, too.. Special effects to the rhythm of modern instrumental music are also a frequent feature.. When it comes to the "Many news in a few words" section,, which is invariably presented by a blonde and pretty female newscaster,, a framed close up of her face comes up on the screen and just below appears her stylised name together with a red rose,, which gives this

section a definitive air of femininity and fashion.

Studio managing activities are coordinated by the Director of Studio Cameramen, who is responsible for airing the bulletins. He decides on the colours for the studio background and often selects them to suit the newscasters' clothing: "A soft yellow for a check grey jacket or a navy blue for a white dress", in the words of a "realizader". Just beside him, in the audio cabin, is the person in charge of selecting and including musical themes for particular sections of the programme: a sharp and tight theme for the start, a rhythmic one for sports and a soft and affectionate theme for the female newscaster's section.

The production department is heavily involved in sport events too and this probably represents its heaviest workload since they are responsible not only for the development of themes and logos but also for the coverage of the events themselves. Overall, the department employs more than 30 people, including cameramen, producers and assistants. Altogether, excluding the staff responsible for the design of the studio and the furniture, TELEVISA employs a total of 12 people who are actively involved in the development of 24 HORAS' image. They are: the Chief of the Production Department; the "producer" of 24 HORAS; 3 people at the "post-production" studios, and 7 people at the "live" studio. It is these people and the specialised functions they perform which allegedly guarantees the success of these non-journalistic strategies to beat the competition and

secure the programme's entertainment value.

13. Labelling history: classifying and storing TELEVISA's news.

Since 1977, the year in which the videotape revolution reached the Directorate of News and initiated a shift from film as the most used recording material, TELEVISA has gradually acquired what now amounts to a vast capacity for resuscitating history. In 1984, a record was kept of approximately 50,000 individually retrievable stories.

Classifying this vast archive is the responsibility of the Continuity Department, created as a means of controlling the otherwise disorganised flow of news material. Before the introduction of video, a register was kept of the contents of all news bulletins. After 1977, however, there was a sharp increase in the number of stories. It was then thought at TELEVISA that video made it possible, at a relatively low cost, to keep an individual record for all news items, whether gathered by the news exchanges or by the Directorate's own resources.

In order to create an efficient system for handling this material, the first task was to devise a classification system to facilitate the fast retrieval of stories for a range of purposes. A file was kept for each news item, stating the date, name of the story, personalities, cameramen and reporters involved, and the length. The key section

contains a multiple-attribute listing space which enables a story to be classified and retrieved with the use of related references and categories. Using this system, for instance, a story that reads "Reagan in Contadora meeting at Cancun" could be retrieved under "Contadora", "Reagan", "Cancun" or through other related categories. Despite its extensiveness, however, this system still restricts the use to which that immense galaxy of events turned into stories can be put.

Owing to the specialization of work and the complexities of broadcast news, once a story has reached the newsroom and been classified under a heading or label, its potential meaning is already restricted to a particular set of contexts. Furthermore, due to the small number of employees and the pressures of always working against the clock, in practice stories are stored under a very small number of headings. Consequently, entries for most events are confined to the names of the personalities involved, the geographical location, the name of the reporters and cameramen, and those headings and categories common amongst newsmen. In this way, history is reduced to and transformed into the occupational categories which convert stories and events into work-currencies to fit a multiplicity of image or text requirements.

From the point of view of corporate control and participation however, this system enables higher executives to access a wide universe of stories and to suggest ways of illustrating current stories or achieving a particular

connotation.. A computerised system is currently under way and terminals have been installed in key decision-making positions within TELEVISA's top hierarchy..

14. Presenting the news.

The last regular routine of production is writing the script.. As with the other stages of the news assembly line,, this process is governed by conventions.. Some concern style,, others relate to newsmen's notions about the nature of broadcast news,, and a third group relates to policy and occupational ideologies..

The chores of script-writing are the responsibility of the Coordinator of news,, who in turn has two assistants.. Generally,, work is divided by sections.. The Coordinator always takes charge of the main news section,, with one of his assistants being permanently responsible for the "many news in a few words" section ((including setting the agenda for that particular part of the programme)), and the other assistant helping out in the writing-up of minor stories..

Stylistic conventions include an emphasis on simple and short sentences,, most of them comprising no more than 20 words.. "Short sentences are more powerful and effective",, the script-writer notes.. Every time a news-actor is mentioned his position follows his name and not the contrary.. The vocabulary is always kept very simple,, almost colloquial..

Other conventions include the belief that television news should avoid detailed information and focus on the broad definition of events. This is based on the notion that the audience could always access more comprehensive accounts through newspaper readership.

Finally, policy conventions include an emphasis on the presentation of "facts" rather than opinion. "While I write the presentation of a story, I am very careful to refer to facts, what has been said or declared by accredited sources, not to subjective or non-verifiable versions of events" the Coordinator of news said. This crucial occupational opposition between "objective" and "subjective" views and the constant need to refer to identifiable sources reveals the presence of a whole set of ideologies about the role and standards of broadcast journalists, some of which will be dealt with in a following chapter.

15. Conclusion.

This chapter has focused on the extent to which the production of TELEVISA's television news is regulated by its bureaucratic procedures. The evidence gathered here supports the contention of other commentators that television journalism is both "reactive" and "anticipated". Within TELEVISA, this means that the production process relies extensively on stable routines and expectations. These in turn form the ground on which 24 HORAS then builds an image of a versatile, fresh and innovative bulletin.

Routines and expectations represent the operative filters through which events must pass to become news. Their influence on the range of issues and formats utilised is considerable since they define, in practical terms, what is to count as a "television story"..

The final significance of the bureaucratic dimension is that it sets the framework within which television news can be utilised by professionals or, more crucially, by the institution which produces it. Chapter 4 has already reviewed the domination of corporate thinking. Chapter 6 will explore the professional dimension behind the production of 24 HORAS.

CHAPTER SIX: THE PROFESSIONAL DIMENSION OF TELEVISA'S NEWS.

1, Introduction.

The values implied in the processes of gathering, selecting and presenting the news are crucial within a news organisation for they determine the nature of the mediating function of the media, between social reality and reality as expressed in the news. In the preceding chapters it has been argued that such processes are greatly determined by institutional and bureaucratic thinking.

But as only a minority of stories is directly requested by TELEVISA executives to comply with corporate rationales, we are compelled to examining the ways the news may be determined by the professional criteria of those who produce it. What is the nature of the value system used to assess professional practice within the Directorate? Furthermore, Do these values originate in the profession of broadcast journalist, the individual who works for TELEVISA or in the organisation itself?; and lastly, Are professional values homogeneously upheld by reporters within and outside TELEVISA's Mexican news operation?..

This chapter's main purpose is to provide a view of the profession of broadcast journalist within TELEVISA, examining the values employed by journalists to produce the news. The analysis attempts to describe the ((competing)) ways in which journalists use their professional performance to advance

their careers in or outside TELEVISA. Finally,, this chapter looks at the main professional differences in the performance of TELEVISA reporters in Mexico and the U.S.

2. The broadcast journalist in TELEVISA.

Miguel Angel Rivera,, a leading journalist at La Jornada, one of Mexico's prominent newspapers,, told the author that "the profession of journalist in this country could be characterised by having a comparatively low status,, being poorly paid,, lacking standardised training,, and,, in many cases,, being a transitory job".

For TELEVISA's team of 25 reporters,, all but one of these characteristics apply. In 1984,, the average monthly salary for reporters was \$ 70,000 pesos ((530 sterling)). Salaries have suffered even more in real terms in the last few years as the Mexican economy experiences three digit inflation figures while salaries barely reach two digit increases. Salaries for press reporters are even worse. Journalists at three national dailies informed me that generally press reporters receive salaries near the minimum wage ((350 sterling a month)). At TELEVISA,, the salary hierarchy depends on length of time in the job and experience,, and reporters negotiate on an individual basis,, with veteran reporters earning salaries exceeding 100,000 pesos ((625 pounds in 1984)) and young and unexperienced reporters the minimum wage.

Regarding educational backgrounds,, only five out of 25 reporters had pursued their education to university level; 16 had completed high school and four had received only informal education.. Only two reporters had completed a university training in journalism.. As for their preceding occupation,, for nine of the reporters,, work at TELEVISA was their first job; 10 reporters had moved from the press and 6 came from various other occupations..

To complement their poor salaries,, TELEVISA reporters participate in a phenomenon known as "chayote" or "embute" which is a characteristic of Mexican journalism in general.. It consists of accepting a monetary payment from a news source as a compliment for covering a news beat or as an informal sign of gratitude for receiving favourable reporting..

The "chayote" phenomenon is said to have been originated in its present form and scale during the Lopez Mateos administration ((1958-1964)) when Press Departments were installed in all major Ministries and Government offices to monitor and foster favourable and extensive coverage of State affairs.. For some years almost any medium sized Government office has had a Press Department or a Social Communication Officer,, charged with that specific role..

Press Departments,, mostly in Government offices,, manage a budget for reporters' financial aid.. Most commonly,, contributions are paid on a monthly basis and they vary

depending on the size of the office and the Ministry it is attached to. Some Ministries pay more than others. According to a journalist's account ((Secanella, P. 1982)), in 1981, the budgets allocated to Press Departments that year were led by the Home Ministry ((figures are Mexican pesos with the sterling equivalent in ~~inininbrackets~~) with \$ 1,252,356 ((31,308)); followed by the Finance Ministry with \$ 273,822 ((6,820)) and the Urban Planning Ministry with \$ 71,728 ((1,793)). The 'chavate' phenomenon has some important implications for the internal political system of the Directorate of News, as it will be noted below.

A second source of supplementary income for reporters is a parallel job. In 1984, seven of the 25 reporters earned a second income from acting as information consultants for organisations ranging from Government offices to commercial and industrial companies in need of a continuous and specific flow of information. Two others had a business of their own, which they supervised during their hours off duty.

One of the striking features of TELEVISA's News Department is the comparatively high rotation of personnel. Each year, from 1980 to 1984 seven ((out of 25)) reporters on average left and seven others arrived. For most reporters, the profession of broadcast journalist within TELEVISA represents a step up on the ladder of a career that often but not always culminates in a post in the Directorate of News. The Directorate's internal occupational hierarchy, although not formally defined, is described through the views of the

news personnel.

Journalists tend to rank the varying positions within the Directorate according to a clear hierarchy of value. Posts given the lowest rating are in the Wires and the Archives Departments. People there seek a post either at the Correspondent, the Editing or Cameramen Departments, while people in these Departments look for posts at the Information Department ((to do the work of a reporter). Reporters themselves seek better newsbeats, and some of those already in good positions within the Department see their career unfolding either in TELEVISA or outside.

Continuing their career inside can take the form of being incorporated as a script-writer or coordinator of news for a specific bulletin. It can also mean being promoted to Director or Presenter of their own bulletin. These two options tend to be favoured by highly committed young reporters. Veteran reporters tend to favour a better newsbeat which allows them time to write or to attend to a job as a news consultant outside.

The commonest options outside are a post as a Press Officer at a Press Department in a Ministry or a big Government Office, or retiring to become an author of popular literature. These two are most favoured by veteran reporters. Young and talented reporters tend to favour as a potential opportunity becoming reporters for TELEVISA'S news operation in the United States.

3. A profession shaped by TELEVISA.

In the last few years there has been a debate about the origin of professional values within media organisations. A first line of thought considers them as dependent primarily upon the professional milieu which operates to some extent independently of organisational intervention. Michael Robinson (1978), for instance, urges commentators to pursue the analyses of the political attitudes upheld by individuals working in the media. This position claims that the aggregate set of individual values and opinions make up what could be considered as the institution's value system. Referring to news, for instance, Robinson argues that the sum of liberal views among reporters could result in liberal reporting. Conservative attitudes, on the contrary, would produce conservative news.

On the other side of the argument, commentators (crucially Golding and Elliot 1979; Schlesinger 1978) have suggested that the values that count in the production of media material are those of the organisation, irrespective of whether they do or do not coincide with those of the individuals. In his study of the BBC, Schlesinger shows that in cases of conflicting views on a specific matter, the editorial system of the Corporation, itself an institutional arrangement, requires reporters to convey in their stories both sides of the argument.

In TELEVISA, however, the definition and assessment of

journalistic practice has been set by institutional rather than individual or professional values. TELEVISA has become increasingly involved in the making of the profession of broadcast journalist since 1970, when it ended the period of multiple news patronage and centralised all news resources and personnel under the roof of the Directorate of News.

As it was noted above, the era of multiple patronage formed a system where advertisers, television channels and professionals had specific and to a large extent independent functions. Professionals were allowed great autonomy to produce their bulletins according to their own methods, which in turn relied heavily on the ways the press operated. Thus, professionals engaged in the production of bulletins such as the one sponsored by "General Motors" were drawn from existing national dailies and used the gathering and selecting mechanisms employed by their former news organisations.

The Directorate of News in contrast, started borrowing methods which were mainly derived from the American networks, and NBC in particular. Hence, one of the most important features of the work done by the team led by Mr. Jacobo Zabludovsky was the emphasis given to investigative reporting. From 1970 to 1976, taking advantage of the policy of "democratic openness" introduced by the Echeverria administration, 24 HORAS pursued the attainment of credibility by engaging in research regarding corruption and the potential mishandling of funds by Government Offices.

Veteran reporters note that in some cases reporters from 24 HORAS were ahead of the Police force in their investigations. On one occasion, for example, a national newspaper included a two paragraph story about a suspicion that Government officials were involved in a smuggling venture. Mr. Zabludovsky assigned a team of reporters to conduct full-time enquiries, which later disclosed documentary proof of that claim. These reports led to the resignation and prosecution of those responsible. Visualising their autonomy as a continuum from 0 to 10, a veteran reporter noted that at the time they were allowed a healthy 9.

With a policy of investigative reporting, 24 HORAS became both credible and popular. All veteran reporters acknowledge that it was during that period ((1970 to 1976)) that 24 HORAS became a respected source of information. Unfortunately, no ratings are available to confirm that viewing figures increased for news bulletins but the growing popularity of 24 HORAS is dramatically illustrated by its inclusion in the 10 most favourite television programmes; the first time in television history that news had made it into the 'chart'.

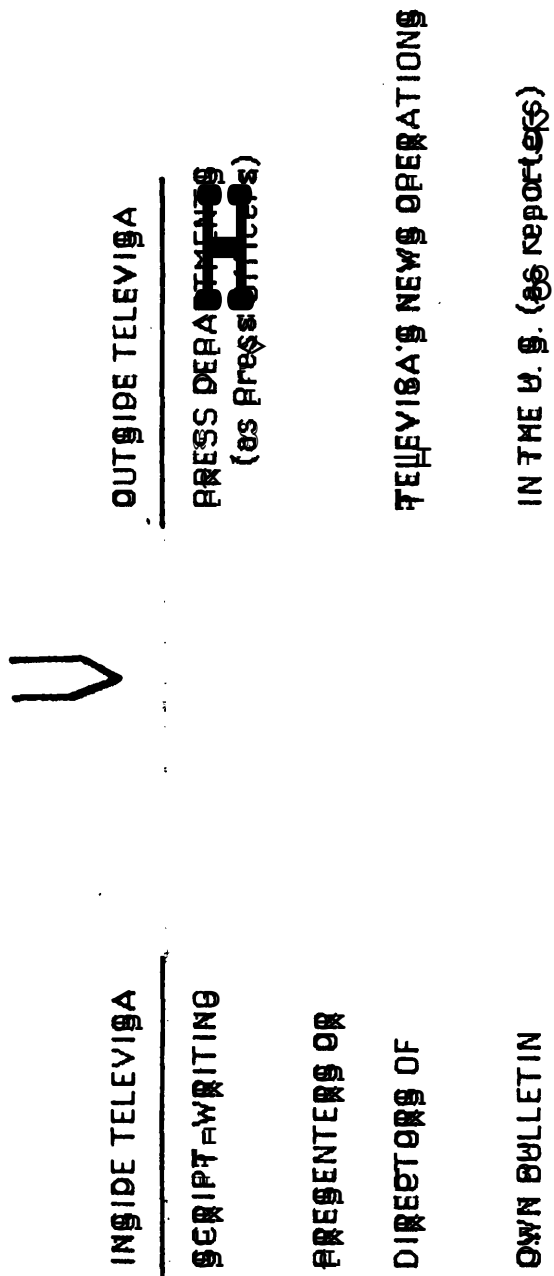
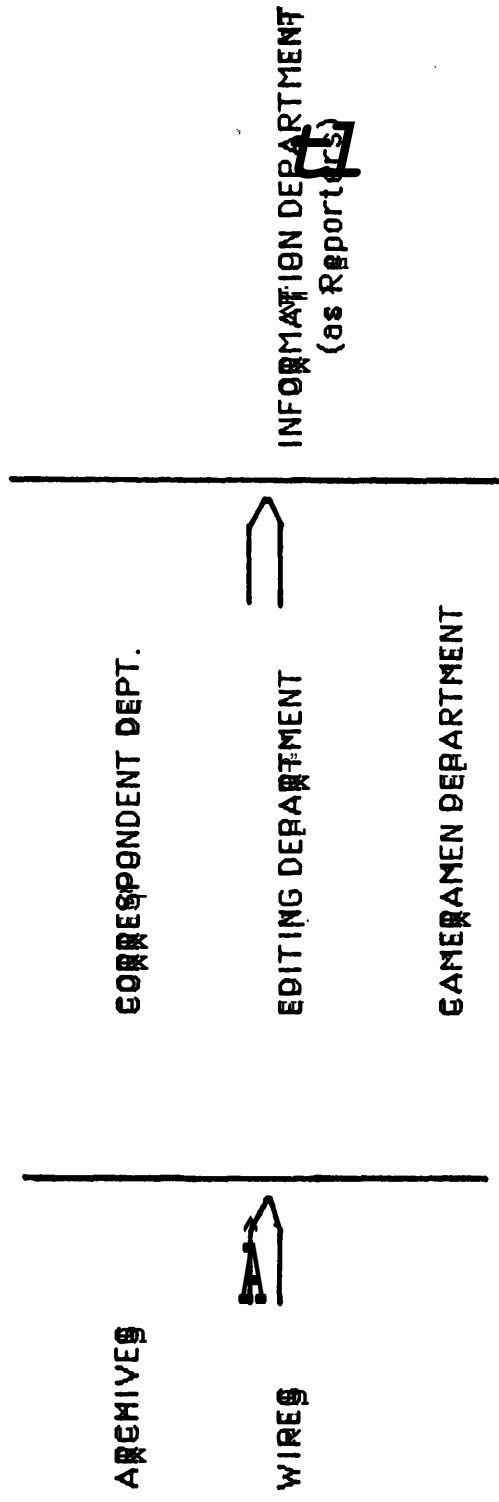
In 1976, a group of veteran reporters left the Directorate. Some of them defected to the competing State channel to launch a new collection of news bulletins. Others were posted to other TELEVISA Departments. So efficient had they proved to be that a few even went to form an intelligence unit serving the president of the company.

From 1976 onwards,, 24 HORAS gradually retreated from investigative reporting and emphasized a new form of television journalism: "discourse" reporting; that is, the coverage and the presentation of a synthesized version of political speeches.. Again,, veteran reporters see this new development as a narrowing of their autonomy. Special assignments decreased and the reporting concentrated more on covering predictable events..

Some reporters note that such a policy was the outcome of increased Government control over the press and broadcast news in particular. A reporter who is currently assigned to cover the Congress beat indicated that out of an imaginary 1-to-10 continuum that marked the range of stories they covered,, reporters in 1970 knew they were in control of the whole ten point continuum.. From 1970 to 1976 they also learned that news concerning Mr. Azcarraga and his partners and friends accounted for a narrowing of two or three points of their autonomy: they had to be covered in a specific way. Then,, from 1976 to 1984,, their autonomy was gradually constrained by Government control and the inflexibility of the assignment list,, so that at the present time,, "reporters" autonomy to select and cover an event is equivalent to controlling one or two points of that imaginary continuum..

Professional standards,, in the formative period of 1970-1976 emphasized a reporter's ability not only to comply with the format requirements of a television story but also his competence and courage to carry out independent

TABLE 22. THE DIRECTORATE'S INFORMAL ORGANIZATIONAL HIERARCHY



investigations which in the majority of cases ran up against the reluctance of sources to disclose information and hostility.

4. What TELEVISA expects from its reporters: professional values within the Directorate of News.

Over the past few years there has been a gradual change in the professional practice of reporters. The Directorate no longer demands investigative abilities since most stories are assigned in advance. However, in the assignment list, a reporter only finds the broad definition of an event. He or she has to construct a story, whose process requires a specialised performance. Fieldwork carried out in 1983 and 1984 shows that professional requirements emphasized: ((a)) the ability to capture a "news angle"; ((b)) the ability to synthesize and produce text for a visual story; ((c)) strict compliance with instructions specified in the assignment list.

((a)) Ability to capture a "news-angle".

For reporters, a "news-angle" is an aspect of an event, a speech or a story which invites emphasis for the purpose of producing news. It is, as they call it, the "subject" of a story; what the story talks about. A reporter bases his search for the news angle on a number of factors;

((a1)) What is new about an ongoing story. As television

most often follows stories that have already been unveiled by the press, a television reporter looks for new developments so as to advance his reporting ahead of that of the press or the competitors. This means that his search continues on a pre-defined news angle to add new information on it.

((a2)) A professionally consensual appeal. A second factor helping a reporter to find a "news angle" is the discussion with colleagues about the definition of the "most significant aspects of an event". An example of this was the coverage, in 1983, of the annual breakfast for the President of Mexico given by the Trades Unions Congress. Reporters covering the event were given copies of the General Secretary's 7-page speech. After reading it, they initiated an informal discussion of what the most important news angle was. They chose references to topics already on the "media agenda". The consensus reached among reporters of different media defined what they highlighted in their stories that day.

((a3)) A story's imaginary relation with the audience. A third factor lies in what a reporter imagines the links between a story and his audience are. Here, a reporter does not ask himself about the relative value of the story as defined by colleagues, but about how it could relate to the audience's interests and ordinary life. A typical example of this trend was found during fieldwork in 1984. A reporter had been assigned to cover the filming of a soap opera. During the journey to the spot he began asking himself how the story could please his audience. He said the way to solve the

problem was to think of what an ordinary viewer would ask and want. He then defined a few questions which, in his opinion, fulfilled that requirement. On this occasion he defined his audience's interests in terms of what viewers had probably been watching recently, assuming a certain competence in the audience's "media culture". He assumed, for instance, that viewers were interested in whether the role that a popular actor would play in the programme would be either as a married or as a single person and whether he would be presented as a "good" or a "bad" character. It is important to note however, that the images that a reporter develops regarding his audience do not derive from an effort to identify the programme's real audience but largely from what a reporter, thinking of himself as a privileged and representative member of the audience, imagines their interests are.

((a4)) Assessing size. Measuring and comparing a story's size becomes a subsequent factor helping a reporter identify the most prominent news angle. A reporter assesses the size of either one or both of the following elements: the number of people or resources involved in the story and the number of people to whom the story is relevant in a direct way. Accidents involving many lives, or accidents which involve the life of a person who is related to many others are typical examples.

((b)) Ability to synthesize and produce text for a visual story.

An established press reporter who was hired by 24 HORAS in 1983 complained that television formats exerted the strictest pressure on a journalist to be proficient at synthesizing. This, she said, made a sharp contrast with writing for the national press: "In the press you are expected to present the fullest possible picture of an event. In television, you are expected to produce encapsulated 60 second stories". Television reporters are faced with the operational problem of making a long story short. As was indicated above, slots within 24 HORAS are normally 60 seconds long. This puts an extra pressure on reporters and requires the development of what can be called a "story frame" for that length.

Synthesizing is part of the training young reporters take before they are hired by the Directorate. Sometimes they are given 50 page documents and are asked to submit 2 page resumes. Then they are asked to accompany veteran reporters, synthesize the same story and compare it with their own version. Finally they are assigned to produce the regular copy from newspapers and magazines, in a synthetic version.

The "story frame" can be defined as a pre-specified structure within which the information of a story is placed. Generally, it contains at least two fundamental sections with an additional third. First, there is a presentation part where the reporter indicates locative information (where and how an event happened). Secondly, there is the story itself, where news actors are defined and linked to something they have said or done. An optional section is called an "insert"

and consists of the audiovisual inclusion of the news actor.

((c) Strict compliance with instructions specified in the assignment list.

Instructions in the assignment list carry general information about the event to be covered, where it is expected to take place and the name of the reporter. Occasionally they contain additional comments. These take the form of specific instructions as to how to conduct the interview and a note if coverage has been requested by a TELEVISA executive in which case the reporter is required to pay special attention. Compliance with the assignment list also implies: ((c1)) availability; ((c2)) a code of behaviour while addressing sources; and ((c3)) keeping coverage as paramount.

((c1) Availability. All reporters define availability as the single most important requirement for a journalist inside the Directorate. "News", they say, "does not respect one's private life. News brakes any moment anywhere, and we have to be available whenever it is to cover the news". Availability is expressed in a reporter's acceptance of the assignments they receive. It also conveys a sense of permanence.

Reporters often work a seven-day week, with no fixed timetables except those imposed by deadlines and assignments. Finally, it contains a sense of responsibility on the reporter's part to be able to devote as much time as a story

requires regardless of personal commitments and timetables. A veteran reporter once noted: "Reporters are the news equivalent to a soldier of information".

(c2) A code of behaviour while addressing sources. Reporters are expected to behave in a manner considered to be "respectful" in the eyes of their sources. This implies the internalisation of a code of behaviour that most often emphasizes, as a departure point, keeping enquiries to the questions that are most relevant to the "consensual news angle", and avoiding the delivery of questions that may embarrass a news actor. An attitude which cuts across or disregards this policy can lead to dismissal, as happened to a reporter who was attending a press conference in which the Head of Mexico City Police Forces announced that any private institution in need of additional police should pay for them. The reporter asked him how much he would have to pay to hire someone like him to watch his house. The angry general rang the News Department, complained and the reporter was dismissed for what was defined as "improper behaviour".

(c3) Keeping coverage as paramount. Compliance with instructions also means that a reporter should take coverage of his assignment as paramount, especially in cases where a conflict arises between the news source and the professional milieu. On one occasion, a reporter was sent to cover a dinner that the Mexico City's Chamber of Commerce was offering to the City's Regent. The event was delayed and reporters grew angry because the news source had not taken the trouble to

sit them in a proper room while they were waiting. As time went by, frustration among reporters rose to the point that everyone called upon each other to leave the event unattended. TELEVISA's reporter suddenly found herself in a conflict situation. On the one hand she felt she had to be loyal to her colleagues. But, on the other hand, leaving would mean unsuccessful coverage of her assignment. She rang the newsroom and was instructed to stay, even against her sense of comradeship.

5. The Directorate's Internal Political System: how reporters advance their interests.

In-depth interviews conducted with all of 24 HORAS' reporters reveal that the variety of interests and motivations guiding their work can be grouped into three main clusters: ((a) advancement in their news-broadcasting career; (b) achievement of social status; and ((c) flow of influence. Reporters can be differentiated in terms of the high or low value they attach to each of these general goals.

((5a) Advance in the career as news-broadcaster.

The most important group of motivations relate to the achievement of higher and more stable positions inside TELEVISA and the Directorate of News in particular. Identification with this goal creates a sense of loyalty towards the company and the job. Reporters who give their commitment to this idea would like to see themselves turning

into presenters or directors of their own bulletin, securing a post as coordinator of news or a prominent news beat or getting the chance to link themselves to TELEVISA's news operation in the U.S.

It is reporters who are committed to this set of values who are more often likely to discuss themes such as "news-angles" and the audio-visual components and structures of stories. They also put a greater effort into producing a more comprehensive version of an event, within the limits imposed by television formats.

((5b)) Achievement of social status..

A female reporter once told me that "one of the main reasons girls venture into news-broadcasting is to gain the social status that their background could not provide and television does". At first I was not impressed by this statement. But as I interviewed an increasing number of reporters it became clear that both male and female reporters seek and obtain a certain degree of glamour and status through their television work.

A prominent reporter confided: "Half our salary is handed out to us in cash. The other half we get in publicity. You get to be a known person, and it gives you a lot of self-confidence. On the other hand, it is like some kind of a drug: once you have come to like it, you cannot give it up. People around you, your relatives and friends, get used to

the fact that you appear on television and they feel proud of knowing you. You suddenly feel that if you left the bulletin you would disappoint them and, crucially, you would disappoint yourself."

The reporters who are most highly committed to this set of interests are mostly women. Accordingly, they often do not try to achieve greater control over their occupation and higher levels of competence. Indeed, more than half the women reporters felt that looking for status made them afraid of ever having an open confrontation with the Chief of reporters, as losing their job could also mean a loss of personal confidence.

((5c) Flow of Influence.

By "flow of influence" newsmen mean the use of their status as 24 HORAS" reporters to achieve personal privileges which otherwise would be more difficult for them to obtain. These perks commonly relate to helping them in their own business ventures. Using the "flow of influence" I saw how reporters obtained privileges such as; getting a set of "taxi number plates" to lease a car for business purposes; obtaining a licence to set up an off-licence shop; reduced fares for plane tickets; enhanced credit worthiness for getting a government loan to buy a house on low interest rates; protection against tax auditing in their commercial ventures; and more generally, a higher degree of flexibility in matters concerning the legal requirements governing their

business activities.

News men who are closely linked to this set of interests regard being a broadcast reporter as a transitory job, one which is primarily related to helping them advance in their own journey to wealth.

Exercising the "flow of influence" also implies an intimate relationship between a reporter and his source. If a reporter uses his beat to promote personal interests he is tied to promote the inclusion of the source's news as they want it put. Reporters acknowledged that they were informally allowed to foster a friendly relationship with their sources, but also noted that in the event of being openly exposed they risked redundancy. This phenomenon creates an underworld of negotiation between the news staff. Favours are exchanged and secrets are used to defend and promote their interests.

In 1983 and 1984, reporters noted that a fierce competition was taking place between news personnel to achieve good assignments ((which in turn guarantee inclusion in the bulletin)), tours abroad, news beats, extended length for their stories, appearance on the screen, getting to interview personalities and more basically, having their story included.

But reporters who were highly committed to their profession complained that opportunities to obtain such privileges were unequally distributed, depending mostly on

their relationship with the Chief of reporters ((who produced the assignment list)) and ad-hoc strategies.

Irrespective of their commitment,, reporters who fostered a loyal and close relationship with the Chief of reporters stood a better chance of obtaining privileges. On the other hand, strategies included a wide variety of tactics. For instance, reporters who had produced longer-than-usual stories would, in order to have them included in the bulletin, jump the normal procedure ((compliance on the Coordinator of News' part)) and go directly to Mr. Zabludovsky,, early in the morning, just after he arrives or when he gets a little distracted,, so as to persuade him of the high newsvalue of their story. If they succeeded,, Mr. Zabludovsky would directly request inclusion..

6.. TELEVISA's reporters in Mexico and the U.S.; a case of professional dissent.

Since September 1976, when TELEVISIA launched Univision ((its American outlet)) news has been a standard part of the programming for U.S. consumption. First,, it relayed 24 HORAS from Mexico City and limited its production of television news in the U.S. mainly to small 5 to 10 minute slots produced to comply with American Communication Regulation..

In 1981,, however,, a group of journalists met to discuss the setting up of a television news production unit which would be charged with the responsibility of creating an

American version of TELEVISA'S Directorate of News. This department would be a part of the Spanish International Network, which was owned by TELEVISA. Forecasting a decisive advance of Spanish language television in the U.S., TELEVISA and SIN executives planned to establish a news centre which could gradually grow into an international television news agency, thus providing local stations with American as well as International news, in Spanish.

The group was established and Gustavo Godoy, a prominent "Latino" anchorman, was appointed as Director. In an interview with the author at his office, where he currently chairs his new venture, the Spanish American Broadcasting Corporation in Miami (February 1987), Gustavo Godoy said that "the whole idea was to run an independent and truly professional television service, which could gradually expand to have a correspondent in every capital of the Western World to produce and distribute International News throughout the Spanish-speaking world".

From 1981 to 1986, he assembled a group of 13 correspondents in Latin American and European capitals and in key news centres in the U.S. As he put it, his strategy to gain popularity and credibility was to "produce news as they do it in the First World, with advanced technology and with a sense of responsible comprehensiveness and depth". With far greater resources than the Mexican Directorate, he began running some stories of great appeal to Latin Americans, such as national elections in El Salvador, Colombia and Peru,

carrying out surveys in each of these countries to predict voting behaviour. In El Salvador,, he predicted the actual voting results: "Worldwide,, ours was the first bulletin to announce President Duarte's victory"..

Despite his success,, in September 1986 he was asked to step down as Director of the SIN news operation and become Sub-Director because of the planned arrival of Mr. Jacobo Zabludovsky as the new Director ((Zabludovsky retired temporarily from Mexican television news that month). This announcement created a very hostile atmosphere in Miami among news personnel towards TELEVISA's decision and in an all-out protest,, the majority of reporters and news processing staff resigned,, including Godoy..

At first it appeared as if Godoy wanted to resign because of a personal resentment with TELEVISA for not letting him participate in the planning of that stage.. However,, the decision of nearly all news personnel to resign was not based on a purely personal disapproval of that decision.. It became apparent that there were some professional factors involved..

The phenomenon became relevant to this study since reporters argued that their main reason for resigning was that they did not agree with the way Mr. Zabludovsky ran his news operation in Mexico: What did reporters mean by that? Were there significant differences in the way broadcast news and their profession worked in Mexico and the U.S., if they were serving a similar audience and corporation? What,, if

any, could be the differences in the professional criteria used to produce Spanish language television news? With these questions in mind, I visited and interviewed prominent reporters who left the SIN and went with Godoy to form the recently founded Spanish American Broadcasting Corporation in Miami.

There is a consensus among reporters in the American organisation that there are at least five points which made them disagree with the idea of working according to TELEVISA's Mexican model.

(a) Unsuitability of Mexican "oriented" bulletins. Reporters formerly associated with the SIN, complain about the exclusively Mexican orientation of 24 HORAS. They argue that TELEVISA produced bulletins which were almost wholly centred around Mexican news, even if the content was not relevant to the multinational Spanish-speaking population in the U.S.

(b) News Autonomy Vs. Institutional News. At a deeper level, they argued that Mexican bulletins serve TELEVISA and the Mexican Government first and the audience second. They indicate that "there is a strong correlation between the bulletins' version of events and the official Mexican Government version of events". They also note that while in the U.S. reporters are welcome to pursue investigative and "critical" reporting, Mexican reporters tend to produce information which is derived from Government speeches and

offices. They use the term "critical" to refer to stories which have contradictory or even opposing views of the same event. "Mexican news", they say, "consistently avoids conflict of opinions".

As an example, Godoy referred to the elections which took place in the Mexican State of Chihuahua in 1986. The PRI (Revolutionary Institutional Party), the official Party, faced strong opposition from PAN (National Action Party), and the voting took place amid strong allegations of electoral fraud. Reporters in Mexico City noted that the Secretaria de Gobernacion (the Mexican equivalent to the British Home Office) imposed a news black-out of events taking place in Chihuahua, which included marches and massive demonstrations against the Government. The SIN included wide coverage of these elections and even the results of an opinion poll, favouring the PAN as the winning party. Godoy claims that there was mounting concern in TELEVISA headquarters about the extensive coverage the SIN was giving to the Chihuahua events. This materialised in a complaint by Azcarraga made to Godoy: "When will you stop coverage on Chihuahua"?, Azcarraga is said to have asked him.

Disagreement with TELEVISA's coverage on the part of reporters formerly employed by SIN also concerns what they call "extremely favourable reporting and promotion of the Mexican President". They note that 24 HORAS regularly includes coverage of President De la Madrid activities, which they argue puts a bias on the news in favour of the Head of

the Mexican State, what they are used to do, they point out, is strongly committing themselves to the notion of autonomy and impartiality: "Then we take the President's voice as a departure point and evaluate the value of his words with evidence derived from his actions".

(c) Comprehensive Vs Superficial Reporting. Equally profound is their claim that Mexican bulletins tend to deal with stories at a very superficial level, whereas bulletins in the U.S. tend to include a more comprehensive picture of events. They point out that 24 HORAS deals almost exclusively with people's speeches, whereas American television broadcasting also tends to include conflicting views and evaluation of actions rather than words.

(d) News Budgets and Production Resources. An additional source of disagreement comes from the extent of operational news budgets and resources. Reporters in Miami claim that TELEVISA is used to spending less money and resources than is required to produce the news. This, they note, leads to a sub-standard level of professionalism. For instance, they say, international news demands fresh and good quality images, which must be generated by the organisation's own cameramen. TELEVISA, they claim, prefers to save money by using stock material or someone else's images rather than to generate its own material.

(e) Finally, Gustavo Godoy points out that his team puts an enormous effort in avoiding the use of "regionalismos"

((regional Spanish slangs and terms)) . Due to the fact that they aim at a multinational Spanish-speaking community, they tend to focus on the use of universal and "more objective" language.. TELEVISA reporters,, he argues,, are not professional enough to produce text in "International Spanish"..

7. The emergency coverage of the 1985 Mexican earthquake;
a gradual accommodation to institutional policy.

At 7.22 am on September 19th 1985,, routine Mexican television news was interrupted by the sudden rise of a two fold emergency crisis.. In the first place,, there was a massive earthquake that destroyed the centre of Mexico City,, killing thousands of people and inflicting serious damages on Mexico's communications network..

But for TELEVISA,, the earthquake was particularly serious.. The building that housed the Directorate of News collapsed bringing down its news production infrastructure.. TELEVISA woke up that day in a grave predicament.. With the country virtually cut off,, it was compelled to provide an effective news service,, covering Mexico's worst natural disaster ever. But even more dramatically,, having been disarmed in news terms,, TELEVISA had to implement an improvised service with whatever resources the earthquake had left available..

TELEVISA's two fold emergency crisis provided the opportunity for a unique and quasi-experimental case study..

First of all, it allowed me to observe the arrangements made by an organisation shaken to its roots by such an unexpected, interruption to the "normal" processes of production and the problem of who was to control the emergency coverage of Mexico's most dramatic emergency. Who took control in times of internal and external crisis? Was the news service primarily guided by operative, corporative or professional rationales? What were the pressures upon TELEVISA's emergency television coverage? With these questions in mind I was able to conduct a 15-day observation exercise, which started on Sept. 20th. This included free access to the newsroom and interviews with the Directorate's reporters.

(a) The first hours of the crisis: communicators take control.

The earthquake that shook Mexico City on September 19th left the country's communication network seriously handicapped. The building that housed the headquarters of the Ministry of Communications and Transport, and the central terminal of the telephone exchanges collapsed in seconds. Phone links between Mexico City and the rest of the country were severed, a resisting floor of the "Victoria" telephone terminal which contains the brain for local phone calls offered limited services for the capital but was threatened with collapse. The country was virtually cut off.

If anything characterised the immediate coverage of the consequences -the needs and services resulting from the

earthquake- it was that communicators took full control over the information service. Imevision, the State's television concern, immediately opened a special service for information from local calls and its diffusion across the country. It also started filming some of the most affected areas and buildings and is said to be the source of the first images of the disaster that emerged from Mexico for international distribution.

At TELEVISA too, communicators took control. The Director of News, Lic. Jacobo Zabłudovsky, left his home immediately after the quake to go to his news headquarters in the centre of Mexico City. Upon witnessing his Directorate become a huge pile of rubble, he started broadcasting from his car through a radio link with one of TELEVISA's radio stations. He went to those central areas worst hit, broadcasting from the remains of restaurants, hotels and government offices.

At least two of TELEVISA's leading journalists were already in the building and were buried in the rubble. With them were dozens of people: editors, and script writers of TELEVISA's Hoy Mismo magazine news programme, news processing staff and some others from parallel departments. The Chief of reporters and the Chief of cameramen, two of TELEVISA's key news personnel were seconds away from the building at the time of the earthquake thanks to a rare delay. They witnessed their offices collapse. The quake destroyed the electronic links between TELEVISA and its reporters. Some of them did not turn up that day: they were either injured or cut off. As

reporters heard about the collapse on the radio and the television services from Imevision, they approached their former building and were directed to the radio station which had been adopted as the provisional centre for TELEVISA's news. The day's assignment list had been buried within the building!

A few cameramen arrived at the Directorate shortly after the quake. Acting against instructions not to go into the collapsing buildings, they rescued their equipment and were able to start filming and producing TELEVISA's own stories. The whole news operation had been altered. Unlike routine practice, it totally depended on the communicators themselves. No assignment list, no script, no suggestions from the government neither from the higher ranks of the corporate hierarchy. A disaster on this scale had simply not been anticipated. Suddenly, reporters were faced with the urgent need to assign their own stories, write them -improvise. In such exceptional circumstances, the Director of News was also at the scene of the tragedy, reporting, interviewing. The radio link finished at 12 o'clock, when a studio was available at TELEVISA's San Angel television complex -normally devoted to soap opera production and some "live" entertainment programmes. That complex had survived the quake.

TELEVISA's news was totally devoted to the crisis. There was a sudden increase in the number of stories submitted by reporters. They were each reporting an average of 6 stories

as opposed to 1 or 2 per day. Cameramen were filming fewer stories each ((during the week after the quake,, the number of visual stories fell to between 24-30 against a 40-45 earlier)). The Chief of cameramen noted that stories were fewer but longer than before; "For instance,, you had to wait 1 or 2 hours,, for the rescue filming was long,, slow and much more complicated" said TELEVISA's Chief of cameramen. TELEVISA's extended news bulletins virtually monopolised the air.

Although the news service was totally improvised, there were signs that this could not last forever. Regarding the operational arrangements,, overall,, work shifts for most newsmen covered a 20-hour cycle for the few days following the disaster. In general,, news gathering and processing lasted longer than usual due to lack of foresight and a removal of stable routines. In some cases,, sheer exhaustion caused some problems ((to the extreme that an important member of the staff had a car crash due to lack of sleep)).

TELEVISA was also robbed of world news as a whole. International news from correspondents was unavailable due to the failure of the phone lines -in some cases contacts were made through telex,, which at one time represented the only link between TELEVISA and the world. Satellite links with American networks were not suited to transmissions from and to San Angel and agency copy material was unavailable since the terminals had been left buried at the former headquarters. Most important,, the quake made reporters forget

about the rest of the world. The only news sought after was: "What has happened in this city today?".

(b) Corporate and external control; a second phase.

After the second and third day, a few anticipatory arrangements were made for the news gathering process: the vague and uncertain but newsworthy phrase "effects of the earthquake" was replaced by a finite set of categories in which journalists tried to apprehend Mexico's disaster "reality".

Firstly, there was the number of deaths and buildings affected, according to various agencies. Secondly, there were the rescue activities from the worst hit sites. Thirdly, there were the refugee centres organised in different parts of the city (information for which was gathered by a special unit formed by TELEVISA and some university students). And fourthly, there were the official communiques from a special cabinet formed by the government and headed by the Regent of Mexico City announcing government strategies to deal with the crisis and releasing figures and other related information.

The categories that reporters used to apprehend reality served as some kind of internal and informal search-guides. Overnight, reporters became specialists in rescue activities, refugee centres, the fantastic tales of how people survived the quake, local and community organisations helping the needy and the homeless, improvised information services,

world and national aid, medical institutions in operation, food and clothing distribution networks, the increasing number of deaths, survivals, homeless, and the tragic stories of personal losses.

TELEVISA's news-net seemed to operate under civil rather than institutional control. Suddenly, the news focused on areas which had never been closely monitored before. The gathering had been altered dramatically. It threw light into traditionally obscure and unknown areas of civil life. Reporters instinctively developed and used their categories as if covering an assigned event.

As days went by, the hierarchy of categories was revised. Stories about government rescue activities, the army's involvement in preventing looting in the city and the pronouncements of high ranking local and central government figures began to climb the "news ladder" to arrive as the first and most important category a week after the disaster. Stories concerning civil rescue operations gradually lost their value, as did the figures relating to survivors as life expectancy beneath the rubble decreased day by day. The change in journalists' appreciation of stories' relative value was greatly due to the re-appearance of TELEVISA's internal controls and the institutional pressures on the news operation which characterised its television news before the earthquake.

First of all, the assignment list re-appeared. This

caused a major shift in the way the gathering of news had been operating since the earthquake. Reporters were not allowed to continue their specialization within their own search-categories. As before, they went back to covering assignments. The Chief of reporters started meeting with the Vice-president of News again to decide news-policy. And the flow of anticipated events re-emerged. This allowed a return to the planning of stories, and as a veteran reporter put it, "led to the management of news in its traditional institutional manner".

There were many examples of corporate influence. The President of the company instructed TELEVISA's research centre to organise information which then could be used by the department of news. They conducted a few surveys, one of them, requested by TELEVISA executives, concerning public attitudes towards solidarity in the face of looting in the affected areas. The information obtained was then included in the news broadcasts regularly. Similarly, the coverage of TELEVISA's own casualties and losses was closely monitored and supervised by its high ranking executives.

Government supervision and control over TELEVISA's newscasts was exercised about three days after the quake. It took the shape of informal notes suggesting that the media should not exaggerate the dimensions of the quake and that after all everything was now under control. It also emphasized that, faced with a great disaster, Mexicans were united, and could be confident that Mexico would emerge from

the crisis soon. After the first few moments of uncertainty, disorganisation, lack of information and lack of policy, the news operation was again under its traditional keepers.

8. Conclusion.

This part of the study notes that a lack of widely accepted normative standards of performance, combined with a comparatively poor status as a career, the profession of television journalism is left sufficiently weak as to be manageable by TELEVISA's own institutional needs, resulting in the individual committing him or herself more to the organisation than to a non-existent code of professional practice. This chapter also notes that the supremacy of institutional arrangements demand from reporters a limited responsibility over the news, mainly the coverage of speeches and other planned stories, precluding the practice of investigative reporting. It also confirms what other studies have found regarding newsmen's notions of newsworthiness, emphasizing values such as recency, size and their notions of audience interests. But far from being a closed and perfectly functional and rational organisation internally, the Directorate of News houses a political system in which not only TELEVISA's corporate values are held as paramount.

If it is true that TELEVISA uses its news personnel for its own purposes, it is equally true that news personnel use TELEVISA for their own individual purposes, thereby creating a potentially dysfunctional space, where rewards and

promotion do not always go to the more TELEVISA committed reporters.

CHAPTER SEVEN: HOW TYPICAL IS TELEVISIÓN?

1. Introduction.

The preceding chapters have shown the centrality of corporate rationales in determining the production of news within TELEVISIÓN, a television giant in the Spanish-speaking world. I have argued that TELEVISIÓN has become a very important economic as well as ideological power centre in Latin America. I have also described how, in the process of consolidating and diversifying its expansion, news programming ceased to be an area of production primarily regulated by journalistic criteria of "newsworthiness". Since 1972, TELEVISIÓN's Directorate of News has been charged with the task of promoting the interests of the conglomerate as a whole.

In order to fulfill these institutional demands the Directorate has endowed convenient operative mechanisms to produce the news. It has also shaped the profession of broadcast journalism, introducing a value system according to which news personnel orientate their occupation and careers. 24 HORAS illustrates how the bureaucratic and professional dimensions involved in the processes of production have fallen under the domination of a corporate logic which creates a credible, popular and highly profitable news outlet.

These findings allow me to formulate a number of

important questions derived from the thesis's opening arguments. First of all, I think that it is relevant to reflect on the role that television news plays within large media corporations in promoting and advancing their interests. The underlying assumption is that news constitutes a fertile ground that can be used by broadcasting organisations to negotiate their relationship with the major political institutions of the domestic national State.

Secondly, I think that is worth reflecting on the conditions under which TELEVISA has been able to emerge as a very strong economic and ideological power. This type of analysis is relevant because the development and expansion of TELEVISA may be seen as an example of how successful a private broadcasting organisation can become given relaxed government regulation and concerted entrepreneurship. But how typical is TELEVISA's success story in the Latin American context? To what extent does it represent the emergence of a pattern for the rest of the Latin American broadcasting institutions?

What follows is an attempt to place TELEVISA's media power within that context. This is necessary in order to avoid the facile assumption that what the future holds in the developing world is the multiplication of television giants such as TELEVISA. This section will enable us to develop a realistic analysis of the likelihood of other television giants emerging in the developing world.

2. The corporate use of news bulletins.

We can begin the analysis of the corporate use of news bulletins by looking at the story of TV GLOBO, Brazil's communication giant, which since the collapse of the military regime is TELEVISA's most obvious parallel in Latin America.

In contrast to the Mexican case, Brazil's broadcasting system experienced strict control and supervision by the State for more than 15 years, and yet the military government allowed the development of TV GLOBO, the fourth largest network in the world and part of a massive privately owned conglomerate.

As with TELEVISA, TV GLOBO is a powerful actor in the political process, and over the years it has used its television news bulletins as a means of mediating between its own interests, the Government of the day, and the ruling block. An important similarity between TELEVISA and TV GLOBO is the overwhelming concentration of news resources in a single "flagship" bulletin. TV GLOBO's equivalent to 24 HORAS is a programme called JORNAL NACIONAL, which gained its privileged position in a context similar to the birth of 24 HORAS, as a corporate move to provide a communication channel which represented the conglomerate's views regarding the nation's most important issues.

According to De Lima ((1988)) and Guimaraes and Amaral ((1988)), JORNAL NACIONAL played a crucial role both for the

conglomerate and for Brazil's political system in the transition from military to civilian rule. That role exemplifies the similarities between TELEVISA and TV GLOBO regarding the successful manner in which they use the news in the context of (potentially contradictory) triangular relationships.

Brazilian television appeared in 1950 with the inauguration of TV Tupi, a station belonging to the Diarios e Emissoras Associados. From 1950 to 1965, the television industry experienced only limited growth. By 1967, only three micro-wave systems had been set up, linking Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Belo Horizonte and Brasilia. In 1965, 15 years after the introduction of television, TV GLOBO was inaugurated. Four years later, Brazil entered the telecommunication age by setting up EMBRATEL (Brazilian Enterprise for Telecommunications), a State agency which made it possible to connect television stations to the National System of Telecommunications. By 1986 TV GLOBO had expanded to become a very strong economic conglomerate, owning companies in the communication, industrial and financial sectors. Its television assets consist of 7 network stations, 36 affiliates and 6 repeating stations, covering 93% of the country's total population.

TV GLOBO was created within a broadcasting system which is similar to many Latin American countries, whereby the State is responsible for granting licences to private investors to use television as a commercial venture but

reserves the right to revoke licences and to safeguard the telecommunication infrastructure as a national asset. The crucial difference for TV GLOBO was that all news output had to comply with Government censorship. Consequently, the conglomerate had to promote the policies of the State on the implicit understanding that such actions included supporting the Government of the day.

Since its creation, TV GLOBO has received support from two authoritarian regimes. From 1969 to 1974 it counted on the support of General Medici's Administration and from 1974 to 1979 it was favoured by the Administration of General Geisel. In those years, TV GLOBO performed the important economic function of integrating a country of continental dimensions through the integration of its consumer market (De Lima, 1988: 119).

In 1979 however, President-General Joao Figueiredo came to power with a political platform that included breaking the television monopoly and encouraging the establishment of television networks. According to De Lima ((1988:120-121)), "the disproportionate growth of the Globo Organisation worried its own partners in the authoritarian regime". TV GLOBO had enjoyed almost 15 years of relative autonomy based on strict compliance with Government policies and sustained by the close contact between Roberto Marinho, GLOBO's President, and the military ruling bloc.

Until then, TV GLOBO's strategy had clearly been based on

a policy of "accommodation" to the Brazilian State, and a preparedness to act as Guimaraes and Amaral put it, "a docile instrument" of the Government of the day. That strategy allowed the conglomerate to expand its communication networks and consolidate its production infrastructure.

In 1984, the "campaign for direct elections" changed Brazil's political system and practices. The campaign was a series of rallies and demonstrations held in all the state capitals and big cities of Brazil between February and June 1984. The President had always been chosen by the military high command before his name reached the Electoral College. General Figueredo had chosen a civilian from the Government's party, the Partido Democratico Social, but to Figueredo's surprise, he faced insubordination from the party and some sectors of the government and met with defeat in the Electoral College. The opposition grew steadily and by its actions the military high command drove some of its former allies into the opposition. They included TV GLOBO.

TV GLOBO supported the campaign for direct elections based on an alliance it had formed with some opposition politicians including Tancredo Neves and Jose Sarney, together with prominent members of the military, including General Geisel. The events that took place in 1985, which led to the election of Tancredo Neves as president of Brazil, included the consolidation of JORNAL NACIONAL as Brazil's most influential news bulletin and the active participation of TV GLOBO in the promotion of the civil alternative to

military rule. These phenomena are good examples of how the conglomerate organised a concerted action to promote and safeguard its corporate interests through the use of its news programming.

Guimaraes summarises the outcome of the 1985 events saying that TV GLOBO gave "legitimacy to the new regime. At the same time, TV GLOBO had assured its own legitimacy in the eyes of public opinion. A new TV GLOBO was born with the New Republic. Its role under the dictatorship was forgotten...the same TV GLOBO that had served the military so well would be the quasi-official network of the New Republic. The new leaders of Brazil had the media to thank for many things. However, they would also have to deal with a powerful new independent political force" ((1988:137)).

3. Structural conditions underlying TELEVISIA'S emergence as a powerful media conglomerate.

An analysis of the emergence of TELEVISIA in the Spanish-speaking world shows that the consortium's success has been based on the combination of at least five structural conditions.

First of all, TELEVISIA has benefitted from a favourable domestic political context where the Government's formal control over broadcasting is based on "fragmented responsibility". In the absence of a single regulatory body, this system encourages "negotiation under pressure" where

both the Government and the broadcasting organisation hold a repertoire of perceived sanctions on each side. This kind of system allows TELEVISA to operate relatively free from State control.

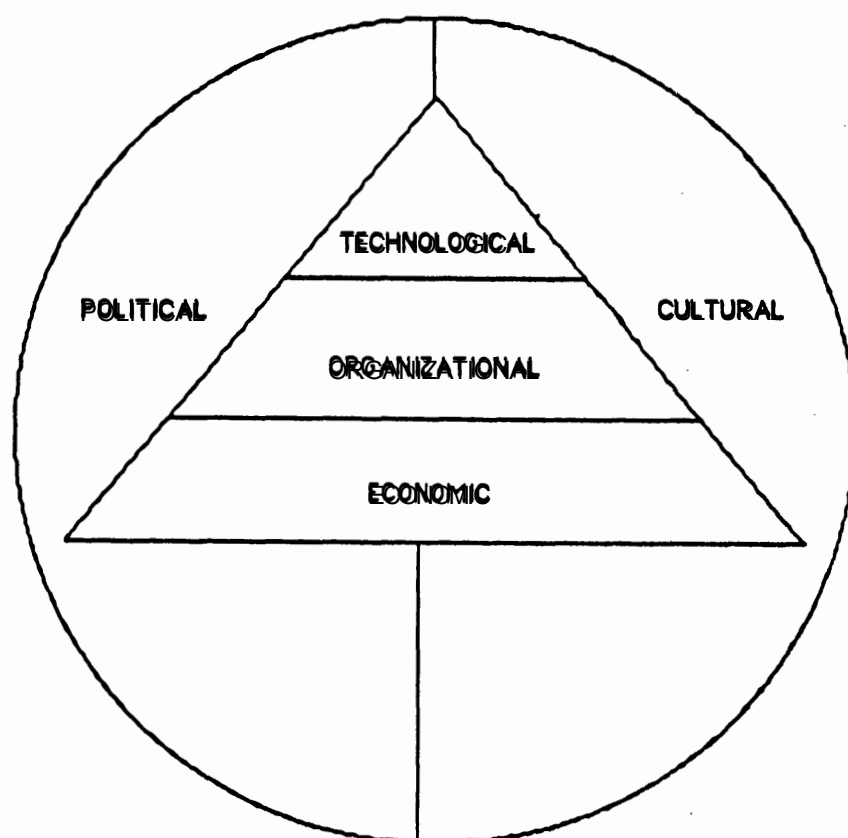
Secondly, TELEVISA has emerged as a very powerful economic force as a result of a process of conglomeration and corporate diversification. When it was created in 1972, TELEVISA acquired the whole economic assets of the Mexican commercial television industry, one that had always enjoyed a privileged position as single recipient of television advertising expenditure.

Thirdly, TELEVISA's consolidation cannot be explained without a reference to its internal organisational context. Over the years, TELEVISA has formed a strong and efficient organisational body which counts on unique expertise, control over its trade unions and its professional milieu, a highly skilled work force, and highly creative producing teams.

Fourthly, TELEVISA's advance has been supported by the rapid incorporation and use of modern technologies. These have allowed it to expand the reach of its signal both domestically and internationally and also to enhance its production capabilities.

Finally, TELEVISA's prosperity has relied upon exploiting to the maximum the cultural characteristics of Spanish-speaking audiences for whom TELEVISA's programming is

**TABLE 23:: TELEVISA'S STRUCTURAL
CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS**



a highly popular form of entertainment. TELEVISA has been able to identify and refer to cultural similarities in order to create very successful "indigenous" television formats.

The following lines attempt to summarise the most important factors which constitute the basis for these five conditions.

(a) The domestic political context.

The first factor which accounts for a domestic political context favourable to TELEVISA is the specific kind of legislation which regulates broadcasting in Mexico. As it was stated in Chapter Two, legislation over broadcasting is weak, unclear and dispersed amongst various Government offices.

Recently, on January 29th 1986, concessions for channels 2 and 4 were renewed. In a document issued by the Mexican State it is stated that "programming in these channels ought to be oriented towards enhancing popular education, diffusion of culture ideas that enforce our principles and traditions" (Official Daily, Jan 29th, 1986). The following day the Federal Government created an Advisory Committee charged with the task of analysing "the diverse aspects of the performance that has been assigned to them" (Official Daily, January 30th). Since its creation not a single significant recommendation has been made.

On the other hand, TELEVISA has forcefully urged

legislation regarding intellectual property rights. In the case of the video industry,, it faced a potential problem due to the emergence of a number of "pirate" companies which copied,, distributed and rented films over which TELEVISA had exclusive rights. The Mexican Government responded with a regulation that protects TELEVISA's rights..

A second favourable political factor is the kind of relationship that TELEVISA has maintained with the Mexican Government.. This can be characterised as being "pragmatic" in the sense that both TELEVISA and the Mexican Government negotiate under specific and contemporary conditions.. Government and TELEVISA officials demand from each other actions which are perceived as necessary at particular moments,, by they leave aside any requirements for structural change..

Their right to supervise and assign concessions has been used by Government officials as a way of exerting pressure to maintain their authority and to demand "respectful" coverage of their activities..

TELEVISA does not generally confront Government policies unless they affect its own interests.. In the past two decades,, open conflict between TELEVISA executives and the Government of the day emerged only in two specific situations..

In 1972,, TELEVISA opposed openly President Luis

Echeverria's attempt to increase government control over broadcasting. TELEVISA's opposition was successful.

In 1982, TELEVISA gave a very cold welcome to the nationalisation of private banks decreed by President Jose Lopez Portillo.

In the context of minimal State intervention, TELEVISA has used the State to consolidate and advance its position.

Both in 1970 and 1986, due to the organisation for the Soccer World Cup, it obliged the State to invest very considerable resources in setting up a telecommunication, transport and services infrastructure.

TELEVISA has been able to persuade the Mexican Government to acquire its own satellite systems and to secure a position for itself as a privileged user. In 1985 Mexico launched its 'Morelos' satellite. Companies in other Latin American countries, such as Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia and Argentina however, still have to rely on the facilities provided by the INTELSAT organisation.

In Mexico, TELEVISA has also been the recipient of special treatment from the Tax Office. This favourable treatment could be termed as a condition of 'exemption'. The Federal Ministry of Communications and Transport is the entity responsible for providing telecommunications services. These include transporting a signal from outside or from

inside Mexico. But while telephone, tel#x and other signals are assigned a price which is competitive internationally, television signals are charged a comparatively small fee.

The cost of conducting a television signal is cheap for TELEVISA, expensive for the State's own television network and too expensive for other companies which produce in the regions or in the capital. This 'condition of exemption' economically supports TELEVISA's unique position in Mexico.

The State's own national television network, TELEVISA's single competitor in Mexico, started two decades after the formation of the first commercial channels, which are the backbone of the present structure of TELEVISA. In that period, TELEVISA was able to consolidate its own style of programming and create a stable demand for it.

Factors which have restricted the success of the State television activities include; insufficient economic resources due to the nation's economic crisis and the absence of clear policies on the part of the State to form professional teams.

The State only showed an interest in controlling its own information means after commercial television had had two decades to experiment with different news formats and to finally create a popular and credible institutional voice. Consequently, the State has continued to depend on TELEVISA's news space to air its policies with a certain degree of

credibility and coverage.

Another major factor that gives TELEVISA a prominent position within the Mexican political context is the hegemonic role it plays within the private sector.

For many years TELEVISA has organised an initiative that promotes the privatisation of the Mexican economy. This activity has been institutionalised under the auspices of LESA (Free Enterprise Inc.) which has served as a meeting point for the interests of the major Mexican private corporations.

TELEVISA'S non-exclusive policy, whereby it embraces the interests of other major private enterprises, has enabled it to interact with the Mexican Government from the position of being the undisputed leader of the entire Mexican Private Sector.

In short, TELEVISA'S emergence as a powerful conglomerate has counted on the indirect support of the Mexican State through weak, unclear and dispersed legislation, superficial supervision, minimal intervention, privileged taxation and special treatment as a user of the telecommunication infrastructure. TELEVISA has also benefitted tremendously from its success in persuading the Mexican Government to modernise its telecommunication might and to invest substantial resources in sectors which are vital for TELEVISA'S operations. Furthermore, TELEVISA'S solid

political position has been strengthened by the key mediating role it performs between the Private Sector and the Mexican Government..

(b) The scale of TELEVISA's economic operation.

Initially the Mexican television industry's economic power derived from having adopted the North-American model of commercial enterprise and minimal State intervention and employing private ownership backed by American capital.. The advent of the television industry was marked by the formation of the first commercial channels by leading figures in the radio business using revenue derived primarily from their radio networks and to some extent from other areas of industry and commerce..

The economic power of TELEVISA was the product of a process of conglomeration.. The beginning of television was characterised by an initial period of intense competition and a subsequent alliance which led to the merger of the three original channels and the formation of Telesistema Mexicano ((TSM)) which in 1972 associated itself with the competing Television Independiente to form TELEVISA..

The television industry followed the pattern already set by the radio industry.. Intense competition between rival stations from the "twenties to the mid "thirties developed into a race for association and the establishment of national networks.. From 1940 onwards,, when Mexico experienced its most

dramatic industrial growth, the process of consolidation accelerated. The most important of these networks was the one led by XEW, owned by Emilio Azcarraga Vidaurreta, which was able to expand its reach thanks to the help provided by the American NBC network. National networks were able to take the lion's share of the expanding advertising expenditure.

Since the beginning of television in Mexico, real commercial competition between channels has only really operated between 1950-1955 and from 1968-1972. In these periods costs of programme production rose considerably as a result of the constant competition for franchises and popular artists, television advertising expenditure remained steady and programming lacked audience segmentation ((an attractive factor for advertisers)).

Apart from the short term savings in production costs and the liberation from domestic competitiveness, conglomeration allowed the conception of a corporate goal centered around TELEVISA's consolidation in the international media markets.

With the merger of Telesistema Mexicano and Television Independiente, TELEVISA was able to launch a full-scale corporate strategy, making use of every aspect of its operation to advance the interests of the conglomerate as a whole.

From its formation, TELEVISA's prominent shareholders owned interests in television, radio, transport and

publishing.. Since 1972 the diversification drive grew steadily to include new interests in the entertainment industry,, aviation,, sports,, restaurants,, technology,, the arts,, and even in manufacturing..

TELEVISA gained the lead in offering a national signal,, which in turn gathered the lion's share of domestic advertising expenditure,, leaving very little to regional stations..

Since the beginning of television in Mexico,, commercial networks have secured penetration within the vast majority of television households.. By 1984,, 97% of all households owned at least one television set. Overall,, TELEVISA's channels have accounted for more than two thirds of the Mexican television audience for the past twenty years.

TELEVISA was also the first purveyor of Spanish-language television internationally.. Through Protele (Telesistema Mexicano's exporting company),, Mexico was one of the first countries to export television programming. In 1962,, through the Spanish International Network,, Telesistema Mexicano was also the first company to open a television service aimed at serving the Latino population in the United States.,

TELEVISA was able to invest large sums of money to expand its reach within the United States,, paying stations to carry its signal,, subsidizing the American operation with

TELEVISA's own programming. UNIVISION, launched by TELEVISA in 1976, occupied a position of virtual monopoly of Spanish-language television in the U.S., reaching in 1980, eighty per cent of the Hispanic population, which in turn represent the Spanish-speaking audience with the highest income in the world.

The entrance of TELEVISA into the U.S. market was based on the infrastructure that it had consolidated in Mexico for the last two decades. Turnover on this operation gradually expanded from 1 million dollars in 1978 to 20 in 1980, 24 in 1981 and 32 in 1982. The operation in the U.S. has been backed by American investors, who have shared ownership of TELEVISA stations in the U.S. and also shared ownership of the Spanish International Network ((SIN)) from 1962.

When placing regional stations, TELEVISA used capital from its major shareholders and backed the stations with knowhow and programming. In contrast, other independent regional stations often lacked capital to start promptly. Their programming was mostly bought in from Protele at a price set by TELEVISA. The emergence of independent commercial regional stations developed when TELEVISA had already established strong repeaters or stations. In some cases, as in Guadalajara, soon after an independent station appeared, TELEVISA launched a strategy that concluded in the incorporation of the independent initiative into TELEVISA's regional network.

Through the corporate nature of the consortium and the solid position it occupies as an international provider of Spanish-language television, TELEVISA has been able to make useful economies of scale. For example, by centralising most of its programme production in Mexico, it has kept production costs comparatively low as TELEVISA sells its services in American dollars. This is due to the permanently devaluatory system that affects the Mexican currency.

TELEVISA has been able to launch a multimedia initiative, consolidating leading interests in the areas of radio and television, magazines, sports, music, videos and film production, distribution networks, night clubbing, art centres, editorial houses, audiovisual equipment.

Within its multimedia interests, TELEVISA has developed a strategy by which it first articulates a television identity for actors, singers and personalities, through which they gain considerable popularity. Afterwards, they consolidate their image in magazines and some of them are offered a contract at one of the TELEVISA controlled record companies. To promote their songs, they are supported by a video and finally, some are offered leading parts in TELEVISA movies and "telenovelas". In this strategy, TELEVISA has even been able to create its own competition.

A particularly significant factor for the success of the Mexican commercial television industry has been the ability to identify and secure stable business partners and alliances

both domestically and internationally.

The first example of this ability is provided by the formation of TELEVISA itself, which is the result of the merger between Telesistema Mexicano and Television Independiente de Mexico.

A second example is the inclusion of American partners in TELEVISA's operation in the U.S. Here, TELEVISA's executives have had a long business relationship with NBC and have benefitted from an alliance with owners of television stations which broadcast Spanish-language programming. In addition, one can mention the inclusion of executives at prominent organisations which are closely related to television such as Joao Havelange, President of FIFA (International Soccer Association).

Finally, it was TELEVISA's contacts in the U.S. that enabled it submit an application to the FCC to make use of a satellite which, operating beyond the INTELSAT organisation and under American control, would offer broadcasting services for North America, Central and South America, the Caribbean and Spain. The initiative, which was approved during President Reagan's Administration aimed to create and place in orbit a satellite which would be used by Pan American Satellite Corporation (Panamsat), a company owned by TELEVISA executives and their American partners. This application was said to be supported by the former American Ambassador to Mexico, Mr. John Gavin, who also became a partner of

TELEVISA's operation in the U.S.

As has been shown in the preceding pages,, to a great extent TELEVISA's success in gaining a unique position in the Spanish-language television market is due to the size of its economic operation.. TELEVISA emerged as a very powerful media organisation owing to a process of domestic conglomeration and diversification.. Since its birth,, TELEVISA has been the recipient of the great bulk of television advertising revenue. This has enabled it to expand its reach to launch a multimedia initiative.. It has also helped it to consolidate a unique position by penetrating markets first and by setting the terms on which competition within Mexico proceeds.. Moreover,, the nature of its operation has enabled it to make highly profitable economies of scale which diminish costs and expand profits.. Finally,, to advance its corporate power it has built up a stable network of partners both domestically and internationally..

((c) TELEVISA's internal organisational environment..

There are important organisational factors which also contribute towards TELEVISA's success story..

TELEVISA has successfully prevented the formation of trade unions which are autonomous from its control.. Since the beginning of television in Mexico,, commercial stations dominated by TELEVISA's shareholders have attained the control over the Sindicato Industrial de Trabajadores y

Artistas de Television y Radio,, Similares y Conexos de la Republica Mexicana ((SITATyR)) which is the most important trade union within the Mexican television industry. The history of this trade union shows that the participation of employees has been directed and organised according to the interests of the private commercial stations,, coordinated first by Telesistema Mexicano and then by TELEVISA.

TELEVISA's internal authority system resembles Max Weber's notion of a traditional and feudal organisation. TELEVISA has been managed in this way due to the fact that ownership of the company is concentrated amongst the prominent members of a few families.. The leaders of the organisation have authority by virtue of the status they have inherited,, and employees have a traditional relationship of loyalty towards them..

The promotion of loyalty and authority is exercised from the moment an individual is hired by TELEVISA.. Often recruitment is based on the principle of a 'recommendation'.. The logic of this system is simple; a TELEVISA employee or associate 'recommends' an applicant to a certain occupation or position.. This system creates a functional network based on commitment to the person who offered 'recommendation' and,, consequently,, to the leaders and interests of the company..

Tactics for controlling the 'creative' and 'key' production employees include preferential payments.. On average,, it pays them higher salaries and gives them better

perks than those offered by other television companies, particularly IMEVISION, the State's channel.

In relation to popular actors and personalities TELEVISA effectively uses the 'boycott' system, which emerged after the last period of commercial competition in 1972. Through this system support is withdrawn from those personalities who either leave the company to move to the competing channels or who simply fail to agree to a contract favourable to TELEVISA.

The control of this highly diversified and conglomerated consortium and the promotion of its corporate interests has relied to a great extent on the ability of TELEVISA's executives to create and permeate the entire organisation with a corporate logic which holds the point of view of the few prominent shareholders as paramount. This logic involves the diffusion of a specific kind of organisational culture in which key officials of the company are immersed. The values, interests and perspectives of TELEVISA's executives are internalised through a form of management which encompasses a "mediating structure" which in practice demands little direct intervention from the owners of TELEVISA.

To a great extent the control of this logic has depended on TELEVISA's historical ability to develop the kind of professional competences it needs at the various levels and areas of its operation. An example of this type of control is illustrated in chapter six where there is an explanation of

how TELEVISA shaped the profession of broadcast journalist.

In the case of news personnel, this type of control is very effective due to the individual's perception that what is expected from him/her is strictly a professional performance. Immersed in this type of professionalism, newsmen promote the interests of TELEVISA as a taken-for-granted part of their job.

Last but not least, over the years TELEVISA has acquired unique expertise which allows it to identify strategic areas for further expansion. It knows its markets and is able to make reliable evaluations of the likely success of strategies designed to consolidate its position and advance it.

In short, TELEVISA has formed an internal environment which is favourable to the pursuit of its corporate rationales. It has gained control of the organised workforce, has entrenched an authority system based on traditional principles of loyalty and commitment, and has trained teams of highly skilled personnel which make it relatively easy to orchestrate successful strategies to secure and advance its interests. Needless to say, TELEVISA has also counted on solid entrepreneurship and great managerial competence on the part of its top executives.

((d) TELEVISA's technological qualifications..

TELEVISA has always been eager to take full advantage of technological innovations in order to advance the reach of

its operation. First, the incorporation of video-tape enabled Telesistema Mexicano to launch an aggressive sales operation of recorded programming, mainly through Protele both domestically and more important internationally.

Second, Mexico was one of the first countries in the world to construct a solid domestic telecommunication infrastructure in the late 'sixties through the establishment of a micro-wave network that covered the entire nation.

Third, Mexico was one of the first developing countries to institute its own satellite system (the two Morabes geostationary satellites launched in the mid 'eighties).

Fourth, TELEVISA was permitted to construct and operate a satellite (Panamsat) which is not a part of the INTELSAT organisation and falls within the control and supervision of the United States.

Fifth, TELEVISA has permanently up-dated recording studios, communication infrastructure and specialised equipment for post-production and digital effects.

(e) TELEVISA'S audiences.

A final structural condition which has enabled TELEVISA to emerge as the biggest producer of Spanish-language television has been its ability to identify and use the cultural characteristics of its audience.

For Mexican audiences,, watching television has become a very popular form of entertainment. A nation-wide study conducted in 1986 by the Instituto de Investigacion de la Comunicacion shows that watching television has become a part of the daily routine of most of 80 million Mexicans and averages two and a half hours every day..

This study also shows that Mexican audiences are relatively passive in terms of how they expose themselves to television.. Only about 10 per cent actually plan and select the programming they want to watch.. The rest of the population watches a specific channel or chooses the programmes they prefer after seeing what the available channels offer at a given moment.. This study also notes that those who watch television for longer periods of time are likely to be less educated and relatively younger..

TELEVISA'S early emergence as an international force derived from its ability to capture the attention of Latin American audiences through the coverage of events which were considered to have great "appeal" in these countries due to their cultural and language similarities.. Events of this type included; the Pope's visits to Latin America,, the Soccer World Cups,, the Space Missions,, the Olympic Games,, the OTI musical contests,, beauty contest and,, lately,, performances and shows by TELEVISA'S international personalities,, actors and singers..

The ability to exploit similarities in cultural

preferences has also enabled the corporation to develop 'indigenous formats'. TELEVISA has been particularly successful in conceiving a very popular type of genre in the form of 'telenovelas'. 'Telenovelas' represent its most profitable genre of television programming within Mexico and account for close to 80% of its exports. Nearly 60% of the domestic audience in Mexico identify 'telenovelas' as their favourite type of programming. The success of the 'Telenovelas' also allowed TELEVISA to gradually decrease its imports from the traditional American sources from 60% in 1961 to 30% in 1985 and below 20% in 1987.

In general, Latin American nations have not shared the democratic tradition which is present in some industrialised nations. Even in some countries, like Mexico, with nominally democratic systems, political participation has remained limited to voting at general elections and even then the number of abstentions is frequently greater than the number voting. Some other Latin American countries have until very recently been governed by the military, with practically no popular political participation at all. Therefore, it is not particularly surprising to find that in general audiences do not have an elaborate political value system by which to judge the news.

One indicator of the relatively weak political culture of Latin American audiences is the fact that they tend to focus on personality, and to use familiarity with the news source as the basis for evaluating the content of the news.

This situation has enabled TELEVISA to emphasize familiarity with ~~and respect for~~ its news sources as a strategy for enhancing the credibility of its news bulletins. It has also allowed TELEVISA to pay scant attention to core professional values such as "objectivity" and "impartiality" which guide editorial judgement at other broadcasting organisations in the developed world.

Lack of regard for professional values, ~~as they exist in~~ other contexts, is also due to the weakness of the professional journalists' associations. As it has been shown elsewhere, there is no single strong association of broadcast journalists in Mexico. Some training is provided at the various schools of communication, but as chapter six has indicated, very few journalists at TELEVISA have a university education. In fact, TELEVISA's Directorate of News is characterised by a team of reporters who have highly diverse backgrounds. Most training is given on the job.

This situation largely explains TELEVISA's failure to organise a Directorate of News in the United States, where journalists clearly opposed the manner in which TELEVISA's normal editorial judgements operate.

The available evidence shows that TELEVISA is the single most popular television network in Mexico, offering a limited range of news bulletins and that audiences seemingly relate to television in a rather uncritical fashion. As a consequence, evaluations of news content are exercised

according to the basic principles of familiarity with the news source, and leave aside more elaborate criteria. This context partially explains the success of TELEVISA's news in terms of credibility, popularity and respect.

An additional explanation for the wide penetration of TELEVISA's programming is its success in creating 'indigenous' formats through a process of cultural appropriation. Examples include; 'telenovelas', and the coverage of 'popular' events.

I would like to use the final space of this section to argue that greater attention must be directed towards questioning the likelihood of similar types of concentrated media power emerging in the Latin American region or in the developing world in general.

TELEVISA's case illustrates the development of a very large television consortium in a regional communication market and the birth of an increasing flow of communications from South to South. This new phenomenon has a number of important implications for current debates about the flow of communications. Is this type of flow likely to decrease the purchase of programming from the traditional North American sources? Will strong regional programming establish a new flow imbalance from South to South?

And perhaps more importantly, What are the chances that other broadcasting organisations in the Latin American region

may also become important sources of television programming? To what extent may TELEVISA's structural conditions set a precedent? Are potential competitors likely to emerge in the Latin American media market? Alternately,, To what extent are TELEVISA's conditions for success unique and unrepeatable? Clearly,, more research is needed in order to address these new questions..

4. The future role of corporate rationales.

By way of final comment I would like to stress the relevance of the internal analysis of corporate rationales within media conglomerates,, particularly at a time when the world is experiencing a consistent drive towards privatisation.. The scope of this type of analysis obviously includes a study of a corporation's internal economic logics in the line of Edward Epstein's News from Nowhere, where a researcher questions the degree in which the internal process of production within a media organisation depends upon the achievement of profit.. But call for greater knowledge about corporate logics also involves questioning the way in which a media corporation uses the production of communication to advance the global interests of the conglomerate as a whole..

This type of enquiry is relevant not only in the cases of emerging communication conglomerates in the regional media markets,, it is also required in the analysis of emerging media organisations in the industrialised world.. For instance,, Does this type of analysis apply to the US networks

all of which have recently changed hands (NBC, in particular, is now owned by General Electric)?

Similar cases may also be relevant to the study of Europe where the privatisation drive is well advanced in several major countries. In Italy, for example, where Sr. Silvio Berlusconi has recently acquired control of three television channels ((Italia 1, Rete 4 and Canale 5), or in West Germany where the Bertelsmann organisation owns the RTL-Plus network.

What would the potential limitations to corporate control be in the industrialised world? Are we talking about greater professional control? What would the similarities be in the way conglomerates use communication to advance their interests in an increasingly competitive market? And finally, What would the structural limitations for democracy be in the age of corporate rationales?.. These are major questions for future research,, and hopefully,, by presenting a detailed analysis of the Mexican case,, this thesis has opened up some lines of inquiry

APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGY.

1. Introduction.

The empirical evidence presented in this study derives from four different sources: ((a)) Archival research conducted on the development of TELEVISA and of the news bulletins in particular; ((b)) Content analysis of Mexican electronic news; ((c)) Interviews conducted primarily with the staff responsible for producing television news at TELEVISA and ((d)) Participant observation carried out at TELEVISA's Directorate of News in Mexico City.

Observations took place within the Directorate of News during four periods of fieldwork. The first period of observation was carried out from September 2nd to October 10th, in 1983. The second, from January 10th to February 15th, in 1984. The third, from September 8th to October 14th in 1984. The fourth took place from September 21st to October 5th, in 1985. Altogether, observation was carried out during 138 days over a three year period ((1983-1985)).

((a)) Archival research.

Archival research concerning the history and development of TELEVISA, the Directorate of News and television popularity indexes was carried out at the Agrupacion de Iniciadores de la Television Mexicana ((Association of Pioneers of the Mexican Television Industry)) and at the

Mexican National Library..

Within the Directorate,, documents consulted included the daily reports from the Wires Department;; coverage derived from the Correspondent Department;; correspondence deriving from Public Relations and Press Offices outside TELEVISA;; programme content schedules from CBS,, NBC and the SIN news exchange;; notes sent from TELEVISA'S external sources via telex;; TELEVISA'S internal assignment lists ((produced at the Departments of Reporters and Cameramen));; reporters' stories;; edition orders produced by the Coordinator of news;; classification cards produced at the Continuity and Film Archive Departments;; and Scripts..

((b)) Content Analysis..

A systematic content analysis of the Mexican electronic news was carried out in order to chart the distribution of access within both mainstream and TELEVISA'S news,, and identify differences in the treatment and space devoted to the main institutions and personalities of Mexican society..

The content analysis also aimed to discover the proportion of international and domestic news items included in the International and the Domestic editions of 24 HORAS..

((c)) Interviews..

In the course of the four periods of fieldwork,,

interviews were conducted with all personnel involved in the different Departments of the Directorate. The majority took place within the offices of the Directorate in Mexico City. Interviews were also conducted with TELEVISA's correspondent in London and with news personnel attached to what was formerly TELEVISA's News Centre in Miami, Florida ((including the Director of that operation and three full-time reporters)). In addition,, interviews were conducted with a total of five full time journalists attached to Excelsior, La Jornada and Novedades, three of Mexico's National dailies. Finally,, interviews were conducted with eight full-time journalists working for IMEVISION,, the State's television network,, particularly in the News Division.

2. Getting access to TELEVISA'S Directorate of News.

Clearly,, an initial problem to be solved was getting adequate access to the Directorate of News.. The formulation of my strategy for "presenting myself" together with the project itself took six weeks ((July and August 1983)) . In that period I looked for informants who could give an account of the likelihood of my succeeding through the use of different tactics..

One of the first things that became clear was that TELEVISA had what appeared to be an internal value system defining what appeared "legitimate" or "likely to be accepted" as an internal presence or alternately rejected as the operation of an "outsider".. There was a system

regulating guided visits into the refinery. These visits were organised by the Public Relations office. They were limited to one day, sometimes more, but had little value in relation to an extensive research programme such as mine.

The information gathered through interviews with various TELEVISA employees pointed to a number of obstacles to adequate access. One was the perceived sensitivity of the company's operation in Mexico to public criticism. One of my informants told me that at executive meetings, there was concern over what a few journalists and academics had published at the time, criticising the reach and might of the consortium.

This kind of sensitivity emerged into the open one morning in September 1984, when I requested the Director of Personnel to give me an estimate of the number of employees at various TELEVISA affiliates. At first he had promised that he would disclose all the information I needed. But that day, La Jornada, a leading Mexican newspaper, published an article by a well known academic criticising the corporate growth that TELEVISA had experienced in recent years. That made him change his mind and withdraw his offer, arguing that his disclosure could increase this type of criticism.

A second potential obstacle was that generally, TELEVISA executives mistrusted attempts made by Mexican social scientists to examine the structure and role of

broadcasting. One of my informants said: "The general view in the executives' eyes is that Mexican academics are more interested in affecting or changing broadcasting than in understanding it".

A third problem standing in the way of obtaining access was what my informants synthesized in the questions "From whom do you come?" and "To Whom do you go?". In other words, Who is the person who morally sponsors your request for access? and Who is the person who will let you in?

Initial contacts with TELEVISA employees persuaded me to develop a definition of the project that would perform a dual function. On the one hand, it had to allow me to secure open access to the various stages of production over an extended period of time. On the other hand, it also had to permit me to publish any piece of information that I considered to be important for the argument of the thesis without breaking my agreement with TELEVISA.

To this end, I presented the project as an academic study, being developed for presentation as a Ph.D. thesis at a British University, to be carried out by a Mexican who did not live in Mexico at the time. I then visited a contact at the Headquarters of the Mexican Catholic Church, who had a long-standing relationship with one of the Vice-presidents of News and through him arranged an appointment. After I had tried myself to arrange a meeting with one of TELEVISA'S Vice-presidents of News, I finally had to rely on personal

contacts,, who in turn played a key role in securing access to the Directorate of News. Later,, as I progressed in my study, it became clear that TELEVISA uses a "personal recommendation" as a form of control,, in which the person who issues it appears as co-responsible for the behaviour of the recipient..

I presented the Vice-president of News with a letter provided by Professor James Halloran,, Director of the Centre For Mass Communication Research ((University of Leicester)) in which he described the general objective of my work..

After a few conversations,, the Vice-president of News called the Chief of reporters and the Director of News to advise them that I should be given access to all areas of production.. This decision allowed me to conduct interviews and observation throughout the Directorate,, with the exemption of the meetings between the Director of News and both Vice-presidents of News,, the Executive Vice-president and the President of TELEVISA.. The agreement reached was that I was free to include in my thesis all information that I deemed to be necessary..

3. Overall research strategy..

My strategy was to develop a comprehensive description of the production of news within TELEVISA. This was based on the idea that news is the product of a complex interaction between the values,, beliefs,, goals and practices of an

organisation,, its bureaucratic structure and the individuals who are professionally engaged to produce it.

During my first visit to the Directorate of News,, I quickly realised that there would be difficulties in doing ethnographic research within TELEvisa. These arose from the way two factors interacted: First,, the organisation's non-deliberate drive to show and emphasize certain aspects of its operation and,, second,, the suitability of the theoretical categories employed to describe the production of television news..

I approached the situation with a schedule that comprised various descriptive stages.. First,, I concentrated on the distribution of work,, the occupational hierarchy,, routines and the newscycle.. My second visit focussed on the interaction between the bureaucratic,, institutional and professional value systems guiding the production of news.. The third and fourth visits concentrated on the planning policies behind the orchestration of coverage for specific activities,, such as the promotion of corporate interests and the 1985 Mexican earthquake..

My goal during fieldwork was to build some kind of theory of events,, practices and values.. The test of my theory was that it should allow me to take a particular piece of behavior and interpret it by putting it into context..

The next step was to take the ability to give accounts, define them as data and look for patterns across events. An example of this was the relationship that reporters foster with their sources. Could I see a pattern that was common to male and female journalists, say? When I accompanied reporters on stories I noticed in all of them a concern for keeping a close and secure relationship with press officers because there was a shared belief that their work was related not so much to what they knew in a newsbeat but to who they knew who could be relied on to provide them with a fresh story as it unfolded.

Bulding a "theory" about how the Directorate worked was not an easy task. I would strongly argue that the study greatly benefitted from the fact that I arrived at the Directorate with some working categories derived from my knowledge of how other news organisations worked. Through my reading of the existing literature I had conceived an integrated perspective, which incorporated the simultaneous operation of three analytical dimensions: bureaucratic, institutional and professional.

At first, I thought that it was important to define the structure of each one of them, implicitly asserting that all three determined the scope and content of the news in a different but complementary manner. However, as I gathered the historical material on the development of the Directorate and I progressed through the fieldwork, it became apparent that the corporative dimension had played a

privileged role in shaping the structure and practices of the other two dimensions..

I realised that the specific professional practice of broadcast journalism that the Directorate had developed, together with the gathering and selection mechanisms, the occupational hierarchy, the allocation of resources, the presentation techniques, and the assignment of stories, could not be explained from the point of view of the professional or the bureaucratic dimensions alone. Rather, these phenomena were linked and shaped by a force which derived from the core of the organisation, right from the initial creation of the Directorate in 1970..

Consequently, I began to pay greater attention to examining the links between the Directorate and the broader interests of TELEVISÀ itself. The subordination of both the professional and the bureaucratic dimensions to the corporate logic allowed the emergence of a framework that best explained the complex and chaotic nature of the production of television news at TELEVISÀ..

4. Interviewing.

I started by taking informal conversations as a departure point, in order to acquire background information about the formation and development of the Directorate. I also needed to obtain some measure of an informant's ability to give an account of a situation. I wanted to learn how

they interpreted the world through which they moved. The informal conversations allowed me to gather data on which I subsequently worked to guide my observation practice.

Informal interviews started by asking about the informant's daily routines, how they performed their work, what most interested them, and their background. Interviews took place at various places inside and outside the Directorate.

Later, when asking them about what they did at their department, I used two referential keys: settings and participants. "Settings" were the activities performed at every department, while "participants" was a key word to guide the interview towards a person's perceived identity and an interpretation of why they were doing what they were doing at that precise moment and how it fitted within the production process as a whole.

As I had to deal with people who often wanted to divert my attention or to emphasize certain points, perspectives and areas of their activity, it was of primary importance in those critical early days to decide who of the people I met I wanted to work with intensively ~~with~~ in those critical early days. How did I know when a person like that came along?

First, I decided to interview the people who were responsible for a specific area of production (the Director

of News, the Chief of reporters, the Chief of cameramen, the Coordinator of news, etc.)). But I could only come to ask relevant questions once I had gathered enough information about how the process of newsmaking ran on a routine basis and once I had some idea about the history of the Directorate as a whole. The first people I interviewed then, were veteran reporters and people in various departments who had been there for a certain period of time. For example, my very first informant at the Directorate was a 65 year old journalist regarded as a member of the "old-guard" who worked at the Wires Department. He had enjoyed a long and close working relationship with the Director of News and was well respected amongst all journalists and News personnel. He had a further advantage; he had time to spare with me.

I tried to achieve rapport with my informants by observing journalists trying to establish rapport with their own sources. I interviewed a few informants and I got to know that an informal rather than formal approach was more likely to be acceptable. Knowing other mutual contacts was also beneficial as a point of reference, as was showing genuine interest and respect for another's point of view and trying to adapt to group life. Together, these strategies opened up a group of potential informants. I then had to choose which of these I wanted to work with more extensively. This was decided primarily in terms of their responsibility and position within the Directorate.

Informal interviewing benefitted from the application of

specific techniques such as;

(a) Distribution checks; the use of 'quantifiers', which were words such as 'none', 'a few', 'some', 'many', 'all', 'a lot', etc. If an informant made a statement that interested me, I tried to get him to estimate to how many people that applied to, how many times it happened, how many similar activities there were, etc..

(b) Contrast; Picking two pieces of behaviour and comparing them; asking for similarities and differences, but paying attention to when it was a good idea to personalise a question or to depersonalise it.

(c) Getting to know the professional jargon: Trying to internalise the meaning of words that are used by journalists in a specific professional sense such as 'embute' or 'chayote' (which are the words for a monetary payment, from a news source)..

(d) Getting to relate the meaning and activities of journalists to their professional milieu in order to arrive at new questions and insights about their occupation. As an example, one day I tried to find out the differences between writing for television and writing for the press, so I picked a reporter who had formerly worked as a prominent journalist for a national daily and asked about what the lead of her story would be that day. Afterwards I asked her to compare it with a story which appeared in the press the

following day. She then went to point out that in newspapers reporters are expected to provide a complete list of the personalities who are involved in an event,, while at the Directorate time was so limited that she had to concentrate on the news actor who had been mentioned in the assignment list. Her answer led me to consider an additional set of questions and focused my attention on new and complementary insights..

((e) Frames: Placing known situations in relation to each other so as to generate new insights.. For instance,, I once asked a reporter what would happen to him if he decided to provide an in-depth interpretation of the event he was going to write about.. He replied that news at the Directorate was about facts and not interpretations.. If shared by other reporters,, I was facing a value guiding the coverage of events which I then had to analyse more fully..

((f) The cross-referencing and evaluation of contradictions.. One of the important problems for the study was how to evaluate contradictions in the reports provided by different informants.. During fieldwork I found various situations where reporters offered contradictory definitions..

I decided to use the categories I had developed for my overall description to evaluate how far divergent views were attributable to personal,, professional or occupational reasons.. More particularly,, I noticed that contradictions

concerning the manner in which reporters conducted their work were to a great extent due to the position and strategies they had developed to place themselves within the Directorate's internal political system. Hence,, despite posing a problem,, contradicitions amongst reporters helped me to see that there were objective differences that I needed to analyse in order to explain how they perceived their role at TELEVISA..

(g) Performing the job of the informant; a useful technique to penetrate the occupational culture of TELEVISA's newsmen consisted of performing the activities of the informant.. This was done at various departments but extensively at the desk of the Coordinator of news and at the desks of individual reporters. It was useful because it served three functions.. First, it allowed me to get a more detailed picture of the activities that needed to be carried out by a single professional during the newscycle.. Secondly,, it allowed me to grasp the perspective of a particular occupation within the context of the whole production process.. Thirdly,, it represented a very useful mechanism through which examine and internalise the value systems which guide the operation of a specific activity within the newsroom..

The logic of this technique was very simple. For instance,, I would ask the Chief of reporters to assign me a story and follow it simultaneously with a reporter.. I would write my own story and then get it evaluated by both the

reporter and the Chief of reporters. I would then have a specific case on which I could ask further questions regarding news policy.

5. Systematic selection of informants.

As mentioned earlier, the initial phase of the fieldwork used accounts given by 'key' informants, people who I established were important sources of information due to their position and responsibility within the Directorate. Additionally, there were a few members of the staff who represented an "opportunistic sample". These were people whom I met by chance or occasionally.

The group of people who represented my object of study at the Directorate constituted a relatively small population. This characteristic enabled me to conduct interviews with all the members of staff at the Directorate. However, in matters dealing with the internal political system, the job of foreign correspondent and the relationship between female reporters and their sources, I was obliged to select a random sample.

In the case of the internal political system, at first I encountered reluctance to talk extensively on the part of two female and one male reporter. One of the possible solutions was to hire a field assistant (a person associated with a different clique) who could use a different strategy. However, I was unable to do so mainly because I did not have

such a person to hand. So, I opted for choosing a random sample. I assigned a number to all reporters and I randomly chose ten. I then structured a special setting to solve potential difficulties in dealing with the subject matter. A meal was arranged with each of the ten reporters in a 'neutral' setting (a restaurant in Central Mexico City).. This strategy was very successful. Interviews lasted between three and four hours and were conducted with great rapport.

In the case of foreign correspondents,, I was able to select five. In this case,, only three were chosen at random and two were interviewed because they were 'at hand'.. One of them was the London correspondent,, and the other ((the correspondent in Israel)) visited the Mexico City headquarters while I was doing fieldwork.

An additional reason why sampling of informants was limited to the three settings mentioned above had to do with the small number of specialist informants. A great deal of my work referred to areas for which only a few people were responsible and competent enough to talk with. As noted earlier in my thesis, work at the Directorate is stratified in such a way that editorial judgement is the responsibility of very few people,, leaving the others carry out a job which requires merely technical abilities.

In the areas of the study for which it was necessary to interview reporters,, there was considerable internal consistency in the way they described their job,, interests

and general situation. This represented what ethnographers call 'theoretical saturation', meaning that after a certain point further interviewing does not add information on a topic. After this juncture was reached, interviewing tended to be limited to cross checking and validating information.

6. Taking and analysing fieldwork notes.

One of the problems most commonly faced by ethnographers is the practical chore of taking notes during fieldwork. In my own case, the rapid pace of the newscycle and the constant interaction with news personnel obliged me to discipline myself to a routine which included taking notes whenever possible: while interviewing and observing. Later, every night I would complete descriptions which needed specification. Unfortunately, tape-recording was not possible due to a personal request made by the Chief of reporters.

Field notes were the record of my observations, conversations, interpretations and suggestions for future information to be gathered. At first it was difficult to write down "what happened" simply because of my lack of information about what was significant. This problem was partially solved by centering on specific topics, such as, the description of routine activities, background, distribution of work, interests and preferences amongst journalists. This exercise also included writing up information that was considered important for the whole

project even if it did not deal with the topic being considered.

Notes comprised two kinds of elements: First,, some ideas derived from observation to be followed up in interviews and,, second,, pieces of information that I wanted to get eventually.. Consequently,, they were an essential tool for pointing to areas to look at more fully and for achieving greater understanding of a group..

Categories for analysing talk derived from the general questions which had inspired the definition of the three dimensional framework ((occupational,, corporative and professional)) presented in Chapter one.. Initially,, they comprised the world of routine work inside the newsroom. Activities,, roles and expectations were a particular focus of analysis.. Once rapport was established,, informants chosen and my identity set,, I moved to analyse the value systems in which routines and activities were rooted.. I then gradually developed categories which responded to specific questions which related to the analysis of the professional and corporative dimensions..

As mentioned earlier,, asking about newsmen's life histories was both a means to gain rapport and confidence and a way to obtain basic information on the social,, educational and training background of journalists.. This exercise was carried out with all reporters and heads of Departments within the Directorate ((Figures 1 and 2 provide

typical examples of the observation and interview protocols used in the initial stages of fieldwork)).

7. Observation and the sampling of events.

Observation served various functions. Firstly, it allowed me to register the range of activities in which a reporter is immersed and to place them in hierarchical order. Secondly, it provided a practical way to test the congruence between what was said and what was done. Furthermore, observing an event served as an opportunity to ask new questions about the "meaning" and "significance" of work activities of journalists and their interaction with their sources. In practice, observation and interviewing mutually interacted with each other, either simultaneously or sequentially.

Observation of events in the initial phase of fieldwork aimed at capturing the process of production in its entirety. Thus, it was guided by practical rather than systematic criteria. In the second and third phases of fieldwork, however, I intended to use a more systematic approach.

First of all, I decided that it was necessary for me to observe how all reporters approached their news beats, wrote their stories, and tried to get them included in the bulletin. Fortunately, the small number of reporters and the facilities awarded to the project made this possible.

Sampling of events took place when observing the Coordinator of news, the Chief of reporters and the Director of News doing their job. This was systematically carried out in the second phase of fieldwork, when I focused on the relative weight of institutional criteria over the range and content of the news. I decided to spend a full work day with each of these people at least three times a week and once during the weekend. Days of observations started with the following sequence: Monday, Wednesday, Friday the first week and Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday the next week.

During the third phase of fieldwork I concentrated on the development and treatment of particular stories. This obliged me to carry out observation at all stages of production, from assignment to presentation.

8. Involvement and disengagement.

A further methodological problem of this study relates to the effect which my visit and personal involvement with the Directorate of News had on the original course and goals of the project. Using one of Philip Schlesinger's reflections on his work about the BBC ((1980)), it could be said that the process whereby I got under TELEVISIA's skin was also one whereby it got under mine.

Being involved with the production process and getting close to informants enhanced my ability to penetrate the Directorate's internal value systems. During fieldwork I

would spend from twelve to eighteen hours a day in contact with TELEVISA staff and I therefore learned to share the excitements of bulletin production,, know reporters in their private and personal lives,, and feel a part of a charming and powerful organisation around which the Mexican cultural industries operated..

However,, this process of involvement also produced a negative side effect.. The power of TELEVISA that I witnessed,, together with what reporters told me about TELEVISA's actions against its enemies,, made me feel wary about the possibility of any action directed against me and my career once my report was made public.. I was particularly cautious about the involvement of TELEVISA and its executives in the production of news.. As a consequence,, I experienced a kind of self-censorship while drafting my reports back at the Centre For Mass Communication Research. Fortunately,, Dr. Philip Schlesinger and Graham Murdock, my thesis supervisor,, played a crucial role in keeping the project on its original track by making comments which helped me to gradually disengage personally from my object of study and prepare the schedule for my next period of fieldwork..

9. Limitations.,

Despite the generous degree of access granted to me,, fieldwork activities at the Directorate suffered from two major obstacles:: ((a)) access was not allowed to policy

meetings between the President of TELEVISA, Vice-presidents and the Director of News; and (b) the distribution of pre-printed questionnaires was not allowed within the Directorate after a certain point in the fieldwork process.

Permission was granted by one of the Vice-presidents of News to move around the Directorate and carry out interviews and observation. However,, occasionally there were meetings and telephone conversations between the Director of News,, the Vice-presidents of News and the President of TELEVISA. These took place at various times during fieldwork and apparently dealt with matters of policy.. No other member of the staff was allowed to be present at those meetings and this applied to me too.. Therefore,, there was a group of questions which I was unable to answer because of this limitation.. One of them was how the values and interests of the Director of News interacted with the values and interests of the executives of TELEVISA, Was there a simple accommodation on the part of the Director of News to the values of TELEVISA's executives? Was there a more complex mediation process whereby journalistic values helped to formulate the strategies employed to gain credibility,, and to set limitations to TELEVISA executives?

The other obstacle I faced was an explicit prohibition made by one of the Vice-presidents of News for me to distribute questionnaires within the Directorate. This restraint was issued at the end of the third stage of fieldwork.. At this point I was particularly interested in

knowing how widely shared the institutional values guiding the coverage of particular stories amongst reporters were. I was also interested in building up a scale for measuring how much reporters attached themselves to the values of investigative/passive reporting. I had applied four questionnaires in October 1984 when the Chief of reporters informed the Vice-president of News,, and he decided that permission be terminated..

During the three stages of fieldwork I had noticed that reporters were highly committed to serving TELEVISA but lacked commitment to the standardised values of broadcast journalism found in Western broadcasting organisations. However,, I was interested in knowing how much recognition there was amongst reporters,, approached as individual professionals,, of the values attached to the practices of investigative reporting.. Unfortunately,, knowledge on this topic could not be gathered as fully as I wished due to the explicit restraint placed by one of the top TELEVISA's executives..

10. The value of ethnography in Latin American mass communication research..

I envisage ethnography as a powerful methodological aid to complement the knowledge derived from textual, historic and structural research and deployed in the current debates about the control of television in contemporary society.. But I would like to add that in the Latin American context this

type of research needs to be developed urgently due to the relatively scant knowledge we have about the internal logics which regulate the production of communications.

For many years, Latin American research has concentrated on developing complex theoretical frameworks to explain the role of communication organisations in the cultural and political spheres of society. For instance, Manuel Martín Serrano ((1985)) and more recently Jesus Martín Barbero ((1987)) have tried to elaborate conceptual schemes to explain the mediating role of the mass media in Latin American societies. However, we still lack detailed knowledge derived from empirical studies that incorporate the organisations' own interests and internal dynamics into the academic analysis of mediation.

This is still more urgent in cases where academics have set themselves the task of designing alternative models for a more democratic use of the media. For instance, the Mexican researcher Javier Esteinou Madrid ((1988b)) argues that a new model of television is needed to respond to the specific needs of regional development. But how can we even begin to conceive and design realistic alternative structures of control if we do not have an adequate knowledge of how Latin American media organisations actually operate in practice?

We could, for example, envisage the use of news bulletins to support development plans in the regions, but

What aspects of news production: street, radio and a: notices are we going to incorporate in order to develop a truly alternative function for news broadcasts? What type of professional is needed to carry out that task? Furthermore, what type of institutional rationale,, if any,, would regulate the seemingly chaotic nature of that operation?

Clearly,, more ethnographic studies are needed if we are to begin to respond to these and the other questions which are now becoming paramount in Latin American research. The basic thought of my argument is that in order to understand the control of contemporary mass communications in this emerging geographical area it is first necessary to understand how communication organisations operate internally.. Hopefully,, more efforts will flow from this first step to study one of the biggest Latin American television organisations..

.....

. FIGURE 2 : A TYPICAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

.....

.NAME _____ .SEX _____ .AGE _____ .JOINED D.N.IN _____

.....

.EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND _____

.....

.TRAINING _____

.....

.OCCUPATIONS AND JOBS BEFORE ENTERING THE DIRECTORATE _____

.....

.HOW DID HE ENTER THE DIRECTORATE? _____

.....

.POSITIONS HELD AT THE DIRECTORATE _____

.....

.PRESENT POSITION WITHIN THE DIRECTORATE _____

.....

.INTERESTS AND FUTURE CAREER EXPECTATIONS _____

.....

.HOW DOES HE PERCEIVE THE PRODUCTION PROCESS ((EFFICIENT,, FAIR,,
.ADEQUATE)) ? _____

.....

.WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS OF A 'GOOD' JOURNALIST? _____

.....

.APPROXIMATE INCOME _____

.....

.NOTES _____

.....

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