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Media exposure and cultural identity in a Mexican border community: The case of "Secundaria" students

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MEDIA EXPOSURE AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN A MEXICAN BORDER COMMUNITY: THE CASE OF "SECUNDARIA" STUDENTS

by

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DISSERTATION

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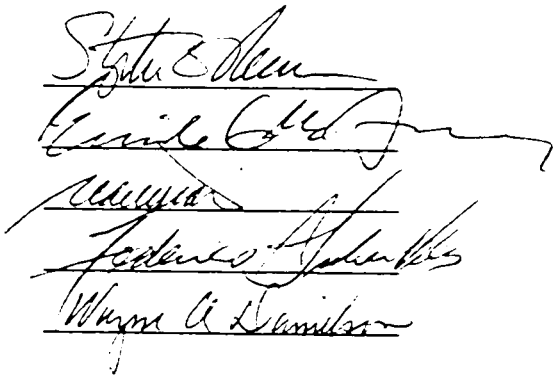

A Rocío, compañera fiel de doctorado y de vida

A mis padres, por su inquebrantable apoyo

A Mundo, por su ejemplo

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This study focuses on the cultural impact of foreign media in Mexico, a Latin American country that may be seen as the most likely to be influenced by U.S. media products due to its proximity to the United States. By taking Nuevo Laredo, a Mexican border town, as a case study, I look at cultural penetration via the mass media in the most extreme of all Latin American cases, where American media products are available both through Mexican media and through the ones established on the U.S. side of the border. Both a quantitative survey and smaller in-depth qualitative interviews were used to gather information from a sample of students in private and public Secundarias in Nuevo Laredo. Findings show that reception of U.S. media content on the Mexican border is not as widespread as sometimes thought, and that audience members expose selectively and creatively to different media and different content. The low level of exposure to U.S. media content, and significant differences in exposure among the students show that countervailing local

influences must be taken into account when analyzing media cultural influence. Mexican media messages were popular among these students. Fears of loss of cultural identity due to exposure to foreign media were not supported.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

For years, Latin American critical scholars have argued that American media products are pervading and eroding the cultural identity of Latin American audiences, making them embrace particular U.S. values and ideology. Researchers like Portales (1981), Reyes Matta (1980), Mattelart (1984), and Hamelink (1981) among many others, consider the large-scale importation of U.S. cultural products into the region, and the dependence of Latin American mass media on American structures, practices and professional values, a form of cultural and ideological domination.

Such scholars have gathered considerable evidence showing an imbalance in the international flow of media products between the U.S. and Latin American countries (cf. David-Amorim, 1982; Rota, 1987; Varis, 1973). Also, they have documented the influence of American modes and content in the locally produced media messages (Granados, 1981; Beltran & Fox, 1980; Hamelink, 1981). However, these studies have not been matched by similar research on the audiences' processes of media consumption and use. As Boyd-Barret (1982) points out, it is easier to determine the number of hours of imported television programming or the percentage of international news originated by transnational agencies, than to assess cultural changes in audience members due to their exposure to imported media messages:

> Yet the weight of evidence for theses of media imperialism often relies heavily on the latter (...) Too much weight may sometimes be given to western influences on one particular medium without reference to the general character of all media output or to evidence concerning respective media impacts. (p. 180)

Boyd-Barret adds that the totality of relevant exogenous media influences --in cultural imperialism studies-- are frequently evaluated without taking into account countervailing local influences. More importantly, "analysis of actual effects or consequences is especially rudimentary (...) There is a general tendency towards exaggerated claims of media impacts" (p. 180). Similarly, Fejes (1981, p. 287) argues that the cultural impact often goes unaddressed in detailed studies of transnational media:

> While a great deal of the concern over media imperialism is motivated by fear of the cultural consequences of the transnational media --of the threat that such media pose to the integrity and the development of viable national cultures in Third World societies--, it is the one area where, aside from anecdotal accounts, little progress has been achieved in understanding specifically the cultural impact of transnational media on Third World societies.

Study purpose: The case of the Mexican border

This study focuses on the cultural impact of foreign media in Mexico, a Latin American country that may be seen as the most likely to be influenced by American media products due to its geographical proximity to the United States. Taking into account Boyd-Barret's and Fejes' criticism of studies of transnational media that do not tackle the question of reception, this study takes as its main focus the analysis of U.S. media reception by Mexican audiences and tries to understand the cultural impact of foreign media contents on the national identity of the audience members.

By taking Nuevo Laredo, a Mexican bodertown, as a case study, I look at cultural penetration via the mass media in the most extreme of all Latin American cases, where American media products are available both through Mexican media and through the ones established on the U.S. side of the border. De la Garde (1987) argues that in media reception studies one must choose very carefully the cases of enquiry, and he suggests that "among the most promising sites for study are 'social laboratories' marked by national and political borders, shaped by historical and economic forces but not, ultimately, contained by them" (p. 192). Nuevo Laredo, I would contend, is one of such promising sites.

Fears of erosion of national identity

For years, Latin American scholars have warned about the devastating impact of transnational communication on the national identity of their countries' audience members. After a comprehensive review of Latin American research on this topic up to 1978, Beltrán (1978) concluded that the vast quantities of imported programming on Latin American television had created a composite of images made of, among others, the following elements: individualism, elitism, racism, materialism, conservatism, aggressiveness, and authoritarianism (p. 75). These "pictures", he added, were characteristic of U.S. media messages and were regarded by the Latin American scholars included in his review as contrary to the aspirations for autonomous, humanistic and truly democratic national development in the region (p. 62).

A similar argument was put forward more recently by Venezuelan scholar Safar (1984). Latin American radio and television, according to her, maintain a

strong dependent relationship with the U.S. model. The processes of production and programing of the stations and the type and content of their programs, have produced cultural alienation, transculturization, and the adoption of a way of life that does not belong to Latin Americans (p. 114).

In Mexico, historical fears of U.S. cultural influence on Mexican identity going back to the 19th Century have been revitalized by the massive presence of American cultural products on Mexican media. In 1966, Cremoux (1988) found that 80% of the television programs preferred by Junior High School students in Mexico City originated in the United States (among others The Fugitive, Batman, Guilligan's Island, Daniel Boone, and Patty Duke). He concluded that the majority of these programs were detrimental to Mexican youngsters because of the stereotyped depiction of characters and scenes (p. 59). Montoya and Rebeil (1986) looking again at the exposure of Junior High School students to Mexican television in 1982, argued: "commercial television has become in Mexico a vehicle for the transmission of North American culture, constantly eroding national identity and local cultures" (p. 147). They explained that the loss of national values and culture, a long-standing problem in Mexican society, had accelerated with the introduction of television (p. 155).

Another scholar, in the same vein, asserts that Mexican television, created and developed following the U.S. model, has promoted since the 1950s programs, consumerist patterns, and aspirations more related with the way of life of the U.S. middle class, than with Mexican values and customs (García-Calderón, 1987, p. 56). About Mexico City's television cable system, García-Calderón adds that by including great numbers of U.S. programs, cable TV is the vehicle through which a model full of foreign values and situations is displacing Mexican national culture: "Cable TV

promotes a cultural colonization which affects the middle and upper socio-economic sectors who have access to it. That is the reason why, in addition to being a commercial enterprise, Cable TV has become a cultural dependency factor" (p. 57). As recent as 1990, another scholar continued to advocate this view arguing that Mexican television promotes a consumerist culture and the veneration of the American way of life (Esteinou, 1990, p. 106). He accussed Mexican electronic media of fostering the mental "denationalization" of the Republic, building in the psychological and cognitive perception of the population a nation opposed to its own cultural roots, ethnic background and Constitution. Through their exposure to television, Esteinou explains, the Mexican middle class has abandoned its catholic cultural background...

> adopting the transnational culture of Superman, Wonder Woman, Star Wars, Batman and Robin, Walt Disney, and so on.
>
> Thus, in less than a generation the roots of the transnational, the North American, have been planted in our conscience. Today, we can say that in Mexican territory the first generation of "norteamericanos" (Americans) have been born. (p. 116)

Cultural erosion in the border region

If Mexican concern over the loss of cultural identity all over the country is great, fears of what could be happening in the border region are greater and more frequent. The consequences of direct exposure to U.S. culture and media systems by Mexican border residents was considered so critical in the early 1980s, that the De la Madrid administration established the "Programa Cultural de las Fronteras," a federal

program set to promote "nationalistic" cultural manifestations, and to support research on the impact of U.S. culture on fronterizos' national identity. The new administration of Salinas de Gortari has provided additional funds for the program.

Also, Mexican scholars continuously discuss the dangers of U.S. cultural infiltration in the border region, assuming that national values and traditions have been or are being replaced by the all-powerful American culture. A good example of concern about the loss of cultural identity along the Mexico-U.S. border is provided by the following excerpt from a national magazine:

> Far away from God --and from Mexico-, and very close to the United States, Tamaulipas' border residents are victims --although they consider themselves to be beneficiaries-- of a "denationalization" phenomenon so deep that it represents (...) not only a threat, but a feint against Mexico's sovereignty in that borderline (...).
>
> Every day, the border resident receives the brutal impact of American culture: films, radio, and TV; books, magazines, newspapers; customs and attitudes about life itself; food to eat, clothes to wear (Candelaria, 1987, p. 16).

Mendoza Berrueto, a Mexican scholar and politician, denounces the same kind of cultural penetration, although in a much less hysterical tone. Pointing out that upper classes are the most influenced by U.S. ideology and values, he concludes that cultural and artistic manifestations in the border --customs, language, schooling, beliefs, and traditions, have been conformed throughout a long process of reciprocal influences, in which the clout of American culture has been so strong that "it is possible to talk about a cultural dependency related somewhat to the economic

dependency of the border region" (Mendoza Berrueto, 1981, p. 58).

Despite all these concerns, serious research about the actual loss of cultural identity in the border region has been sparse. Very few studies have tried to measure the exposure of Mexican northerners to U.S. mass media, and fewer have tried to tackle the issue of the actual impact of mass media on attitudes and values (see for example Malagamba, 1986; Iglesias, 1988; Toussaint, 1990).

For a researcher, however, the Mexico-U.S. border provides an excellent case study for American cultural penetration in a developing country. While in other Latin American countries and in the interior of Mexico American influence is mainly represented by imports transmitted by the local media, in the Mexico-U.S. border residents are able to pick up U.S. television and radio signals with no interference. At the same time, Mexico's northern states are the ones which have the biggest concentration of national and local mass media in the whole country (cf. Iglesias, 1988; Toussaint, 1990), providing a great diversity of choices in TV and radio stations, newspapers, cinemas, and magazines.

The U.S.-Mexico border consists of 1,905 miles, including 1,210 miles of river, and 675 miles of land. Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California are the political entities on the United States side of the border while Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Baja California are the states on the Mexican side. One of the most important Mexican border cities is Nuevo Laredo (Tamaulipas), with a population of 217,912 according to the Mexican 1990 Census.

Nuevo Laredo is the main terrestrial port for Mexican imports from and exports to the United States. Most of the economic activity gravitates around international trade between these two countries. For example, forwarding agencies,

custom brokers and public employees, transportation services, and so on. The "maquiladora" industry (assembly plants) is also very strong: there are 72 plants in Nuevo Laredo employing around 20 thousand workers.

Nuevo Laredo is also characterized by an overwhelming presence of mass media, both Mexican and American. At the beginning of 1991 there were two local television stations (one affiliated to the national and most powerful television channel in the country XEW Channel 2); also, the signal from three stations in the U.S. side (Laredo, Texas) could be picked up without problems (one affiliated to CBS, another one to NBC and the third one to the Spanish-language network Telemundo). The local channel (XEFE 2) based its programming on "telenovelas" (Mexican soap operas), U.S. movies and action series dubbed to Spanish, U.S. and Mexican sports (NFL games, Big Leagues Baseball, soccer football, boxing, Mexican wrestling), and the news magazine of a national commercial network. The other station XHBR Channel 11, affiliated to the national channel with more rating and coverage, based its programming on CNN-style news programs during the morning, a block of local programs in the afternoon (a one-hour news program, a half-hour sports program and a half-hour program of interviews with local personalities), two blocks of telenovelas, one from 5 p.m. to 8:00 pm, another from 9:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Mexican comedy shows in the style of "The Golden Girls," "Doctor, Doctor," and stand-up commedy.

There were 12 local radio stations, and the signal of five more stations from the U.S. side could be received on the radio sets. Of all 12 local radio stations, none transmitted English-language programming. Most of them based their programming on Mexican traditional and "country" music. Three of them offered Spanish-language

modern pop music. Of the five Laredo, Texas stations, two of them had Spanish-language programming (Mexican "country" or Tex-Mex, and Mexican modern music), one was a Catholic station, two transmitted U.S. pop music.

Residents could rent either Mexican or American movies in more than 50 video stores in Nuevo Laredo, or watch them in one of the nine theaters located in different parts of the city. There were five daily newspapers, all locally owned, with a combined circulation of around 18,000,[1] and the only English-language newspaper, printed in Laredo, Texas, had around one thousand circulating in the Mexican side every day. All these facts support the selection of this border town to carry out research on media and national identity.

Border youth as a special audience

The decision was made to focus on junior high school students, a very specific group, instead of the whole population of Nuevo Laredo for three different reasons: 1) constraints in time and resources make considerably easier to contact and interview *Secundaria* students (Junior High school students); 2) the complexity of the subject matter calls for the use of a qualitative research design and, following McCracken (1988, p. 17), "it is more important to work longer, and with greater care, with a few people than more superficially with many of them"; and 3) this group may be regarded as one of the most likely to be exposed to U.S. media products and incorporate some of the hegemonic values and meanings into its conception of the world, due to age and socialization factors. *Secundaria* students are members of a social group regarded by many as the most susceptible to foreign influence. Their

age, and the fact that cultural values and traditions are not consolidated enough at this age, supposedly makes them more likely to break with their local roots and embrace foreign value systems (see Montoya & Rebeil, 1986).

Theoretical framework

Instead of trying to determine causal links between exposure to foreign media and loss of cultural identity, in positivistic terms, this study attempts to understand the complex and creative processes involved in the reception of media contents by *Secundaria* students. Adopting a culturalist approach, the study focuses on the role mass media play in the construction of a social identity, and the degree of exposure and appropriation of hegemonic media messages by the students. Hegemony, according to Fiske, is "the process whereby the subordinate are led to consent to the system that subordinates them. This is achieved when they 'consent' to view the social system and its everyday embodiments as "common sense," the self-evidently natural (Fiske, 1987, p. 40). Hegemony, however, is far from perfect. To be accepted and appropriated by the subordinate groups, hegemonic messages are forced to incorporate some of the authentic interests and points of view of those subordinate sectors. Quoting Godelier, Garcia-Canclini argues that in order for relations of domination and exploitation to reproduce themselves in lasting form they need to present themselves as an exchange of services between classes: "Hegemonic classes achieve this position to the extent that, over and above their sectoral interests, they include those aspects of popular cultures in the function and meaning of institutions, objects and messages, that render them useful and significant for the majority"

(Garcia-Canclini, 1988, p. 475). While the incorporation of popular sectors' interests is frequently done in such small "doses" as not to question the foundations of the dominant ideology, the final product --in this case the media message-- carries with it the possibility of alternative, anti-dominant readings:

> Hegemony is a constant struggle against a multitude of resistances to ideological domination, and any balance of forces that it achieves is always precarious, always in need of re-achievement. Hegemony's "victories" are never final, and any society will evidence numerous points where subordinate groups have resisted the total domination that is hegemony's aim, and have withheld their consent to the system. (...) Hegemony characterizes social relations as a series of struggles for meaning. The dominant ideology, working through the form of the text, can be resisted, evaded, or negotiated with, in varying degrees by differently socially situated readers (Fiske, 1987, p. 41).

The lack of general, descriptive data about patterns of exposure to mass media by border residents suggests the use of the traditional survey research technique. Although qualitative techniques are preferred by culturalists when doing reception analyses, many researchers consider valid and sometimes necessary the use of surveys to complement qualitative studies (see Christians & Carey, 1989; Marsh, 1984; McCracken, 1988; Morley, 1988; Tunstall, 1974).

In the present case, a survey of the *Secundaria* students provided basic information about two general areas: 1) their media preferences and amount of exposure to each particular medium and product, and 2) the social characteristics associated with different patterns of exposure. In addition, long, focused interviews

were carried out among a small group of students, to explore in more qualitative terms the actual impact --if any-- of U.S. media contents on their cultural identity.

In addition to critical studies on cultural dependency, this project takes into account in its theoretical framework the contributions of "cultural" studies, both European-American and Latin American, to the study of "reception." While there are significant differences within and between these "cultural" studies perspectives, they are very useful to approach from a critical standpoint issues like impact, negotiation, rejection and assimilation of hegemonic media messages by audience members. Using these approaches, this study attempts to explain and interpret the findings of the field work in Nuevo Laredo in line with the critical concerns raised by the cultural dependency perspective. This study will contribute to a better understanding of processes of reception of foreign media contents on a developing country, by empirically testing some of the assumptions and theoretical concepts of critical approaches like cultural studies and hegemony.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The evidence of cultural penetration in Latin America

The large-scale importation of American cultural products in many Latin American countries, and the dependence of their local media on American structures, practices, and professional values are documented by a great number of scholars (Beltran & Fox, 1980; Garcia, 1980; Mattelart, 1979, 1984; Schiller, 1971; Tunstall, 1981). Through sometimes different methodologies and research questions, a consensus has arisen about the existence of a radical communication imbalance between the vast majority of Latin American countries and the United States, by far the most powerful exporter of media products in the world. In this particular instance, communication has not reflected a balanced and equal flow of cultural products between the United States and Latin America. Rather, as advocates of the New International Information Order have pointed out at a global level, communication has been characterized as a vertical, one-way flow of news stories, television programs, movies, music, magazines, and comics.

This prevaling situation is considered by many researchers as a form of cultural and ideological domination which jeopardizes the national identity of Latin American countries, traditionally dependent both economically and technologically on the United States. Government officials and social scientists tend to believe that the more their people expose themselves to American cultural products, the more they lose their national and cultural identity. These assumptions are frequently based on assertions by theorists describing not only American media hegemony over Latin America, but also over most parts of the world. According to Mankekar (1981, p. 123), an Indian scholar,

> In the present era of the electronic communication revolution, what

> with the awesome inventions in the field of television, satellite, computer and optic fibre, the winds of alien culture are turning into whirlwinds that are threatening to uproot the developing countries from their indigenous cultural moorings.

Schiller (1981), one of the leading advocates of this approach in the United States, argues that based on the free flow of information principles adopted by the United Nations, U.S. media products and informational networks "blanketed" the world (p. 176). In the decades after the adoption of the principles, Schiller explains, American movies, television programs, and magazines reached millions of people outside the United States. He adds that as a reaction to the flood of American media products "and the usurpation of national media systems that were required to disseminate it" references to cultural sovereignty, cultural autonomy and the possibility of cultural imperialism arose (p. 177).

In 1973, Tapio Varis carried out a large worldwide study of the flow of communication in which he concluded that there existed a radical imbalance between industrialized and developing countries (Varis, 1973). In 1983, he replicated his study with the support of different centers for communication research. After tracking the international communication flow, he concluded that the situation had not improved in the 10 year period (Cf. Varis, 1990). Around 50 percent of television programming in Latin America was still being imported (United States being the source of about three quarters of the imported material).

Katz and Wedell (1978), although far from adopting a dependency perspective, acknowledge in their world study (which included Brazil and Peru) that, as a result of heavy dependence on imports, "traditional culture, except for language

in some cases, has not found its place in the broadcast media (of developing countries), while the Beatles and other pop stars on radio, and 'Ironside' and 'Lucy' on TV threatens to overtake the national heroes" (p. 36). They point out that everywhere, regardless of type of regime or broadcasting system, American imports outnumber those from all other countries, adding that their importance is illustrated by their places in prime-time program schedules of the major stations (p. 157).

Hamelink (1981) explains the threat of foreign media products to cultural identity by arguing that production and marketing on a world scale conceive the world as a global village. In this sense, "national cultures are seen as restrictions blocking the free world consumption of goods and services. Consequently, they [national cultures] will have to be transformed or adapted, but not recognized (...). Production and consumerist models do not stop at national cultures' frontiers." Accordingly, for cultural imperialist scholars "authentic, traditional, and local culture in many parts of the world is being battered out of existence by the indiscriminated dumping of large quantities of slick commercial and media products, mainly from the United States" (Tunstall, 1981, p. 57).

As early as 1973, the heads of state of the non-aligned countries pointed out in a general meeting the need to reaffirm national cultural identity to confront the menace of cultural imperialism (see Sinclair, 1990, p. 289). Masmoudi (1990, p. 313), a leading new international information order advocate, put it in these words:

> (...) advertising, magazines and television programs are today so many instruments of cultural domination and acculturation, transmitting to the developing countries messages which are harmful to their cultures, contrary to their values, and detrimental to their development aims and

efforts.

Most of the criticism mentioned above belongs either to the "cultural dependency" tradition or to the "cultural imperialism" approach. Although some researchers make some distinctions between both perspectives (see Boyd-Barret, 1982), others use the terms indistinctly. Some, like Fejes (1981, p. 281), prefer the term "media imperialism," and others, like Beltran and Fox (1981, p. 20), use the term "cultural domination," although the differences between these and the former two terms are not very clear. At any rate, all these approaches seem to agree on several grounds.

First, they all seem to study the processes by which modern communication media and technologies operate to create, maintain, and expand systems of domination and dependence worldwide. They all see these processes as allowing some powerful nations to impose their beliefs, values, norms, and lifestyles over less powerful nations.

Secondly, they all reject former approaches which tended to see the international and national mass media systems as factor contributing to the "modernization" and development of Third World countries. By questioning the patterns of ownership, control, and ideological content of those media, they strongly argue that media are not neutral and that they even hinder development if they bring alien values and commercial goals to local cultures in developing nations.

By focusing attention on ownership, control and origin of mass communication messages and technology, they go beyond the national and social psychological factors into a global structure level, "whereby it is precisely the international socio-political system that decisively determines the course of

development within the sphere of each nation" (Nordenstreng & Schiller, quoted in Fejes, 1981, p. 281).

Thirdly, these approaches tend to propose, at least as a partial solution, the establishment of a balanced and horizontal flow of communication both at the international and at the national levels. They stress that developing nations must be self-reliant, and that they must be able to develop national communication policies geared toward the solution of specific problems and to the fostering of a strong national identity (see Reyes Matta, 1977, p. 13).

Fourthly, all researchers working with these approaches seem to locate the study of the mass media within the context of the prevailing international economic order, and the economic and political relations between industrialized and developing countries. "The economic context of international communication is an essential factor in the shaping of an unequal communication flow, and it is part of the worldwide economic dependence scheme" (Hamelink, 1981, p. 22).

A final agreement between the different factions appears to be the need to take into account the historical dimension which accounts for the prevailing imbalances and insufficiencies. As Golding (p. 291) points out...

> Mass media in Africa, Latin America and Asia have developed almost invariably, as derivatives of those in the advanced industrialized countries. They do not appear spontaneously at an appropriate moment in social evolution, but have been transplanted from metropolitan centers. This simple fact of colonial history has enormous implications for analysis of the structure and role of media in the Third World, most importantly, it means that accounts of the media in a single

country which make no reference to an international context of dependence are empirically and theoretically barren."

Audience research: the neglected area

The problem of the dissapearing audience. Although media dependency or media imperialism studies have accumulated considerable evidence about the imbalance in the international flow of media products, and about the serious dependence of developing countries on American media products, few of them have paid enough attention to the actual impact of American media products on the cultural identity of developing countries' audiences.

In addition to Boyd-Barret's and Fejes' criticisms, other critical scholars have also pointed out the cultural imperialists' neglect of issues of media reception and the cultural imports' actual impact on cultural identity. De la Garde (1987, p. 191) explains that many dependency theorists conclude that if transnationalization of the production process occurs, the transnationalization of the reception process follows logically. He argues that it represents an unwarranted conceptual shortcut and reflects a main weakness in critical research:

> Although it is mandatory to understand the undeniable commercial and industrial nature of many of the products which make up our cultural environment, it is equally important not to forget that people are not mirror reflections of their environment; rather they are prisms. Culture as a dynamic process of sense-making does not end, but rather starts, with the reading of a book, the listening to a pop record or the thrill of a movie. (p. 191)

Servaes (1986) also asserts that dependency studies neglect audience reception: "The qualitative impact and consequences of these dependency relationships, such as how these unequal processes affect the culture, ideology and identity of the local population in the long term, are often overlooked" (p. 210). He adds that for the most part, dependency theorists assume that together with the high volume of Western media products, "a conservative and capitalistic ideology and consumption culture is transmitted and established."

Garcia-Canclini (1988), a leading Latin American scholar, explains that one of the main problems with dependency theory is its conceptualization of audience members as passive receipients of all-powerful communication messages. In the dependency approach...

> audiences and consumers are seen as passive executants of practices imposed by the dominant, incapable of distinguishing between those messages which benefit and those which harm, between the use value in given goods (which is assumed to be 'authentic') and their exchange or symbolic value (which is considered 'artificial'). The methodological consequence is the belief that purely by studying the mass media's economic aims and the ideological structure of their messages, one might deduce the needs they create in the audience. No autonomy on the part of popular cultures is recognized, nor is the complex relation between consumers, objects and social space. (p. 472)

Smith (1990) shares this view, pointing out that "images and cultural traditions do not derive from, or descend upon, mute and passive populations on

whose tabula rasa they inscribe themselves" (p. 179). Instead, he says, the meanings of transnational communication for specific populations derives not only from the intentions of the producers, but also from the historical experiences and social status of those groups.

Fejes (1984) equated in the early 1980s the image of the media as all-powerful and audience members as passive recipients of dominant ideology with the old hypodermic model used in research on propaganda conducted by behaviorist scholars before and after World War II. He argued that by focusing on issues of media content and production, the audience had become almost invisible in the theory and research of critical scholars (p. 222).

National cultures as "elite" cultures. A different kind of criticism is raised by Tunstall (1981). He argues that cultural imperialists do not realize that traditional and authentic cultures are frequently archaic, full of injustices and inequalities, and "dependent upon religious beliefs which have long been in decline." Furthermore, national cultures are more often than not "elite" cultures belonging to the ruling class of the country, just as foreign to the masses as American or European media contents (p. 58). Tunstall also points out that the actual impact of media imports is felt by the upper classes of developing countries, and not by the population as a whole:

> It is precisely the highly educated élite in Asian and African countries who are the most active consumers of imported --and presumably "low, brutal and commercial"-- media. It is the rural dwellers --short of land, food, literacy, income, life expectation, birth control devices and so on-- who are the main consumers of traditional and 'authentic'

culture. (pp. 58-59)

Positivist research on media reception and cultural identity

Increasingly, scholars from the positivist tradition are paying attention to issues of media reception and cultural identity in either the ethnic minorities of developed countries or developing countries receiving heavy doses of imported programming.

Ethnic studies. Research on ethnicity and mass media in the United States, for example, has been studying the ways in which media use relates to assimilation on the dominant Anglo culture or allows the subsistance of minority subcultures. According to Subervi-Velez (1984, 1986), the literature in this field is divided into two approaches: the assimilation and the pluralist perspectives. Assimilationists argue that U.S. mass media have strong "acculturation" powers over immigrants. According to Subervi-Velez (1986, p. 72)...

> the underlying assumption (of assimilationists) is that access to, exposure to, and use of the mass media of the dominant group influences ethnics and migrants in their processes of learning about and taking part in the dominant society.

Researchers in this perspective, thus, are similar to cultural imperialists in regard to the power they ascribe to the media to change cultural values and customs. Exposure to the contents of the dominant media by members of an ethnic group is seen as leading to the gradual replacement of their native traditions, language, and cultural roots.

In contrast, pluralist studies place emphasis on the existance of ethnic media as a factor deterring the loss of cultural identity among minorities in the United States, acting as shields "against some of the external pressures of acculturation" (Subervi-Velez, 1986, p. 73). As long as minorities continue to expose themselves to ethnic media, the argument goes, they maintain some aspects of ethnic identification (p. 76). As evidence of the truth of the former argument, Subervi-Velez mentions that "there are millions of Latinos who continue to pay attention to the Spanish-language media and to maintain their Hispanic identification, culture, and ways of life" (p. 82). As will be seen, this approach has some similarities to the cultural studies tradition, if we interpret exposure to ethnic media as a conscious or even unconscious resistance practice by minorities who do not want to lose their cultural identity.

A perspective similar to the pluralist one is the one developed by Shoemaker, Reese, Danielson and Hsu (1987). Acknowledging that ethnic differences in the United States have endured and even increased instead of fading away (p. 593), they looked at the impact the variable "concentration of ethnics in a community" exerted on the type of media preferred and on the salience of the dominant or ethnic culture. Arguing that acculturation is affected by community characteristics in addition to attributes of the individual, they stated that when defining acculturation as the adoption of norms and values of a salient reference group...

> then the size of or concentration of one reference group relative to others in the community should influence which group is the more salient. The proportion of Hispanics to Anglos (ethnic concentration) may become large enough to obviate the ethnics' need to conform to Anglo culture, slowing Hispanics' acculturation and leading to a

continuing interest in and use of Spanish-language mass media (...)."
(p. 594)

The results of the telephone survey done in Texas in 1984 supported their hypotheses about positive relationships between the concentration of Hispanics in a community and the Hispanics' likelihood of speaking Spanish with family or friends, with Hispanics' Spanish-language print media reading and radio listening, and with Anglos' reported importance of having a Spanish-language newspaper to read (p. 596). Tne implications of these findings for the study of media and cultural identity on the Mexican border with the United States are important: if Latinos living in the interior of the United States are able to maintain their traditional cultural traits when their community is large and when Hispanic media are available, Mexican border residents may well have stronger possibilities of keeping their cultural identity intact despite the geographical proximity with the United States. Mexican media are widely available and of course the vast majority of the total population of the communities are Mexicans.

International studies. Some positivist researchers have tried to put to test the cultural imperialism hypotheses about the erosion of cultural identity in the Third World, and others have approached the question within the framework of intercultural studies. Kang and Morgan (1990) mention a study by Tsai in which he found that television-viewing children in Taiwan had a more favorable attitude toward certain aspects of U.S. culture than did their non-viewing counterparts. They also quote a study done in Israel by Weimann, who found that heavy viewing among high school and college students was strongly associated with an idealized perception of American life (p.

432). Regarding their own study about the impact of U.S. television on Korean college students, Kang and Morgan found that there were significant differences for males and females in their appropriation of imported media contents. Females were more likely than males to endorse U.S. values and roles to the detriment of traditional Korean viewpoints. For males, greater viewing of U.S. television was related to an "intensely" protective attitude toward Korean culture. However, these same students were more likely to endorse some specific non-traditional values and norms in an apparent conflict between being hostile toward Westernization and embracing some of its cultural characteristics. They concluded that the impact of U.S. media messages abroad is not uniform across the population:

> (...) our findings do suggest that American programs may indeed be contributing to the Westernization of traditional cultures, but not always in the manner "intended." (...). The point is that the impacts of U.S. programs abroad may be more diverse than we have so far acknowledge. As American television continues to "tighten its grip on the world," it may unwittingly be contributing to conflicts between those who wish to retain and those who wish to reject diverse cultural traditions and values. (p. 438)

The pioneering audience studies in Latin America of the impact of U.S. media imports were made by Santoro in Venezuela (cited in Beltran & Fox, 1981). Using a complex methodological design, which included a content analysis of Venezuelan television programs and ads, and a survey of 938 school children, Santoro found evidence of negative stereotypes and attitudes in children who were heavy viewers of American television programs. According to Betran and Fox, Santoro concluded that

for school children the "good guys" in any story were Americans, white, single and rich; the "bad guys" were from other countries, especially from Germany and China, and they were frequently black and poor. The way of life for these school children was the American way of life, money being the most important thing. (cf. Beltran & Fox, 1981, pp. 95-96).

Skinner and Houang (1987) carried out in 1982 a case study of the impact of U.S. television program viewing on "national allegiances" in Trinidad and Tobago. They posed as their main research question the following: "Does a strongly foreign-influenced national TV schedule merely represent people enjoying people's entertainment or does this foreign programming pattern affect deeper psychological traits, socio-cultural patterns, and national ideologies?" Using two scales, an appreciation scale and an appeal scale, they analyzed the kind of program, personality and life styles preferred by Trinidadians. The appeal scale (television programs or personalities most attractive to the viewers), according to their findings, showed "a decided preference for the United States. Programs and personalities which drew more than 4% of the responses were the only ones reported. But even with this low limit, just one local program (...) was mentioned" (p. 193). However, preference for U.S. shows and personalities was not overwhelming. Regarding answers to the question "what television program presents a style of life you would most want to follow," 57% of respondents did not select a show, 6% said *Magnum, P.I.*, 6% said *Knots Landing*, and 4% said *Little House on the Praire*. The national appreciation scale (respondents' preference for linking various traits to nations of their choice) showed the United States was prominent in only some categories (like the nation most concerned about personal health, and the one most concerned with its

environment). In others, like the most honest nation, the best dressed nation, and the happiest nation, the United States was well behind Trinidad and Tobago. The same was true for the nation which cared most about its families. Twenty-eight percent felt that Trinidadians cared most about their families. Fifteen percent mentioned India, and only 6 percent said the United States (pp. 191-192). Skinner and Houang concluded that their findings supported "the position that research in media-cultural imperialism is warranted" (p. 194). However, they pointed out that a significant default of responses for the appeal scale may suggest "that people keep their deeper socio-psychological lives well protected and normally choose to look at entertainment from abroad as extraneous, superficial and unimportant." They suggest that acculturation through television could be a more subconscious process, "one in which media consumers can neither overtly manipulate the way they are influenced, nor objectively recognize the subtle but compelling effects foreign media might exert upon them" (p. 194).

Critical approaches for the study of audience reception

A new critical approach on audiences. Unfortunately, while studies like the ones discussed above are useful to grasp the complexities of audience reception of imported media messages, they do not provide a coherent theoretical framework able to guide research projects and to help interpret findings from a critical tradition. Coming from the empirical perspective, studies like the ones done by Tsai, Kang and Morgan, and Skinner and Houang do not seem to pay attention to theoretical issues, and do not confront media imperialism constructs with compatible or similar

theoretical frameworks coming from the critical tradition. To find such a framework, it is important to look at the European cultural studies tradition and the Latin American theoretical developments in the area of popular cultures. The findings of positivist studies on ethnicity and exposure to media in the United States like the ones by Subervi-Velez (1984) and Shoemaker, Reese, Danielson, and Hsu (1987), on the other hand, may be interpreted from the culturalist approach as evidence of the resistance processes of Latinos in the United States. Despite an overwhelming availability of hegemonic (Anglo, English-language) media messages, large Latino communities are able to hold on to their culture and language via Spanish-language media. Consequently, the preservation of the Mexican cultural identity along the U.S.-Mexico border may be seen as very likely, considering the abundant offer of Spanish-language mass media and the more intense vinculation with the interior of Mexico.

While most cultural studies advocates have not carried out systematic research on audience reception of imported media messages, they offer a cohesive set of theoretical constructs and sophisticated research designs for qualitative studies of media reception. The Latin American perspective, on the other hand, tackles the problem of foreign media's impact on this large developing region, rejecting the study of individuals in favor of collectivities and subcultures. Both the cultural studies approach and its Latin American counterpart provide a sound discussion on culture, ideology and the complex processes of assimilation, rejection and negotiation of media cultural products by audience members. Together, they may provide us with the needed theoretical framework for the analysis of foreign media products and cultural identity on the Mexican border with the United States.

In part an answer to the insufficiencies of orthodox Marxist approaches to mass communication, in part an evolution of neo-Marxist perspectives on communication and culture, the 1980's were characterized by the emergence of a new critical approach interested in the study of processes of reception and consumption of cultural products. In Western Europe, in North America and in Latin America, neo-Marxist scholars focused attention on the impact of transnational communication on the different social classes and subcultures of contemporary societies.

Rejecting former Marxist conceptualizations of mass media as all-powerful agencies able to manipulate the ideology of audience members, the new approaches saw audience members as dynamic human beings actively participating in the construction of meaning. Advocates of this new perspective located mass communication in the context of the social struggle for hegemony, and emphasized the processes of assimilation, rejection, and negotiation of media messages by subordinate groups. Stuart Hall, David Morley, James Lull, John Fiske, John Hartley and Martin Allor in England and the United States, and Jesus Martin Barbero, Nestor Garcia Canclini and Valerio Fuenzalida in Latin America, among others, have developed this innovative theoretical perspective. Despite significant differences among these scholars and among their positions, this new approach has proved to be extremely useful in the analysis and understanding of the impact transnational/hegemonic communication exerts both on industrialized societies and on developing countries (see Barbero, 1988; Murdock, 1989).

The Cultural Studies tradition. The origins of the cultural studies tradition can be traced back to the writings of neo-Marxist theorists like Antonio Gramsci, Louis

Althusser, and Nicos Poulantzas. More specifically, Stuart Hall (1989) mentions Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* (1958) and Williams's *Culture and Society* (1961), as "the two books which helped to stake out the new terrain" (p. 33). By the late 1960's Eco had already developed the concept of "aberrant decoding" --audience members' decodings not intended by the producers of media messages--, a concept that would develop into the more sophisticated view of audiences "negotiating" the meaning of media contents. However, it was not until the 1970s that the "cultural studies" approach was consistently formulated and consolidated in Great Britain, in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at Birmingham. According to Biernatzki and White (1987), the Birmingham school members posed three central questions in the study of communications and culture:

> 1) How do powerful elites in liberal, capitalistic societies such as Britain, with institutions of democratic debate and consensus formation, still succeed in maintaining ideological control and in gaining the apparently willing consent of subordinated groups to this ideology?; 2) How could it be true that media institutions are, at the same time, free of direct compulsion and constraint and yet freely articulate themselves systematically around definitions of the situation which favour the hegemony of the powerful? 3) How can the cultural signifying practices in clothing, music and language inversions such as "black is beautiful" utilized by movements among working-class youth, women and racial minorities counteract dominant ideologies and introduce a "cultural justice"? (p. 3)

One of the most important contributions of the CCCS to the study of communication was to replace the traditional conceptualization of audience members

as passive recipients of all-powerful media messages with a more active and dynamic notion of the reception process (cf. Hall, 1980a, p. 118). This recognition had been made by positivist scholars much earlier, but not in the context of the discussion of hegemony, ideology and power. In the positivist tradition these concepts are not taken into account and tend to be considered anti-scientific (Fejes, 1984, p. 220).

In a 1980 article, Hall argued that media messages suggested to audience members a "preferred decoding," an interpretation consonant with the dominant ideology of the producers. However, Hall pointed out that the decoding process included three different possibilities: 1) a dominant/hegemonic reading; 2) a negotiated reading; and 3) an oppositional reading (cf. Hall, 1980b, pp. 136-137). According to Hall, these were the three hypothetical positions from which decodings of a television program were constructed. The dominant reading interpreted the media text according to the code of reference in which it had been produced; the audience member assimilated the hegemonic values and portrayals --complex and contradictory-- embedded in the television program. The negotiated reading, on the other hand...

> (...) contains a mixture of adaptative and oppositional elements: it acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations (abstract), while, at a more restricted, situational (situated) level, it makes its own ground rules --it operates with exceptions to the rule. It accords the privileged position to the dominant definitions of events while reserving the right to make a more negotiated application to "local conditions," to its own more corporate positions. (p. 137)

Finally, the "oppositional reading" refers to those moments in which viewers refuse to interpret events with dominant/hegemonic codes, using instead alternative codes. Social class, according to Hall, is the most important variable when determining the type of "reading" to be performed. Upper class individuals identified with the hegemonic system would tend to decode the message following its "preferred reading" cues, while lower or working class individuals would tend to decode them using alternative and oppositional codes. Most viewers, however, were in the middle, constructing "negotiated readings" of media messages (pp. 137-138).

While most cultural studies projects have been related to the analysis of media "texts," David Morley, one of the associates of the CCCS, put Hall's theories to test in the reception side. He carried out the now classic study about the British television program "Nationwide", analyzing its reception by several occupational groups. The groups, from five to ten persons each, were divided by occupation, gender and race: apprentices, bank managers, teacher-training students, art students, black girls, trade unionists, and so on. For Morley, occupation was perceived as the most important variable, since it was a prime definer of class. Other characteristics like gender and race were thought by Morley to be of minor relevance. Consequently, he expected to find major differences between the several groups according to the occupation of their members. Morley showed each group several Nationwide programs and at the end of each screening asked participants to engage in an open discussion. His findings, according to Fiske (1987), "showed that Hall had overemphasized the role of class in producing different readings and had underestimated the variety of determinants of readings" (p. 63). The plurality of roles played by a single individual, concluded Morley, accounted for different patterns of assimilation, negotiation or

rejection of media messages not related with the occupation and class of the viewers. In a later work, Morley would argue that "the same man may be simultaneously a productive worker, a trade unionist, a supporter of the Social Democratic Party, a consumer, a racist, a home owner, a wife beater and a Christian" (Morley, 1986, p. 146).

In more recent work, Morley (1988) found that gender and familial situation were as important variables as class in television reception:

> To consider the ways in which viewing is performed within the social relations of the family is to consider the ways in which viewing is performed within the context of power relations, and in terms of differential power afforded to members of the family in different roles encompassing gender and age. (p. 30)

John Fiske and John Hartley have also contributed greatly to the attention cultural studies is paying now to audience reception. From their early book *Reading Television* (1977) --in which they use Hall's and Parkin's theories to approach television reception from a different angle-- right to their most recent work, Fiske and Hartley have contributed to the development of the new "active audience" paradigm. Though their semiological analyses focus mostly on the plurality of meanings on media messages instead of on the reception process, both scholars have clarified significantly the relationship between messages and audience members.

In a text book that summarizes very clearly the status of active audience studies, Fiske (1987) argues that "late capitalist societies are composed of a huge variety of social groups and subcultures, all held together in a network of social relations in which the most significant factor is the differential distribution of power"

(p. 309). He rejects the assumption that the mass media are able to manipulate at will the ideology of viewers; the later are not "cultural dopes" nor a passive helpless mass. According to Fiske, new Marxist thinking is far more sophisticated and useful in the assessment of the role mass media play in the reproduction of the dominant ideology. Instead of adopting the notion of a monovocal capitalist ideology, critical scholars now favor the notion of...

> (...) a multiplicity of ideologies that speak capitalism in a variety of ways for a variety of capitalist subjects. Their unity in speaking capitalism is fragmented by the plurality of accents in which they speak it. Such a view posits a multiplicity of points of resistance or accommodations whose only unity lies in the fact of their resistance or accommodation, but not in the *form* it may take. (p. 309)

Consequently, Fiske argues, subordinate groups in capitalist societies have managed to maintain a strong diversity of social identities despite the homogenizing force of the ruling ideology. In answer to that, capitalism has created a similar variety of voices, voices that are evidence of the "comparative intransigence of the subordinate" (p. 309). Thus, audience members' interests and cultural practices differ from and often conflict with those of the media messages' producers.

> The autonomy of these groups from the dominant is only relative, and never total, but it derives from their marginalized and repressed histories that have intransigently resisted incorporation, and have retained material, as well as ideological, differences. (p. 310)

In response to this relative autonomy, cultural products, to be popular, need to satisfy the various interests of the audience members as well as those of their

producers.

Resistance and relative autonomy in the reception process. What are the implications of this discussion in the study of audiences and the mass media? First of all, Fiske arguments point out the need to reject former Marxist notions of the all-powerful message disseminating the ruling ideology over passive and indefensible audiences. Secondly, it leads us to conceptualize viewers or readers as actively participating in the "construction" of meaning, and to take into account the cultural experiences of subordinate groups in the decoding process. This perspective of the audience is radically different from either the uses and gratifications approach or any other empirical, functionalistic approach. The latter do not take into account issues of power, class, ideology and hegemony; they do not question the persistence of class stratification nor the role the mass media play in legitimizing prevailing inequalities in contemporary societies. Also, empirical, positivist approaches do not include in their analyses ways of assessing the influence class, culture, and subculture play as mediating variables in the decoding process (cf. Carey, 1979; Fejes, 1984).

Following Foucault, Fiske argues that the alternative ideologies subordinate sectors have --ideologies that create resistive meanings and pleasures-- are ways of obtaining social power. If power is not a one-way, but a two-way force, also coming from below (Foucault, 1978), audiences are sometimes able to revert the dominant meanings of cultural products interpreting them in a different way or even distorting them on purpose. Popular creativity which transforms television commercials into critiques or indirect mockery of the dominant system is for Fiske an example of "'excorporation,' that process by which the powerless steal elements of the dominant

culture and use them in their own, often oppositional or subversive, interests" (Fiske, 1987, p. 315).

Another example of "excorporation" mentioned by Fiske is the analogy created by school children of Sidney, Australia, between a television program about prisoners and their own school. The social experience of subordination in the school system as well as in their family nuclei, allowed them to develop an active ideological practice able to relate jail repression with educational repression: "they were not cultural dopes at the mercy of the text or its producers, but were in control of their own reading relations" (p. 315). Fiske acknowledges that the relative autonomy of subordinate readings does not translate directly into oppositional politics or into social action, but he argues that the absence of a direct political effect does not mean there is not a more general political effectivity: "resistive reading practices that assert the power of the subordinate in the process of representation and its subsequent pleasure pose a direct challenge to the power of capitalism to produce its subjects-in-ideology" (p. 326).

The ethnographic approach in mass media research. One approach to reception analysis that does not embrace the neo-Marxist postulates of the Birmingham school and of culturalists like Hartley and Fiske is represented by James Lull in the United States. For Lull (1988a, p. 240), culturalist analyses of audience reception are theoretical speculations with no basis in empirical work: "The logic of the theoretical argument and style of presentation are given more weight than descriptions and grounded interpretations of what audiences really think and do." With the exception of Morley and Radway, who have engaged in extensive

ethnographic research of audiences, most culturalists --according to Lull-- offer personal and subjective opinions disguised as theory. Furthermore, Lull criticizes cultural studies for being culturally insulated, not taking into account Third World scholarship and research. In contrast to this tradition, Lull suggests studying audience members through an ethnographic method characterized by a "qualitative empiricism":

> We can get inside of the processes of media production, for example, by carrying out case studies of institutions. We can get inside of the processes of reception, interpretation, and use of media by conducting in-depth studies of media audiences in natural contexts. The new qualitative empiricism in media studies has already begun to be reflected in work originating in areas as disparate as British cultural studies, European-based reception studies, and American social science. (p. 242)

According to Lull, the theoretical essence of ethnographic studies of the reception process should emerge spontaneously within every research project. The studies should not be constrained by a fixed theoretical perspective; rather, they should "let the data speak to us" (Lull, 1988b, p. 16). Adopting an eclectic position, Lull points out that all approaches to studying audiences --functionalism, Marxism, feminism and postmodernism-- are useful to relate empirical findings to more formal theoretical structures. For Lull, however, research projects should not be confined by those theoretical limits.

While Lull's approach has been influential in a great number of audience studies in the United States and some other parts of the world, some culturalists

criticize his eclecticism and his disregard for theory. Allor, for example, questions the methodological discussions of Lull about qualitative empiricism and its conceptualization as a way of accessing inside information without solid theoretical foundations (Allor, 1988, p. 252). For him, qualitative empiricism represents a model of "objective" description of forms of life, a model that in essence "falsifies" reality. According to Allor, Lull should participate in the recent debates among ethnographers about the epistemological problem of the researcher's subjectivity and the possibility of representing inside information (p. 252).

While Lull's eclectic theoretical position may not be compatible with a cultural studies framework, it is my contention that it is useful for our discussion on two different grounds: first, Lull's criticism of the lack of empirical work by culturalists is a valid one and needs to be tackled; second, his ethnographic approach can be seen as a useful technique to carry out research on the processes of media production and consumption from a cultural studies perspective. The epistemological compatibility of a critical framework like cultural studies and an ethnographic technique has been successfully put to test by David Morley, a cultural studies advocate.

The Latin American perspective. While the new culturalists and receptionists approaches are most popular in Western Europe and in the United States, in Latin America there also exists an important perspective that theoretically and methodologically considers audience members as active human beings engaged in a complex process of negotiation, acceptance and rejection of media messages.

In contrast to the culturalist approaches discussed above, Latin American

scholars in this perspective take as a point of departure not social class, gender or the family context, but the wider concept of popular cultures.[2] Jesus Martin Barbero, one of the key theorists in this vein, mentions three phenomena that explain the Latin American new interest on popular cultures. First, he mentions the failure of the dominant paradigm in media studies --the positivist, functionalist tradition characteristic of most U.S. communication studies-- to see the communication process as collective and everyday behavior and for not taking into account the production and reproduction of sense-making conditions (Barbero, 1987a, pp. 10-11). Second, he considers a failure the attempt of the dominant paradigm to develop an understanding of communication in isolation from its social context and its social mediations (institutions, organizations, languages, subjects). By not perceiving communication in these terms, conventional scholars are unable to understand the processes of symbolic production embedded in communication (p. 11). And finally, the rediscovery of the "popular" in this field has to do, according to Barbero, with particular communication practices still prevalent among subordinate classes, like oral culture, rumors, gossip, jokes, popular storytelling and some other practices (p. 12).

Taking into account the central points of Gramsci's theory of hegemony, but avoiding the mechanistic interpretation of dominant classes manipulating mass media to achieve hegemony and subordinate sectors engaged in "resistance" practices, Barbero does not reject mass culture to rescue "lo popular" (the traditional/anti-hegemonic components of subordinate cultures). "Lo popular," asserts Barbero, is full of contradictions, complicities and cross-fertilizations with mass culture (1988, p. 459). There is no such thing as a pure traditional culture free of contamination from

the hegemonic ideology. And there is no such thing as a hegemonic ideology free of contradictions and popular elements. In order to be hegemonic, the dominant ideology needs to take into account some authentic claims, values and practices of the subordinate groups. Against "manichean" perspectives on the dominant paradigm and on cultural imperialism theories, Barbero argues, "the way is clear for a new perception of the popular that emphasizes the thick texture of hegemony/subalternity, the interlacing of resistance and submission, and opposition and complicity" (p. 462).

Mediated communication. In the Latin American metropolises, where mass communication is strongest, Barbero discovers the persistence of rural practices and values, of religion, oral history and psychological traits like "machismo" (Barbero, 1987a, p. 14). As a consequence of this new thinking on communication and culture, Barbero is able to reach the same conclusions as culturalist scholars: audience members are not passive, and reception of media messages is mediated by social and cultural factors which dilute the ideological components of the product and generate a more active articulation of the media content with the everyday life of individuals. Again, this reconceptualization of audience members as active has little in common with positivist and functionalist approaches like "uses and gratifications" and liberal pluralist perspectives on media's long-term effects like agenda-setting.

The main difference between Barbero's approach and that of the positivist perspective continues to be the "critical" point of departure of the Latin American popular cultures approach. For Barbero and other Latin American scholars, communication needs to be studied within the wider perspective of society and culture, and media messages seen as ideological products engaged in the reproduction

of the class system. Contemporary capitalist societies are characterized by structural inequalities, and communication plays a fundamental role in the ideological reproduction of the social system. Biernatzki and White (1987) summarize well Barbero's position:

> The new perspective on media and culture suggests, in the view of Martin Barbero, that the development of media structure and content comes not only from the introduction of new media technologies or new media policies, but from the way media are appropriated in the daily life of the family and the *barrio*. The starting point for research should not be the disjunction of media as hegemonic control and passive reception, but the mediations, the points of articulation between the processes of media production on the one hand and the daily routine of media use in the context of the family, community and nation on the other.
>
> (p. 7)

Active reception of media messages. Another Latin American scholar stressing the critical ability of audience members in media reception is Valerio Fuenzalida. Through his experience in an "active reception" project financed by an international organization in Chile, Fuenzalida concludes that the influence of primary and peer groups is extremely important in the individuals' reception of media messages. Family, according to this, exerts a decisive influence in the television habits and preferences of the youth along with the influence of their friends with whom they talk and discuss the programs (Fuenzalida, 1989, p. 41). Thus, the

significance and redefinitions of television held by any individual are constructed in confrontation with the perception of their spouses, children, neighbors, co-workers and/or friends.

In all his writings, Fuenzalida points out the importance socio-cultural context has in television mediation. For those individuals with high income, the television set is only one among many entertainment or informational options. For lower income groups, the television set is most of the time their single or most important means to get acquainted with other social realities. On the other hand, Fuenzalida argues that the presence of mass media other that television exerts an important influence in the reception process. For those who are exposed heavily to newspapers, magazines, radio and films, television may not be as significant as for those who are not. Also, social organizations like churches, political parties, professional associations, unions, action groups, and so on intervene in the reception process because they constitute sources of information and of socio-cultural elaborations for the individual. Those organizations promote a complex view of society and life which sometimes conflicts and contradicts television discourses:

> While the television viewer may be physically alone when watching television, he is however a culturally situated and socially constituted receiver. And this beam of socio-cultural relations that constitute the television viewer interacts with the different television messages to reach a final concrete meaning. (p. 46)

Links between popular culture and mass culture. Néstor Garcia Canclini is another of the Latin American scholars who have contributed to the shifting away

from the powerful media, powerful ideology thesis within the critical perspective in Latin America. In the same vein of Barbero and Fuenzalida, García-Canclini (1987) criticizes cultural dependency and cultural imperialism approaches for considering mass communication as an unquestionable instrument of the dominant class to manipulate subordinate groups. Asserting that many links exist between mass culture --understood as the culture produce *by* the mass media *for* the masses-- and popular culture in contemporary Latin American societies, he points out the need for anthropologists to recognize that the "popular" does not exist in a pure and essential form among subordinate groups but is intermingled with mass communication. Simultaneously, communication scholars, according to García-Canclini, should be aware of the complex interactions between media messages and popular traditions and beliefs, and study not only the electronic media, but also popular cultures:

> The problem becomes then, for both anthropologists and communication scholars simultaneously, how to interpret traditional legends reformulated through their contact with cultural industries; how popular crafts change their designs and icons in their quest for new buyers in the cities (...). On the other hand, it is also necessary to study the ways in which mass culture is fertilized by the traditional-popular, using melodramatic structures, narrative, visual and rhythmic structures taken from the wisdom popular cultures have accumulated. (p. 9)

Though Garcia-Canclini (1988) believes mass media play an important role in the reproduction of hegemonic interests --emphasizing the need for hegemony to genuinely take into account the interests of subordinate classes-- he suggests,

however, not to take as a point of departure the premise of domination. Rather, he explains, it would be better to examine the "service" mass communication provides to popular groups. Many of the millions of migrants arriving to the big cities feel that their local cultural habits are an obstacle for their intervention in urban life. They, he says, "find in mass culture information on how to understand and behave themselves in the new conditions, on how to get out of their isolation in order not to be inferior anymore" (p. 38-39). The Latin American theorist complains about the lack of attention anthropologists, sociologists and communication scholars have paid to the sense mass media makes to audience members. By doing this, he argues, they would understand more the processes of assimilation and use of media messages.

Definitions of cultural and national identity. Despite widespread concern about the impact of transnational communication on the cultural identity of developing countries' population, efforts to define the concept of "cultural identity" are scarce. Schlesinger (1987), after an exhaustive review of the literature about cultural and national identity, concluded that these terms functioned as handles that offered respectability and brand identification for a variety of approaches and projects in the cultural arena. However it was "far from clear what these terms actually mean, or more importantly, that any of the writers cited has a coherent view of how such forms of collective identity are constructed" (233).

A similar critique is espoused by Hamelink (1989). He argues that the usefulness of the concept of cultural identity is frequently taken for granted and the analytical concerns directed towards such questions as "How is cultural identity threatened?" or "How can cultural identity be preserved?" (p. 418). Such a concept is

so inadequate according to Hamelink, that he proposes to delete it from the academic debate and focus instead on problems of *cultural development*, by looking at issues of "dynamism," "diversity" and "dispute" within national cultures (pp. 421-422).

Some scholars, however, have ventured some definitions of cultural identity. Smith (1990), for example, proposes the following:

> By a collective cultural identity (...) is meant those feelings and values in respect of a sense of continuity, shared memories and a sense of common destiny of a given unit of population which has had common experiences and cultural attributes. (p. 179)

Consequently, for Smith, the concept of identity refers to three components of a population's shared experiences: 1) a sense of continuity between the experiences of succeeding generations of the unit of the population; 2) shared memories of specific events and personages which have been turning-points of a collective history; and 3) a sense of common destiny on the part of the collectivity sharing those experiences (p. 179). A somewhat similar definition is advanced by La Pierre (in Schlesinger, 1987): "collective identity relates to a collective memory through which the contemporary group recognises itself through a common past, remembrance, commemoration, interpretation and reinterpretation" (p. 235). A third definition in this vein is provided by Schlesinger himself. He argues that particular collectivities which have or believe to have certain characteristics in common have a national identity which is sustained by different factors: "Characteristic elements would be continuity of territorial settlement entailing a deeply meaningful sense of place, a distinctive language, an identifiable pantheon of heroes, battles and traditions constructed as a 'national history' or collective memory, and specific political,

economic and cultural institutions" (Schlesinger, 1991, p. 300).

Cultural studies scholars, however, offer a different approximation to the concept of cultural identity. Garcia-Canclini (1990), for example, argues that the defense of the "national" should not be understood as the general condemnation of the "foreign." Preserving the cultural identity, according to this Latin American scholar, has to do with the ability of audiences to interact with the multiple international symbolic systems from their *own* cultural positions and background. Garcia-Canclini points out that the defense of the local and national cultures continue to be necessary due to the efforts of transnational companies to subordinate these national cultures to foreign ideological systems. However, he explains, in contemporary developing societies multiple symbolic exchanges intersections and transactions are generated, creating a hybrid sociability through which the individual participates unevenly in both high brow and popular, traditional and modern groups (p. 332). Consequently, trying to assess the impact of transnational communication on Latin American audiences is not just a matter of measuring the distance between the enunciation of messages and their effects, "but rather of constructing an integral analysis of consumption, understood as the overall effect of the social processes of appropriation of products (...)" (García-Canclini, 1988, p. 493). The definition of consumption, in this vein, includes for García Canclini the use of urban space and the ways of living at home, of dressing and eating, in addition to the reception of media messages.

The analysis of De Certau (1987) of consumption, culture and everyday life is very similar to that of García-Canclini. De Certau points out that the analysis of the images transmitted on television (representations) and of the time audiences expose

to them (behaviors), needs to be complemented by studying what is "fabricated" out of those images during the hours of exposure: "the same has to be done with the use of the urban space, the goods bought in the supermarket, or the legends and stories distributed by the newspaper" (p. 70). For De Certau, the identity of subordinate groups survives due to their particular patterns of consumption, procedures different and sometimes opposed to those intended by the producers of transnational or hegemonic cultural products. According to De Certau, popular groups sometimes subvert the hegemonic practices and values, not by rejecting or replacing them, but by using them in ways alien to the ones designed by the producers (pp. 70-71).

A somewhat similar position is adopted by Barbero (1988). The Colombian scholar argues that cultural identity cannot be found on that which is idealized as pure, authentic and without contradictions and complicities in national cultures. Rather, contemporary national cultures have been made by historical machinations, cross-fertilizations, complicities and contradictions (p. 459). They interact with highly complex and diverse cultural practices and values, some of which are unavoidably foreign. Cultural identity, in this context, is the way in which the popular sectors, despite their integration to the capitalist economy embedded in the transnational cultural paradigm, are able to recycle the hegemonic practices and values "in order to survive physically and culturally --from their uncertain relation to the state and their distance from technological development, to the persistance of elements that derive from oral culture and the maintenance of the popular apparatus for transmitting knowledge, the refunctionalization of machismo, the melodramatization of life and the 'practical' uses of religion" (pp. 463-464). Latin American popular classes, unavoidably exposed to the transnational media contents

and the hegemonic ideology due to the economic and technological dependence of their countries on the United States, find ways of preserving some of their local cultural traits, negotiating or resisting some of the dominant messages and technologies. Sometimes, subordinate groups develop new uses for media technologies, according to the needs of their own culture (Barbero, 1988b, p. 177).[3] Sometimes, they are able to use the foreign product as energy, as a project to be developed based on the requirements of their own culture (p. 181). And sometimes the only way open for subordinate sectors to assume actively the imposed cultural and media contents is through the "anti-design," the parodic design that allows people to reject the foreign cultural product as a real value (p. 181).

In this context, for culturalists, the concepts of national and cultural identity are not static qualities or characteristics of social groups. Rather, they refer to dynamic processes inscribed in the reproduction of meaning in societies characterized by inequalities, unbalanced distribution of power and resources, and divisions along class, gender, and socio-cultural practices. Consequently, operationalizing these terms in a positivist vein is out of the question. Instead, one needs to look at the cultural processes whereby subordinate groups are able to confront hegemonic messages, assimilating them or refunctionalizing them according to their own cultural background and social position. To do this, qualitative, ethnographic methods are needed.

A theoretical framework for the study of media and cultural identity

Having discussed the most recent "active audience" approaches and the debate over cultural identity, it is necessary to go back to our initial question: Do mass media exert an ideological manipulation of audience members due to inequalities in the international flow of communication between the United States and Latin American countries, as cultural imperialism advocates argue? Are foreign media messages affecting and destroying Latin American national cultures?

Almost ten years after Boyd-Barret's and Fejes' criticism about the lack of studies assessing the cultural impact of transnational media products, it is obvious this topic has been considered consistently by European, American, and Latin American scholars like the ones cited above. Although there are significant differences among their specific theories and methods, some general conclusions seem to have been reached:

Boyd-Barret's criticism of giving exaggerated importance to foreign influences in one particular medium, and not taking into account the wider context of all media available to audience members, was supported by Fuenzalida's research. After doing extensive research on television reception in Chile during the 1980's, Fuenzalida (1989) concluded that the impact of television is diluted when receivers expose themselves to other mass media like radio, cinema, comics, and newspapers. The Chilean scholar goes further, and notes the mediating importance of family members, friends, and social organizations like the church, political parties and unions. These mediating forces, when taken into account as information sources to elaborate socio-cultural meaning, intervene between hegemonic messages and individual audience members' reception.

European and American culturalists, on the other hand, have contributed by

rejecting the idea of communication messages carrying only hegemonic values that reinforce the interests of dominant classes. Following Gramsci, both European and Latin American culturalists take as their point of departure the concept of "hegemony," asserting that in order to be effective and get social consensus, hegemonic products are forced to include authentic elements, tastes, and interests of subordinate groups (see Fiske, 1987). Thus, popular traditions, genres, and narrative and melodramatic structures are openly incorporated in mass communication (Garcia-Canclini, 1988). For Martin Barbero, Latin American soap operas, the yellow press and the Mexican cinema are very successful among popular classes because they learned how to take into account the complex and contradictory cultural background of subordinate groups. Both Fiske and Garcia-Canclini argue that these processes weaken the omnipotent and manipulative conceptions of "hegemony".

Fiske asserts that despite the homogenizing force of the dominant ideology, subordinate groups in capitalist societies have always maintained a diversity of social identities, forcing capitalism to create an equivalent variety of voices. Garcia-Canclini agrees when he points out that modern capitalism "does not always need to put away economic and cultural forces not useful to its growth, especially if those forces still hold together a large sector and contribute to the satisfaction of needs or the system's equilibrated reproduction" (Garcia-Canclini, 1987: 9).

Consequently, cultural dependency researchers' assumptions about the undimensionality of foreign cultural products, about their malign reproduction of dominant values and interests, have been discarded in two different ways: through the analyses examining the polysemy of media messages --messages that incorporate subordinate traits to be accepted by popular sectors of society, and by the analyses of

the mediation processes that intervene in the reception of those cultural products.

Despite these fundamental coincidences among culturalists in Europe and Latin America, there are some important differences. On the one hand, European and North American scholars work on the industrialized and postmodern world, qualifying their findings according to the particular conditions of subordinate classes in their countries. Their emphasis, thus, is on social class --operationalized as occupation, and on variables like genre and age of the studied groups.

On the other hand, Latin American researchers work in developing societies characterized by an unequal and complex confluence of the traditional, the modern, and the postmodern, where elements of the Indian and colonial historical memory coexist with capitalist and hegemonic structures. Their emphasis, consequently, centers on the persistence of popular cultures and social class in the context of Indian, rural and mestizo influences.

A culturalist approach to the study of border identity

Combined, the European cultural studies tradition and the Latin American "popular cultures" approach allows us to test the impact of foreign media on the cultural identity of Mexican border residents from a more consistent and cohesive theoretical framework.

First, it seems necessary to take as a point of departure the possibility of border audiences reacting in a differentiated and complex way to U.S. media messages. Instead of passive, easily manipulated individuals, border residents may actively participate in the reception process. They may expose selectively to specific media and programming, and may "negotiate" the meaning of cultural products,

accepting some ideological values and rejecting others according to their socio-economic status, gender, and other characteristics.

Cultural identity, thus, may not be as jeopardized as imperialism scholars tend to assume. Cultural studies suggest that subordinate groups --in this case citizens of the less developed country interacting with and confronting the most powerful nation in the world-- may be able to hold on to their most basic values, customs, traditions, and beliefs despite an overwhelming presence of the hegemonic ideology in the mass media. Resistance or negotiation may not be homogenous; rather, variables like social class, gender, age, occupation, years of education, years of residence on the border, knowledge of English, and so on may account for higher or lesser degrees of acceptance or rejection of U.S. media or U.S. cultural products, and for their impact on national identity. Csepeli (1991), for example, has found in the case of Hungary that the contents and structures of national identity show...

> "a remarkable distribution among the various social groups within a given society. Socio-economic status measured by the level of education, occupation and level of social mobility seem to be the most important variables behind the presence of simpler or more sophisticated contents and structures of national identity". (p. 330)

Csepeli has also found in their surveys on national identity that youth, while generally in agreement with adult response patterns, have a less meaningful concept of national sentiment (1991, p. 331).

Furthermore, availability of local and national media on the Mexican side may also play a role in the intensity of exposure to U.S. media. As Boyd-Barret has mentioned, when looking for foreign media effects on cultural identity it is necessary

to take into account the availability of counteracting local or national media. This seems to be the case of the Mexican border region, where residents have plenty of local television and radio stations, newspapers, magazines, and theaters. While many of these media transmit a high proportion of U.S. media contents dubbed or translated to Spanish, they also include significant amounts of local programming. Consequently, to assess the influence of U.S. media or U.S. cultural products on Mexican border residents, it is necessary to determine the degree in which the later in fact engage U.S. media. Also, information about the patterns of exposure to these media may provide important clues to be further explored in qualitative terms.

Although the above discussion shows the important contribution cultural studies can make to a project like the one reported here, it is important to point out some limitations in that contribution as well as some departures from it. The main limitation of this contribution by cultural studies to an analysis of foreign media reception, at least in the Latin American context, is the dramatic lack of empirical studies, either qualitative or quantitative, testing this approach's main assumptions, concepts and ideas. Lull's (1988a) criticism of culturalist analyses of audience reception being in most cases theoretical speculations with no basis in empirical work, is particularly relevant for Latin American cultural studies. Most researchers in this tradition publish sound theoretical discussions about social mediations and active processes of reception, but just a few report actual findings of empirical research. This is an important limitation because it means this study must proceed without the benefit of substantial empirical description of the phenomena of interest.

Methodologically, this study does not follow the typical research design cultural studies would suggest. I have given the survey considerable importance in

my design, an importance rarely found in the few pieces of empirical reception research. The reasons for this decision are discussed later, but for now it is important to stress the contribution a survey can make to obtain basic descriptive data, explore basic relationships between variables and triangulate the qualitative data of in-depth interviews.

Study concepts

In order to facilitate the understanding of the particular meaning of key terms used in this study, I provide the following definitions:

Exposure to mass media: the extent to which students watch particular television stations or programs, listen to particular radio stations and types of music, and watch particular types of movies in theaters or using the VCR. While exposure alone cannot be considered an indicator of cultural values or attitudes, it is a necessary condition for foreign cultural penetration to occur. If Secundaria students are not exposed to U.S. media or U.S. media contents, hypotheses about a possible loss of cultural identity through foreign media penetration on Mexico's border region would not be sustainable.

Cultural identity: In this particular study, cultural identity will not be defined as a fixed or objective set of values, traditions or attitudes towards the Mexican culture. Rather, an attempt will be made to allow the students, in their own subjective terms, to define what it means to be "Mexican" in the border with the United States, the implications of exposing to U.S. or Mexican mass media, and the importance of celebrating U.S. or Mexican traditions in the region.

Research questions

Taking into account the theoretical concepts, assumptions, and findings of the cultural studies tradition, this study takes as a point of departure the following considerations:

With respect to the most general question, that of the availability of local media and local cultural products that may counteract the influence of foreign media, it is important to look at whether reception and preferences of media contents varies according to the socio-economic status of the students. Do lower-class students, due to their subordinate position, more frequently select local and national media because they include cultural products that incorporate some of the values, traditions, genres and beliefs embedded in popular culture? Are upper-class students, in contrast, more likely to be exposed to U.S. media and U.S. media contents because their socialization, values and visions of the world are more compatible with the hegemonic perspectives incorporated in American cultural products?

An exploratory survey carried out in 1988 indicated that less than 40% of *Secundaria* students in Nuevo Laredo read newspapers with some frequency, while 66% watched television at least 3 hours per day, and listened to the radio at least 2 hours every day (cf. Lozano, 1991). For this reason, and in order to allow a more in-depth analysis of the last two media, the decision was made to exclude exposure to and reception of newspapers from the study.

To investigate the concerns mentioned in the literature review of culturalist approaches and studies, the following research questions will lead this research

project. As discussed in the introduction, the research design calls for the use of both a survey and a qualitative technique: the in-depth interview. While a survey would be inappropriate or incomplete to assess the complex concept of cultural identity and construction of meanings, it is my contention that it may be of great use for descriptive purposes, and even for determining some basic relationships between key variables like social class, gender, and years of residence on the border with exposure to particular types of media contents. In this, I follow critical and culturalist scholars like Bourdieu (1984, 1990), Morley (1988), and Marsh (1984) that have defended a non-positivistic use of surveys in critical studies. Sieber, for example, has argued that...

> The integration of research techniques within a single project opens up enormous opportunities for mutual advantage in each of the three major phases --design, data collection and analysis. These mutual benefits are not merely quantitative (...) but qualitative as well --one could almost say that a new style of research is born of the marriage of survey and fieldwork methodologies. (cited in Bulmer, 1984, p. 30)

For Marsh (1984), doing a survey "is only positivistic if one tries to claim that theory has no role in ordering the variables and assessing the significance of the coefficients" (p. 89). Tunstall (1974) rejects the frequent criticism of surveys being more shallow and less capable of tapping subjective meanings than participant observation:

> This is a fair criticism of many badly conceived and conducted survey. However, it is not an accurate account of many other well prepared and positively conducted surveys (...) many pieces of high quality

> sociological research combine both micro and macro aspects, both interaction and systems concerns and use both observational and survey methods (...) it is possible to combine the strengths of these two, and of other, methods. (51-52)

James Carey, one of the most prominent American scholars in the qualitative-culturalist approach, has argued along with Christians that qualitative studies are not opposed to statistics, mathematics or any other quantitative technique:

> Counting, even the more elaborated forms of counting, are among the most extraordinary and indispensable tools invented by humans. No one can survive very long in scholarly research without such tools, and simple arguments about quantifying versus nonquantifying distort and even obscure the real intellectual problems. (Christians & Carey, 1989, p. 357).

Garcia-Canclini (1990, pp. 56-57) has also advocated the combined use of quantitative and qualitative research techniques. He explains that the complexity of contemporary popular cultures asks for the use of both survey methods and participant observation or in-depth interviews.

Mainly for descriptive purposes, for basic relationships between the variables mentioned above, and for triangulation with the data stemming from the in-depth interviews, the survey included in this project was extremely useful.

The research questions posed for the survey were:

Media exposure questions

1) What are the television and radio stations preferred by the students?

2) How long are they exposed to radio, television and films? Do they tend to expose

to a single medium or to several of them?

3) What kind of television programs, originated where, are most watched by them?

4) What kind of radio programs and/or music are most listened to by them?

5) What kind of movies, originated where, are most watched by them?

6) Are there any differences in Secundaria student exposure to U.S. media by social class, gender, years of residence on the border, and knowledge of English?

7) How frequently do they combine in their media preferences Mexican and U.S. contents, Mexican and U.S. genres? Do they watch both American and Mexican television programs, American and Mexican movies, listen to English- and Spanish-language songs?

8) Are native border youngsters more likely to select U.S. media contents than youngsters that came recently from the interior of Mexico?

Cultural identity questions

As discussed before, surveys have some important limitations in the study of cultural identity. However, some critical researchers have used survey questions to explore basic dimensions of cultural identity and to get complementary information for their qualitative studies (cf. Csepeli, 1991). The following cultural identity questions were included in the survey as a complement for the long interview and as exploratory approximations to the complex problem this study is concerned with. The questions were similar to some of the ones included in the long interview and were designed to elucidate the potential of survey questions to find information similar to the one gathered in a qualitative study.

9) How proud or satisfied are they to be Mexicans?

10) How Mexican do they consider themselves to be?

11) What are their perceptions of Mexican and U.S. traditions?

12) How do cultural identity attitudes relate to exposure to the media? Are youngsters who are less proud to be Mexicans or who feel they are less Mexican that youngsters living in the interior of Mexico more likely to be exposed to U.S. media contents?

The in-depth interview was, on the other hand, based on two sets of research questions. One set focused on perception and use of U.S. and Mexican media messages by the *Secundaria* students, the other one explored the youngsters' own perceptions and definitions of cultural identity.

Perception and use of U.S. and Mexican media messages

1) What do they think about Mexican media messages and U.S. media messages? How do they perceive both? Do they find similarities and/or differences?

2) How do they use media messages in their everyday lives? What do they do with them? How do they integrate them with their social experience?

Perception and definitions of cultural identity

3) How do Secundaria students define their own social identities as Mexicans and as border residents? What are the symbols, attitudes and practices that youngsters use to define their collective cultural identity?

4) What do they consider to be their similarities and differences with Mexicans in the interior of the country?

5) What do they consider to be their similarities and differences with Anglos?

6) What do they think the impact of U.S. media has on their cultural identity?

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The survey

As discussed above, the research design in this study called for both a quantitative technique (a survey) and a qualitative one (in-depth interviews). The survey was needed to gather descriptive information about patterns and amount of exposure to U.S. and Mexican media, years of residence on the border, knowledge of English, and so on. It was based on interviews with a representative sample of students attending both private and public *Secundarias* in Nuevo Laredo. Officials from the local delegation of the Mexican Public Education Secretary were approached for permission to use *Secundaria* (junior high school) students as subjects, and they provided a listing of *Secundaria* schools and the number of students in each of them by grade and gender. With their help and the assistance of officials at each particular *secundaria*, schools were stratified to assure representation of upper, middle and lower-class students. In November 1991, there were 8,486 junior high school students in Nuevo Laredo. Of those, 8,078 attended public schools and 403 attended private schools. Sample size was 575, to allow for an adequate number of upper-class students in the survey (seven upper-class students were interviewed for every middle and lower class). The field work was done during the last two weeks of November and the first week of December 1991.

The research instrument was pretested with 30 high school students: 10 for each stratum (5 males and 5 females). Based on this pretest, the questionnaire was revised to make sure instructions and the wording of questions were clear.

The final instrument was a self-administered questionnaire with questions that

allowed determination of the students' patterns of exposure to national and foreign media, their content preferences, and general information about their sex, age, years of residence on the border and knowledge of English. The most important variables in the survey were: 1) Socio-economic status of students attending each particular school[4]; 2) Sex; 3) Number of hours devoted to watching television, listening to the radio and reading newspapers, as well as number of times per month they go to the cinema; 4) Origin of preferred mass media (local, national, American); and 5) Content preferences.

The in-depth interview

Regarding the qualitative phase, a sample of Secundaria students (from the original one) was interviewed in depth in order to elucidate their accounts on the roles and functions of media messages in their everyday lives, as well as their definitions of their own social and collective identities as border Mexicans. Through the interviews it was possible to gain insight into the active media reception processes of the students, their perception of U.S. and Mexican media products, the context of their exposure to them, and so on. The open-ended questions allowed the students to go in depth in their accounts of their media experiences, describing them with their own words and in their own terms.

The students were interviewed one by one in the school's library by this researcher and two assistants. The interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, and were audiotape recorded. Although interviewers had a basic questionnaire to guide the interviewing session, the method allowed for an unstructured discussion and for exploratory and different questions and topics to emerge. In this, I followed

McCracken (1988), who advocates the use of a questionnaire for the in-depth interview but who points out that it should not preempt the "open-ended" nature of the qualitative interview: "Within each of the questions, the opportunity for exploratory, unstructured responses remains" (p. 24). The questionnaire, thus, will include open-ended questions originated in the research questions posed for the qualitative part of the study. The analysis of the data collected with the in-depth interviews followed the model outlined by Lull (1990) and Morley (1990): written transcripts were made from the audiotape recordings, and particular answers organized around each specific research question (cutting the typewritten pages into units of one observation each). Afterwards, an analysis of the overall meaning of the data in the context of the theoretical framework and the research questions posed for the qualitative stage was done. Major themes and recurring definitions or perceptions were noted that pointed to some degree of consistency of response (cf. Morley, 1988, p. 34). Particular samples of the respondents' answers and comments about U.S. and Mexican media messages and about their perceptions and definitions of their own cultural identity were used to illustrate conceptual focal points. An attempt was made to relate these qualitative findings to the quantitative ones of the survey.

The sample consisted of 30 Secundaria students. Using a stratified random design, 10 students were selected for each social stratum (upper class, middle class and lower class). Half the students (5 in each stratum) were boys, and half girls. This design did not provide statistical representation for each stratum and each gender group. However, it allowed an in-depth and detailed exploration of the media experiences and accounts of the different groups of students selected in this qualitative phase.

Sample for the in-depth interviews

		boys	girls
Class	upper	5	5
	middle	5	5
	lower	5	5
		15	15

n = 30

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Survey results

Survey results were expected to provide basic information about the general patterns of the students' exposure to the different media content available for them. In particular, it was designed to determine if the students focused their attention mainly on one particular medium (i.e. television), or had a more diversified set of media preferences.

Based on the culturalist literature reviewed in chapter 2, the survey results were expected to provide some evidence about a differentiated exposure to the available media content, either American or Mexican, according to variables like social class and gender. In particular, it was expected to find that lower-class students would be less likely to be exposed to American media messages than upper or middle-class students, due to their subordinate social position and the social mediations embedded in their cultural context and deriving from their "marginalized and repressed histories that have intransigently resisted incorporation" (Fiske, 1987, p. 310).

The same was expected in relation to the cultural identity set of questions included in the survey. It was expected that lower-class students would be prouder of being Mexican, would consider themselves more Mexican and would consider Mexican traditions as more important than American traditions in comparison with upper and middle-class students.

Gender, social class, and ownership of media. Altogether, 575 students answered the survey questionnaire. Table 1 shows that 263 were male and 300 were female, 161 were upper class, 295 middle class and 107 lower class (total in this table is 263 because of the missing cases).

Table 2 shows the patterns of ownership of television and radio sets, VCR, cable and satellite dishes. Almost all the students owned at least one television set and one radio set. VCR's, cable television, and satellite dishes were more likely to be mentioned by upper-class students than to middle or lower class. While 96.3% of upper-class students had VCR's at home, only 68% of middle class and 47.1% of lower-class students had this technology. Cable television is not widely available in Nuevo Laredo due to capital and technical limitations of the cable company. However, 40.3% of upper-class students were suscribed to cable, while just 13.5% of middle class and 6.3% of lower-class students had access to it at home. Satellite dishes were in fact more widely available for upper-class students than cable; 47.7% of them had this technology at home, compared with just 4.9% for middle and 2% for lower-class students. In general, the oldest media, television and radio, were widely available for all students regardless of their social class, while the new technologies (VCR's, cable television, and satellite dishes) were mostly available for upper-class students, showing a clear media gap along social classes.

Exposure to different media. Many studies about the impact of mass media on cultural identity tend to focus attention on television, arguing that it is by far the medium which audiences select the most frequently. Although this may be true, it does not mean that other media like radio, films, newspapers, and magazines are

marginal for audience members. In fact, most of the time, audiences constantly and widely use other media, and this exposure may mediate, reinforce or even dilute television impact (Fuenzalida, 1989). Table 3 shows that exposure to all kind of media was very strong in most students. They devoted 242 minutes per day (4 hours 2 minutes) to television, and 164 minutes per day (2 hours and 44 minutes) to radio. Lower-class students were the ones who use more frequently both media, reflecting fewer leisure choices than upper class youngsters.

On average, students with VCR's at home watched video movies almost three days a week (2.81). In this instance, upper class youngsters (3.14 days per week) were heavier users of this technology than lower-class students (2.26). The latter, however, attended more frequently the cinema than the former. Almost 29% of lower class youngsters went to film theaters once a week, in contrast with just 13.9% of the upper-class students.

Television and radio stations preferred. Table 4 shows that despite having the possibility of tuning in to at least two U.S. English-language television channels (CBS and NBC) operating from Laredo, Texas, *Secundaria* students preferred by far the stations with Mexican or Spanish-language programming. XHBR Channel 11 (affiliated to the national Televisa channel XEW) was the most frequently watched station, with a media of 4.41 in a scale of 1 thru 5 (from never to every day). The second most watched station was KLDO Channel 27 (mean = 4.00), which although located in the U.S. side of the border was affiliated to the Spanish-language network Telemundo, with many Mexican movies, soap operas and sports. In third place was the local television station XEFE 2 with a mean of 2.86 ("rarely") and in the last two

places were the two U.S. stations affiliated to CBS (mean = 2.44) and NBC (mean = 2.07).

Those suscribed to cable television, with many more U.S. English-language channel options, still preferred to watch more frequently Mexican television stations. The upper class youngsters with satellite dish (47% of all upper class studentes), however, tended to watch U.S. networks like HBO, Movie Channel, Pay per View, and so on more than Mexican stations.

In sum, Secundaria students in general tended to watch Mexican, Spanish-language stations much more often than U.S. networks, with the exception of the few upper-class students with satellite dish.

The same situation was true for exposure to radio stations. Table 5 shows that the students overwhelmingly chose Mexican Spanish-language stations when listening to the radio. The twelve most listened to radio stations were local stations, ranging from a mean of 3.19 to a mean of 1.29 in a scale of 1 (never) thru 5 (every day). The four radio stations located in Laredo, Texas, were in the last five places. Consequently, Nuevo Laredo Secundaria students, despite their geographical proximity to the United States, showed patterns of exposure to their national media similar to their peers in the interior of Mexico.

Most watched television programs. While U.S. programs were available both in English in the two Laredo, Texas' stations affiliated to CBS and NBC, and dubbed to Spanish in the local XEFE 2, *Secundaria* students were clearly more interested in watching Mexican programs. Out of the 33 most mentioned television programs, the first 16 were either produced in Mexico or in the United States but by the Telemundo

network (in Spanish, with Latino actors or artists). All but one of the eight programs with the most mentions were Televisa programs like *Papá Soltero*, *Anabel* and *Chespirito* or soap operas like *Muchachitas*. In 17th place was the first most mentioned U.S. program: cartoons. In 22nd appeared U.S. films showed on CBS or NBC, on 25th Magnum (dubbed to Spanish in the local station), and in 28th Dukes of Hazzard (also dubbed in the same station). Chips and the Ninja Turtles cartoons were ranked last.

Exposure to U.S. television programs, thus, was not significant among the students despite living on the border and being able to tune in U.S. television stations.

Preferred radio music and groups. Table 7 shows that the most frequently listened to music on the radio was Modern Spanish-language music with a mean of 3.87 on the scale of 1 (never) thru 5 (every day). On second place was Mexican "country" or traditional music with a mean of 3.14 closely followed by U.S. pop music, with a mean of 3.13.

The list of most liked groups or singers shows that Mexican artists were much more popular than American ones. Table 8 shows that the most popular U.S. group was Vanilla Ice, in ninth place with just 35 mentions while Alejandra Guzman, a Mexican vocalist, and the regional Mexican music group Bronco were in first place with 93 mentions. Grouped by the type of music they play (see bottom of Table 8), 50.9% of mentions went to groups playing Spanish-language modern music, 36.9% to Mexican "country" traditional music and just 12.2% to English-language music. This results confirm those of Table 7, which showed English language music in third place.

Again, as in the case of television, border youngsters were much more likely to expose themselves to and prefer Mexican music and groups than U.S. music or groups. Geographical proximity to the United States seemed not to play a factor in increasing the likelihood of Mexican youngsters choosing U.S. television or radio contents.

Most watched films. If *Secundaria* youngsters prefer by far Mexican television and radio messages over U.S. contents, the reverse is true for films. Table 9 shows that 84.8% of the films most recently seen by the students on VCR and 77.0% of the films seen on cinemas were U.S. films. Most of these American movies were seen dubbed or with Spanish subtitles. The fact that U.S. movies were rented on the Mexican side of the border in national video rental chains or seen in local cinemas affiliated to national distribution chains, reflects the widespread availability of U.S. films all over Mexico and not just on the border region.

Whether exposure to American movies is common throughout the country or not, the fact is that Nuevo Laredo's *Secundaria* students do watch them, opening the possibility for some kind of ideological influence or impact on their cultural identity. Later, we will get back to this possibility when analyzing responses to the cultural identity questions both on the survey and on the in-depth interviews.

Differences in exposure to U.S. media by social class. Table 10 shows that while social class did not account for any difference in exposure to Mexican television programs, it did make a difference in exposure to U.S. television between upper class and middle-class students, the latter being heavier consumers of U.S.

television (dubbed-to-Spanish series like Magnum, Chips, Daktari) than the former. Exposure to U.S. television among the three social groups (mean = 2.17 in a scale of 1 to 5), however, was considerable less intense than to Mexican television (mean = 3.59). Nuevo Laredo *Secundaria* youngsters tended to much more frequently watch Mexican television programs than U.S. programs (even those dubbed to Spanish and transmitted on the local station), showing concern with the erosion of Mexican cultural identity via U.S. television programming was not well founded.

With respect to the frequency with which they listen to U.S. and Mexican music, Table 12 shows that there were significant differences between upper class and middle and lower class youngsters. Upper-class students listened to U.S. music significantly more (mean = 3.98) than middle class (mean = 3.13), and lower-class students (mean = 2.98). However, upper-class students also listened to Mexican modern music more than their middle and lower class peers. In fact, the former listened more frequently to Mexican modern music (mean = 4.12) than to U.S. music (mean = 3.98), rejecting any simplistic correlation between social class and preference of U.S. media contents. In the case of Mexican traditional, country ("ranchera") music, Table 12 shows that the lower the social class the more frequently students are exposed to it. Looking at the frequency of which students listen to each particular kind of music, it is easy to see that in all cases, regardless of social class, exposure to Mexican music (either modern or traditional) is more intense than exposure to U.S. music. While upper-class students are more likely to listen to American singers or groups, they tend to devote even more attention to their national music.

In the case of movies seen on the VCR, Table 13 shows that upper-class

students were significantly more likely to watch American movies (mean = 4.09) than their middle (mean = 3.64) and lower class (mean = 3.43) counterparts. In contrast with their music preferences, they were the less likely to watch Mexican movies (mean = 2.72) than U.S. movies. Middle and lower class youngsters, however, tended also to watch U.S. films more frequently than Mexican movies, indicating again that U.S. media influence seemed to be concentrated on this kind of cultural products, but not on television and radio messages.

While the preference for U.S. films when attending the cinema was also true for upper and middle-class students, lower-class students were more likely this time to choose Mexican films over U.S. movies (see Table 13). These findings point out the complexity of media reception and the coexistence of different patterns of exposure, in the case of films, among *Secundaria* students.

Differences in exposure to U.S. media by gender. Table 11 shows that there was a significant difference in the frequency in which boys and girls select U.S. television programs. *Secundaria* boys watched more frequently American programs (mean = 2.34) than girls (mean = 2.04).

Gender was also an important variable to look at in exposure to U.S. and Mexican music. While boys tended to choose with the same frequency to U.S. (mean = 3.32) and Mexican modern music (mean = 3.33), girls clearly preferred Mexican music (mean = 4.44) over U.S. music (mean = 3.38) (see Table 12).

With respect to exposure to films, Table 13 shows that boys were significantly more likely than girls to watch U.S. movies, either on the VCR or on theaters. Still, girls watched more frequently U.S. films than Mexican films, both on VCR (mean =

3.69 over 3.04) and on cinemas (mean = 2.95 over 2.40). Again, if exposure to U.S. media is to affect cultural identity, films may be the vehicle through which this is happening.

Differences in exposure to U.S. media by years of residence on the border. Tables 14 and 15 show that there were no significant differences in the frequency with which native youngsters and recent immigrants to the border from the interior of Mexico (less than 6 years living in Nuevo Laredo) exposed to U.S. television programs, films and music.

The fact that the t value was not significant in all of the categories suggest that geographical proximity to the United States, and the permanent coexistance and interaction with U.S. persons and institutions do not account for stronger preferences for American media products.

Satisfaction with their nationality. In order to explore the degree in which students were happy with their nationality and how proud were they to be Mexicans, the survey included two questions in that direction: "how proud do you feel for being Mexican?" and "if you would be born again, of what nationality would you rather be?" For the first question, the answer was "very much" (1.47 in a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being "very much" and 5 "nothing"), showing a strong degree of satisfaction with their nationality and their country (see Table 16).

This finding was reinforced with the answers to the question about the nationality they would rather have (Table 17). Around 78% of the students said they would rather remain Mexicans, while 22% responded they would prefer the U.S.

citizenship. There were significant differences between the youngsters according to their social class. Although the majority of upper-class students, 72.6%, said they wanted to remain Mexicans, their percentage was smaller than that of middle class (76.6%) and lower-class students (88.6%). The higher the social class of a youngster, consequently, the weaker their loyalty to his/her Mexican citizenship.

Gender, however, accounted for no differences in their degree of satisfaction of being Mexican or in the loyalty to their citizenship. Both boys and girls exhibited the same pride of being Mexicans and the desire to continue being Mexican citizens (see Tables 16 and 18).

How Mexican they feel they are. Tables 19 and 20 show that Nuevo Laredo's Secundaria students do not consider themselves to be less Mexicans than their counterparts in the interior of Mexico for living on the border with the United States. Around 70% said they considered themselves to be as Mexican as their counterparts in the interior and 19% even said that they felt more Mexican than youngsters not living near the border. Neither social class nor gender accounted for any significant differences in this topic.

Their perception about the strength of Mexican culture on the border, however, did show some differences according to their social class and gender. Table 21 shows that most upper-class students considered Mexican culture to be stronger in the interior of Mexico (73.2%) while over half the middle-class students (56.4%) agreed with that proposition, and 39% of lower class youngsters gave this answer. It is interesting to note that the three groups perceived Mexican culture to be less strong at the border, despite feeling very proud of being Mexicans and wanting to remain

Mexican citizens. Gender did not account for differences in the percentage of students in favor of the "stronger in the interior of the country" proposition (see Table 22).

Importance of U.S. traditions. Table 23 shows that *Secundaria* youngsters, regardless of their social class, perceived Mexican traditions as being more important than U.S. traditions. While students are familiar with U.S. traditions like Thanksgiving, Halloween and the Easter Bunny because of their geographical proximity to the United States, they rated as more important for them Mexican festivities like the Feast of the Virgin of Guadelupe, Mexican Independence Day and the traditional Mexican Day of the Dead ("Día de los Muertos"). Upper-class students rated significantly higher U.S. traditions (mean = 3.31) than middle (mean = 2.95) and lower class youngsters (mean = 2.85), reflecting a tendency for them to perceive U.S. traditions as more important than their counterparts did. However, the same upper-class students rated considerably higher (mean = 4.58) their own national traditions. Consequently, possible U.S. influence on these grounds was not alarming.

Cultural identity and media exposure. Table 24 shows that there were no significant differences in frequency of exposure to U.S. television programs between those students who said they would rather be Mexican citizens again if they were to be born again, and those (a minority) who said they would rather be U.S. citizens. In a scale of 1 ("never") to 5 ("every week") both groups rated their exposure to American television programs in the lower end of 2 ("rarely"), with no significant difference between their medias. There were significant differences, however, in their

responses to the frequency in which they watched U.S. movies on the VCR or at the cinema. This suggests that preference for the U.S. citizenship was moderately associated with higher degrees of exposure to U.S. television or film contents.

The same was true in the case of exposure to U.S. music (see Table 25). Those who said they would rather become U.S. citizens did listen to U.S. music significantly more often (mean = 3.62) than those who said they would rather remain Mexican (mean = 2.97). Exposure to Mexican modern music did not account for any difference in both groups, but exposure to Mexican traditional, popular music made a difference. Those asserting they would want to remain Mexican, listened more often to traditional music (mean = 3.29) than those who would rather become U.S. citizens (2.70). Dissatisfaction of the students with their actual nationality, thus, seemed to be coincident with a higher degree of exposure to U.S. music and lower exposure to Mexican traditional music.

Table 26 shows there were no associations between exposure to U.S. television programs and films exhibited on theaters and how proud Nuevo Laredo's Secundaria students were of being Mexicans. Exposure to U.S. films played on the VCR and exposure to U.S. music, however, showed significant correlations, although they were low correlations (-.2153 and -.1784). Consequently, exposure to U.S. media was either not related or moderately related with lower degrees of satisfaction of the students with their nationality. Again, U.S. films and music, more so than U.S. television programs, seem to play a part, however moderate, in lower levels of cultural identity.

Another way to look at relationships between exposure to U.S. media and cultural identity values is to analyze responses to the question about how Mexican the

students felt in comparison with their counterparts in the interior of Mexico. Tables 27 thru 29 show that there were no significant relationships between the students perceiving themselves as less Mexican and watching more frequently U.S. television and films or listening to U.S. music. In these tables, exposure to U.S. films and music do not show any correlations with lower perceptions of the students about their "Mexicaness."

Knowledge of English. Table 30 shows that close to 65% of *Secundaria* students did not know the English language; 26.4% had some knowledge and only 8.8% knew it well or very well. This explains in part their low exposure to U.S. television and radio stations and why, when interested on watching U.S. films or television programs, they would look for them dubbed or with Spanish subtitles in their local television stations, video rentals or cinemas. By not knowing the language, most students were "protected" from receiving foreign values and ideologies directly from U.S. media across the border, at least from the verbal content of those media. As could be expected, upper-class students were the more likely to know English although even here the vast majority, over 75% did not know it well.

Table 31 shows that except for television, exposure to U.S. media contents was related to knowledge of English. The more English they know, the more they choose U.S. films and U.S. music. Exposure to television, however, was not correlated with knowledge of English. Students who knew English very well watched U.S. television contents as rarely as the ones who did not. Again, this calls for a more sophisticated interpretation of the processes of exposure to media contents. Variables like knowledge of English may be related to higher degrees of exposure to some U.S.

media contents than to others. In fact, it may well be that the knowledge of English is dependent upon the studen's social class, upper-class students being more likely to know English than lower class youngsters. Thus, even a straight forward variable such as knowledge of English may not have a direct and decisive impact on degree of exposure to U.S. media.

Summary of survey results. These findings show that Secundaria students consistently select a wide spectrum of mass media, and that they do so in a differentiated way, especially along class lines.

That the students are significantly exposed to a wide variety of media content and that they clearly prefer Mexican television programs and music over American ones, supports Boyd-Barrett's suggestion about the need to take into account, in any analysis of foreign media influences, the "countervailing local influences."

Secundaria students, in fact, select more local media contents than American ones, despite the widespread availability of the latter. This is important evidence that conflicts with cultural imperialism's assumptions about automatic exposure to foreign media content in developing countries, and that supports culturalist's assertions about the active role of subordinate groups in their selection of and exposure to mass media and their content.

The findings also support culturalists' arguments about the importance variables like social class have on mediating and differentiating exposure to the media. Upper-class students tended to expose themselves significantly more to U.S. films, televison programs and music than middle and lower class youngsters. They were also more likely to say they would rather be U.S. citizens if they would be born

again, to think that Mexican culture was stronger in the interior of Mexico, and to concede more importance to U.S. traditions than middle and lower-class students.

The findings, however, do not support a simplistic relationship between social class and exposure to U.S. media or erosion of cultural identity. While upper-class students were more likely than middle or lower-class students to expose themselves to U.S. media content, they would still prefer overwhelmingly Mexican television programs and music over American ones. While they were more likely than middle and lower class youngsters to say they would rather be U.S. citizens, there were no significant differences between them and their middle and lower class counterparts on how proud they felt of being Mexican and how Mexican they felt they were. While they rated U.S. traditions higher in importance than middle and lower-class students, they rated Mexican traditions even higher. Consequently, it is important to emphasize and follow cultural studies recent tendency to include social mediations and variables other than just social class when doing this kind of cultural analysis.

Table 1
Number of Secundaria students who participated in the survey by social class and sex: Dec. 1991

Social class	Boys	Girls	Total
Upper class	72	89	161
Middle class	139	156	295
Lower class	52	55	107
TOTAL	263	300	563[a]

a For a 95% Confidence level, a 5% margin of error, and a p. = .05, the adequate sample size for the 8,486 Secundaria students was 382. However, for this study, the sample was increased to 425 students.

To allow meaningful comparisons by social class, it was decided to oversample upper class students, in a proportion of 7 upper class students for each middle or lower class student, increasing the sample size to 563. In tables making reference to Secundaria students in general, the sample size of 425 was used. In tables making comparisons between social classes, the sample size of 563 was used.

Table 2
Ownership of television and radio sets, VCR, satellite dish and suscription to cable by social class

Ownership	Upper	Middle	Lower	Total
Television				
Yes	100%	99.7%	94.3%	98.8%
No	---	0.3	5.7	1.2
Total	100% (n=161)	100% (n=299)	100% (n=106)	100% (n=566)
Radio				
Yes	100	99.0	99.1	99.3
No	---	1.0	.9	.7
Total	100% (n=158)	100% (n=297)	100% (n=106)	100% (n=561)
VCR				
Yes	96.3	68.0	47.1	72.3
No	3.8	32.0	52.9	27.7
Total	100% (n=160)	100% (n=297)	100% (n=102)	100% (n=559)
X^2 = 80.949, d.f. 2, p. = .0000				
Cable				
Yes	40.3	13.5	6.3	19.8
No	59.7	86.5	93.8	80.2
Total	100% (n=149)	100% (n=281)	100% (n=96)	100% (n=526)
X^2 = 57.44, d.f. 2, p. = .0000				
Satellite Dish				
Yes	47.7	4.9	2.0	16.2
No	52.3	95.1	98.0	83.8
Total	100% (n=149)	100% (n=287)	100% (n=100)	100% (n=536)
X^2 = 57.44, d.f. 2, p. = .0000				

Table 3
Frequency with which students watch TV, listen to the radio or see movies by social class and gender

Social class	n	Minutes	St. Dev.	F/t	Signif.
Watch T.V.					
Upper class	161	248.75[a]	118.03	F = 3.33	.0366
Middle	299	230.43[a]	117.57		
Lower	104	264.45[b]	141.54		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b)					
Boys	262	247.68	134.48	t = .95	.343
Girls	298	237.67	112.29		
Total	**567**	**241.93**	**122.96**		
Listen to the radio					
Upper class	139	131.79[a]	100.58	F = 12.64	.0000
Middle	282	162.94[b]	119.63		
Lower	101	213.06[c]	159.38		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b)					
Boys	238	152.79	122.19	t = -1.94	.052
Girls	281	174.34	130.04		
Total	**567**	**164.34**	**126.57**		
Days per week they watch movies on the VCR					
Upper class	121	3.14[a]	1.92	F = 4.40	.0130
Middle	172	2.71	1.74		
Lower	42	2.26[b]	1.40		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b)					
Boys	147	2.72	1.75	t = .90	.371
Girls	186	2.90	1.82		
Total	**567**	**2.81**	**1.79**		

Go to the cinema	Upper	Middle	Lower	Total
Once a week	13.9%	19.1%	28.8%	19.5%
Once a fortnight	13.9	10.1	8.7	10.9
Once a month	13.9	10.7	12.5	12.0
Occasionally	53.2	46.6	31.7	45.7
Never	5.1	13.4	18.3	12.0
Total	100% (n=158)	100% (n=298)	100% (n=104)	100% (n=560)

Go to the cinema	Boys	Girls	Total
Once a week	25.8	14.2	19.6
Once a fortnight	12.7	9.5	11.0
Once a month	13.1	10.8	11.9
Occasionally	40.0	51.0	45.9
Never	8.5	14.5	14.5
Total	100% (n=260)	100% (n=296)	100% (n=556)

Table 4
Television stations preferred by the students on air reception, cable and satellite dish

Station	Media[a]	Standard Deviation	
Air reception			
XHBR (Televisa)	4.41	0.88	
KLDO (Telemundo)	4.00	1.06	
XEFE (Local)	2.86	0.99	
KVTV (CBS)	2.44	3.78	
KGNS (NBC)	2.07	0.95	
On the cable			
Mexican channels	3.44	1.31	n = 61
U.S. channels	3.11	1.26	n = 62

On satellite dish	f	Percentage
Mexican channels	8	27.7
U.S. channels	21	72.3
TOTAL	29	100%

a Mean on the scale 1 "Never", 2 "Rarely", 3 "Sometimes", 4 "Frequently," 5 "Every day"

Table 5
Radio stations they most frequently listen to

Rank	Station	Type of music	Mean[a]	Stand.Dev.
1º	XHTLN[b]	Ranchera music	3.19	1.36
2º	XHNOE	Modern in Spanish	3.17	1.53
3º	XHMW.	Modern in Spanish	2.96	1.29
4º	XHNK	Modern in Spanish	2.76	1.44
5º	XEFE	Modern in Spanish	2.39	1.23
6º	XEWL	Ranchera music	2.11	1.31
7º	XENLT	Modern in Spanish	2.06	0.97
8º	XEGNK	Ranchera music	1.75	1.06
9º	XEAS	Ranchera, salsa	1.69	1.03
10º	XEBK	Ranchera, tejana	1.56	0.87
11º	XENU	Ranchera	1.52	0.86
12º	XEK	Varied	1.39	0.73
13º	**KVOZ**	Contemporary (English)	1.37	0.88
14º	XEMU	Varied	1.29	0.75
15º	**KOYE**	Contemporary (English)	1.23	0.69
16º	**KLAR**	Varied (Spanish & English)	1.22	0.66
17º	**KRRG**	Varied (English)	1.21	0.66

a Mean in the scale 1 "Never", 2 "Rarely", 3 "Sometimes", 4 "Frequently", 5 "Every day."
b Stations in bold are U.S. stations transmitting from Laredo, Texas.

Table 6
Favorite television programs

Rank	Programs	Number of mentions[1]
1º	Mexican soap operas (*Televisa o XEFE*)	226
2º	Papá Soltero (*Televisa*)[2]	153
3º	Anabel (*Televisa*)	153
4º	Chespirito (*Televisa*)	144
5º	Cine Millonario (*Telemundo*)	135
6º	Cándido Pérez (*Televisa*)	131
7º	Muchachitas (*Televisa-Mexican soap opera*)	109
8º	Andale (*Televisa*)	79
9º	Cara a Cara (*Telemundo*)	64
10º	Lucha Libre Mexicana (*Televisa*)	51
11º	Todo de Todo (*Televisa*)	45
12º	Mujer, Casos de la Vida (*Televisa*)	40
13º	TVO (*Televisa*)	35
14º	Mexican movies (*Televisa*)	34
15º	Ocurrió así (*Telemundo*)	33
16º	La Movida (*Televisa*)	31
17º	**CARTOONS in English** (*NBC o CBS*)	31
18º	A la Cama con Porcel (*Telemundo*)	26
19º	Dubbed-to-Spanish cartoons (*XEFE*)	17
20º	MTV International (*Telemundo*)	16
21º	Siempre en Domingo (*Televisa*)	16
22º	**U.S. movies (en English)** (*NBC o CBS*)	15
23º	Primera Tanda (*Telemundo*)	13
24º	Un millón de amigos (*Telemundo*)	13
25º	**MAGNUM** (*XEFE, dubbed*)	12
26º	Cine en su casa (*Telemundo*)	12
27º	Contacto (*Telemundo*)	11
28º	**DUKES OF HAZZARD** (*XEFE*, dubbed)	11
29º	La Telaraña (*Televisa*)	10
30º	Eco (*Televisa*)	10
31º	Primera Tanda (*Telemundo*)	10
32º	**CHIPS** (*XEFE, dubbed*)	10
33º	**NINJA TURTLES** (*CBS*)	10
	Other in Telemundo[3]	62
	Other in Televisa or XEFE	59
	Other in English	53
	Other U.S. programs dubbed to Spanish	44
	Other Mexican or Latin American programs	19
		n = 1,943

[1] Every student mentioned 5 of his/her favorite programs; data refers to the total number of mentions.

[2] U.S. Programs are in bold. [3] With less than 10 mentions each.

Table 7
Frequency with which they listen to U.S music, Mexican modern music and Mexican "ranchera" music

Type of music	Mean[1]	Standard Deviation
Mexican modern music	3.87	1.25
Mexican "ranchera" music[2]	3.14	1.33
U.S. music	3.13	1.27

[1] Mean on the scale 1 "Never", 2 "Rarely", 3 "Sometimes", 4 "Frequently", 5 "Every day."

[2] A wide term embracing different types of music liked by the lower classes in Mexico: "corridos" (ballads), salsa, cumbia, tejano music, and so on.

Table 8
Favorite music groups or singers

Rank	Group or singer	Mentions[1]	
1º	Alejandra Guzmán[2]	93	
1º	Bronco	93	
3º	Temerarios	68	
3º	Gloria Trevi	68	
5º	Magneto	56	
6º	Caló	50	
7º	Tigres del Norte	38	
8º	Luis Miguel	18	
9º	**VANILLA ICE**	30	
10º	Garibaldi	26	
11º	**M.C. HAMMER**	14	
13º	Ricardo Montaner	10	
14º	Yuri	10	
15º	**NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK**	10	
16º	La Mafia	14	
20º	Liberación	10	
	Other playing modern[3] music in Spanish	86	
	Other groups playing ranchera music	79	
	Other U.S. groups	**46**	

Summary:

Groups playing Mexican modern music	**417**	**50.9%**
Groups playing Mexican ranchera music	**302**	**36.9**
U.S. groups or singers	**100**	**12.2**
Total	**819**	**100%**

[1] Every student mentioned two of his/her favorite groups or singers; Data refers to the total number of mentions.

[2] Groups in bold are U.S. groups.

[3] Receiving less than 10 mentions each.

Table 9
Movies watched recently on VCR or at the cinema, by origin

Origin	Mentions[1]	Percentage
Movies played recently on the VCR		
Mexican films	73	15.2%
U.S. films	408	84.8
TOTAL	481	100%
Movies watched recently at the cinema		
Mexican films	147	23.0%
U.S. films	484	77.0
TOTAL	639	100%

[1] Every student mentioned the name of the last two films he played on the VCR or watched at the movies. Films were classified according to their origin in "Mexican films" or "U.S. films." Totals refer to the number of titles mentioned, not to the number of students contacted.

Table 10
Frequency with which they watch Mexican and U.S. television programs by social class

Social class	freq.	Mean[1]	St. Dev.	F	Signific.
Mexican television programs[2]					
Upper class	150	3.51	0.71	1.35	.2612
Middle	268	3.63	0.79		
Lower	93	3.62	0.87		
Total	**511**	**3.59**	**0.79**		
U.S. television programs[3]					
Upper class	144	2.05[a]	0.54	3.03	.0494
Middle	261	2.22[b]	0.79		
Lower	90	2.23	0.72		
Total	**495**	**2.17**	**0.79**		

Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b).

[1] Mean in the scale 1 "Never", 2 "Rarely", 3 "Sometimes", 4 "Frequently", 5 "Every week."

[2] Combined mean for the following six Mexican television programs: Papá Soltero, Anabel, Cándido Pérez, Chespirito, Mexican films, and Mexican wrestling.

[3] Combined mean for the following six U.S. television programs: Chips, Magnum, Daktari, Dukes of Hazzard, Ninja Turtles, and U.S. films.

Table 11
Frequency with which they watch television programs by gender

Gender	freq.	Media[1]	Desv. Est.	t	Signific.
Mexican television programs[2]					
Boys	233	3.61	0.85	0.45	.649
Girls	275	3.58	0.73		
U.S. television programs[3]					
Boys	223	2.34	0.70	4.69	.000
Girls	269	2.04	0.71		

[1] Mean in the scale 1 "Never," 2 "Rarely," 3 "Sometimes," 4 "Frequently," 5 "Every week."

[2] Combined mean for the following six Mexican television programs: Papá Soltero, Anabel, Cándido Pérez, Chespirito, Mexican films, and Mexican wrestling.

[3] Combined mean for the following six U.S. television programs: Chips, Magnum, Daktari, Dukes of Hazzard, Ninja Turtles, and U.S. films.

Table 12
Listening to U.S. music, Mexican modern music and Mexican "ranchera" music by social class and gender

Social class/ gender	freq.	Mean[1]	St. Dev.	F/t	Signific.
U.S. music					
Upper class	159	3.98[a]	1.040	F = 31.23	.0000
Middle	290	3.13[b]	1.243		
Lower	101	2.98[b]	1.356		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b					
Boys	253	3.32	1.281	t = -.53	.595
Girls	293	3.38	1.268		
Mexican modern music					
Upper class	161	4.12[a]	1.131	F = 3.88	.0213
Middle	297	3.86[b]	1.205		
Lower	103	3.72[b]	1.382		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b					
Boys	261	3.33	1.262	t = -12.03	.000
Girls	296	4.44	.896		
Mexican ranchera music					
Upper	159	2.17[a]	1.23	F = 40.18	.0000
Middle	297	3.06[b]	1.30		
Lower	102	3.53[c]	1.32		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b)					
Boys	260	3.19	1.389	t = 4.92	.000
Girls	294	2.63	1.302		

[1] Mean on the scale 1 "Never," 2 "Rarely," 3 "Sometimes," 4 "Frequently,", 5 "Every day."

Table 13
Frequency with which they play Mexican and U.S. films on the VCR or watch them at the cinema, by social class

Social class	freq.	Media[1]	Desv. Est.	F/t	Signific.
Mexican movies on the VCR					
Upper class	154	2.72[a]	0.95	F = 12.00	.0000
Middle	206	3.15[b]	1.04		
Lower	50	3.38[b]	0.99		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b)					
Boys	186	2.99	1.03	t = -.50	.617
Girls	222	3.04	1.03		
U.S. movies on the VCR					
Upper	154	4.09[a]	0.90	F = 11.48	.0000
Middle	207	3.64[b]	1.10		
Lower	49	3.43[b]	1.17		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b)					
Boys	185	3.91	1.05	t = 2.06	.040
Girls	223	3.69	1.07		
Mexican films at the cinema					
Upper	161	2.21[a]	1.08	F = 20.30	.0000
Middle	293	2.85[b]	1.19		
Lower	100	3.02[b]	1.22		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b)					
Boys	259	2.63	1.22	t = -1.20	.231
Girls	291	2.75	1.19		

U.S. films at the cinema

Upper	161	3.85[a]	1.24	F = 44.26	.0000
Middle	291	3.00[b]	1.27		
Lower	100	2.40[c]	1.29		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b)					
Boys	257	3.38	1.30	t = 3.73	.000
Girls	291	2.95	1.38		

[1] Mean in the scale of 1 "Never," 2 "Rarely," 3 "Sometimes," 4 "Frequently," 5 "Always."

Table 14
Frequency with which they expose to U.S. and Mexican media contents by years of residence on the border

Contents	freq.	Mean[1]	Stand. Dev.	t	Signif.
Mexican television programs					
Less than 6 years	30	3.53	0.97	-.54	.595
6 or more years	350	3.63	0.79		
U.S. television programs					
h					
Less than 6 years	30	2.50	1.01	1.66	.107
6 or more years	341	2.19	0.74		
Mexican films played on the VCR					
Less than 6 years	19	3.37	1.21	.99	.323
6 or more years	257	3.12	1.04		
U.S. films played on the VCR					
Less than 6 years	19	3.68	1.38	.19	.851
6 or more years	370	3.79	1.10		
Mexican films at the cinema					
Less than 6 years	34	2.94	1.13	.45	.654
6 or more years	378	2.84	1.22		
U.S. films at the cinema					
Less than 6 years	33	3.00	1.20	.40	.692
6 or more years	377	3.90	1.34		

[1] Mean on the scale of 1 "Never," 2 "Rarely," 3 "Sometimes," 4 "Frequently," 5 "Always".

Table 15
Frequency with which they listen to U.S. and Mexican music by years of residence on the border

Years of residence	freq.	Mean[1]	Stand. Dev.	t	Signif.
Listen to U.S. music					
Less than 6 years	35	2.89	1.34	-1.20	.230
6 or more years	375	3.15	1.26		
Mexican modern music					
Less than 6 years	35	3.77	1.31	-.47	.639
6 or more years	384	3.87	1.24		
Mexican ranchera music					
Less than 6 years	35	3.34	1.14	.92	.357
6 or more years	381	3.13	1.35		

[1] Mean on the scale of 1 "Never," 2 "Rarely," 3 "Sometimes," 4 "Frequently," 5 "Ever day."

Table 16
How proud they feel of being Mexican,
by social class and gender

Social class gender	freq.	Mean[1]	Stand. Dev.	F / t	Signif.
Social class					
Upper	157	1.51	.985	F = .3223	.7247
Middle	295	1.44	.890		
Lower	106	1.49	.897		
Gender					
Boys	258	1.47	.955	t = .00	.999
Girls	296	1.47	.890		
Total	558	1.47	.918		

[1] Mean on the scale of 1 "Very much," 2 "Some," 3 "Neutral," 4 "A little," 5 "Nothing."

Table 17
Nationality they would like to have if they would be born again, by social class

Nationality	Upper class	Middle	Lower	Total
Mexican	72.6%	76.6%	88.6%	77.9%
American	27.4	23.4	11.4	22.1
Total	100% (n=117)	100% (n=252)	100% (n=88)	100% (n=457)

X^2 = 8.018 d.f. 2, p. = .0182

Table 18
Nationality they would like to have if they would be born again, by gender

Nationality	Boys	Girls	Total
Mexican	76.7%	78.6%	77.8%
American	23.3	21.4	22.2
Total	100% (n=117)	100% (n=252)	100% (n=88)

X^2 = .144 d.f. 1, p. = .7047

Table 19
How Mexican they feel they are in comparision with youngsters in the interior of Mexico by social class

Opinion	Upper class	Middle	Lower	Total
As Mexican as them	75.2%	68.0%	64.5%	69.4%
More Mexican than them	14.6	19.7	23.4	19.0
Less Mexican than them	10.2	12.2	12.1	11.6
Total	100% (n=157)	100% (n=294)	100% (n=107)	100% (n=558)

X^2 = 4.32, d.f. 4, p. = .3643

Table 20
How Mexican they feel they are in comparison with youngsters in the interior of Mexico, by gender

Opinion	Boys	Girls	Total
As Mexican as them	68.6%	69.9%	69.3%
More Mexican than them	22.4	16.4	19.1
Less Mexican than them	9.0	13.7	11.6
Total	100% (n=255)	100% (n=299)	100% (n=554)

X^2 = 5.215 d.f. 2, p. = .0737

Table 21
Where is Mexican culture stronger, by social class

Place	Upper class	Middle	Lower	Total
In the interior of México	73.2	56.4	39.0	57.9
Here at the border	6.4	10.4	23.8	11.8
Same in both places	20.4	33.2	37.1	30.4
Total	100% (n=157)	100% (n=298)	100% (n=105)	100% (n=560)

X^2 = 37.77, d.f. 4, p. = .0000

Table 22
Where is Mexican culture stronger by gender

Place	Boys	Girls	Total
In the interior of Mexico	58.9	56.7	57.7
Here on the border	15.9	8.4	11.9
Same in both places	25.2	34.9	30.4
Total	100% (n=255)	100% (n=299)	100% (n=556)

X^2 = 10.958 d.f. 2, p. = .0042

Table 23
One way analysis of variance of how important they perceive U.S. and Mexican traditions, by social class

Origin	Media[1]	Desv. Est.	F	Significance
U.S. traditions[2]				
Upper class	3.31[a]	1.06	7.44	.0007
Middle	2.95[b]	1.05		
Lower	2.85[b]	1.06		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b				
Mexican traditions[3]				
Upper	4.58[a]	0.66	11.48	.0012
Middle	4.30[b]	0.91		
Lower	4.23[b]	0.95		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b)				

[1] Mean in the scale of 1 "Nothing," 2 "A little," 3 "Neutral," 4 "some," 5 "A lot."

[2] Combined mean for the following three American traditions: Halloween, Thanksgiving, and the Easter Bunny.

[3] Combined mean for the following three Mexican traditions: Independence Day, the Virgen of Guadalupe Day, and Day of the Dead.

Table 24
Nationality they would like to have by exposure to U.S. and Mexican television and film contents

Nationality	freq.	Mean[1]	Stand. Dev.	t	Sign.
U.S. television programs[2]					
Mexican	238	2.16	.75	-1.40	.163
U.S.	73	2.30	.79		
Mexican television programs[3]					
Mexican	247	3.66	.77	-.46	.644
U.S.	73	3.71	.84		
Mexican films at the cinema					
Mexican	268	2.97	1.15	3.11	.002
U.S.	75	2.49	1.23		
U.S. films at the cinema					
Mexican	267	2.77	1.30	-2.60	.010
U.S.	74	3.22	1.36		
Mexican films played on the VCR					
Mexican	180	3.26	1.00	2.09	.038
U.S.	54	2.93	1.06		
U.S. films played on the VCR					
Mexican	179	3.52	1.11	-2.05	.041
U.S.	55	3.87	1.14		

[1] Mean on the scale of 1 "Never," 2 "Rarely," 3 "Sometimes," 4 "Frequently," 5 "Always."

[2] Combined mean for responses to the following U.S. television programs: "Dukes of Hazzard," "Chips," "Daktari," "Magnum," "U.S. films on television" and "Ninja Turtles."

[3] Combined mean for responses to the following Mexican television programs: "Cándido Pérez," "Chespirito," "Mexican wrestling," "Papá Soltero," "Anabel" and "Mexican films on television."

Table 25
Nationality they would like to have
by exposure to U.S. and Mexican music

Nationality	freq.	Mean[1]	Stand. Dev.	t	Sign.
U.S. music					
Mexican	267	2.97	1.23	-4.08	.000
U.S.	74	3.62	1.19		
Mexican modern music					
Mexican	272	3.95	1.17	.52	.606
U.S.	76	3.87	1.30		
Mexican ranchera music					
Mexican	272	3.29	1.32	3.41	.001
U.S.	74	2.70	1.30		

[1] Mean on the scale of 1 "Never," 2 "Rarely," 3 "Sometimes," 4 "Frequently", 5 "Every day."

Table 26
How proud they were to be Mexican by exposure to U.S. and Mexican media contents (Pearson r)

Media contents[1]	Pride in being Mexican[2]
Mexican television programs	.0203
Mexican films at the cinema	.1281
Mexican films played on VCR	.1090
Mexican modern music	.1165
Mexican ranchera music	.0809
U.S. television programs	.0532
U.S. films at the cinema	-.1222
U.S. films played on VCR	-.2153**
U.S. music	-.1784*

n = 228
* p. = .01 ** p. = .001

[1] Measured in a scale of 1 "Never", 2 "Rarely", 3 "Sometimes", 4 "Frequently", 5 "Always."
[2] Measured in a scale of 1 "No proud at all", 2 "A little", 3 "Neutral", 4 "Proud", 5 "Very proud."

Table 27
How Mexican they feel they are in comparison with youngsters in the interior of Mexico, by exposure to television programs

How Mexican	freq.	Mean[1]	Stand. Dev.	F	Sign.
By frequency with which they watch Mexican TV programs					
1) As Mexican as they are	255	3.63	0.80	.399	.6712
2) More Mexican than they are	74	3.68	0.82		
3) Less Mexican than they are	48	3.54	0.85		
By frequency with which they watch U.S. TV programs					
1) As Mexican as they are	251	2.26	0.80	1.601	.2031
2) More Mexican than they are	69	2.14	0.65		
3) Less Mexican than they are	74	2.06	0.73		

[1] Mean in the scale of 1 "Never," 2 "Rarely," 3 "Sometimes," 4 "Frequently," 5 "Every week."

Table 28
How Mexican they feel they are versus youngsters in the interior of Mexico by exposure to U.S. and Mexican films

How Mexican	freq.	Mean[1]	Stand. Dev.	F	Sign.
By frequency with which they watch Mexican films (cinema)					
1) As Mexican as they are	271	2.89	1.16	1.9929	.1467
2) More Mexican than they are	85	2.93	1.23		
3) Less Mexican than they are	51	2.55	1.38		
By frequency with which they watch U.S. films at the cinema					
1) As Mexican as they are	270	3.01	1.27	2.901	.0561
2) More Mexican than they are	84	2.62	1.36		
3) Less Mexican than they are	51	2.86	1.54		
By frequency with which they play Mexican films on the VCR					
1) As Mexican as they are	191	3.10[a]	1.03	3.394	.0350
2) More Mexican than they are	51	3.45[b]	1.08		
3) Less Mexican than they are	32	2.87[a]	1.10		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b).					
By frequency with which they play U.S. films on the VCR					
1) As Mexican as they are	191	3.59	1.12	2.4740	.0861
2) More Mexican than they are	51	3.51	1.17		
3) Less Mexican than they are	32	4.03	0.97		

[1] Mean in the scale of 1 "Never," 2 "Rarely," 3 "Sometimes," 4 "Frequently," 5 "Always."

Table 29
How Mexican they feel they are versus youngsters in the interior of Mexico by exposure to U.S. and Mexican music

How Mexican	f	Mean[1]	Stand. Dev.	F	Signific.
By frequency with which they listen to U.S. music					
1) As Mexican as they are	273	3.06	1.26	1.365	.2561
2) More Mexican than they are	81	3.18	1.27		
3) Less Mexican than they are	52	3.42	1.29		
By frequency with which they listen to Mexican modern music					
1) As Mexican as they are	278	3.86	1.24	.222	.8012
2) More Mexican than they are	84	3.96	1.29		
3) Less Mexican than they are	52	3.83	1.20		
By frequency with which they listen to Mexican country music					
1) As Mexican as they are	278	2.91	1.33	3.1100	.0457
2) More Mexican than they are	83	3.05	1.27		
3) Less Mexican than they are	51	2.56	1.28		

[1] Mean on the scale of 1 "Never," 2 "Rarely," 3 "Sometimes," 4 "Frequently", 5 "Every day."

Table 30
Knowledge of English by social class

Knowledge	Upper class	Middle	Lower	Total
Nothing, a little	31.7%	73.2	91.5	64.8
More or less	44.7	23.2	7.5	26.4
Good, very good	23.6	3.7	0.9	8.8
TOTAL	100% (n=161)	100% (n=298)	100% (n=106)	100% (n=565)

X^2 = 134.16 d.f. 4, p. = .0000

Table 31
Exposure to U.S. media contents by knowledge of English

Knowledge of English	freq.	Mean[1]	Stand.Dev.	F	Signific.
By frequency with which they watch U.S. television programs					
1) Nothing, a little	273	2.17	0.75	2.1485	.1181
2) More or less	83	2.36	0.86		
3) Good, very good	13	2.08	0.28		
By frequency with which they watch U.S. films at the cinema					
1) Nothing, a little	308	2.70[a]	1.26	18.339	.0000
2) More or less	87	3.44[b]	1.33		
3) Good, very good	15	4.13[b]	1.30		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b)					
By frequency with which they play U.S. films on the VCR					
1) Nothing, a little	189	3.49[a]	1.15	5.336	.0053
2) More or less	73	3.94[b]	1.00		
3) Good, very good	13	4.00[b]	0.82		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b)					
By frequency with which they listen to U.S. music					
1) Nothing, a little	306	2.98[a]	1.23	9.841	.0001
2) More or less	88	3.61[b]	1.24		
3) Good, very good	14	3.57[b]	1.28		
Means with different superscripts are significantly different (Tukey's b)					

[1] Mean in the scale of 1 "Never," 2 "Rarely," 3 "Sometimes," 4 "Frequently," 5 "Every week / always / everyday."

In-depth interview results

As argued before, surveys are seldom useful to get insight into human subjectivity and ideological or cultural symbols. While they are important to get a descriptive picture of what goes on, they have some important limitations when trying to go in-depth on emotions, values, and visions of the world.

The 30 in-depth interviews included in this project's research design, allowed me to contrast and triangulate survey responses, especially those about cultural identity.

Research question # 1: How do they use media messages in their everyday lives? What do they do with them? How do they integrate them with their social experience?

In order to explore the way in which the students incorporate mass media into their everyday experiences, they were asked right at the beginning of the interview the following three questions: "Could you tell me what do you do during a typical workday step by step?", "What about Saturdays?", "What about Sundays?"

The answers to these three questions show that everyday activities for the students include more than being exposed to the media. Most of them said they usually go out with friends, exercise, do homework or go to church in addition to watching television or listening to the radio. Media exposure, consequently, is not as intense as it may be thought, and other activities may mediate some of the impact of media on their everyday lives.

Lower-class students seem to be heavier consumers of television and radio

than middle class youngsters. The latter, however, are heavier consumer of these media than upper-class students. Upper-class students seemed to have a wider spectrum of non-media activities, especially going out and doing exercise. They mentioned "watching television" only three times and "listening to the radio" only two when asked about what they usually do on regular workdays and weekends, while lower-class students mentioned "watching television" 22 times and "listening to the radio" nine times. Going to the cinema received very few mentions in the three groups, three by lower-class students, one by middle class students and two by upper-class students.

Exposure to radio. The answers to the question about amount of exposure to the radio and type of music they like the most were consistent with the survey findings. Students said they listened to the radio between two and three hours per day, and type of music preferred varied according to social class.

Lower-class students mentioned more frequently Mexican traditional music (ranchera, cumbias), than Mexican modern music in Spanish or U.S. music. Only one upper class student mentioned he liked "ranchera" music, and just a few mentioned U.S. music, all others mentioned as their favorite music Mexican modern music.

Exposure to television. Most students reported watching television between 2 and 4 hours per day, a finding also consistent with that of the survey.

Overwhelmingly, students said they watch television in the company of family members, opening the door for these members to act as mediators in the process of television reception. As in the survey, programs receiving more mentions

were Mexican Spanish-language programs like *Papá Soltero, Andale, Chespirito*, Mexican telenovelas (soap operas), *Anabel, Todo de Todo* and *Cándido Pérez*. Only four out of the 30 students --none of them lower class-- mentioned U.S. programs. Two of them mentioned "Cartoons" in addition to other Mexican programs, another one mentioned *Perdidos en el espacio* (Lost in Space), a dubbed to Spanish series produced in the U.S., and the fourth one mentioned generically "Programs in English." Again, Secundaria students seemed not to be highly influenced for their geographical proximity to the U.S. and showed patterns of exposure similar to those in the interior of the country[5].

Research question # 2: What do they think about Mexican media messages and U.S. media messages? How do they perceive both? Do they find similarities and/or differences?

Music preferences on the radio. To the questions about whether they liked Mexican or U.S. music the most, all but two students said they liked Mexican music the most. The reason? Many of them, regardless of social class, said they liked Mexican music over U.S. music because they did understand the lyrics of Mexican songs, something they were not able to do with U.S. music. One of the students said:

> A: [I like Mexican music rather than U.S. music] because I understand Mexican songs better [than U.S. songs]...They are in my language and I understand them. U.S. songs...I don't understand them.

Some also said they liked Mexican music over U.S. music because Mexican music had more rythm:

> A: I like Mexican music more, in addition because I understand it

better, because I like its rythm more and I also like more the lyrics, the message.

Two said Mexican music was better than U.S. music. One explained the former reached him more; another one said "Mexican music is from here, it belongs to us."

Of the 30 students, 5 said they liked to listen to both Mexican and U.S. music, listening more frequently to Mexican music than to U.S. music.

Only two said they liked to listen to U.S. music more than to Mexican music. One --an upper class student of the bilingual Real Secundaria Bilingüe-- said he liked more U.S. music because he "understood English very well." He added that he owned just a few Mexican cassettes. However, when asked about his opinion about Mexican music or singers, this same student said:

A: My opinion is that it [Mexican music] is all right...yes, I like some singers, I like Pedro Infante...

The other one asserting he liked U.S. music more, said afterwards that he also liked Mexican music, especially Mexican modern music like the one of Luis Miguel.

To the question about whether they liked Mexican or U.S. television programs the most, as in the case of radio, most of the students explained that they liked Mexican television programs better than U.S. programs because they were unable to understand American programs. The language, in the first instance, served as an important barrier against exposure to foreign programs. One student who mentioned she used to watch U.S. movies on television, in addition to watching Mexican programs said:

A: When I watch [U.S.] movies, I am just watching what they [the characters] do, because I don't understand English (...).

However, if we realize that there were at least 10 U.S. programs dubbed to Spanish available on the local XEFE Channel, the answer "I understand Mexican programs better" takes a new meaning. Youngsters felt they were able to understand them better because of the situations, the characters and the stories presented on the national programs. Two of the students put it in these words:

A: [I like Mexican programs better] mainly because they make reference to our country, about how it is...in addition... because I am Mexican.

A: (...) because they [Mexican programs] are from the same country where I live; it is what I understand the most.

Preferred films. Consistent with the survey results, the in-depth sample of Secundaria students reported watching more U.S. films than Mexican films. Of the 29 films mentioned as most recently watched, 20 were American and 9 were Mexican. Preferences were also divided along class lines. Lower-class students mentioned 6 Mexican films and just 3 U.S. films, while upper-class students mentioned 2 Mexican movies and 8 U.S. movies. Consequently, films seemed to be the main --perhaps the only-- source of probable influence on the students cultural identity.

Most of the students asserting they liked U.S. films the most said they did because the movies had more action and were technically better than Mexican films:

A: I like American movies more because they have more action and

they are better made than Mexican films.

The popularity of U.S. films among the youngsters, however, may respond to two different things. On the one hand, video rental stores in Nuevo Laredo have a much larger number of U.S. movies available than Mexican movies. A student put it like this:

> A: I like American movies more [than Mexican ones]...I figure they make more movies there that we make here...almost all movies in the video stores are American, dubbed to Spanish.

On the other hand, the Mexican film industry in the last decade has been characterized by very low technical quality and the predominance of pornographic and extremely violent stories. Many students said they did not like the "contemporary" Mexican films because they were not as good as the old films from the "Golden Age" of the Mexican film industry (1940-1960):

> A: I don't like Mexican movies because they have nudity and violence, they are for adults only, while U.S. movies are just action movies.
>
> A: Of American movies I like the special effects, but some times they are exagerated...Mexican movies...they are not made like they use to; before, they presented topics more...I don't know...what was artistic in Mexican films is being lost more and more...now they are mainly about drugs, police, prostitution...
>
> A: Mexican movies are not as interesting as before. The old ones, the old Mexican movies, they were better, not like the new ones...the new ones are all about killings and drugs...the old ones were better.
>
> A: I like Mexican movies more, but only those with Pedro Infante and

> Jorge Negrete [idols of the Golden Age of Mexican Cinema]. I like them more because American movies have their own means, and Mexicans, well, I like their stories, about charreadas [Mexican rodeos], the "Fiestas" of Jalisco...I like them better because of the traditions Mexico has.

Surprisingly, many students said they liked and used to watch old Mexican movies, those defined by Barbero (1987, p. 180) as the most clearly identifiable nationalist expression in Latin American. How is it possible that students familiar with advanced special effects, color, and new more sophisticated film languages, codes and stories develop an interest and do like old black-and-white films that lack any elaborated special effects? The answer lay on the possibility for the students to identify that which is traditionally Mexican, to recognize themselves in the images and characters, to "learn" --in words of Monsiváis (in Barbero, 1987, p. 181) "how to be Mexicans (or Latin Americans for that matter)." The melodrama in the stories -- deeply rooted on the Latin American popular culture-- showing the clashes between lower and upper classes, between "mestizos" and "criollos" in a society in which even today there exist the same kind of problems, made these films highly popular. That was for Barbero and Monsivais the reason why Mexican films of that period (1930-1950) had a tremendous success all over Latin America. That may be why youngsters in different parts of Mexico (cf. Sanchez Ruiz, 1989; Malagamba, 1986) watch these old movies whenever they are played on television, and make sense out of them.

Research question # 3: How do secundaria students define their own social

identities as Mexicans and as border residents? What are the symbols, attitudes and practices that youngsters use to define their collective cultural identity?

Mexican customs or traditions in Nuevo Laredo. In order to allow the students to identify and define Mexicaness at the border, the interview asked about the customs or traditions in Nuevo Laredo that can be considered to be part of the Mexican culture.

In their answers, lower-class students mentioned exclusively national holidays like Independence Day, Mexican Flag Day, Constitution Day, Cinco de Mayo, Mexican Revolution, and Catholic traditions like the Virgin of Guadaloupe Day, Christmas and Easter. They made 22 references to national holidays and 5 to religious celebrations. For the latter, they carefully pointed out they were talking about Mexican Catholic traditions, not their American counterparts:

> Q: What customs or traditions in this border city can be considered to be part of the Mexican culture?
>
> A: National Independence Day, Labor Day ['Día del Trabajo' in Mexico], and Easter festivities...I say Easter, not 'Día de la Coneja' (Easter Rabbit Day) (...) Also Christmas Day, not the one of Santa Claus but the Nativity of Christ.

Both middle and upper-class students, in contrast, hardly mentioned national or Catholic holidays as the most important Mexican traditions in the city. They mentioned other customs, like regional dances, Mariachis, the local Fair, Mother's Day and Valentine Day:

> Q: What customs or traditions in this border city can be considered to

be part of the Mexican culture?

A: The family, the 'fiestas' like for example the Fair, the 'posadas.'

A: The Mariachis, the craftmanships, the traditions...

American customs celebrated in Nuevo Laredo. To the question "Do you think there are American customs or traditions that are celebrated in this side of the border? which ones?" the students overwhelmingly mentioned Halloween and Easter (celebrated in Nuevo Laredo as "Day of the Rabbit" in reference to the Easter Rabbit tradition in the United States). Thanksgiving Day was also mentioned as well as Saint Patrick's Day. Some students mentioned that Christmas, at least some aspects of it, was celebrated in Nuevo Laredo in an American way, and some others mentioned the incorporation of Santa Claus to that holiday as an American custom.

To celebrate these American customs however, was not a symptom of weakness of Mexican culture. Only four of the 30 students interviewed thought that to celebrate U.S. holidays or customs in the Mexican side of the border had a negative impact on national identity. A lower class boy said:

A: I would say you lose your Mexican identity, because you are adopting other customs...

A middle class boy argued:

A: In fact they do [lose their Mexican identity], because they have no reason to celebrate that which is originated elsewhere.

The other 26 students, however, emphatically denied any negative impact on their Mexican identity. A middle class girl put it like this:

Q: Do you think people who adopt those American customs are losing

their Mexican identity?

A: No, it depends in the way you were raised.

Q: When you celebrate Thanksgiving Day, don't you lose your cultural identity?

A: No.

Q: Why?

A: Because we know its meaning, and it is just an invitation to go to our relatives' home [in Laredo, Texas] to celebrate it with them, nothing more.

Q: Do you celebrate the "Día de la Coneja" [Easter Rabbit Day]?

A: Yes.

Q: And you don't think you are losing your cultural identity when you celebrate it?

A: No, because we know it is Día de Pascua [Easter Day], the resurrection of Christ.

This passage and all the others are important to understand that border youngsters are able to differentiate very clearly what is Mexican and what is American in the holidays and traditions popular in their region. Although most of them consider more important national or Catholic holidays than American holidays, they agree that celebrating U.S. traditions has no influence on Mexican national culture. Several students argued that those who celebrate U.S. holidays do not lose their national traditions. A lower class boy said:

A: Maybe they do lose it, but I don't think so. In a way, they are also Mexican and tend to live and act like Mexicans...they are not going to

lose completely their traditions just for that [celebrating U.S. holidays].

A middle class boy said:

A: No [they don't lose their Mexican identity].

Q: Why not?

A: They can't lose their roots, because they were born here.

An upper class girl also denied it emphatically:

A: In my case, no. Even if we celebrate those customs of the United States that are being adopted in Mexico, I don't think just for that we are going to stop being Mexicans.

Another upper class girl acknowledged having celebrated Halloween, but denied having lost her Mexican identity:

Q: Do you think that people who celebrate that American custom, Halloween, are losing their Mexican culture?

A: In a way they do...because they live at the border and they are exposed to influences from the American side, but they shouldn't lose what is theirs.

Q: Have you ever celebrated Halloween?

A: Well...in some parties...with my friends sometimes, but also at my home...we celebrate it in a Mexican way...

Q: Celebrating Halloween at parties, do you think that made you less Mexican, made you imitate Americans?

A: No, no way.

What does it mean to be Mexican? Again letting the students decide for themselves what the definition of Mexicaness is, the interview asked them to define it in their own words.

Following the teachings of the Mexican school system, most students said that to be Mexican means to honor and love the Mexican flag, the nation and the country's symbols:

> A: Being Mexican means to honor the Mexican flag and not doing anything bad against your country.
>
> A: To honor 'la Patria' [fatherland], to respect 'la Patria,' nothing else.

Other students adopted a more pragmatic definition: to be Mexican was equivalent to having been born in Mexico or at least living in Mexico for a long time:

> Q: What does it mean to be Mexican?
>
> A: It means to be born here, or at least to live here, to love your country, to do your best to make it progress...and if you go to a foreign country, to always remember Mexico as your country, not to forget that.
>
> A: To be born in Mexico, or to grow up in Mexico if you are not from here, or if you love this country a lot, then you can be Mexican.

For some others, keeping and respecting Mexican customs was the right answer. An upper class girl put it like this:

> A: To maintain our customs...to celebrate that which is conmemorated in our national holidays...not to be influenced by other countries' customs.

An upper class boy preferred a more inclusive definition:

A: To like Mexican music, to believe in Virgin Mary and to celebrate with your family in a typical Mexican fashion.

While the students' subjective definitions and perceptions of "Mexicaness" may be problematic, incomplete and perhaps distorted by the hegemonic definitions of "national identity" in that country, it is my contention that it is still important to look at how the youngsters perceive it in their own terms. Imposing an "objective" or inclusive definition, measuring identity against a fixed a priori standard, would have been even more problematic, and would have constrained the possibility of exploring the students own symbolic processes of marking differences between themselves and "others."

Research question # 4: What do they consider to be their similarities and differences with Mexicans in the interior of the country?

Differences of living along the border with the U.S. and in the interior of Mexico. Many students said the main difference between living on the border and living in the interior of the country was that border residents were able to go shopping to the U.S. side more frequently. One of the students put it this way:

A: The difference is that they come to buy things in the United States, and they have to travel a lot, while we don't need to travel.

According to social class, there were some interesting differences. Lower-class students tended to see their geographical proximity to the United States in positive terms. Seven out of the ten students in this bracket made reference to the

possibility of getting goods in the American side. One also talked about learning English due to the proximity with the U.S.:

> A: Living on the border makes it easy to learn English...also, you can visit the United States more frequently.

One of the lower-class students misunderstood the question, thinking that he was being asked about the difference between living on the Mexican side and living on the American side. He answered:

> A: That in here I am 100% Mexican, and that should I live on the other side, I would be American.

In contrast, upper-class students tended to perceive their proximity to the U.S. as a threat to their cultural identity. Four of them said Mexican culture was being influenced by American culture due to the proximity of the United States:

> A: Living on the border you have more contact with the United States; you get more used to American culture than Mexicans living in the interior of the country.
>
> A: [In here] our culture is lost somewhat, while in the interior it doesn't happen, because they do not have the invasion of another culture.
>
> A: Here on the border you are attached to the United States, even if you don't want to, you have American customs. In the interior...they are educated in a different way...

Middle-class students tended to be neutral on their answers. They either mentioned the possibility of shopping in the American side or said there was no difference between border and non-border Mexicans.

How Mexican they feel they are. Regardless of social class, Secundaria students overwhelmingly said they felt as Mexican or even more Mexican than youngsters living in the interior of the country. Just one out of the 30 students interviewed said he felt less Mexican, but this because he had been born on the U.S. side of the border!

Here are some of the typical answers they provided:

A: I feel as Mexican as they are. We all were born in Mexico, in the same country.

A: The same. Not for living on the border we are going to be different.

A: The same. I am not going to think I am American just because I live on the border. No, I am Mexican.

A: I feel good to be Mexican; I would not have liked it being an American, no way! Americans live in a different way, they are more...they are more lazy or... I don't know what's wrong with them. But I wouldn't wish to be an American...I feel good being Mexican.

Some said they were even more Mexican than their counterparts in the interior. One upper class girl said:

A: I think I am more Mexican, because of the same thing, because we are here, on the border...even if American influences are felt here (...) our roots in here are stronger.

A lower class girl asserted: "I am much more Mexican than they are."

The answers, consequently, point out that Secundaria students do feel they are Mexican and see no danger to their identity as such due to their geographical

proximity to the United States. Their sense of belonging to Mexico as a nation and as a cultural unity was not in question for them.

Advantages of living near the United States. Half the students metioned that one of the main advantages of living near the United States was the possibility to buy things that were cheaper or better.

Four of the students mentioned as an advantage of living at the border the possibility to meet Americans and to get acquainted with U.S. culture. Two mentioned learning English as an advantage and three more made reference to the possibility to have access to more advanced technology.

Only one student perceived as an advantage the possibility of getting a job in the American side. The majority did not entertain that idea as one of the advantages of living near the United States.

Disadvantages of living near the United States. Students mentioned a wide variety of disadvantages of living near the United States. For lower-class students, one of the main disadvantages was the possibility of being affected by the "constant" war conflicts of the United States (like the Panama Invasion, the Gulf War, and so on):

A: [The disadvantage would be that] the United States wars would reach us sooner than reach other countries far away from the border...

Another preocupation for lower class youngsters was the misbehaviour of Americans when they come to Mexico as tourists:

A: It makes me mad that Americans feel they are superior and

misbehave when they are here.

For half the middle and half the upper-class students, living near the United States had no disadvantages. For the others, there were a lot of problems in the United States that could reach the border. One student said:

A: [the disadvantages are] that we have more probabilities [than Mexicans in the interior] of being affected by drugs, Aids and crime.

A: There are more drug traffickers there [in the U.S.].

For two upper-class students, the problem was that Mexican border residents are embracing a foreign culture:

A: We are adopting another culture, incorporating Anglicisms into our language.

Looking at these answers, it is possible to realize that Secundaria youngsters do not perceive the United States in black or white terms; they have an elaborate and complex image of that country, and they are able to separate very clearly things they consider advantages from those that are perceived as negative.

Research question # 5: What do they consider to be their similarities and differences with Anglos?

Opinions about the United States. Positive aspects of the United States according to the students were that the country was cleaner, had more order and justice, better roads and a good government. Also, they perceived the United States as a superpower with a strong economy and technological advances. An upper class girl

put it like this:

> A: [The United States] is a superpower, isn't it? It is a highly developed country that always is trying to do better...it is very powerful.

The same students, however, mentioned as one of the most negative aspect of the United States the proliferation of social problems like drugs, Aids, gangs, robberies and vandalism. For them, these were endemic problems of the United States much more exacerbated than in Mexico:

> A: It is very dangerous [to live in the United States] because of drugs and AIDS.
>
> A: (...) the negative thing is that there are to much drugs and sometimes policemen stop you and beat you.

The second most negative aspect of the United States was discrimination against Mexicans, especially for lower-class students. Some of them said:

> A: [Americans] do not like Mexicans, they treat them bad.
>
> A: It is a country that is hardly democratic, because there is a lot of racism.

A lower class student answered to the question "What do you think about the United States," with this:

> A: That it took a part of Mexico away from us.

Other students condemned Americans for coming to the Mexican side of the border to get drunk and do things they would never do in the United States, and for contaminating the Mexican border with their twin plants:

> A: U.S. industries sometimes throw away chemical waste in our

country because here our public officials are less strict.

Opinions about Mexico. For the students, positive things about Mexico were: it is a beautiful country, it is a nation that is growing, that is developing more and more, that people are more amiable and friendly, that it is a peaceful country with no wars, like the United States:

A: Mexican people are better, more friendly.

A: The positive thing about Mexico is that it is a peaceful country with no wars.

However, students were critical about several things in Mexico, especially political corruption, bad streets and roads, dirt and contamination. The bad shape of the roads was one of the most mentioned aspect:

A: Streets are in bad condition, highways are full of holes...

A: Mexico is a Third World country with few economic resources to fix the streets.

Political corruption was also one of the negative aspects students were clearly aware. Some students put it like this:

A: The negative thing is that there are a lot of corrupt politicians, and a lot of things in bad shape, like the streets.

A: There is still a lot of corruption...we need to fight against it to progress.

A: There is a lot of corruption at the border with those who want to cross illegally, the so-called wetbacks.

For some others, the main problems of Mexico were poverty, illiteracy and

pollution.

The ambivalent opinions about both the United States and Mexico show that Secundaria students have a complex perception regarding the two countries, a perception that allow them to look more objectively to both nations without stereotyping any of them in black or white terms.

Similarities or differences with American youngsters. Only nine students out of the 30 said there were some similarities between them and American youngsters. They either said they were no different except for the language, or they said they were all human beings.

> A: The difference is that they speak English, but all the rest is the same.
>
> A: I believe we youngsters are all similar regardless of our country of origin...differences are our language, our race, maybe the way we are --they are more liberal--, but being youngsters, we are all the same.

Most students, however, found important differences between them and American youngsters in addition to that of the language. Some made reference to the race, some said their American counterparts had better educational opportunities, and some more said Americans were more liberal. The latter was one of the most important differences for them. A lower class student explained:

> A: The difference is that they [American youngsters] are more exposed to drugs and alcohol, and in here we have stronger moral principles. For example, in the United States is very difficult for a girl to still be virgin at 20 or 22-year old, and in here [Mexico] it is not

difficult. There, at 15 "ya caminaron" [it's over for them].

Two upper class girls agreed with the opinion about Americans being more liberal. One said that because of the differences in education, American girls were more liberated than Mexican girls. The other one answered in very similar terms:

Q: If an American girl were here with you, what similarities or differences would you find between you and her? Would you be similar or different?

A: I would be very different. She would be talking and talking and I would be silent..

Q: silent?

A: she would be talking and talking and I would be here just listening...as I told you already, they are very extravagant, they don't mind anything. they don't mind what people think about them.

For one middle class girl, the main difference was citizenship:

A: They are U.S. citizens and we are Mexican citizens.

Research question # 6: What do they think the impact exposing to U.S. media has on their cultural identity?

Exposure to U.S. radio and cultural identity. To the question "Do you think that those who listen to U.S. music have lost their identity and their Mexican culture," the students answered overwhelmingly "No." Only two of the 30 students said "Yes." The remaining 28 said listening to U.S. music had no effect whatsoever in their

cultural identity as Mexicans.

Some students denied a negative impact of listening to U.S. music with these words:

> A: No [Mexican identity is not lost], because Mexican culture is not lost if one does not want that to happen.
>
> A: No, because listening to music in another language is not going to change your whole culture.

Two youngsters pointed out that Mexicans should be open to foreign cultural manifestations, without losing their national identity.

One of the few students who said he did listen to U.S. music answered to the question "Do you think you have lost your Mexican identity for listening to U.S. music?":

> A: No. If they ask me, I tell them I am Mexican.

One of the only two students asserting that listening to U.S. music represented an erosion of Mexican cultural identity explained it in these words:

> A: Yes [they have lost their Mexican identity], because they come to like U.S. music so much that they develop a preference for all that is American.

Exposure to U.S. television programs and cultural identity. To the question "Do you think that those who watch U.S. television have lost their identity and their Mexican culture," the students also answered with an unequivocal "No." Again, only two out the 30 students said "Yes." They said:

> A: Yes they have, because they get so excited about it that they want

to imitate what they watch.

A: Yes, by always watching programs from there [the U.S.], they lose their interest in Mexican programs.

The other 28 students categorically denied any impact of watching U.S. television on their cultural identity. Some argued that those who watch them do it just to be entertained, distracted:

A: No [they do not lose their cultural identity], because they watch them just not to get bored.

A: No, they [the ones who do watch U.S. programs] just watch them, they don't lose anything.

A: No, they just take American programs as entertainment.

Some others saw no relationship whatsoever between watching U.S. programs and losing their Mexican culture:

A: No, not for watching U.S. programs they are going to stop being Mexicans.

A: No, watching U.S. programs does not mean one is going to lose her Mexican culture.

A middle class boy said cultural identity is never lost if one does not want that to happen:

A: No, I don't think so, losing our cultural identity happens only if we want that to happen.

An upper class boy put it like this:

A: No, although they watch U.S. programs, they also celebrate some Mexican customs.

As in the case of radio, the vast majority of students do not perceive exposure to U.S. television as a threat to their cultural identity. If the survey results show that most secundaria youngsters do not watch American television programs, the interviews show that even in the ocurrence of exposure to U.S. media, one should not take for granted a negative impact on Mexican cultural identity, at least as it is perceived by the students. This, of course, is problematic. Students may not be able to determine objectively the impact of foreign media content on their cultural identity, and they may not be able to clearly define what the latter really means. However, I would contend that the subjective meanings and perceptions of the students are valid ways of approaching such an elusive concept, and that they provide important insight about the symbolic construction of reality they are engaged in. In addition, these subjective meanings can be seen to vary in predictable patterns according to various social factors.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

De la Garde's (1987) suggestion of choosing as cases of inquiry for media reception studies "'social laboratories' marked by national and political borders, shaped by historical and economic forces but not, ultimately, contained by them" proved to be fruitful in the present study. Nuevo Laredo, a Mexican city along the border with the United States, is indeed an interesting "social laboratory" where an extraordinary availability of Mexican and foreign media contents coexist. Local media offer both national and American contents, the latter dubbed to Spanish. Laredo, Texas' media also offer both American and Mexican contents --the latter in a television station affiliated to the network Telemundo and some radio stations with Spanish-language programming. From all these multiple media outlets, Secundaria youngsters choose specific contents, mostly national ones, according to their social class.

The findings of both the survey and the in-depth interviews show that the reception of media contents --at least for these Secundaria students -- is indeed a complex and creative process, as culturalist theories argue. The patterns of exposure to and interpretation of radio, television and film contents by these youngsters validate the assertion of De la Garde (1987) about people not being mirror reflections of their environment but prisms, and culture as a dynamic process of sense-making not ending but starting with the watching of a television program or the listening to a particular type of music.

The findings also show the validity of Boyd-Barret (1982), García-Canclini

(1988), Smith (1990), Fejes (1984) and other scholars' criticisms of media imperialist assumptions about the passive reception of hegemonic messages by audience members. The low levels of exposure to U.S. media contents by the students, despite their availability both in U.S. media and Mexican media, and the significant differences in exposure to different kind of media messages according to social class, show that media imperialists should take into account Boyd Barret's suggestion of looking at the countervailing local influences when analyzing the "totality of relevant exogenous media influences" (1982, p. 180).

Media imperialist and Mexican scholars and politicians' fears about the loss of cultural identity due to exposure to foreign media contents were not supported in this study.

First, Secundaria youngsters prefer to expose themselves more to Mexican national or local media messages than to U.S. media messages. Geographical proximity, in this case, is not related to higher degrees of exposure to all U.S. media.

Second, exposure to American media contents should not be seen as necessarily causing an erosion of cultural identity. Mexican media messages may act as mediating factors, since the majority of the students exposed to U.S. media contents also like --even in higher degrees-- Mexican media messages. In addition, the majority of the students --if the sample for the in-depth interview can be taken as a general indicator of what the students think-- see no danger to their national identity from watching U.S. television programs or films or listening to U.S. music. The few students who do watch this content do it "just not to be bored," for plain entertainment, and seem to keep their national customs and identity as firmly as all others. As Fuenzalida (1989) argues, television viewers are culturally situated and

socially constituted receivers, and this beam of socio-cultural relations "that constitute the television viewer" interacts with the different television messages to reach a final concrete meaning."

Third, the findings of both the survey and the interviews show that the students do not show any weakening of the dimensions of the national identity operationalized in this study. They all feel very proud of being Mexicans, 78% would like to be Mexican again if they were born again, 88% feel as Mexican or more Mexican than youngsters in the interior, they concede much more importance to Mexican traditions than to American traditions, and they perceive clearly the advantages and disadvantages of living so near to the United States. Thus, Esteinou's assertion about the Mexican middle class having adopted the transnational culture of Superman, Wonder Woman, Star Wars, Batman and Robin, an so on, and the roots of the transnational having been planted in the consciousness of all Mexicans was not supported in this study.

In the introduction, I argued that this study would contribute to a better understanding of processes of reception of foreign media contents on a developing country. The following is a summary of findings and conclusions that may help to understand those processes of reception:

1) The assumption that the availability of foreign media contents means exposure to them by local audiences in developing countries, was not supported in this study. U.S. television programs, both in English and dubbed to Spanish, are widely available in Nuevo Laredo. American music is also available through five radio stations located on the U.S. side of the border that can be tuned in in any radio set in Nuevo Laredo. American films can be seen on several Nuevo Laredo's theaters,

or rented in dozens of video stores and watched on the VCR. However, the 20 most popular television programs, and 83% of the music groups or singers mentioned as their favorite among all Secundaria students were Mexican. American films were the only U.S. media contents really popular among the students. More than 80% of the films watched by the students on the VCR or at the theaters were U.S. movies.

However, there were some differences in the degree of exposure, according to social class and gender, lower-class students and girls exposing less to U.S. films than upper-class students and boys. Also, the findings of the in-depth interviews show a general dissatisfaction of the students with the technical quality and the stories of contemporary Mexican movies, a wider availability of American films in the video stores, and a consistent interest and exposure to old Mexican movies regarded as "much better" than the new ones.

The implications of these findings are twofold. Exposure to foreign media content is not homogeneous, neither across media nor across social classes or genders. Many media imperialist studies focus on documenting availability of U.S. television programs on Mexico or other Latin American countries. These findings suggest that local television programs may be considerably more popular than American ones among the audiences. American influence, on the other hand, may be concentrated both on video movies and on films, suggesting the need for media imperialists or culturalists to pay more attention to processes of reception and appropriation of U.S. films among different social classes.

2) The belief that exposure to U.S. media contents may erode the national identity of Mexican or Latin American audiences was not supported either in this study. The survey findings show that in the different dimensions of national identity

used, Secundaria students were clearly high in their degree of loyalty to their country, despite their significant amount of exposure to U.S. films. In fact, Pearson correlations for exposure to U.S. films and how proud they were to be Mexican were either non-significant or showed a low correlation in the other direction: the more they exposed to U.S. films, the more proud of being Mexican they were! There was no significant difference in how Mexican the students feel in comparison with youngsters in the interior of the country, according to amount of exposure to U.S. films.

The in-depth interviews, in the same line, showed that the students are convinced that there are no negative consequences for their national identity from exposing to U.S. media contents. They are able to perceive the differences between that which is "American" and that which is "Mexican" with no doubts or trouble. They may like to watch "Rocky" or "Rambo," but they also like old Mexican movies, Mexican television programs like "Cándido Pérez", "Papá Soltero" and "Chespirito," and Mexican modern or traditional music.

3) Social class is a most important variable to take into account when looking at exposure to foreign media contents. Consistently, upper-class students tended to expose themselves more to U.S. television, radio and films than middle or lower-class students, with middle class youngsters closer to the lower class counterparts than to upper-class students. This does not mean that upper class youngsters do prefer U.S. media contents over Mexican ones. Except for films, they showed higher degrees of exposure to Mexican television programs and music than to American ones. There is a tendency for upper-class students to expose themselves more frequently than lower-class students.

The same was true for the cultural identity indicators of "nationality they would like to have if they would be born again," "where they thought Mexican culture was stronger," and "importance of U.S. traditions for them". Results showed upper class youngsters less likely to want the Mexican nationality if they were born again or less likely to think Mexican culture was as strong or stronger at the border. Again, as in the case of exposure to U.S. media, this does not mean the majority of upper-class students were U.S. inclined. Almost 73% said they would rather be Mexicans again (vs. 88.6% of lower-class students) and they considered much more important Mexican traditions (with a mean of 4.58) than U.S. traditions (with a mean of 3.31). In addition, they were as proud as lower-class students of being Mexican, and feel as Mexican in comparison with youngsters in the interior of Mexico as lower-class students. Tunstall's (1981) point about elites in developing countries being the most active consumers of imported media, while lower classes expose to traditional and authentic culture, was somewhat validated in this study, although upper-class students were not as active consumers of imported media as they were of local media.

4) Gender is also a variable to look at in the reception of foreign media contents. In several of the exposure variables, girls showed significantly less interest in U.S. content than boys. Although the media of both groups' exposure to U.S. television programs was "rarely" in a scale of "never" to "every week," the difference between the mean of the boys (2.34) and that of the girls (2.04), was significant. Exposure to U.S. films was also significantly different between both groups, boys exposing more frequently to them than girls (see Table 13). While social class has been considered by critical scholars to be a most relevant variable when looking at

differentiated patterns of exposure and use of media contents, gender has not always received similar attention. In the Mexican case, gender may play an important role in accounting for differences in media exposure and use due to the clearly different socialization processes through which males and females go through. Traditional values and practices have a more important role in the socialization of females than of males. This fact may explain why Secundaria girls tended to devote less attention than boys to U.S. media content.

5) Years of residence on the border seemed not to account for any differences on degree of exposure to U.S. media. The assumption that the more years living on the border with the United States, the more exposure to U.S. media was not supported in this study. Cultural identity is much stronger when confronted with foreign cultures than it may be assumed.

6) The need to take into account exposure to media other than television when doing reception analyses was highlighted in this study. Border youngsters are very active consumers of radio and films, not just of television programs. They listen to the radio about 2 hours and 45 minutes every day and watch movies on the VCR at least three times per week. The way these other media contents interact with television contents is open to question. They may reinforce the latter or they may conflict with them. They may provide the receiver with additional, complementary information or ideas, or they may offer contrasting, alternative messages.

The in-depth interviews showed also that everyday activities for the students include more than using the mass media. Most of them usually go out with friends, exercise, do homework or attend religious activities during the week.

7) There seemed to be no direct relationship between exposure to U.S. media

and a weakening of the students' cultural identity. The few youngsters who said they saw U.S. television programs or films were not significantly different from those who said they preferred Mexican media content. They tended to say they would rather be Mexican again should they be born again, they were as proud of being Mexicans, and they perceived themselves as Mexicans as youngsters in the interior of the country. Exposure to U.S. music was the only isolated variable associated with a lower interest in wanting to be born Mexican again. The former's frequency of exposure to U.S. music was significantly higher than the latter's. However, exposure to American music did not account for any difference in the other cultural identity items.

Theoretical implications of the findings. The results discussed above may lead one to conclude that if border youngsters are not significantly exposed to U.S. media as a whole, there is nothing problematic about the reception of some particular foreign contents (like video movies and films), and about exposure to national or local media messages. I would like to stress that such a view would be as erroneous as the opposite cultural imperialism position. The findings do point out that cultural dependency scholars may be wrong when assuming that availability of foreign media contents necessarily lead to exposure to them and that this exposure leads inevitably to an erosion of cultural identity. The findings clearly support the culturalist assertions about audience members being actively engaged in the reception process, and about the mediating importance social and cultural factors have in the final selection and interpretation of media content.

For a critical tradition that adopted such a simplistic model of media influence, assuming that audiences members were passive and completely vulnerable

to foreign media content, findings like these suggest that a necessary revision of that model is in order.

However, the results do not rule out the possibility of media systems, either foreign or local, exerting some influence on border audiences. The findings show that Mexican border youngsters do spend important amounts of time selecting and using media contents. Constant exposure to the latter may very well lead to a less dramatic but still important impact on people's perceptions of the world and ideological framework. The findings do not rule out either the possible influence of mass media on other cultural indentity dimensions. This study looked just at a few cultural identity indicators. Many other ways of operationalizing this concept do exist, and the influence of media content on other dimensions is possible, like looking at family values, attitudes towards the United States and Mexico, consumption of Mexican and American goods, and so on.

More importantly, exposure to Mexican national or local media contents may be as problematic for cultural identity as exposure to U.S. media messages. Dependency theorists have consistently shown that Latin American mass media follow closely the U.S. media structures, professional practices and ideological contents (cf. Beltran, 1978; Safar, 1984). These local media tend to espouse and promote American ideological values like individualism, consumerism, competition, aggressiveness, and the like. Consequently, exposure to Mexican television programs or radio music may be as detrimental to cultural identity as exposure to American mass media. While Latin American audiences may actively engaged foreign and local media contents, it is clear that these active processes of reception have not lead in any of the region's countries to the needed structural changes envisioned by the two

critical approaches: cultural imperialism and cultural studies. On the contrary, we have witnessed in the last years a revitalization of transnational companies and interests. Communication monopolies, instead of decreasing in size and number, are getting bigger. Latin American governments are adopting radical, neo-liberal economic policies without open or widespread opposition of the masses. The hegemonic class is still in control of societies still characterized by huge inequalities and an uneven distribution of power. In this context, how succesful may active reception practices be in terms of leading to structural changes? How succesful may they be in eroding the social consensus about the prevalent political and economic system?

So far, evidence about active reception processes has not gone beyond the important but insufficient levels of differentiated selection, negotiation and rejecting of hegemonic messages. While these levels show that a potential exists for a critical consciousness to arise among audience members, they do not seem to play a significant role in the actual transformation of society. If they want to be consistent with their critical stand, cultural scholars may have to address these issues.

Policy implications. Secundaria youngsters have maintained some of their traditions, values, and loyalty towards their nationality not because of their exposure to Mexican media content, but despite their exposure to it. The commercial nature of the television programs and radio songs and music, their conditions of production and distribution, do not foster the cultural plurality and diversity needed for national identity to thrive. On the contrary, Mexican commercial media reproduce the same undimensional values and ideological systems than American commercial media. To

find that audience members, according to different social mediations, practices and experiences, are still able to resist and tranform that undimensional ideological definition is encouraging and an important qualification to the assumed direct effects of media contents on cultural identity. However, it is important to realize that neither foreign media contents nor Mexican ones are helping the different social groups and classes to maintain their particular cultural practices and values. Public policy towards mass media in the Mexican border region may take this into account, designing strategies to facilitate the creation and expansion of alternative non-commercial media systems able to respond to different social needs and groups. Plurality, diversity and access are essential issues that need to be addressed by federal, state, and local governments as well as social organizations and institutions. Cultural identity may still be strong in most border residents, but it could benefit a great deal from media systems sensitive to regional and inter-class differences.

The findings of this study raise some important questions for future research on this area. First, it may be important to analyse in depth the students' processes of assimilation, rejection and negotiation of those media contents they are exposed to. Because of the lack of descriptive data about border residents' exposure to U.S. and Mexican media, this study had to focus a great deal of attention on getting basic information about media exposure and preferences. And although the in-depth interviews explored how the students use media messages in their everyday lives, their perception about U.S. and Mexican media, and how they define their own social identities as Mexicans and border residents, these interviews did not directly explore issues of assimilation, negotiation or rejection of media contents by the students

While the in-depth interviews provide some clues about the ability of border youngsters to interact with either American, national or local symbolic systems from their *own* cultural positions and background, using Garcia-Canclini's terms, it is still necessary to explore in more detail the ways in which this process is reproduced on the Mexican border with the United States.

If it is impossible to find anywhere a cultural identity that is pure, authentic and without contradictions and complicities with hegemonic and foreign ideologies and values (Barbero, 1988), future studies may want to pay more attention to the implications of contrasting media exposure habits, like watching Mexican television and seeing U.S. films. How is it possible that a clear preference for Mexican sitcoms and telenovelas coexists with a clear preference for American movies? What connections and cross-fertilizations are done by the students in making sense of these contrasting cultural products?

Also, it may be important to look at other ways in which cultural penetration may occur in the Mexican border region. Tourism, international trade, twin plants and work in the U.S. side of the border may account for stronger influences than those of American mass media. Future studies may have to pay more attention to these issues in addition to looking at cultural penetration via the mass media.

Finally, future research may want to explore the way in which these findings and implications may differ if a study is done in another site. Are youngsters in other parts of Mexico as exposed to media? are they able to make the same distinctions between their culture and their own values as border students? Could it be that routine confrontation with the "otherness," with foreign people and institutions on the border region makes it easy for Mexican residents to identify their national

background, as Bustamante (1983) argues? Studies in different sites would be very useful to answer these and other important questions.

The complexity of studying both reception processes and cultural identity in a setting such as the Mexican northern border asks for many other studies to be carried out with the same and with other qualitative methodologies, like participant observation. This research did not pretend to be an exhaustive analysis of these cultural processes. Rather, it was just a first and tentative step in the study of processes of reception and appropriation of media contents in a region characterized by a plurality of media choices.

Appendix

Jose Carlos Lozano
Doctoral Dissertation
Questionnaire for Junior High School Students

ID.- Case ID |__|__|__|

2. Write down the name of your school

_____

3. Check the grade you are attending now.
1. First ____ 2. Second ____ 3. Third ____

4. Gender
1. Male ___ 2. Female ___

5. Does your family have a television set at home?
1. Yes ___ 2. No ___

(If you don't have a TV set, skip next questions and go to question No. 25)

6. How many hours do you watch television in an average day?

_____

7. In the next section, please check the cell corresponding to the frequency with which you watch EACH ONE of the following television stations.

How often do you watch	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Frequently	Every Day
1. XEFE Canal 2 (Local)					
2. KGNS Canal 8 Laredo, Texas					
3. KLDO Canal 27 (Telemundo)					
4. XHBR Canal 11 (XEW Televisa)					
5. KVTV Canal 13 Laredo, Texas					

8. Write down the names of five of your FAVORITE TV programs.

	Channel
1._____	_____
2._____	_____
3._____	_____
4._____	_____
5._____	_____

CODE AS First Digit 1. Mexican program 2. American
2nd and 3rd ID for each program

9. In the next section, please check the cell corresponding to the frequency with which you watch the following TV programs.

How often do you watch	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Frequently	Every Week
1. Cándido Pérez					
2. Daktari					
3. Chespirito					
4. Chips					
5. Lucha Libre Mexicana					
6. U.S. movies					
7. Papá Soltero					
8. Magnum					
9. Mexican films					
10.Ninja turtles					
11. Anabel					
12 Dukes of Hazz					

10. Does your family have a VCR machine at home?

1. Yes _____ 2. No _____

(IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A VCR AT HOME, SKIP NEXT QUESTIONS AND GO TO QUESTION No. 15)

11. When you play movies in your VCR, or someone in your family plays them and YOU watch them, how often are they MEXICAN movies?

1. Never ____
2. Rarely ____
3. Sometimes ____
4. Frequently ____
5. Always ____

12. When you play movies in your VCR, or someone in your family plays them and YOU watch them, how often are they AMERICAN movies?

1. Never ____
2. Rarely ____
3. Sometimes ____
4. Frequently ____
5. Always ____

13. Write down the titles of the last two movies you have played in your VCR at home.

(13a) 1._____ (13b) 2._____

CODE First Digit: 1. Mexican movie
2. American Movie
8. Origin unknown
9. Other

2nd & 3rd: ID for each movie

14. How many days per week do you use the VCR to play movies?

_____

15. Is your family subscribed to Cablevision?

1. Yes____ 2. No____

16. If your family subscribes to Cablevision, how often do you watch AMERICAN stations on cable? (Other than KGNS Channel 8, KVTV Channel 13 and KLDO Channel 27)

1. Never ____
2. Rarely ____
3. Sometimes ____
4. Frequently ____
5. Always ____

17. If your family subscribes to Cablevision, how often do you watch MEXICAN stations on cable? (Other than XEFE Canal 2 and XEW Canal 11 [2])

1. Never ____
2. Rarely ____
3. Sometimes ____
4. Frequently ____
5. Always ____

18. Does your family has a satellite dish to watch other TV stations?

1. Yes _____ 2. No _____

19. If your family has a satellite dish, what station do you MOST like to watch?

_____

CODES First Digit.....1. Mexican 2. American
Second & Third....ID for each station

20. If your family has a satellite dish, what station do you NEXT like to watch?

_____

CODES First Digit.....1. Mexican 2. American
Second & Third....ID for each station

21. Does your family have a radio set at home?

1. Yes ____ 2. No _____

22. How many hours do you listen to the radio on an average day? (IF YOU DON'T LISTEN TO THE RADIO, WRITE DOWN 0)

_____

23. In the next section, please check the cell corresponding to the frequency with which you listen to the following radio stations.

How often do you listen to	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Frequently	Every Day
1. XEK La Grande					
2. Radio Mil					
3. XEBK La B.K.					
4. XEWL La Poderosa					
5. XHNOE Stereo 91					
6. XEFE Radio Fiesta					
7. XEAS Radio Cañón					
8. XENU La Ran-cherita Contenta					
9. XHMW Stereo Vida					
10. XHNK Stereo Ritmo					
11. XEWL Radio Cañón					
12. XEGNK Radio Mexicana					
13. XHTLN Estrellas de Oro					
14. KVOZ					
15. KLAR					
16. KOYE					
17. KRRG					

24. Check how often do you listen to the following types of music. Pop Music in English.... (musica moderna en ingles). Would you say...

1. never ____
2. rarely ____
3. sometimes ____
4. frequently ____
5. every day ____

25. What about Pop Music in Spanish (Musica moderna en español) like the one played by juvenile groups, Mijares, Yuri, and so on. Would you say...

1. never ____
2. rarely ____
3. sometimes ____
4. frequently ____
5. every day ____

26. What about "Ranchera" or "Norteña" music, including "cumbias" and "corridos" (Mexican traditional music). Would you say...

1. Never ____
2. rarely ____
3. sometimes ____
4. frequently ____
5. Every day ____

27. Write down the names of your FAVORITE singers or music groups.

_____
_____
_____
_____

CODES First Digit.....1. Mexican 2. American
Second & third....ID for each singer or group

28. Write down the name of the singer or music group you NEXT prefer.

_____

CODES First Digit.....1. Mexican 2. American
Second & third....ID for each singer or group

29. How often do you go to the cinema?

1. Once a week ___
2. Once every two weeks ___
3. Once a month ___
4. Ocassionally ___

5. Never ___

30. Write down the titles of the last two movies you have seen at a theater.

30a. 1._____

30b. 2._____

31. When you watch movies at a theater, how often are they U.S. movies?

1. Never ____
2. Rarely ____
3. Sometimes ____
4. Frequently ____
5. Always ____

32. When you watch movies at a theater, how often are they Mexican movies?

1. Never ____
2. Rarely ____
3. Sometimes ____
4. Frequently ____
5. Always ____

33. Do you speak English?

1. No ____
2. Just a little ____
3. More or less ____
4. Good ____
5. Very good ____

34. How often do you go to Laredo, Texas?

1. Never ____
2. Rarely ____
3. Sometimes ____
4. Often ____
5. Very often ____

35. How do your parents go to work?

1. By bus _____
2. By bicycle _____
3. In his or her own car _____
4. Walking _____
9. Other _____

36. Is the street on your block paved?

1. Yes ____ 2. No ___

37. What kind of material is most of your house made of? (¿De qué material están hechos la mayor parte de los muros y las paredes de tu casa?)

1. Block, cement, brick _____
2. Wood _____
3. Adobe _____
4. Cardboard or "lamina" _____

38. Where were you born? (Write down the names of the city and the state)

City _____ State _____ Country _____

39. For how many years have you been living in this city?

_____

40. If less than 10 years, where were you living before coming to Nuevo Laredo?

City_____
State _____
Country _____

41. What is your father's occupation?

_____

Codes:

1. Patron
2. Administrador, gerente ___
3. Empleado ___
4. Obrero, albañil, carpintero ___
5. Trailero ___
6. Profesor ___
7. Sirviente ___
8.
9.
10.
11.

42. What is your mother's occupation? (IF SHE DOES NOT WORK, CHECK "HOUSEWIFE")

1. Patron ___
2. Administrador, gerente ___
3. Empleado ___
4. Obrero, albañil, carpintero ___
5. Trailero ___
6. Profesor ___
7. Sirviente
8.
9.
10.
11. Ama de casa

43. What characteristics should someone have to be considered a Mexican? (open question)

_____

_____

_____

44. If you would be born once again, what nationality would you rather have, in what country would you like to be born?

_____

45. How proud are you to be a Mexican?

very proud	proud	neutral	not proud	not proud at all
1	2	3	4	5

46. Do you think youngsters who observe U.S. traditions like Halloween or Thanksgiving Day are less Mexican than those who observe only national festivities?

1. Yes _____ 2. No _____

Why? _____

_____

_____

47. How Mexican do you feel you are in comparison with Mexican youngsters living in the interior of Mexico? ¿Qué tan mexicano te sientes tú en comparación con los jóvenes que viven en el interior de México?

1. More Mexican than them _____
2. As Mexican as them _____
3. Less Mexican than them _____

48. In your opinion where is Mexican culture stronger, in the interior of Mexico or here in the border? En tu opinión, ¿dónde está más fuerte la cultura mexicana, aquí en la frontera o en el interior de México?

1. In the interior of Mexico ____
2. Here in the border ____
3. The same in both places ____

49. What customs or traditions do you consider to be more representative of Mexican culture in this border city? Please mention two. ¿Qué costumbres o tradiciones consideras tú que identifican más a la cultura mexicana en esta ciudad fronteriza? Menciona 2.

1. _____

2. _____

50. In the next section, for each of the following traditions and festivities, tell whether FOR YOU it is very important, important, neutral, unimportant or definitely unimportant.

How important is	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Frequently	Every Week
1. Halloween					
2. Día de los muertos					
3. Día de la Coneja					
4. 16 de Sept. (Independ.)					
5. Thanksgiving					
6. Virgen de Guadalupe					

José Carlos Lozano October 20, 1991
Doctoral Dissertation
Questions for the long interview
with Junior High School students

Date: _____
Place: _____
Time: _____
Interviewer's name: _____

Subject's name: _____
Sex _____ Birth date: _____
Age: _____ Birth place: _____
Time living in Nuevo Laredo: _____
Father's occupation: _____
Mother's occupation: _____

Name of school _____
Grade _____

NOTE: These questions are conceived as a point of departure for an informal deep interview. Many others will raise according to the priorities and emphasis of the informants.

1. ¿Me podrías describir paso por paso lo que haces durante un día normal de entre semana? Could you tell me what do you do during a typical workday step by step? (ASK HIM/HER TO BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE)

2. ¿Y que haces durante los sábados? What about Saturdays?

3. ¿Y los domingos? What about Sundays?

4. ¿Qué tanto escuchas la radio al día y qué tipo de música prefieres? how many hours do you listen to the radio everyday and what type of music do you like to listen to the most? (ASK WHETHER THE MUSIC IS U.S. MUSIC OR MEXICAN MUSIC).

5. (SI ESCUCHA MUSICA NORTEAMERICANA) ¿Por qué te gusta más la música norteamericana que la mexicana? (IF HE/SHE LIKE U.S. MUSIC THE MOST) Why do you like U.S. music more than Mexican music?

(SI ESCUCHA MUSICA MEXICANA-EN ESPAÑOL) ¿Por qué te gusta más la música mexicana o en español que la norteamericana en inglés? (IF HE/SHE LIKES MEXICAN MUSIC THE MOST) Why do you like Mexican music more than U.S. music?

6. ¿Qué opinas sobre la música y los artistas o grupos mexicanos? what do you think of Mexican music, singers or grups?

7. Y ¿qué opinas sobre la música y los artistas o grupos norteamericanos? And what do you think of U.S. music, singers or groups?

8. ¿Dónde y con quién escuchas la radio? Where and with whom do you listen to the radio?

9. ¿Crees que los que escuchan música en inglés han perdido su identidad y su cultura mexicana? Do you think that those who listen to English-language music have lost their identity and their Mexican culture?

10. ¿Qué tanto ves la televisión diariamente y con quién? How many hours do you watch television everyday and with whom?

11. ¿Qué tipo de programas prefieres? (PREGUNTAR NOMBRES Y SU PROCEDENCIA) What programs do you like the most? (ASK THE TITLES AND ORIGIN, V.GR. U.S. OR MEXICAN)

12. ¿Qué diferencias o semejanzas adviertes tú entre los programas de televisión mexicanos y los norteamericanos? in your opinion, what are the differences or similarities between U.S. and Mexican television programs?

13a. (SI PREFIERE PROGRAMAS NORTEAMERICANOS) ¿Por qué te gustan más los programas norteamericanos que los mexicanos? (IF HE/SHE LIKES U.S. PROGRAMS MORE THAN MEXICAN PROGRAMS) why do you like U.S. programs more than Mexican ones? or

13b. (SI PREFIERE PROGRAMAS MEXICANOS) ¿Por qué te gustan más los programas mexicanos que los norteamericanos? (IF HE/SHE LIKES MEXICAN TV PROGRAMS MORE THAN U.S. PROGRAMS) why do you like Mexican TV programs more than U.S. programs?

14. ¿Qué es lo que no te gusta de tus programas preferidos? what is it that you don't like about your

favorite TV programs?

15. En tu opinión, ¿qué diferencias hay entre vivir en la frontera con los Estados Unidos y vivir en el interior de México? In your opinion, what are the differences of living in the border with the United States and living in the interior of Mexico?

16. ¿Qué tan mexicano te sientes tú, en comparación con los jóvenes que no viven cerca de Estados Unidos? How Mexican do you feel you are, in comparison with youngsters who do not live near the United States?

17. ¿Cuáles son las ventajas de vivir en la frontera con Estados Unidos? What are the advantages of living on the border with the U.S.?

18. ¿Y cuáles son las desventajas de vivir junto a los Estados Unidos? And what are the disadvantages of living so near to the United States?

19. ¿Qué costumbres o tradiciones consideras tú que identifican más a la cultura mexicana en esta ciudad fronteriza? What customs or traditions in this border city can be considered to be part of the Mexican culture?

20. ¿Piensas que hay costumbres o tradiciones norteamericanas que se festejan de este lado de la frontera? ¿cuáles? Do you think there are American customs or traditions that are celebrated in this side of the border? which ones?

21. ¿Piensas que aquellas personas que festejan estas costumbres norteamericanas están perdiendo su identidad como mexicanos por hacer eso? Do you think people who adopt those American customs are losing their Mexican identity?

22. ¿Qué semejanzas y diferencias crees tener tú con los jóvenes norteamericanos? What are in your opinion the similarities and differences between you and American youngsters?

23. ¿Crees que los que ven programas de televisión norteamericanos han perdido su identidad y su cultura mexicana? Do you think that those who watch U.S. television programs have lost their identity and Mexican culture?

24. Según tu opinión ¿en qué consiste ser mexicano? In your opinion, what does it mean to be Mexican?

Notes

1 According to sources internal to the three newspapers.

2 In Latin America, the word popular is interpreted more in the sense of "traditional," subordinate and alternative, than in the Anglosaxon sense of "modern." In Latin America, popular culture is not mass culture, but the values, traditions, beliefs, and social practices of subordinate groups like the Indians, the workers, the peasants, and in general those groups with lower income and resources.

3 Barbero mentions as examples of these creative uses of media technology the transmission of radio programs by and for Peruvian peasants in Lima, and the use of loudspeakers and audio cassette recorders by female vendors in a popular market of the same Peruvian city (p. 179).

4 Social class of each student was computed out of the following variables: particular school attended to (private or public), means of transportation of parents (car, bus, bicycle, walking), conditions of his/her home, and parents' occupation.

5 A survey of 836 viewers in Monterrey done in February 1992 by the newspaper El Norte, found that the most watched programs in that city were Televisa telenovelas, Cándido Pérez, Anabel, Chespirito, Papá Soltero, Mujer...Casos de la Vida Real, Todo de Todo and Siempre en Domingo. Cfr. El Norte, February 26, 1992, p. 1E.

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