

CHAPTER THREE

The Mexican Public Hearing (1983)

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

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

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

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

- A) New Communications Technologies and Availability of Information;**
- B) Freedom of Communication (freedom of speech; freedom to inform/be informed);**
- C) The Economics of the Broadcasting Industry;**
- D) Roles of Communication Institutions;**
- E) The Fostering of National Identity and Cultural Sovereignty;**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A) NEW COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES AND AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION

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

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

One of the main focuses of the presentations on this

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Broadcasting in Mexico is taxed by requiring stations to

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

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

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

consorcio monopolico ya contaba con 61 repetidoras y 67 transmisores de baja potencia.¹¹

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

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

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

government.

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

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

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

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

Mexican history could be examined from its native circumstances or from its dependence upon foreign powers. While the truth rests on both internal and external factors, the notion of the pernicious effect of foreign influence on Mexico has been a major theme in the search for national identity. The foreign model provided Mexico with a developmental dilemma: entry into the modern world depended on a rationale and an infrastructure derived from advanced Western technology, and this created a conflict¹⁴ between progress and tradition.

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

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

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

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

1) Broadcasting in Mexico should serve the purposes of a sovereign nation.

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

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

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

2) There is an unbalanced international flow of information which affects Mexico.

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

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

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

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

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

into consideration alternatives to the introduction of new technological imports.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the Mexican Broadcasting Act). The subject was brought up for discussion during the national hearings on communications:

El experimento falló rotundamente. Al parecer Televisa no esta preparada para transmitir cultura. Sus teóricos, sus concepciones, su ideología, su actitud ante los valores del país se lo impiden.

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

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

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

C) THE ECONOMICS OF THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3) There should be ways to encourage private broadcasters to fulfill their roles adequately.

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

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

It was said during the hearings:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

D) ROLES OF COMMUNICATION INSTITUTIONS

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

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

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

Two clearly different positions were stated by the presenters in regard to this matter: one position insisted that the private sector be forced to contribute to the broadcasting of culture and popular expression, and the other stated that this is a task best undertaken by the State, even if so far it has failed to make good use of the 12.5% of air time that by law corresponds to public service broadcasting.

If the government cannot meet this need, maybe educational

institutions can.

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

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

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

E) DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the end, the above mentioned arguments oscillated

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

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

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

- a) to create series and produce programming based on Mexico's history, heritage and tradition;
- b) to establish community groups in charge of supervising the contents of the audiovisual material being broadcast via the media so as to avoid those that do not correspond to the reality of the country.⁴¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5) New broadcasting legislation should be created.

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

were to:

- a) reformulate the actual regulatory framework as to respond to present needs;
- b) delimit the objectives of the different governmental agencies involved in broadcasting to avoid confusion;
- c) encourage national productions and control the importation and distribution of foreign material;
- d) train communications professionals who can promote new ways of expression and revitalize those which correspond to the Mexican identity.

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

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

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

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

With American technology, Mexico has also adopted

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

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

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

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

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

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

The debate over cultural identity and national sovereignty as manifested during the hearings is nothing more than the continuation of a historical search for expression.

Mexico, like other countries which used to be colonies of imperialistic powers, has frequently lost grasp of its own identity and started looking for models or parameters to

imitate.

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

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

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

Hence, it is unclear what Mexico is really trying to rescue from its past in order to construct a national identity, and as the process advances it will be less clear.

But as one of the characteristic features of this culture, Mexico can oppose its very process searching to the American social determinism, meaning that:

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

Notes

1. The other two main occasions on which the public was invited to express an opinion concerning communications in Mexico were the following: in 1948, President Miguel Alemán commissioned the intellectual and artist Salvador Novo to figure out a Mexican alternative to the existing system of broadcasting and production for the recently introduced medium of television. Novo proposed a "descentralized monopoly of the State with the plural participation of all the groups that compose the Mexican nation." Alemán did not follow his advice (as mentioned in Comunicación Social, vol. 2., p. 125).
The other attempt to encourage popular participation in a communications policy process was made by President José López Portillo between 1978 and 1980 during which a long series of popular hearings was conducted before Congress in order to define an already approved amendment to the 6th article of the Constitution. The amendment read as follows: "Freedom of information will be guaranteed by the State". Nobody knew at the time what the concept 'freedom of information' was supposed to mean, and the President did not define it. Hearings at the time stressed the ambiguity in which such a concept had seen the light of the Constitution, and posed a number of problems related to its formal adoption. Congress finally concluded that the nation was not prepared for such an advanced addendum to the Bill of Rights and that appropriate mechanisms for its adoption did not exist. Ultimately, Congress abandoned the attempt to define the concept even though it was adopted and stands in the Constitution.
2. See Samuel Ramos. El Perfil del Hombre y la Cultura en México. México. Editorial Pedro Robredo, 1938. This work has led Mexican thinkers in many directions since it was the first approach to define in socio-psychological terms the characteristics of "the Mexican".
3. Francisco Vázquez H, "Philosophy in Mexico: the Opinion of the Intellectuals for a Prophetic Insight?" in Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory, vol. 4., no. 3, p. 39.
4. Michael and Deena Weinstein. "Marginality in Mexican Philosophy," in Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 23-24.
5. If all sectors of society are given the opportunity to participate in national policy matters such as this, it is logical to assume that a demand for further participation will appear. At least in this case, however, the socio-political momentum and the issues under discussion are such that if the hearings are not successful in helping to implement a definite policy this time, it is unlikely that social participation will

be seen at work again.

6. Subsidiaries of American corporations operating in Mexico are in essence considered as transnationals. American subsidiaries surpass in number any other group of transnationals which is not North American in origin. According to data published by Miguel Basáñez, La Lucha por la Hegemonía en México 1968-1980 (Siglo XXI eds, 1982), there are at least 170 of these transnational companies operating in Mexico, and of these, a minimum of 7 are communications related or sponsors of broadcasting.
During the 1983 hearings, Maria Victoria Storms Reyes, representative of El Colegio de Sociólogos de México, expressed her concerns as quoted in regards to the role of transnationals in the future of broadcasting. Comunicación Social, vol. 4, July 1983.
7. Francisco J. Martínez, Comunicación Social, vol. 5, August 1983, p. 152; and Claudia Solís, Comunicación Social, vol. 3, July 1983, p. 209.
8. Fernando Buen Abad D., Comunicación Social, vol. 4, July 1983, pp. 149, 153.
9. Miguel de Anda Jacobsen, (Director de la Casa de la Cultura de Ensenada, B.C.), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 135.
10. Federico Campbell (journalist), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, pp. 122-125; and Eduardo Aispuro Beltrán (journalist), Comunicación Social, vol. 4, July 1983, pp. 121-124; and Héctor González Pérez (news reporter), Comunicación Social, vol. 4, July 1983, pp. 192-196.
11. Federico Campbell (journalist), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, pp. 124-125.
12. Ibid., p. 125.
13. Fátima Fernández Christlieb (representative of La Asociación Mexicana de Investigadores de la Comunicación, A.C.), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, pp. 137-141.
14. Henry C. Schmidt, The Roots of Lo Mexicano, College Station and London: Texas A & M University Press, 1978, pp. 57-58.
15. Luis Ramiro Beltrán y Elizabeth Fox de Cardona, Comunicación Dominada, México, Editorial Nueva Imagen, 1980, p. 43.
16. Alfonso Maya Nava (broadcaster), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, p. 83.
17. Miguel Antonio Meza Estrada, (representative of the

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

18. Rogelio Cuevas Huerta (radio producer), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 35.
19. President Miguel de la Madrid H., "Plan Básico de Gobierno 1982-1988 sec IV," as quoted by Ruben Adolfo Fernández González, Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 144.
20. Fernando Buen Abad D and Héctor Ibarra González, Comunicación Social, vol. 4, July 1983, pp. 145, 151, 201.
21. Gustavo E. Astiazarán (representative of La Cámara de la Industria de la Radio y la Televisión, delegación Baja California) and Miguel Antonio Meza Estrada (representative of El Centro de Estudios Fronterizos del Norte de México), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, pp. 21-23 and pp. 88-90 respectively.
22. Mario Arras Rodriguez (architect), Comunicación Social, vol. 4, p. 138, July 1983.
23. Michael and Deena Weinstein, "Marginality in Mexican Philosophy," in Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory, vol. 4, no. 3, (Introduction to a series on Mexican philosophy), pp. 21-22.
24. José Asunción Cortés Rivera. Comunicación Social. vol. 5, August 1983, p. 127.
25. Delia Crovi (representative of the Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 130.
26. As in the case of Televisa's cultural channel supposedly created as part of a deal with the Mexican government in exchange for renewed broadcasting licences.
27. Delia Crovi (representative of the Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 129.
28. Alfonso Maya Nava (broadcaster), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 86.
29. Federico Campbell (journalist), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, p. 123.
30. According to the Mexican Broadcasting Act licences to broadcast are granted for a period of 30 years; (only one television station has been renewed so far).
31. Fernando de Ita (journalist), Comunicación Social, vol.

4, July 1983, p. 181.

32. Solomon Lipp, Leopoldo Zea. From Mexicanidad to a Philosophy of History, Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980, p. 96.
33. Irma Aguilar Fernández, (communications researcher), Comunicación Social, vol. 5, August 1983, p. 29.
34. Henry C. Schmidt, The Roots of Lo Mexicano. Self and Society in Mexican Thought 1900-1934, College Station and London: Texas A & M University Press, 1978, p. ix.
35. Jesús Ruiz Muñoz (broadcaster), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 98.
36. Francisco Javier Sánchez Campuzano (chairman of the Administradora de Medios de Comunicación, S.A.), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 107.
37. Juan Rivero Valls (representative of the Universidad de Veracruz), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 107.
38. Francisco Alcalá Aguilar (representative of the Centro de Estudios Políticos Económicos y Sociales de Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 107.
39. Fedra Cabrera y Rodríguez (representative of the Secretaría de Educación Pública de Quintana Roo), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 25.
40. Francisco Javier Sánchez Campuzano (chairman of the Administradora de Medios de Comunicación S.A.), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 102.
41. Francisco Alcalá Aguilar (representative of the Centro de Estudios Políticos, Económicos y Sociales de Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl) and Luis H. Galindo Carrillo (representative of the Colegio de Profesionistas de la Comunicación de Saltillo, A.C.), in Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 118 and respectively.
42. Jaime Hernández García (journalist), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, p. 55.
43. Rodolfo Pichardo García, (professor of Universidad de Sonora), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, pp. 95-96.
44. Tatiana Galván (communications scholar), Comunicación Social, August 1983, p. 143.
45. Delia Crovi (representative of the Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), Comunicación Social, vol. 2, June 1983, pp.131-132.

46. Eduardo Aispuro Beltrán (journalist), Comunicación Social, vol. 4, July 1983, pp. 122-124.
47. President Miguel de la Madrid H., First Presidential Report, Excelsior, Sept. 2, 1983, p. 13-D.
48. Octavio Paz, The Labyrinth of Solitude. Life and Thought in Mexico, (translated by Lysander Kemp). New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961, p. 87.
49. Ibid., p. 25.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

government and media owners.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

presented in the real world.

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

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

A) NEW COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES AND AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION.

Canadian arguments

1) Technological improvements should aim to serve all Canadians
 (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 221-223, 235)

2) Centralization, particularly in broadcasting, can overwhelm the culture of other regions
 (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 13-14, 149 153, 231)

3) Community broadcasting services should be encouraged
 (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 215)

4) Cable television should be recognized as a third communication entity with its own distinct and complementary characteristics
 (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 218-219)

5) Cable has an uncertain regulatory status
 (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 218)

6) Pay-TV should serve to strengthen Canadian program production potential
 (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 223-224)

Mexican arguments

4) Mexicans should set an example in joining efforts to serve the country with the technology available
 (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, pp. 124-125, 137, 140-141, Vol. 4, pp. 121, 192-196)

1) Mexican broadcasting although owned by nationals depends on foreign ways of production and diffusion of information
 (Comunicación social, Vol. 4, p. 113)

2) Regional and municipal broadcasting should be avoid centralization and strengthen local media
 (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, p. 90, Vol. 3, p. 209, Vol. 4, p. 52-53, Vol. 5, p. 152)

3) Cable television in Mexico is a direct threat to national cultural identity
 (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, p. 135)

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

1) Canada should implement its own broadcasting system in the true sense (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 4)

1) Broadcasting in Mexico should serve the purposes of a sovereign nation (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, pp. 48, 82-85)

2) There is an unbalanced flow of communication goods in the international market (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 9)

2) There is an international flow of information which affects Mexico (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, pp. 35, 56, 89, 99, 164, Vol. 4, p. 164)

3) Culture should not exist in any concentrated form; it should be evenly and homogeneously distributed across Canada (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 14-15)

3) Mexicans should be talked to in "their own language" (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, p. 144, Vol. 4, pp. 53, 145, 151, 201)

4) Canadians should be free to choose from the variety of programming available in the broadcast media (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 219-221, 224-225)

4) Mexico's Northern border situation presents a challenge to local broadcasters (Comunicación social, Vol. 2, pp. 21-23, 88-90, 94)

5) The availability of American programming poses problems for public policy-making and the administration of regulations (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 222-223)

6) Cultural industries do not reflect cultural diversity appropriately (FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 223)

5) Mexican cultural broadcasting institutions do not respond to actual cultural needs (Comunicación social, Vol. 4, pp. 88-89, Vol. 5, p. 29)

C) THE ECONOMICS OF THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY

1) The United States is simply too big to compete with
(FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, p. 9)

1) Mexico's poor economy and technology do not allow the country to compete with the U.S.
(Comunicación social, Vol. 5, p. 127)

2) The marketplace produces a double 'dis-incentive' that works in favor of American programming
(FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 219, 229)

2) The marketplace produces a double 'dis-incentive' that works in favor of American programming
(Comunicación social, Vol. 2, p. 130)

3) Private broadcasting must be successful business before it can effectively embrace public service requirements
(FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 219-220)

3) There should be ways to encourage private broadcasters to fulfill adequately their role
(Comunicación social, Vol. 2, pp. 86, 129)

4) The ownership of the media (who profits from what and under what legal framework is the real core of Mexican broadcasting)
(Comunicación social, Vol. 2, p. 123, Vol. 4, pp. 181, 190, 238)

D) ROLE OF COMMUNICATIONS INSTITUTIONS

1) Governmental institutions have failed to fulfill their roles
(FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 227-228, 230-231)

1) Mexican cultural broadcast institutions do not adequately fulfill their role
(Comunicación social, Vol. 5, p. 29)

2) These institutions have failed primarily because of lack of financial resources
(FCPRC, Summary of Briefs & Hearings, pp. 22, 26, 33)

E) THE FOSTERING OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2) There is a strong need to promote national identity in Mexico
(Comunicación social, vol. 2, pp. 55, 118, 147)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The unwillingness of the Mexican government to change its

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

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

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

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

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

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

- a) control,
- b) capitalization, and
- c) skills.

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

Diagram No. 3Canadian and Mexican issues derived from the arguments by macroanalytical category1) Control.

- A) Canadian Issues:
- centralization of information/culture in a few centres of production
 - unfair competition from the U.S.
 - Excessive concern over amount of content instead of quality
- B) Mexican Issues:
- Centralization of information/culture in a few hands (private ownership)
 - Dependency on foreign patterns and means of production
 - Lack of precise regulations concerning broadcasting

Analytic conclusion:

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

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

2) Capitalization.

- A) Canadian Issues:
- Need to support independent producers to enhance creative cultural programming
 - Lack of financial support for cultural institutions
 - Need to break into the American market
- B) Mexican Issues:
- Need to support the present broadcasting scheme (majority of private ownership) while at the same time encouraging cultural trends instead of commercialization

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

3) Skills.

- A) Canadian Issues:
- Need to encourage native talent and provide access to the media
 - Need to foster independent centers of production
- B) Mexican Issues:
- Need to encourage the production of national material
 - Awareness that it is indispensable to produce material according to the needs of the people

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Philosophers like Grant or Zea would remind us that

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

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

CONCLUDING REMARKS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

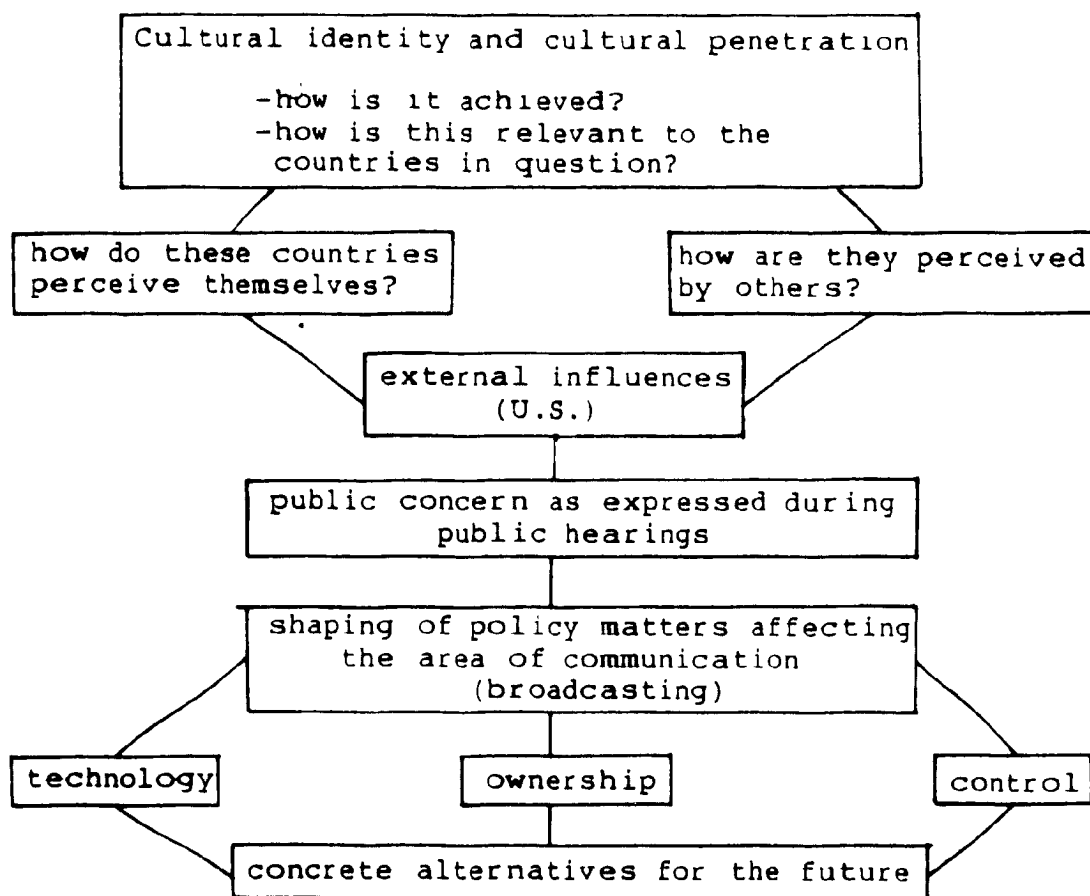
During the course of the analysis, certain issues remained central, as catalysts speeding up or slowing down the process of cultural penetration, and, consequently, as priority areas in which action must be taken if these countries want to achieve a cultural identity. The analysis done through the macro-categories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

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

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

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

Diagram No. 4



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

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

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

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

Notes

1. According to Mexican presenters at the hearings (see argument no. 1 on the Role of cultural institutions, chapter three), cultural institutions, and especially governmental institutions do not respond adequately to Mexican cultural needs. The government, however, has responded by reducing financial support instead of increasing it, because from the point of the State, cultural needs are not considered a priority in times of economic crisis (which the country suffered from 1982 to the present).
2. The relationship that the private sector built with the Mexican government dates back to the very beginning of broadcasting in Mexico (the 1920's) but was made more evident with the introduction of television as a new communication medium (1950). The Mexican government originally adopted a very permissive attitude towards the private sector but has been trying to reduce its power ever since. Nevertheless, the private broadcasting monopoly has always found ways of increasing its influence. For more details on this

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

- 3 There are no performance criteria established by the Mexican government or the Broadcasting Act except for the articles that loosely define that programming should contribute to the good taste of the public and be balanced in nature. The latter are not defined as categories of performance evaluation. To date these criteria have been applied according to the perceptions of broadcasters and the subjectivity of government officials
- 4 Section 3 a Part I of the 1968 Broadcasting Act, "Broadcasting Policy for Canada," Chapter B-11, p. 2

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