

**UNWARRANTED HOPES
AND UNFULFILLED
EXPECTATIONS:
CANADIAN MEDIA POLICY
AND THE CBC***

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Changes in organizational location and fiscal support during recent years have not been kind to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), one of the crown jewels of North American broadcasting. In view of these circumstances, as well as several critical reviews of its performance, a session of a recent meeting of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States (ACSUS) was devoted to the Corporation's current position and future prospects in a globalizing, privatizing, retrenching environment. As an invitee to that session, I saw opportunity to consider whether the CBC's declining esteem could be attributed primarily to its past and present associations with missions largely beyond its control, and, if so, whether an alternative mission and appropriate resources might help it recover.

My starting premise is that evaluations of the Corporation are strongly influenced by its success in attaining policy goals with which it was or is associ-

*A list of acronyms used in this article is provided on page 34.

ated and for which it is held accountable. I propose a candidate for that primary mission, examine how it accords with other national policies, and consider whether the CBC can succeed by such standards. This exercise suggests that the CBC has been, now is, and will continue to be in a 'no win' situation because the relevant policies are in conflict and unrealistic — in short, because they are unattainable. I conclude that they constitute the unfulfilled expectations that erode the CBC's position with the state. The addition of poor management to the mix is an additional burden. In assessing the Corporation's future under current conditions, I have tried to take recent events into account.¹ Obviously, much has happened recently; there have been major changes in the CBC's situation and operations. But an updating as I edit the manuscript suggests that little has changed since the ACSUS presentation.

The aforementioned organizational changes may introduce some unintended confusion. The facts are that the CBC is no longer a regulatory or autonomous organization; it and all other Canadian broadcasters, as well as the entire public and private telecommunications industry, are regulated by the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). Their current aims and justifications are specified in the Broadcasting Act of 1991 and its subsequent amendments.² Both are situated in the Department of Canadian

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Heritage after having been independent agencies prior to that department's creation. Although the act pertains to all Canadian broadcasting — it does address the CBC specifically as well — I argue that the position of the CBC in Canadian Heritage, its surveillance by another agency within Heritage, and its primary dependence on government funds make it a party to Heritage's broader cultural mission. This does not mean the CBC censors or biases materials to appease incumbent regimes; rather, it makes more understandable the facts that only the CBC has implemented an all-Canadian programming regimen and that the television network rarely gets high audience ratings. The organizational nesting of CBC and other Canadian broadcasters under the authority of the CRTC, and the nesting of the CBC and CRTC but not the rest of Canadian broadcasting in Canadian Heritage, which also monitors other media less directly, shapes my interpretation of recent events. The position of the CBC in the Canadian Heritage-CRTC-CBC hierarchy of control contributes to its weakened position in two ways; it undercuts the CBC's ability to compete with private broadcasters, and diverts it from a non-competitive role as a national public broadcaster. Both circumstances have given rise to the concerns that led to the ACSUS session as well as to the formation of several Canadian public interest support groups.

Despite these major changes in organization and function, the more things change the more they remain the same. As a target of frequent criticism, the CBC limps along, defensively proclaiming past successes while publicizing plans to fulfill its mission better. I shall maintain that this is because the CBC has been and continues to be judged, in part, in terms of a former mandate to contribute to national unity by building a Canadian culture. The Corporation's current mandate (in the 1991 Act) is to provide programs that, among other things, will be "distinctively Canadian," "contribute to shared national consciousness and identity," and "actively contribute to the flow and exchange of cultural expression." Two observations may be made about these specifications. First, because they are vague (e.g., the third), and imply the reality of central undefined and hotly debated concepts (e.g., distinctively Canadian, national consciousness, national identity, cultural expression), they are subject to interpretation. Secondly, there is no reference in the act to a responsibility to create or contribute to national unity. But many of these same programming mandates were linked with that goal in earlier legisla-

tion and/or legitimating statements pertaining to the CBC made by government officials or its own executives and partisans. Moreover, the threat of Quebec separation loomed large when the act was drafted. Therefore, my premise is that contributing to Canadian unity by building a Canadian culture continues to be a goal associated with the CBC and that failures in this regard help account for an erosion in status.

If the premise is correct that these goals knowingly or unwittingly affect evaluations of the CBC by those who shape its future, it will remain a weak and vulnerable organization for several reasons. I shall argue that culture building is an unattainable enterprise for a state and its agencies, the assumption that the media can have a determinative role in such a project is questionable at best and probably wrong, and, consequently, that efforts to attain these goals enmesh the CBC in a web of contradictions. I also shall argue that, on balance, recent events indicate that Canadian media policy still is shaped by conflicting and unreachable goals that also conflict with other policies, policy implementation is impeded by national and international political considerations, and the CBC is becoming a minor cog in pursuing these policies.

I first address the reasons for employing the premise that the CBC's early mission as a player in Canada's project of nation-building still shapes expectations for its goals and assessments of its accomplishments. Then, two basic assumptions behind the nation-building project and CBC's involvement in it — that a national culture is necessary and can be built by state efforts, and that the media in general, and broadcasting in particular, can be harnessed for that purpose — are examined, and their feasibility and consistency with each other and with other policies are considered. Finally, in light of this assessment of assumptions and policy coordination and a review of the current situation, I consider the CBC's future.

I. NATIONAL POLICIES AND THE MISSION OF THE CBC

It is appropriate to assess the CBC and its mission in the context of broader issues of cultural and media policy because for many years Canadians have considered communication crucial for the country's unity and future. Harold Innis identified it as critical in his lifetime effort to understand Canada (cf. *The Bias of Communication*). More recently, B. W. Powe (1993), in expressing deep devotion to Canada,

stressed the role of communication. "I perceive communication to be the value of Canada" (51) he wrote. "...I call it a communication state...The only way we can live in this country is through advanced technologies of communication (67)." The government's position has been that a country of enormous area and small population with a very large and dominating neighbor that shares the same language, religions, and practices of everyday life, depends on its means of communication and what they can provide to people to bind the country together. The need to develop and protect a Canadian culture is a major corollary. The logic is captured succinctly in a statement by then Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, quoted in the introduction to the Canadian Broadcasting Company's submission to the Federal Task Force on Broadcasting Policy, to the effect that "...cultural sovereignty is as vital to our national life as political sovereignty" (1985:5). Mulroney's speechwriter well may have seen the Royal Commission on Publications' earlier claim that "communications of a nation are as vital to its life as its defences, and should receive at least as great a measure of national protection" (quoted by Globerman, 1987:4). Five pages into that CBC submission (10), in metaphor-laden hyperbole that confuses style with logic, the link between cultural and political sovereignty is explained:

Culture is what the people of a country say about themselves. Culture is how a country's people play, rejoice and laugh. It is how we think, argue and evolve. It is how we dream and hope; how we reminisce about our history and look to our future. How we tell our children about the past, the present and the future — their future.

In short, our culture is the central nervous system of our nation. But our geography and our southern neighbor combine to present Canadians with the world's toughest challenge in cultural preservation. Because we are so spread out with 5,000 miles and six time zones from St. John's to Victoria and 4,000 miles from Inuvik to Windsor, communications have become the life-giving arteries of our nation of 25 million.

In fact, from "the last spike" to the satellite dish, our communication systems of rail, air, phone, radio

and television have been an enormously significant factor in the existence of Canada.

Without those communicating links we would have no sharing of culture; we would have no nation.

"The communications industry," Mr. Massé said in announcing the Task Force on Broadcasting, "is the country's lifeline."

On April 13, 1999, Sheila Copps, the Liberal Minister of Canadian Heritage, addressed the Standing Committee on Transport and Communication of the Canadian Senate on behalf of Bill C-55 to protect Canadian magazines from foreign competition after previously applied means of protection were ruled in violation of the GATT by the World Trade Organization. On that occasion she said that "our magazines tell us about our achievements, our challenges, our regions, our cultural diversity, our institutions, our values, our families, our fashions, our foibles, our fantasies and our future." The words are different but the melody (and, perhaps, the speech writer) are the same.

The reference to "our southern neighbor" in the CBC submission also is no surprise. These sentiments have pervaded Canada for more than two hundred years. Anticipated and actual U.S. activities always have been major factors in shaping Canadian policies and in their subsequent success or failure. With respect to the media, the United States has long been a major source of popular culture for Canadians, material that many consider antithetical to Canada's needs. For most of this century American media have intruded on Canada and impeded efforts to develop and control a Canadian system. In the submission cited, the CBC's proposals for improving its performance were premised on the paramount need to compete effectively with American programming or suffer the loss of Canadian culture and, ultimately, independence. The importance that national leaders in Canada and other countries place on the media for creating and disseminating cultural material is longstanding,³ having been expressed most recently in the symbolic exclusion of cultural materials from the U.S.-Canadian free trade, NAFTA, and GATT agreements.⁴

In response to these concerns, the CBC, Telefilm Canada, and the National Film Board have been created and financed to insure that Canadians can have access to material that all Canadians should

have. Because these cultural projects were motivated in part by concern about maintaining independence from the United States, it is not surprising to find in one recent document a government official disclaiming that a protective measure was an expression of anti-Americanism. But the rarity of references to culture in the recent materials reviewed for this paper was striking. Neither national leaders nor partisans of the CBC seem to be talking very much about its role in cultural promotion. It certainly would be discrete to be disassociated from recent unsavory events in which appeals to culture have preceded some of the worst excesses of nationalism. Nevertheless, the government's commitment to cultural development and protection is abundantly clear in its actions (e.g., Canadian content quotas, the Nashville Country Music and the *Sports Illustrated* cases). The Minister for Canadian Heritage expresses the mission of the department in these terms and the CBC now operates under the aegis of her department. These circumstances make it reasonable to conclude that involvement in the project of developing and promoting Canadian culture as an antidote to foreign influences impacts on the CBC's performance, reputation, and political position.

II. CULTURE AND NATIONAL CULTURE

In setting policy, Canadian governments always take into account the fact that theirs is a politically contrived country⁵ with a relatively small bilingual and bicultural population that occupies a large territory in the shadow of the United States. Heavy recent immigration largely comes from areas very different from Britain and France, and the "bi" now shares attention with "multi". Three related policy goals—promoting a national culture, accommodating multiculturalism, and developing a sense of nationhood—warrant discussion because many of the decisions that impinge on the CBC are intended to serve them. If the CBC is to be judged by its contribution to their success, any impossibility or inconsistency among them would doom it to failure.

A. Promoting a national culture

In order to promote a sense of national identity, national cultural development and protection are Canadian government priorities. In large part, Canadian media and cultural policies are shaped for this purpose. They are driven by concern that American

popular culture may distort or replace the national culture and that this will weaken the country's capacity for independent action. Concern for national cultural development has significant implications. If there is no adequate national culture, it means that a country can exist and survive for long periods without one. It also means that a national culture need not develop spontaneously from the everyday routines of a country's populace — or, at least, that the process can be so slow that a country can survive for a long time without one. These implications raise fundamental questions about the necessity and source of national cultures.

The academic concept of "culture" refers to all the material (e.g., dress, housing, tools) and non-material (e.g., values, language, customs) attributes shared by members of a group. If the world were simple, each group with a unique culture would be the sole occupant of an area and constitute a society. With growth and mobility, however, few societies any longer have unique, distinct cultures, but they do have an identity (usually a name) and their people do interact among themselves in an organized fashion and distinguish themselves from others. Identifiable societies may be spatially separated from and/or interspersed with others.

Political developments have decoupled culture and society. As societies develop a political sense and some form of polity, they became nations.⁶ They develop and accept the role of states as their systems of rule become more formalized and depersonalized. Nations with states that exercise sovereignty over territory are nation-states. Disjunctures between state and nation develop when they lose sovereignty (e.g., become colonies, are absorbed) or expand to include part or all of others (e.g., Austria-Hungary, U.S.S.R.), or when states expand their sovereignty over territories occupied by parts or all of several societies (e.g., Canada, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Nigeria). Consequently, few, if any, countries are nation-states. They simply are areas over which a state has sovereignty but in which the sense of nationhood varies and may be problematic. Because few countries coincide with a single integral society and culture, they may not have a distinctive national culture; that is, one that is the culture of all (or most of) the inhabitants. But most have a dominant culture that is treated by the government, the elite, and outsiders as a national culture and/or a thin veneer of shared beliefs, symbols, and modes of behavior. These changing society-nation-state-country contingencies highlight the ambiguity and questionable status of national cultures.

The idea that a country needs a national culture suggests that countries have, or have had, one, and that those without one will or must develop it. Why? Because a distinctive culture and exclusive intense interaction is expected to generate a sense of identity and motivate people to do whatever is necessary to survive as an independent entity, i.e., the population can be mobilized. But whether this need be so is dubious. Some single society nation-states fail (e.g., Ruthenia, Montenegro); some multicultural countries (e.g., Belgium, Switzerland, Canada) survive even if a national culture is resisted. In Switzerland, for example, "no national culture" was one of the slogans employed by the successful opponents of a 1972 referendum proposal for standardized arithmetic and reading testing after the first two years of primary school.⁷

Aside from these problematic aspects of the concept of a national culture, the very nature of culture raises questions about the role a state can play in developing or protecting one.⁸ Culture denotes the artifacts, activities, values, language, and beliefs routinely found among the members of a distinctive real group, not a category. Cultures collect; they agglomerate. They are crecive, not built or created. Because their rightness and legitimacy are based on tradition, cultural development requires time and a degree of isolation. A *national* culture would be one found throughout a country and would have a *distinctive* language and value system with related practices as its core. As such, the very idea of a single, coherent *national* culture is now and may always have been largely a fiction. Few, if any, countries have a uniform culture throughout their territory; extensive status, regional, and rural-urban variations are normal. What often is called a national culture is that of a national elite. It could be argued that what a national group does is its culture, but if extra-national groups do the same things or if the national group is an aggregate of distinctively different, largely segregated groups, then there is no distinctive national culture (cf. Servaes, 1993:144-145). Aside from those of many of its First Nations, Canada's languages and values are not distinctive; the Canadian mosaic is comprised of different cultures found in other countries as well. The goal of creating a national culture may be deemed urgent; whether it is a project which a modern state can accomplish is questionable.

Because the emergence of strong regional organizations and transnational corporations (TNCs) has required many countries to forego some traditional prerequisites of sovereignty (e.g., control of

trade, independent military activity, and travel to and from the country), their survival as independent entities may be at stake long before there can be a decisive outcome to their efforts to achieve nation-statehood.⁹ Modern countries that lack an overarching “deep” (i.e., a world view, values, perspectives) culture¹⁰ and are seeking to develop one are doing so in inauspicious circumstances. It may be that they will only have a national culture in the sense that their unique combinations of ethnic and other groups give rise to distinctive social and political arrangements (e.g., Canada’s multiculturalism, Switzerland’s very loose confederation) or agree on an agenda for negotiating common or dominant values. Even if more substantive cultures eventually develop from the repeated behaviors these systems engender, the arrangements for ethnic co-existence are really structures rather than cultures, by themselves not all that the term culture connotes. But in the contemporary world, regardless of the condition of national culture, most states that have maintained legitimacy and the support of most of their citizens have survived. For the Canadian state, however, despite the ambiguity and ephemeral quality of the concept, building a national culture to enhance a national identity has remained a goal and chronic concern.

B. Multiculturalism¹¹

The Canadian government espouses multiculturalism to accommodate the country’s burgeoning ethnic groups, and to implement it funds various programs intended to serve other goals as well. One such program, grants to ethnic advocacy organizations, exemplifies the logic. The fundamental premise is that funding advocacy organizations (e.g., groups interested in promoting ethnic cultural survival, language, sports, women’s issues, consumer issues) builds national unity. The rationale is that people should have identities that express their interests and attributes, that funded advocacy groups will promote their interests more effectively than unfunded ones and have a higher success rate, and that success in promoting the group’s interests will both make people more aware and effective citizens and demonstrate that ethnics (and every other group) have a place in the mosaic that is Canadian unity (Pal, 1993:251-253). On its face, but only on its face, this rationale would seem to resolve any apparent contradiction between state promotion of both multiculturalism and a national culture.

Multiculturalism has opposition. In a heavily publicized, wide-ranging critique, Neil Bissoondath (1994), a naturalized Canadian from Trinidad, accuses multiculturalism of having had a cynical political rather than an altruistic intent, thwarting immigrants' desires to leave their disparate backgrounds and become Canadians, blocking ethnic groups' understanding of one another, and ignoring the wishes of a majority of Canadians that newcomers become Canadians and fit in to Canada.¹² He suggests that the policy destroys rather than builds unity and, by doing so, impedes the building of a national culture. With respect to unity, emphasizing ethnic differences can encourage divisive ethnic politics by shifting attention from cultural expression and practices to group inequalities. The fact that Allophones, unlike Anglophones and Francophones, are not guaranteed language protection is one such possible inequality. Survival of their languages is not a government commitment. Language being at the core of culture, an inconsistency between cultural and linguistic policy could kindle inter-ethnic contention. Any coincidence of ethnicity and inequality can produce cleavages and conflict, and the evidence of such coincidence in Canada¹³ suggests that membership in an ethnic group still equates to lower social status for many Canadians.

With respect to Canadian media generally and the CBC specifically, multiculturalism, if successful,¹⁴ could fractionate an already small market. In view of frequent claims that the market is too small to support quality Canadian cultural production, an audience of small ethnic groups desiring its own cultural programming is even more of a handicap. Approximately thirty percent of the market is Francophone and already served by its own media. If the policy were to succeed and all ethnic groups were to preserve and practice their own cultures, programming, other than news, public affairs, and sports, would be unlikely to draw audiences large enough to support the production of quality material in quantity without continuing large subsidies.

If a widely shared national culture could be a bulwark of independence, multiculturalism likely would impede its development because it provides little to unite the component ethnic groups or to motivate them to create that structure. By itself, the celebration of difference is insufficient to build a shared identity and facilitate mobilization. The Canadian mosaic, the model being promoted as a multicultural alternative to the outmoded ideal of co-existing En-

glish and French cultures,¹⁵ does not help alleviate the chronic concern about independence from the United States. Not surprisingly, a national culture based on multiculturalism and difference, and freed from American cultural influence, has yet to take root.¹⁶ To explain the failure it does not help to argue, as some Canadian cultural protectionists do, that it would take root were it not for the American presence. Not only is the argument counterfactual, it also implies that American cultural themes are more attractive and meaningful to Canadians than the mosaic (cf. Hiller, 1986:213).

Encouraging acculturation to a mosaic that lacks substance promotes a semantic fiction. By providing a rationale not to assimilate, multiculturalism makes Canada a place to be rather than a society to join. It raises issues of personal identity and loyalty that have profound implications for national integration and social mobilization, and, in turn, for Canada's future as an independent country.¹⁷ A national culture with multiculturalism at its core is vulnerable on this score. Preserving Canada's rich cultural diversity by promoting multiculturalism can be a significant impediment to achieving national goals through media policy.

C. Developing nationhood

In his study of Canadian media policy, Richard Collins (1990:xiii), citing Ramsay Cook, portrayed Canada as a nationalist state rather than a nation-state so as to emphasize Canadian nationhood as an aspiration rather than condition. In a later essay on mass culture in Canada, Rutherford (1993:260) referred to this commitment, noting that "(t)he doctrine of nationalism has bedeviled intellectual discourse in Canada." Other countries, like Canada, have a weak national culture and ethnic, regional,¹⁸ and religious diversity and cleavages. But many of them once were nations, single societies sharing a common culture, that lost their nationhood through expansion, invasion, or heavy immigration. Unlike them, Canada never has been a nation in the sense discussed here. The English conquerors and French conquered always have been separate and unequal in status. Bell claims (1992:67) that "...for a long time after Confederation, few Canadians could think of Canada as a nation, and no longer a mere colony." Even the British culture of Anglophone Canada has only occasionally overridden the diverse traditions and interests of the original provinces.¹⁹

The effort to integrate the country materially and ideationally has taken many forms since Confederation. Materially it has emphasized creating equity in the sense that each political, social, and economic component of the country contributes to and receives a fair share²⁰ as well as building an infrastructure. Ideationally, the goal is to get citizens to make Canada a salient aspect of their self-conceptions; that is, to build a shared national identity. Providing an infrastructure, however, can be antithetical to equity and, consequently, to a shared identity, if the costs and rewards of an infrastructure are unevenly distributed, and that is likely when population and resources are unevenly distributed. Building a transcontinental railroad, for example, placed heavier financial burdens on the rest of Canada than on British Columbia. Subsidies to the National Film Board benefit far fewer people than pay for it. The costs of the CBC's Northern Services are disproportionately greater than the population served. Severe inequalities in wealth and income must be addressed if those at the bottom are to have adequate lives and not become alienated. Material inequities heighten the importance of ideational factors. A shared identity reenforced by a common culture is crucial for generating and sustaining the altruism required when contributions and returns cannot be balanced. Canadian governments have been active on both fronts.

Building a nation has involved the Canadian state in constructing networks of railroads and highways for moving material goods and telecommunication networks for moving symbols.²¹ When necessary, state enterprises like the CBC have been created to abet these projects to link all parts of its vast territory.²² Relatedly, as in many former colonies, there has been great concern with achieving economic independence if for no other reason than the state's interest in protecting its own investments. Despite some wavering, then, Canadian governments have participated in the effort to build an economy controlled by Canadians by encouraging and subsidizing private enterprises, by developing public enterprises when private initiative is insufficient, and by protecting these enterprises.

The early tendency of many Canadians to place province, language, and religion before country did not by itself promote a state interest in nation-building. The impetus for focusing on media policy came with the onset of broadcasting and the realization that Canadians listened to U.S. radio stations when they could not receive Canadian stations. It continued with the work of a long line of royal

commissions, parliamentary committees, and task forces familiarly known by the names of their chairmen: Aird, Fowler, Davey, Massey, Symonds, Kent, Applebaum-Hebert, Caplan-Sauvageau. The studies they commissioned and the testimony they gathered revealed that broadcasting largely emanated from the United States, that most publishers were foreign-owned and most of their books had foreign authors, that university social science texts relied on American rather than Canadian data, that much of the available broadcasting, including that on Canadian stations, originated in the United States, that most musical performances were in some part American, and that most available films were American productions provided by American-owned distributors for viewing in American-owned theaters. Their reports expressed fear that Canadians might become more American than Canadian²³ and recommended the creation of what is now the CBC, the National Film Board, and Telefilm Canada, as well as legislation and regulation on such matters as tax benefits to advertisers who use Canadian media and producers of material for these media, Canadian content quotas and rules, and import regulation. Government participation in and protection of cultural production and entertainment is one way a conservative state has tried to provide an ideational foundation for a Canadian nation.²⁴

In addition to the problems that can arise in pursuing diverse projects that require a delicate balance if they are all to succeed, no state can diagnose problems, design and implement remedies, and achieve its goals without encountering many other difficulties. For Canada, with much of its economy foreign-owned and a location requiring accommodation to U.S. actions, demands, and interests, nation-building always has been fraught with problems. To counter them, because patriotic sentiments and national support vary directly with perceptions that one's country is being demeaned, threatened, or harmed by others (Tai, Peterson, and Gurr, 1973; Woods, 1976; Smith and Jackson, 1981), the leaders of countries that lack a strong national culture and whose citizens do not share a strong sense of national identity profit from having enemies. They are well served if citizens believe that another country is exploiting and harming them (cf. Schwartz [1981] for evidence of such anti-American sentiments on the part of Canadians). Positive feelings for Canada do increase when the United States is perceived as acting to Canada's detriment (Tai, Peterson, and Gurr, 1973). Hence, there might be unexpected costs for Canadian political leaders if they were to

succeed in the project of nation building and were to establish Canada's autonomy and independence from the United States. In a sense, the American presence has been a godsend. It has simplified policy making and implementation by giving it focus. Quota setting and tax regulations are adjusted to desired mixes with U.S. materials and to the reactions of the U.S. government and firms to Canadian actions. Until recently, Canadian content quotas for French broadcasting has been lax compared to those for English broadcasting.²⁵ Non-U.S. media imports were largely ignored or treated more leniently. Given the historical legacy and the commitments to bilingualism and multiculturalism, Canadian nation-building would be an even more formidable task without the U.S. as a catalyst to fan the flames of Canadian loyalty.²⁶ The paradox for policy makers is that proximity to the United States both enhances and impedes the nationhood project.

D. The project of culture building and protection

If the CBC's performance in building and promoting Canadian culture is to be judged in the light of the broader national culture project, the picture is not bright. Culture-building by a state is never a promising enterprise. In the context of multiculturalism, nation-building, and the accessibility of attractive alternatives, it is even less of one. The decline in references to national culture in official discourse does not obviate the centrality of the underlying issues: does a country need one to survive and prosper? Can government actions create what has not developed through natural processes? Can a culture remain distinct when there is frequent widespread contact with another that is not substantially different (or is it another culture?), Is globalization and its attendant homogenization of consumption and language homogenizing all cultures? Given the difficulties with the cultural project, why, other than a fervent belief that the media can accomplish anything, should the CBC be judged in these terms? If it is, and that is my premise, its reputation surely is in jeopardy.

III. MEDIA EFFECTS

The role of the media in building or undermining national support has been a chronic concern of Canadian governments. In addition to periodic commitments to rely on the market to assure that the media build rather than erode support for the country, mani-

fested most recently in the government's position on the 'global information superhighway' and in budget cuts for the CBC, the National Film Board, and Telefilm Canada, media policy also has been shaped to protect an economic space for domestic media by selectively controlling imports and encouraging domestic productions. The details of implementation have varied over time and among the media, but it is apparent that the policy rests upon several propositions about the relationships among the media, culture, identity, and Canada's situation with respect to them. They include, in no particular order and with minimal commentary, the following:

1. Media exposure affects self-identity and national identity. The proposition links identification with one's country to exposure to its media. The mechanism is a "black box," but presumably requires people to like or believe what they consume and know (or assume) its origins. The obverse also is implied: exposure to material from other countries decreases identification with one's own country, though it isn't clear why unless national identity is zero-sum and exposure to foreign material breeds identification with its source. In addition, there is an implicit underlying assumption that exposure produces the presumed effect rather than the effect being a pre-existing, contributing factor to the exposure. Systematic evidence to support any of these arguments is weak (cf. Ferguson, 1993).

2. Programs to promote a national culture and to provide unbiased information are compatible. The strategy for promoting Canadian culture is to reclaim the Canadian market by controlling the amount of foreign (particularly American) material available and by providing the media with more domestically produced cultural and informational material. Though research demonstrates that people's reactions to what they see and read vary, it seems to be assumed that reasonable people will not vary widely or polarize in their responses to state subsidized Canadian-produced material and, instead, that such material will contribute to a cultural consensus.

In addition, there seems to be little attention to differences among people in the quantity and their understanding of what they consume.

3. National cultures are necessary if people are to identify with and support their country. It is assumed that if there is a national culture most people will identify with their country, feel that it is important to them, and support their government, though this last does not necessarily follow. However, none of these consequences entail the reverse. Perhaps a national culture is not a *sine qua non* for national identity or support.²⁷ The links are in serious question (Schlesinger, 1993; Handler, 1994); at best, they are unclear.

4. The concept of unity in difference (a mosaic) is a viable basis for a national culture. Even before multiculturalism, Canadian leaders promoted a concept of the country as a mosaic. In a mosaic each component contributes to an overall image but does not — indeed, cannot — lose its separate identity. The mosaic metaphor may appeal to Canadian elites; its merits may be lost on others. It does not identify the groups that constitute the pieces, the picture or pattern to which they contribute,²⁸ nor their contribution to it. It does not offer a reason for a group to continue to be part of a whole. It certainly does not address any group's problems as part of the mosaic. In short, the fundamental matter of what the mosaic is as a basis for a national culture or identity is ignored. The ethnic mosaic also is inconsistent with the new Charter's emphasis on groups organized on the basis of transient non-ethnic interests (Atkinson, 1994:740-745; Pal, 1993:247) and, as policy, implies that assimilation is neither encouraged nor imminent.

5. Media addressed to ethnic groups in their own languages can serve common goals. The CBC is Canada's major investment in the media as instruments to further national integration. As such, it operates English and French national networks and

a Northern Service. Because each has its own programming (including news and public affairs), if their managers disagree on goals, the interests of their audiences, or what serves their mission, broadcasting can divide rather than integrate the population. Moreover, if ethnically divided media are to serve the same ends, they must meet the unlikely condition that the cultures served have equivalent ideas, concepts, values, and goals (cf. Smith, 1994[1970]:127-128). A further difficulty is that the languages of different cultural groups reflect their different experiences; they are not mirror images of one another.

6. Popular culture affects self-concepts and national identity but high culture does not. An examination of over-the-air television network schedules (particularly those of the CBC and Radio-Canada) and a reading of past CRTC rulings with respect to Canadian content rules suggests that they have been applied primarily to popular cultural imports from the United States rather than to similar French and British imports. More important than any possible differential application of the rules to exporting countries, however, is that an emphasis on popular culture (e.g., sitcoms, films, sports, music) ignores differences in class tastes. Is imported popular culture harmful and high culture not? If so, why? Although it is difficult to measure because of budgetary ambiguities as to which appropriations are intended for this purpose,²⁹ funds to encourage Canadian cultural production (particularly those awarded by the now defunct Canada Council and its successors and those spent by the CBC for programming before it went to its current domestic regimen) have gone disproportionately to works of high and folk culture. But is that what urban lower-middle and working-class Canadians should or do seek for entertainment? Canadian cultural policy discriminates if it is elitist in its implementation (cf. Litt, 1992; Rutherford, 1993: 279).

7. Canada lacks a(n adequate) national culture. Aside from whether a national culture is not necessary or possible in a large, complex contemporary country, Canadian cultural policy sometimes implies that there is no national culture and at other times that there is one that is weak and vulnerable. The difference matters for implementing policy.

There are good reasons to be skeptical about the truisms and taken-for-granted understandings that pervade popular discourse on and understandings of the media. This is particularly the case with regard to discussions of their functions and effects in contemporary societies, for it is common to credit the media with every phenomenon in contemporary society from the furtherance of democracy and progress to crime, violence, and social deterioration (Smith, 1995:131-161). Given the public's predilection to consider the media responsible for any and every thing without regard to whether these claims are contradictory, it is no wonder that these seven propositions seem questionable when put so starkly. They underlie policy in many countries and, because they are empirical assertions, should be tested rigorously. Self-evidence, common sense, and anecdotes are not adequate; reliable, representative evidence is required. With regard to the CBC and its future, the first, second, fifth, and sixth propositions all assume a relatively direct link between specific media exposure and specific effects. Despite the lack of consensus among scholars as to many aspects of media effects, the voluminous research literature may be of some help in gauging the validity of these assumptions.

Two papers prepared for a recent conference on Canadian media policy illustrate the value of the literature on media effects for anyone who relies on the media to implement policy. The first, Elihu Katz's (1996) analysis of Israel's experience in using public television to inform citizens and promote integration, gives compelling insight into the conditions that must be satisfied to succeed in such efforts. When Israeli television was first introduced, a daily prime time newscast was scheduled to supply the very diverse population with material that could stimulate and inform wide discussion of major issues of concern. The programing was intended to promote national integration and studies showed that it did. Because almost everyone watched the same nightly news and nothing else was available, it

became a communal event that supplied the next day's topics of conversation. But the situation eroded when a second channel was introduced. Although the intention was to provide choice, because media competitors typically reduce uncertainty by copying success, the new channel 'cloned' a news program for the same hour that did not increase the supply of information. The population then divided among groups attending to each source, and a third, growing group that did not watch. Katz explains the seeming paradox of decline in the total news audience by noting that to offer a choice of two channels automatically introduces a third alternative of none. By implication, television, and other media, can only serve as a public space if everyone is exposed to the same materials. This requires a monopoly.

Viewed from the perspective of the Israeli experience, Canadian efforts to expedite democratic participation via public broadcasting never could succeed because the system has never had the requisite monopoly.³⁰ The CBC was mandated only after commercial Canadian and U.S. stations were well-established and widely available. If Katz is correct that the audience must be monopolized,³¹ the CBC's failure to attract and hold the vast majority of Canadians is entirely predictable. Canadian political leaders have been either unwilling or unable to take the extreme measures required for the media to succeed in such a project.³²

The second paper, Lee Becker's (1995) assessment of the literature on media effects, pertains to the first two assumptions above. After reviewing studies of the effects of media treatment of such matters as gender and race on the development of personal identities and studies that indicate that people know how to distinguish and handle the provision of information from obvious efforts to influence them, he concludes by emphasizing the capacity of audiences to mediate the expected or intended effects of media exposure. In contrast, Canadian cultural and media policies, and their involvement of the CBC, employ simplistic, hypodermic-like models of media effects and neglect the implications of an active audience. It also is worth noting that, unlike Katz, Becker concludes that, on balance, monopoly is not necessary for the media to be effective in encouraging national integration (and, implicitly, identity). This divergence, in itself, reflects how unreliable and incomplete our understanding of media effects is. In this light it is unfair to judge any medium as having failed to succeed in assigned tasks for which there are no compelling reasons to expect it to succeed.

It may be testimony to the minefield of disagreements that characterizes the study of media effects that Becker was the only conferee with the audacity to address the matter directly. I avoided it in a recent book on the media (1995), choosing instead to discuss their social role. Had I not written that section earlier, I could have cited the Katz-Becker disagreement to justify my decision instead of two other reputable scholars (McGuire, 1986; Hearold, 1986) who, after reviewing numerous studies of media effects, came to diametrically opposite conclusions as to whether there is reliable, valid evidence that there are any (Smith, 1995:157-159). McGuire examined the evidence in support of twelve frequently mentioned intended and unintended media effects and found it lacking. He concluded "...that the demonstrated impacts are surprisingly slight. Even in the areas with the most impressive results, including frequent statistically significant effects in methodologically adequate studies, the size of the impacts are so small as to raise questions about their practical significance and cost effectiveness" (233). He suggests, as I did, that the "no effects" position may have lost scholarly support not because of evidence to the contrary, but because the absence of evidence of sizable impacts of the media on the public embarrasses both their friends, who claim effects to gain financial support from advertisers, and foes, who claim effects to justify their campaigns for media controls.

Policymaking that relies on the media to effect change ignores these unresolved disagreements by implicitly assuming that there are effects.³³ In many cases, a mechanism that links the media to change also is assumed to be known. This is not the place for a litany of disagreements over the nature and mechanisms of effects. But such knowledge is a *sine qua non* for policymakers who expect to achieve their goals by using the media. There is no way to formulate and implement goal-oriented media policies without understanding how the media produce wanted and unwanted outcomes. Very likely we will not have such knowledge soon, if ever.³⁴ The media are just one among numerous factors that interact to shape our world. They do not exist or operate in a vacuum. Because they impact upon, are affected by, and reflect their settings, the basic concept of the media as a single factor having a particular effect is based on a simplistic understanding of reality.

If Canadian policymakers are encouraged by a growing weight of scholarly opinion that there are media effects,³⁵ even though the

hypodermic analogy no longer is the accepted model of how they occur, they need to be aware of three consequences of this shift. First, it has refocused ideas on what it is about the media that might have an effect from an almost exclusive emphasis on content to a much wider range of attributes of the media as a social institution and process. Second, and relatedly, it has opened conceptions of the mechanism of effect to a broad spectrum of complex possibilities that go far beyond simple stimulus-effect models. Third, it has stimulated awareness of the role of consumers in bringing meaning to the materials to which they may react. Consequently, the same material can have different consequences as circumstances vary. If so, we really are not in a position to design a broadcasting regimen that can be relied on to develop a national culture. Canadian media policy and its application to the CBC tend not to reflect any of these understandings.

Because claims about the roles of the media are very diverse,³⁶ analyses are based on very different underlying models of the character of media consumption and assumptions as to whether the significant locus of their impact is individuals or collectivities (e.g., families, peer groups, industries, communities, society).³⁷ My comments focus primarily on the collective level, because that is where Canadian media policies are intended to have their ultimate impact.³⁸

In this regard, analyses of the social role of the media by Postman (1985), McLuhan (1962, 1964, 1967),³⁹ Meyrowitz (1985), and Innis (e.g., 1951)⁴⁰ are particularly germane for assessing the implicit policy goals of the mandate of the CBC. Though their interests and the details of their research differ, taken as a totality their work suggests that the character of the technology of each medium and the physical form of the messages they produce, rather than or in addition to specific message content, profoundly alter general patterns of behavior and the fundamental structure of social relations (also see Brenkman, 1979). Others (e.g., Hallin, 1987; Bennett, 1988) have proposed that reliance on entertaining material to promote sales of the first radio and television sets and the subsequent practice of selling audiences to advertisers (contingent on the audiences satisfying specific size and quality criteria) have cultivated an image of broadcasting as entertaining for purposes of influence, and that this, in turn, has eroded their potential as sources of serious informational material. They argue that because people have been

conditioned to expect entertainment from the media, informational material must be treated as stories and organized to fit entertainment formulae. Consequently, it is no longer veridical.⁴¹

If it is true that media fare is shaped in this manner and reflects the cultural standards of the socially dominant, exposure to it (provided it is understood as intended) has the function of maintaining the *status quo* (cf. Gandy's [1982: 3-5] comments on Marxist scholars) because it does not give people cause to doubt the rightness and value of how things are. In a hegemonic situation *information* tends to justify and reinforce the *status quo* (cf. Tuchman's [1983: 330] comment on studies of the news in that respect), *recreation* to defuse dissatisfaction and frustration. The position of members of the Frankfurt school on this distinction is similar (Becker and Schoenbach, 1989:15):

Mass media are supposed to keep the populations quiet — even apathetic. For this purpose media entertainment is a major vehicle. Entertainment has the task of maintaining the stability of unjust social conditions and emphasizing their unalterable nature. Entertainment offers escape and distraction. It thus keeps people from becoming aware of their class interests.

People do not examine the social order critically if they are induced to attribute failures to their own weakness or the malevolence of others rather than to fundamental problems in society. The net result differs little from what Gerbner and his associates postulated as cultivation effects (i.e., fictional media images are repeated so frequently that they are absorbed incidentally and produce a shift in perceptions of reality).⁴²

Considered from this perspective, very little of what the commercial media do is communication. In the most stringent sense of the concept, the potential for communication through the media exists only when pre-announced informative materials are provided. That situation becomes communication only for targeted persons who receive and understand them as intended. To say that very little of what the media do is communication is not to say that people do not learn from them or secure material that they treat as information. Rather, it is to say that the offering and receiving of media material

by themselves may not constitute communication. The difference is that the usual media fare (music, drama, cartoons, and the like) is there to be experienced just as is the rest of the empirical world, and, like all experience, can become a basis of knowledge. The fact that those materials become available through the agency of the media does not alter the fact that they are not intentionally produced and disseminated to inform. If the media are not intentionally sending information to targeted recipients, at best they perform a sort of pseudo-communication, disseminating non-informational material through a potential vehicle for communication. Given these features of the media as a social institution, the problem of the CBC in fulfilling a mandate to promote national integration by serving a public informational role becomes clearer. It operates in a sector that the public generally does not identify as a reliable informational source, and that difficulty is compounded by the need to emulate its commercial competitors' reliance on entertainment material to attract audiences.

The media are not the communication systems they are identified as being. Rather, because material is created and transmitted to attract, hold, and otherwise influence audiences, they are simply one of many institutions through which the dominant culture is promulgated.⁴³ Because the project of creating and instilling a Canadian national culture through the media, and the CBC in particular, is collectively oriented, that role is hegemonic rather than communicative. Consequently, any claim that the CBC's programming will be in the public interest is compromised if it does not reveal who chooses the programming and how, or remind the consumer of the contingencies that bear upon any material identified as informative. In particular, the latter practice (i.e., claiming to be communicative, and, hence, informative) is misleading and hegemonic because it tells the consumer that this is something *you should know* rather than something that *you can use* if you believe it, understand it, and need it. Enlisting the CBC in efforts to promote a national culture compromises its role as a national institution performing an essential public service.

Given these stipulations, insofar as much of its programming is intended to be informational (despite the implicit hegemonic mission) and the public has come to know it as such, the CBC performs well. However, to the extent that financial cuts have led the network to increase broadcasting of typical television entertainment, the Corporation performs as a hegemonic agent despite its efforts to be

and to be considered an impartial information provider. In this regard it is no different than the commercial sector. Indeed, it could be argued that it is worse because it flies under false colors, cultivating a reputation that belies what it does. In any case, even if the CBC restricted itself to providing informational material, it would still be primarily involved in a hegemonic process so long as the choice of material is guided by concerns of state policy.

The problem with the CBC's mandate and with Canadian media policy more generally is that neither takes account of the uncertain connection between what the media do and what may happen as a result. Canadian leaders simply seem to act on the popular view that anything disseminated through the media will have the effect expected. Not that there is a readily available handbook for policymakers to consult. There is none because the entire situation regarding media effects begs to be clarified. The wild swings between claims of no effects and jeremiads about catastrophic effects, and the current diversity of viewpoints, is no accident. To a considerable extent it reflects fundamental differences in concepts of what an effect is. They range from very narrow cause-effect connections between media and subsequent events, conceptions of the sort captured by the "hypodermic" notion, to very broad contingencies that depend on a web of connections, very much like saying the effect of dropping a pebble in a pond is to make a leaf wobble because ripples eventually spread to where the leaf is floating.⁴⁴ The goals of media policies implemented on the basis of simplistic notions of media effects will continue to be unrealized unless we can specify the conditions under which a type of exposure experience to a type of material in a type of venue will have a specific effect. Meanwhile their proponents will blame the messenger.

A second point about these differences in views on the effects of media that bears on the CBC relates to evaluations of the presumed effects (whether they are so disturbing that they must be avoided, and ideas as to whether interventions can prevent them) which is a policy issue that needs to be explored more thoroughly. The heightening interest in the media throughout the century has been marked by a shift away from an interest in their potentially ameliorative, positive functions. The shift is motivated by popular concerns rather than reliable evidence, for, on balance, the public's view of the media is that they are negative rather than positive, destructive rather than constructive, and dysfunctional rather than functional.⁴⁵ That is why

a broad spectrum of groups maintain continuing surveillance of and demand for new controls on the media. Protective exclusionary Canadian media policies simply mirror such views.

The insistence that negative media effects must and can be prevented implies a concept of the media as some alien pathological agent from outside the bounds of normal everyday life. The analogy is that of a germ causing a disease, an accident causing an injury, a crime causing a death. The implication seems to be that if we could sustain normal conditions, those causes would not arise and/or could be avoided. The analog is that if there were only Canadian media — and, perhaps, only the CBC — in Canada, there would be a strong national culture and every Canadian would share in it and strongly identify with the country. That is a totally unrealistic view of the media in contemporary societies. The media are simply one of many phenomena that constitute contemporary society and enable it to exist as we know it. To treat them as somehow alien or exterior, as removable or drastically alterable, does violence to social reality. It does not address the issue of why the Canadian media scene has developed as it has. It does not address the issue of why American media remain attractive even when Canadian alternatives are available. Views of effects based on unrealistic conceptions of the relation of media to contemporary society are bound to produce expectations that cannot be fulfilled.⁴⁶ This is what underlies the unfulfilled expectations for the CBC.

IV. THE WEB OF POLICY AND THE MISSION OF THE CBC

In contrast to the protectionism and closure that the cultural project encourages, Canada's economic situation and role as international peace maker is consonant with foreign and trade policies that emphasize openness and free trade. As a consequence, Canadian officials, like those in many other countries, are caught in a posture of promoting free trade while placing media and other cultural products off limits. With respect to the media, this means wanting open foreign markets for Canadian films, television series, and the like, but acting as a gatekeeper on imports of these same products. These contradictions between cultural and other policies create confusion at every level, often making it impossible to achieve the goals of either.

The transition to service-dominated economies in core countries is pressing their governments to help citizens with creative talents find work at home. The numerous commissions and study groups that have reviewed Canada's media and cultural industries since World War I all have recommended the creation of jobs in those industries for Canadians. These recommendations are in the realm of labor and industrial policy even though it has been more politic to identify them as cultural policy. Just as contradictions between open trade and protective media policies hamper the achievement of goals for the media, contradictions and inconsistencies between economic and cultural policies also do. Decentralization of broadcast production, for example, is basically a distributive economic policy to spread CBC expenditures beyond Toronto and Montreal. As such, the issue is whether the returns justify the costs. However, such actions are usually justified as cultural policy, the claim being that regional production provides materials distinctive to the regions and contributes to national cultural development by making everyone aware of Canada's regional diversity. And because the justification is asserted as fact, no one bothers to ask whether knowledge of regional differences and disparities can build a Canadian culture if a common core does not exist or is minimal.

Broader economic policies also conflict with cultural policy by undermining the CBC's ability to compete with commercial broadcasters for audiences. The fiscal limitations under which the Corporation operates constrain it from investing in and sustaining the presentation of material that might wean audiences from its competitors. The emphasis on Canadian content that has led the CBC to Canadianize its programming completely has not yet led commercial broadcasters to drop U.S. imports. Consequently, they still provide material that the CBC is mandated to counteract, and at lower cost. Furthermore, the CRTC, despite its location in Canadian Heritage, has been approving consolidations that strengthen the resources of commercial broadcasters, thus enabling them to provide even more of the attractive programs that the CBC must forswear.

V. THE CBC TODAY

Despite the many reasons that public leaders and officials may have for being disappointed with the CBC, recent studies show that it retains widespread public support. Canadians think it is important to the country and does its job well. These poll results are almost a

mantra for the numerous public support groups whose activities bear all the earmarks of a nascent social movement...but there is the rub. The groups (Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, CBC Ours to Keep, Vancouver Save CBC Coalition) have formed to fight budget cuts they fear will prevent the CBC from continuing to provide the programming their members want. When I looked at it while preparing a version of this paper for the ACSUS session in 1997, the CBC's on-line message board listed forty-three items under the heading "While we dither on the CBC is under attack," and another twenty-three under "Why are Canadian shows ripoffs of American ones?" But both groups of messages were almost equally divided between concern and indifference. There also were numerous repeats: the sixty-six messages represented far less than sixty-six people. They constituted less than ten percent of all the messages posted (773), the vast majority of which were irrelevant to the CBC's fate or mission. A perusal of the message board in June, 1999, showed only 210 messages (either it is cleaned more often, chat groups divert more public expression, or people are no longer as interested in expressing themselves on the CBC) with approximately fifteen percent pertaining to the CBC and CRTC rather than comments on the programs. All but one of these was critical either of the CBC for basing its programming on the policy issues discussed here or of the CRTC for constraining the CBC's range of programming choices.

The indifference to the CBC or lack of support for its mission suggested by the message board content is consistent with the public's acceptance of the CBC's deep budget cuts. A national Angus Reid poll on proposed cuts in the CBC's budget prior to its adoption showed a majority in support of cuts at least as deep as those being contemplated. Another poll of reactions to the federal budget containing those cuts showed that a majority considered it and its implications to be a move in the right direction. Other Reid polls both before and after the most recent election (when supporters of the CBC tried to make the cuts an election issue) in which people were asked to name the issues of most concern to them have never shown as many as two percent (the lowest frequency reported) expressing any concern about the CBC. Although CBC executives are justly proud of having achieved Canadian-only prime time English TV programming and of being able to promise this for the entire schedule, industry audience studies and the Corporation's own analyses show that, except for news, specials, and sports, imported programs remain

much more popular than the CBC's. BBM's sweeps in the spring of 1996 showed American imports dominating the viewing audience for regularly scheduled series in all major cities, and those ratings did not even include available American channels. The pattern was repeated in 1997. The convergence of these varied data suggest that, though they value the CBC as a status symbol, most Canadians do not value it enough to pay for or use it. This lack of widespread support and interest only makes it easier for those who would use the CBC for cultural, economic, labor, or whatever purposes to manipulate the organization and its budgets to serve their goals.

The CBC has not always been in this weak position. It was launched with high hopes and had both regulatory and broadcasting functions. Now, however, both it and the CRTC are under the control of the Department of Canadian Heritage. The continuing loss of 'self' control in the transition from independent body to a subsidiary of a government department reflects the CBC's growing vulnerability but does not tell us why. But two recent reviews, the Mandate Review Committee's and the Auditor General's, identify some of the reasons. A major factor was the CBC's response to its imminent financial problems by trying to replace federal grants with advertising revenue. To attract advertisers it tried to build audiences by programming American imports and Canadian-produced American clones that might also bring additional income as exports to the U.S. Though these decisions might not have been important by themselves, they cost the support of some of the CBC's strongest supporters who want it to provide for Canadians what the private sector cannot be counted on to provide. The misfortune of irritating and alienating some of its strongest proponents was magnified by a recent mandated Auditor General's special examination that charged the Corporation with poor and inefficient management. CBC President and CEO Perrin Beatty summarized the findings as follows (<http://www.cbc.ca/aboutcbc/audgen.html>):

- The Corporation lacks fundamental strategic planning.
- Our system of internal accountability is too diffuse and important information is often incomplete.
- Our collective agreements are restrictive and have a negative impact on efficiency.
- A formalized method of performance appraisal is lacking.

- Our administrative support services are generally expensive.
- We possess excess production capacity in terms of facilities.
- There is room for improvement in the utilization of our human resources.
- With respect to news programing in both television and radio, there exists the potential for duplication of costs.

Ironically, given the aforementioned recommendations more than ten years previously that it decrease and decentralize its own production and purchase more from independent regional producers, the report was released while construction of an overly large CBC centralized production facility on Front Street in Toronto was behind schedule and beset with cost overruns. Bad decisions and poor management, added to its implicit role as an instrument for implementing conflicting policies and reaching unattainable goals by means it does not choose, are making the CBC a vulnerable, weak organization. Regardless of whether these expectations are reasonable or appropriate, in the circumstances the CBC is likely to remain or become even more of a public whipping boy.

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Does this mean that the CBC should be allowed to fall into shabby neglect or die? Not necessarily. A case certainly can be made for the CBC as a public broadcaster guided by independent professional standards. That case is based on the premise that a democratic state must insure the public availability of important material. The chief concern of any government is the public loyalty and support that is needed to mobilize people to support and contribute to state projects. In this light, state efforts to develop a national culture are misplaced. It would be much more appropriate and effective to cultivate public support more directly. Success in such a project is not primarily a media issue; it requires understanding what leads people to support the state.

Even if a Canadian national culture and identity cannot be developed and inculcated through the media, and even if concerns about U.S. media are misplaced, if the CBC is to be an effective public broadcaster the Canadian government should not abandon communication regulation and let market forces alone determine the country's media fare. Proposals that I and others have made for very early training in media consumption (Smith, 1995:212-214) are premised on the belief that the state has a legitimate role in shaping its citizens'

media behavior. Their implication, however, is that media management be minimized and many investments in the media be diverted to education. Training in media consumption and support for balanced, potentially informative public media, including the CBC, will not guarantee popular support for the state and its functionaries. But the public's response to important public issues is likely to be more informed than emotional or ideological. Maintaining national integration and state support are chronic problems in all countries when migration is increasingly common and national borders increasingly permeable. Regimes must confront them not to assure their own continuance in office but to provide some stability for the state and the polity. As to how a regime's efforts might play out in the communications arena, I am struck by the very different implications for media policy of two cogent and not easily reconcilable analyses of Canada's situation.

Mark Starowicz, a CBC executive producer and staunch proponent of state support for public broadcasting, has presented a case for why the Corporation can contribute to the development of a national culture that can help buttress Canadian independence (1993). He argues from the premise that a national culture is a necessary condition for independence and admits Canada's difficulties in that regard. For many of the same reasons discussed above, he acknowledges that "a Canadian should be the last person capable of defining a national culture...It is impossible...to define a Canadian national culture as some function of defined territory, common language, and common heritage" (92). He goes on to observe that Canada is characterized by competing values, and, because this is the case, that its "(n)ational culture...could be usefully seen as a *process*" (92) in which some values and ethics may become dominant for a while but almost certainly will be replaced in a decade or two. After showing how well this depiction fits Canada's situation, he asserts (93):

(H)owever cacophonous the process, and despite those that are excluded, there is by and large an underlying consent on a set of rules by which to argue, and a place in which to do it — the nation.

I propose this working definition of national culture: *A country's or ethnic group's aggregate values (social, political, economic, ethical and artistic), not necessarily harmonious, at any given time; a constant process.*

This definition does not require homogeneity; it recognizes culture as dynamic; it allows art and entertainment to be defined as a form of communication rather than as a product. (*National identity*, I propose, might be usefully defined as a subset of the above definition. Simply, the *dominant* social political, economic, ethical and artistic values and characteristics of a particular country or ethnic component, at a particular time).

In short, Starowicz proposes that the national culture is whatever the current situation is. Rather than discuss some of the obvious problems with this position, for I understand the difficulties he is grappling with, this idea may be juxtaposed with a very different perspective on these issues (Price, 1995:233-234):

(E)very state holds a conversation with its subjects as to the legitimacy of its existence. In this conversation, the state is engaged in self-justification, in making the case for the loyalty of its citizens. Some states may have so weak a franchise without the use of force or fiction that the creation and propagation of a narrative of legitimacy is all-consuming, pervasive, and devastatingly revealing of the regime. Even in democratic societies, however, the necessity for generating and maintaining a narrative of community is a universal occupation. What is important is that these ideas and images are part of every state's definition. Governments are virtually compelled to generate or favour images that reinforce the relationship between their subjects and themselves. The state may claim to intervene in the market-place of ideas out of defence of its culture, a valid and relevant ground for intervention, or, more ambitiously, to encourage a world outlook that extends its dominion. National identity, so theatrical and compelling a concept, becomes, as I have argued, the often elegant collection of images that the government (or a series of interest groups) manufactures or encourages to keep itself in power.

Here we have national culture and identity not as tangible, albeit changing and conflicting, products of some natural and/or manipulated processes, but as fictions promoted by the state and its regimes, one of many techniques employed in their constant struggle for legitimacy, stability, and power.

Starowicz's proposals focus on the informal competition, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation that goes on in all contemporary democratic societies. If pursued in a tolerant, understanding manner, they exemplify the ideal of a working democracy in which the state's role is minimal. But Starowicz writes as though the ideal always is adhered to and as if the state does not exist or, at least, that it exists only when it is needed to expedite the process. But the state does exist, needs to legitimate itself, and, as Price makes clear, is consumed with issues of support and self-preservation. Moreover, the norm of peaceful intergroup competition is often violated and, when it is, state intervention can be required. It is increasingly evident that there are no guarantees that the many groups that comprise socially and culturally heterogeneous countries will work out their differences peacefully, and there are no stateless societies. Even if governments were not self-interested, they are compelled to monitor the ongoing competition for dominance and control and, frequently, to intervene in order to keep the peace. As Price also notes, the invention and promotion of myths can be preferable to force as the mode of intervention. This leads the state to promote some particular culture and identity, not the vague process of accepting an ongoing competition with forever shifting outcomes that Starowicz offers as adequate.

Neither Starowicz nor Price is ignorant or naive; their differences reflect the dilemma of all contemporary countries: people and groups pursuing their own goals without harming others and states struggling to maintain stable conditions in which they can do so. The result is an ongoing dialectic, a continuous movement between polarities of minimal intervention and group competition in an uncontrolled market on the one hand, and state intervention to re-establish and maintain these conditions on the other. All the while the state must maintain popular support and legitimate its right to intervene. Despite its unusual advantage of widespread civility and concern for the other (Taylor), Canada exemplifies everything that both Starowicz and Price discuss: groups engaged in sometimes friendly, sometimes acrimonious ongoing competition for cultural

dominance, a state with a strong franchise that has been allowed to grow weak, and a state that needs to generate and maintain a narrative of community. Their divergent views matter for media policy. Starowicz, it would seem, would have the media 'tell it like it is'; Price would have them promote a single, unified vision. In Canada's current circumstances there is no ideal policy for the media and the CBC is simply one of many instruments of varying value in the struggle to maintain state and country. At the moment, the sky is falling for the CBC, but circumstances and policies change. The policy role of the CBC has often changed. Without a commitment to remove the CBC from this arena and make it a distinguished public broadcaster, we are likely to see more of the same.

ACRONYMS

ACSUS	Association for Canadian Studies in the United States
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
COQ	Canada outside Quebec
CRTC	Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission
CSMA	Consolidated statistical metropolitan area
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NPR	National Public Radio
TNCs	Transnational Corporations

NOTES

* An earlier version of this paper was prepared for delivery on November 20, 1997 during a panel on "Alice in Wonderland: The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in a Marketplace Culture," held at the Biennial Meeting of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States in Minneapolis, MN.

¹ In this regard, I examined relevant policies and pertinent literature on the media and reviewed as many as I could identify and locate of the reports, speeches, regulatory agency actions, activities of and statements by public interest groups, press releases, studies, government documents, and a miscellany of other material pertinent to the status of the Corporation during the 1996-97 period. No such exercise can be claimed to be complete. One does this to the point at which new items only point back to other material already examined and/or provide no new material, there are no more known materials or sources to pursue, and/or there are no inconsistencies in the material that cry to be resolved. The search led me to print out approximately six inches of Internet material. I also have drawn upon material collected and reviewed during twenty-five years of teaching about Canadian society, politics, and media, thirty years of research in these same areas, and extensive contacts with Canadian scholars, officials, and laymen during this same time.

² Because the CRTC's responsibilities go far beyond the CBC, the CBC accounts for only a small part of the CRTC's activities and rulings.

³ In a Department of Communications report on the implications of the information revolution for Canada (Serafini and Andrieu, 1980), two sections of the chapter on issues raised by these trends are devoted to "the erosion of national sovereignty" (27) and "the decline of national culture" (38).

⁴ Patrick (1989:103) claims that the exclusion is purely cosmetic. "(C)ontrary to popular mythology, the terms established for culture in the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement do not exempt the sector from the objectives of the agreement, only from the protections offered by the agreement. In this way, culture is isolated and

abandoned in the free market whether it uses old technology or new.”

⁵ The distinction intended by this term is one between countries that emerged over a long period of time through various modes of agglomeration and assimilation (e.g., Great Britain, Spain, France) or through acts of will in which large segments of local populations actively rejected systems of rule to create their own states (e.g., United States, India, most Latin American countries) and countries that were created and legitimated through formal political actions in circumstances in which there was no strong, widely shared consensus among the inhabitants to secure independence and/or to create that particular state. The distinction should not be confused by the fact that, with rare exception, in these other cases there also is a legitimating political action (e.g., a treaty, an agreement) to create and recognize a state after a successful, prolonged, organized, conflictful effort to create an independent state. The point of the distinction is that a process like that through which Canada was created does not provide material for founding myths or symbols of sacrifice or glorious accomplishments around which to mobilize population loyalty, support, and integration. Admittedly, it is difficult to find other cases quite like Canada. Countries like Lebanon, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia might qualify. Their difficulties and fates are indicative of the problems that confront countries created by political acts without a strong indigenous supporting consensus.

⁶ Smith (1993[1986]:78), in a similar vein, emphasizes the coincidence of the ambiguity and importance of the phenomenon, writing that “No two nations exist as nations by reason of the same theory of nationhood, nor by the same criteria...A nation is a culture or society which has seized upon the discourse or discourses of nationalism as being structurally essential to it. Thus, there are no definitions of nations as the subjects of historical experience, only observations of the progress of...tensions that fuel discourses...There are no set ways of being a nation, only debates about the identity of national groups.” The variety of ways in which the idea of nation has been used to create a focal point for the coherence of politics has been captured neatly by Anderson (1991), who titled his study of the subject *Imagined Communities*. Cf. also Calhoun (1994).

⁷ Such countries may survive only because it suits the interests of strong neighbors or their own constituent groups and/or because they have ruthless governments, but they do survive, often with strong citizen support. Institutional forms (e.g., consociational democracy, federalism) that emerge to defuse the tensions that can develop in multicultural countries also may be very important. Gagnon (1991) has explored the way in which Canadians may avail themselves of the lessons to be learned from the experiences of other federal countries that share many of Canada's problems.

⁸ In discussing the need to exclude cultural materials from NAFTA, Allan Smith (1994[1990];108) asserts that there is a "widespread conviction" in Canada that both high and low culture must be state-aided.

⁹ Scholars disagree on whether these developments portend the end of the nation-state, e.g., Pal (1991) believes that it will survive; MacMillan (1991) foresees the end of the nation-state as we know it.

¹⁰ In a sense, Charles Taylor's (1991) challenge to COQ is to decide if they share a "deep" culture.

¹¹ Cf. Smith's (1981) excellent analysis of how multiculturalism has become a theme for Canadian nation-building and of the problems that arise in reconciling it with biculturalism and bilingualism.

¹² Bissoondath is only the most recent widely publicized critic of multiculturalism. Bell (1992:74) refers to others who complain that it "...excuses the refusal to become Canadians." Still others, however, consider it desirable and necessary. William Johnson, the journalist, thinks that Bissoondath is completely wrong (*Montreal Gazette*, November 19, 1994:B5) and that the policy simply asserts that Canada has no official culture, just as it has no official religion, that it liberates members of ethnic groups from the straitjacket of traditional English Canadian culture, and that it does not perpetuate divisions and hostilities.

¹³ Reitz and Breton write (1994:5) that "(t)he maintenance of ethnic diversity would hardly be a valuable feature of a society if it occurred in the context of inequality, or if it resulted in inequalities." After analyzing extensive Canadian and U.S. data — they take the U.S. to exemplify more overt and invidious ethnic and racial group discrimi-

nation and inequality — they conclude that despite the popular belief that “(t)he Canadian style is more low-key than the American...(and that)...Canadians have a conscious tradition of ‘tolerance’,... (i)n terms of their effects on the experience of minority groups...these differences are more apparent than real...(T)he cultural differences between the two countries have not produced less pressure toward conformity in Canada, or less propensity to discriminate in employment or housing.” Also cf. Smith (1994[1970]:130). Clark and Morrison (1995), who studied the political consequences of ethnic residential segregation in the Los Angeles CSMA, claim that maintenance of a mosaic pattern can be communally divisive from the standpoint of the larger community. Cf. also, Massey and Denton (1993).

¹⁴ Measured by public acceptance, multiculturalism may not yet be successful. “(A) majority of Canadian and American respondents believe that newcomers should blend in with the larger society...Canadians are just as likely as Americans to believe in a melting pot in contrast to a mosaic (Schmid, 1994:38).”

¹⁵ Cf. Bell (1992:62-91) for a critical exposition of the mosaic metaphor. Bell (76) links the phrase to the publication in 1938 of John Murray Gibbon’s *The Canadian Mosaic*.

¹⁶ Several years ago, Allan Smith wrote (1994[1970]:130) that “The mosaic concept is also an idealization of reality. A greater degree of behavioural assimilation has taken place in Canada than the concept would appear to allow for.” Almost twenty-five years later, however, Reitz and Breton (1994:5) wrote that “(t)he cultural mosaic has become an important cultural and political symbol for Canadians. If the frequency with which Canadian politicians, intellectuals, journalists, and commentators invoke this symbol is any guide, it is deeply ingrained in the Canadian psyche.” However, even if they are right, there is a logical flaw in citing the attention given to the mosaic by this limited, elite segment of the population as proof that it is incorporated into the culture as understood by everyone — unless, of course, the version of Canadian culture represented by this advantaged group is being enforced as the Canadian culture. In all fairness, it also should be noted that the need to accommodate the ideas of a national culture and multiculturalism is recognized. Thus, in a submission to the Cultural Policy Review Committee, the CBC stated (1981:7) that

"Cultural policy...must concern itself both with our ability to share and appreciate among ourselves our common heritage and our desire to 'achieve great things together,' and with the ways and means of articulating the uniqueness of our identities of Canada." Of course, placing the two goals in the same sentence and joining them with 'and' hardly resolves their potential incompatibility as stable, long term goals. Indeed, the text then identifies the 'uniqueness of our identities' as the Francophone heritage rather than those of first nations and all ethnic groups. With respect to the widely emphasized differences between ethnic policies in Canada and the United States, Schmid (1994:37) concludes that her "...analysis is in agreement with Reitz and Breton (1994) who conclude that the differences between the Canadian mosaic and the American melting pot are not significant enough to justify the distinction implied by the choice of metaphors." Other studies have shown that neither Canadians (Smith, Nevitte, and Kornberg, 1990) nor Americans (Nincic and Russett, 1979) perceive substantial difference between the two.

¹⁷ According to Atkinson (1994), the situation is more complex because the new charter gives rights to individuals rather than to collectivities. This handicaps the leaders of traditional groups (e.g., political parties) in mobilizing their members to pursue collective interests. However, when the members of groups find the emphasis on personal diversity inadequate to express their identity, as in the case of Quebec, they will seek special status as a group. If Atkinson is correct, it would mean that ethnicity will remain relevant as an organizing principle or become a divisive focus of contention. In either case, multiculturalism, as it is being implemented, is inconsistent with the sort of individualistic citizen activity envisioned in the charter.

¹⁸ Most discussions of regional cleavages concern relations among provinces or clusters of provinces (e.g., Atlantic, Prairies). However, there are other, non-politically based natural geographic regions. Neglect of the differences among them hides the fact that the continental terrain creates a set of natural North-South regions that cross the U.S.-Canadian border and do not share common interests (cf. Wonders, 1993).

¹⁹ Bodemann (1984) attributes the need for nation building to the absence of a national mission. This in turn, he considers an inten-

tional product of national Anglo elites intent on preserving their dominance.

²⁰ In Canada, equity and fairness are always at the forefront of attention if for no other reason than their presumed relevance to the continual debates on special status for Quebec. The difficulties these standards engender also bedevil efforts to resolve various other problems, e.g., the diverse concerns that the Secretary of State must consider in determining funding levels for each of the several special interest groups it supports (cf. Pal, 1993), the fact that constitutional revision to deal with issues of special status (cf. Atkinson, 1994) has been an unresolvable political preoccupation from the moment of patriation. David Milne (1991) has assembled long lists of inequalities in the treatment of various units and groups that have developed in the effort to maintain across-the-board support for the country. The unfairness, if any, seems to be accepted.

²¹ The latter may have received unwarranted emphasis in the view of some scholars (e.g., Babe [1989]).

²² Provincial governments have played a similar role, particularly with regard to natural resources. Many of them also support provincial broadcasting systems.

²³ Citing such conditions, Meisel asserted (1986:152) that "inside every Canadian, whether she or he knows it or not, there is, in fact, an American." He also could have cited a 1975 student awareness survey that disclosed that 63% did not know the names of three Prime Ministers since World War II, 70% did not know the proportion of the population that is French-Canadian, and 61% were unable to identify the BNA Act as Canada's constitution (Bell, 1992:5-6). Despite subsequent efforts to meet these deficiencies, a study of 70 Ontario grade 13 high school students ten years later showed that 40 believed Canada to be a republic, 30 thought that the Governor General and Senate are elected, and 39 did not know the name of the Premier of Ontario. Bell suggested (71) that it was "from watching too much American television (that) many Canadians came to imagine that the rights granted to Americans by the Bill of Rights and the Constitution applied to them." A 1988 study (cited by Taras, 1991:345) found that Ontario university students admired George Washington by more than a three-to-one margin over John A. Macdonald, that they

preferred the U.S. to the Canadian political system, and that 74% expected Canada to join the U.S. during their lifetimes. However, recent studies of the information that American students have about the U.S. suggest that they probably would not do better. In my class at an elite U.S. institution, the morning after former Vice President Spiro Agnew's death I asked the thirty-five students, who had referred to journalists as "nattering nabobs," whether they had heard of Agnew's death, and who he was. Only one NPR morning news "junkie" could answer the questions.

²⁴ Despite such efforts, Taras (1991:345-346) feels that "(t)he inability of Canadian television to reflect English and French-speaking Canadians to each other or to cultivate the 'vegetable gardens' of local and regional cultures may have damaged Canada's prospects for survival. To create a television system that could accomplish these tasks would have taken extraordinary acts of will and imagination and a sizable commitment of resources. Instead recent Canadian governments have chosen to see broadcasting as an economic tool rather than an instrument for nation-building." Mark Raboy (1990) has similar views about media policy implementation.

²⁵ In contrast to the emphasis on Canadian-produced material for prime time English broadcasting, Radio-Canada, CBC's French language system, participates with Radio-Quebec, TVOntario, and the National Film Board in bringing European French language broadcasts to Canada for prime time broadcasting on TV 5, a channel devoted to this material (Communications Canada, 1988:21). Also see *The Future of French-Language Television* (1985) for more information on French language broadcasting in Canada.

²⁶ Frank H. Underhill, the historian, has said (1964:4) that "there should be a monument to this American ogre who has so often performed the function of saving us from drift and indecision." Because there is little evidence of a desire on the part of the U.S. to absorb Canada politically, the concern is usually expressed in terms of Canada drifting into a situation in which it would actively pursue that option (cf. Smith, 1986). It must be admitted that recent strong statements by political leaders criticizing the United States in controversies over salmon fishing, sharing joint military information, and protectionist activities for Canadian magazines may not have generated the same sort of popular support. However, if not, this would

only be further testimony to the fact that Canadian public officials must always counterbalance bombast with conciliatory statements and friendly positions on other matters involving the United States.

²⁷ Hiller (1986:213) is among the few Canadian scholars of a somewhat similar mind. In contrasting the United States and Canada, he writes that "...it usually has been argued that...the Canadian identity has been diffuse because Canadian society has lacked this kind of revolutionary origin (Note omitted). While a national mythology may help differentiate a society and contribute to the arousal of patriotic feelings, it may be wrong to assume that societies are impoverished if they lack this kind of origin, or the heightened collective feelings about the society which result..." Powe (1993:70-71) echoes his thought, writing that "I'll ...call...anonymity part of our invisibility...Our identities are kept hidden...It may be that...the anonymous Canadian, who lives in a place where communication links are a matter of air and vibrations and crossed wires, has no need for a static identity." Webber (1994:184-187) suggests why a few shared core values may be all that is desirable in a diverse modern country.

There is another way of looking at questions of identity and citizenship, one that rethinks what a country is all about. It rejects the notion that countries are typified by long lists of agreed principles, and suggests that a strong focus on shared values or a canonical set of national beliefs betrays a misunderstanding of the substance of political community. Allegiance...does not require a wide measure of agreement on substantive ends. Belonging...does not require that one's values be shared by others. A small core of shared values is vital to the health of a democratic order, but the list...will be relatively short, including basic respect for democratic procedures and political accountability, but *not* (emphasis added) everything that makes a country what it is... The essential problem with the language of shared values is that it is forced to carry too much weight. It leads one to over-determine what is important to a country and to citizenship, to constitutionalize visions of a

country that do violence to its richness and diversity,
impliedly excluding those who do not share those
visions...(185) The national character...of all...societies
is characterized by a debate through time...(187)

The existence next door of just such an effective and stirring document for almost two hundred years before the adoption of the Charter may be another symbolic manifestation of the national differences that have fueled Canadian ambivalence toward the United States.

²⁸ Arguably, the mosaic depicts Canada. However, if Canada's problem is a lack of a clear identity that everyone shares (hence, the desire to encourage a national culture), to say that without providing substantive imagery adds nothing but an empty circularity.

²⁹ One particular difficulty in documenting this point is that the Canadian government has been subsidizing the production of both theater/TV films and television serials for export — to the United States in particular. Therefore, much of this material is at a typical U.S. level and may not be promoted or even exhibited in Canada.

³⁰ Cf. Anthony Smith's (1993[1989]) homage to Lord Reith, and his success in creating a public service broadcasting system that could pursue its mission and protect itself against political and public pressure for more than sixty years. Those conditions did not exist for the creators of the CBC. It should be added that there are compelling reasons not to rely on the media to promote democracy that are inherent in the communication process itself (cf. Smith, 1995, 311-322).

³¹ This is a long-accepted proposition in propaganda theory that goes back to the work of Doob and Allport.

³² It also is true that because Israel is a small country in area and population it is reasonable to apply a model in which most citizens are simultaneously exposed to the same material, discuss it among themselves, and form a widely-shared public opinion. These conditions do not apply to Canada, a country with a very large land mass and a population clustered in widely separated locations scattered over six time zones.

³³ Rutherford (1978:64, 75) implies that Canadian politicians have acted on the supposition that the press has effects. He explains two cases of politicians' actions as responses to newspaper editorials, their assumption having been that editorials were read and accepted by readers. In the United States, both public and scholarly interest in the media's role usually also are premised on a conviction that the media are effective. Gitlin (1978) has advanced the thesis that Rockefeller Foundation officials decided to fund radio research in the 1920s and '30s on the belief that 'administrative research' (Lazarsfeld, 1941) would provide information about audiences that could be used to develop radio broadcasting along lines that would serve their patron's interests (cf. Rowland, 1983: 53-86; Carey, 1988: 69-88). A more sanguine view of foundation involvement that also presumes media effectiveness is expressed in Engelman's (1987) analysis of the roles of the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation in promoting national public television in the United States.

³⁴ Page, however, is no longer uncertain about media effects. He writes (1996:23) that "(t)he days of belief in 'minimal effects' by the media are over. A large body of evidence now indicates that what appears in print or on the air has a substantial impact..." However, he also urges research on how the media have their effects and whether they provide or simply convey the stimuli. If he means this, we still don't know very much about the most important aspects of media effects. In this regard I side with Smith (1993[1986]), who questions concerns that the consumption of foreign media materials has hypodermic-like effects that undermine a person's national identity (cf. Ferguson, 1993:53). He writes (74) that "The complex of causes and effects simply stuns the logical processes of the mind: it is impossible to think through the myriad of variables that are contained within the communication process, the totality of human interactions which constitute culture."

³⁵ With regard to specific effects, selected studies can support numerous assertions. In no particular order, the media have been identified as agenda setters; they tell us what to think and talk about (Thayer, 1988: 4-65), but not what positions to take (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Shaw and McCombs, 1977; Weaver, Graber, McCombs, and Eyal, 1981; Wilhoit and deBock, 1981; Becker, 1982). They are said to reinforce; they stabilize existing knowledge, attitudes, and behavior

rather than add to or change them (Comstock, Chaffee, Katzman, McCombs, and Roberts, 1978: 337-341; Parenti, 1986: 20-22). Consequently, they inhibit change. It is claimed that they divert people from reality (Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1948; Klapper, 1960: 166-205), but neither the reality nor the individual or social consequences of diversion are specified. Some scholars (McLeod and Reeves, 1980; McLeod, Kosicki, and Pan, 1991) have linked specific aspects of media structure and of the processes by which material is produced and consumed with specific types of effects, but their conclusions tend to reflect the positions from which they begin.

³⁶ Fifty years ago, Lazarsfeld (1948) sought to categorize the approaches to these issues at that time. The task proved virtually unmanageable even then. Thirty years later and more than twenty years ago (Chaffee, 1977), the task required even more elaborate and complex schema. Also cf. Klapper, 1960; Blumler and Katz, 1974, McQuail, 1977; 1985:104-7; Rosengren, Wenner, and Palmgreen, 1985, and Tuchman, 1988.

³⁷ Lull (1990 [1980]: 28-48) distinguishes what McQuail, Blumler, and Brown each have identified as personal uses of the media from what he calls social uses. Both are primarily what I refer to as individual.

³⁸ Presumably, though, something must happen within individuals as a result of exposure that would account for the media's collective impact.

³⁹ For an incisive critique of McLuhan's ideas, see Fekete (1973).

⁴⁰ For discussions of Innis' work, see Melody, Salter, and Heyer (1981) and Carey (1988: 142-172). Carey says that, "During the third quarter of this century, North American communications theory...could have been described by an arc running from Harold Innis to Marshall McLuhan....Innis's work...is the great achievement in communications on this continent" (142). It may be more than coincidence that both Innis and McLuhan were Canadians and that communication technology and media are deemed crucial for Canada's survival.

⁴¹ In contrast, Phillips has continued to study very specific effects. For example, he has concluded that three days after the appearance of media items (e.g., news items, soap opera events) detailing suicides,

violent crimes, accidents, and other deviant behavior, real events of the same type increase for about a week (Phillips, 1977, 1979, 1982; Bollen and Phillips, 1981). See Baron and Reiss (1985) and the subsequent exchange with Bollen and Phillips for additional citations and an important methodological debate.

⁴² The essence of the argument is presented in an early form by Gerbner (1972: 30), who, in reporting on a content analysis of television violence, wrote that "...the almost ritualistically regular and repetitive symbolic structures of television drama cultivate certain premises about the rules of the game of life." A volume (Melischek, Rosengren, and Stappers, 1984) that appeared 12 years later, in which Gerbner (1984: 329-343) reported a study of political content on television, contains a full set of citations to the various papers from 1972 to 1984 in which the thesis was developed. A good synthesis is available in Wober and Gunter (1988: 1-19). The process of cultivation is somewhat different from the postmodernist assertion that media reports and imagery simply have become reality because people accept and respond to them.

⁴³ In terms of media studies, Tuchman (1983) has suggested that "...researchers began to recognize the study of media as the study of consciousness and formations of consciousness..." (330) and that "...one can do theoretically informed and empirically rich studies without accepting a narrow, linear, sequential model..." (340) of media effects. Hers is just another way to state the possible independence of media effects and communication effects. The distinction between effects at the individual level and consequences at the collective level leads to a focus on psychological processes in the first instance and on hegemonic conditions in the second.

⁴⁴ Causal assertions are compromised by the tendency to consider cause and effect to be direct and inexorable, i.e., whenever the cause is present, the effect occurs. Thus, the tendency to say, for example, that viewing a particular television program or film will cause adolescents to imitate a crime always can be countered by the claim that all adolescents who see that program or film will not commit that crime. On the other hand, broad claims about effects usually seem so obvious as to be trivial and hardly worth noting.

⁴⁵ Such disparate matters as the refusal until 1976 of the Union of South Africa to allow domestic television broadcasting (cf. Harrison and Ekman, 1977; Hachten, 1979), concerns that young children are unable to distinguish fact from fiction in the media, claims that the media convert people in 20th century industrial societies from participants to observers, and charges that media coverage rather than citizens' informed rational choices decides elections are all expressions of this concern.

⁴⁶ For a similar perspective, cf. Jensen (1990).

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