PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

Cultural and Educational Dimensions

UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Table of contents

Preface

The International Round Table the Cultural and Educational Functions of Public Service Broadcasting held at UNESCO, Paris, 3-5 July 1995, was organized in a very enlarged context of celebrations each one of which bore a special message for the Round Table.

In 1995 we celebrated first of all the 100th anniversary of the airwaves, and by this I mean the series ofdiscoveries and inventions that eventually led to the understanding of how electronic signals can be propagated and received. A hundred years have indeed led us to a stage of technology that opens new frontiers for public service broadcasting. Radio and television can now be articulated directly with informatics, multi-media and inter-active ways of communicating. We need only a little imagination to propose what public service broadcasting in today's information society can do for education and for culture.

The year 1995 also marked a continuation of the World Decade for Cultural Development which will end in 1997. Hopefully, cultural development and what public service broadcasting can do for it will not end in 1997, but will continue and grow in strength. This Decade provides a broad context for innovative ideas and co-operation within the international community of broadcasters and cultural experts. These may deal with the preservation ofnational and local languages, the continuation and further development of cultural mores, but most of all, the need for sharing understanding cultures and appreciating the cultural diversity that is upon us today. This is the only way that humanity can be oriented towards openness and tolerance, and hopefully for peaceful ways of settling differences between individuals, peoples and nations. This is all the more important as 1995 was also the International Year of Tolerance.

In this context and to mark the 125th Anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Ghandi, UNESCO, jointly with the Indian Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the National Commission for UNESCO, organized an International Round Table on Non-violence, Tolerance and Television in New Delhi, 1 April 1994. As some participants in that Round Table observed, public broadcasters are the trustees of society under a form of unwritten "social contract" to provide useful educational, cultural, informational and non-violent programmes to the audience. And for this reason, public broadcasting organizations everywhere should be strengthened.

In 1995, we also celebrated the 50th anniversaries of both the United Nations and UNESCO, organizations founded on the premise that peace impossible. Today, however, we do realize that the process of peace is a complex one, that peace is intimately related to sustainable and lasting development, and to fullest democratic processes, and consequently intimately and dynamically linked to freedom of expression and freedom of the press. There can be no democracy without freedom of the press. "A free, pluralistic and independent press is an essential component of any democratic society", as declared by the 26th session of the General Conference in its Resolution concerning the UN-UNESCO seminar on promoting an independent and pluralist press in Africa held in Windhoek, Namibia, in 1991.

UNESCO, being the lead United Nations agency for education, culture and communication, our 50th anniversary offers an opportune moment to reflect on the educational and cultural dimensions of public service broadcasting. This is all the more appropriate in the context of the major programme Education for All, declared at Jomtien in 1990 and in face of increasing illiteracy in the world and the inadequacy of formal educational institutions to respond to the annually increasing needs of the population. In view of the "learning without frontiers" concept which inspires UNESCO's action in promoting life-long education for all at all levels, the International Round Table on the Cultural and Educational Functions of Public Service Broadcasting was the occasion to devise innovative means for broadcasting to cross the "frontiers" of distance, classrooms,

books and bureaucracy and deliver educational benefits more directly related to the working and living environment of the masses. Broadcasting also has the power to cut across the frontiers of race, class and social milieu. And that is why public service broadcasting is so important as the basic means of learning without frontiers as well as creating knowledge and an attitude of tolerance among people of different cultural values and orientation.

Today, public broadcasting throughout the world is also being challenged by new technological developments. Today in Western Europe the television and radio user is paying about 100 ECU per year to receive a package of radio and television services. The question is, with new technological developments, will less or more be receivedfor the same price ? New technical possibilities open up new possibilities for commercial broadcasters, but they should open up new possibilities for public broadcasters as well. It seems that technological development is again overtaking legislation and administration. At the same time new technologies, the increasing number of channels and access to multiple programmes create new possibilities for fair distribution of roles.

It is clear that if we want to have social harmony we must not neglect the market forces but compensate their interplay with cultural factors, and public broadcasting (television and radio) is one of these factors. People are more and more turning their eyes and ears to moral and spiritual values. Finally, we will all be judged on moral and ethical values; technicalities will disappear. And that is the strength of public broadcasting.

HENRIKAS YUSHKIAVITSHUS
Assistant Director-General
for Communication, Information and Informatics
UNESCO, Paris

Introduction

I fever there was an opportunity to strengthen public service broadcasting (PSB) in truest fidelity to its mandate, and particularly with the advantages of technological advances world-wide, it is today. And if ever there were more obstacles and impediments to this task, it is also today. The increase in population, especially in developing countries and the inability of literacy action and educational programmes to keep pace with population growth point to the multiplier effect of broadcasting coupled with satellite and cable distribution as additional and highly potent educational instruments. Multi-media formats and the possibilities of inter-activity furnish additional arguments for the increasing role and place of broadcasting in the educational phalanx alongside libraries, conference halls and multi-purpose resource centres.

The rapid spread of news, information and cultural values over the air waves and via distribution cables has accelerated access to new information and exposure to different, in some cases, alien and even contrary values. This process has also become more or less global and inter-active; that is, it often evokes reactions and responses on the part of the audience, individually or socially. In this way, modern dress fashions, hair styles, liberal attitudes of the youth towards sex and heterogeneous relations as portrayed in music video and films, often conflict with the traditional norms of developing societies, by far the greater part of the world audience. In some cases, this process has caused grave internal, social conflicts. And yet, the potential of electronic broadcasting to contribute to reinforcing coherent social and cultural values, to smoothing the transition from traditional mores to a

modern mindset, to instilling the concepts of mutual understanding, tolerance and peace remains largely untapped.

One of the major factors in the balance of power in the media today is the fact that the national broadcaster is no longer the single source of programme fare. Major shifts in the economic and social control of programme origination have created new entertainment industries which manufacture magnetic and celluloid pleasures mainly according to the norms of the market - what sells and gives the quickest, largest return on multi-million dollar investments, regardless of the more profound and longer lasting educational, social or cultural costs. These entertainment industries dominate the top hundred positions in financial audio-visual markets. And in this market, the national broadcaster and the public service broadcaster are only programme browsers competing with higher paying distribution agencies.

Even in distribution, transnational "mega companies" have taken over global distribution of films and television programmes through a combination of satellite and cable distribution, making the national broadcaster a poor cousin in the trade where conventional transmission by hertzian waves has been bypassed and almost completely dominated by high technology. Only where national broadcasters have joined international consortia or established their own can public service broadcasting hope to compete in this market at a reasonable economic level and seek to fulfil the educational and cultural mandates of public service media.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in late 1989, and the shifts in many countries in almost all regions towards more democratic processes and more liberal media laws, one would think that there would indeed be a rare situation for public service broadcasting to re-establish itself firmly as the principal system of audio-visual information to the world public. However, despite the cracks in the walls of autocracy everywhere, another force – commercialism – which has long been in the looming now presents the most formidable challenge to the original mandates of public service broadcasting.

It would be unrealistic to hold that public broadcasting must shun commercialism and be forever beholden to the state or depend solely on a system of license fee collection for its existence in the future. This would effectively marginalize public

radio and television, even possibly reduce it to an information organ of government, or cede the world audience to the commercialism offered by the translational entertainment industries. However, public radio and television cannot be true to their mandate and at the same time yield to all commercial pressures, in effect erasing the distinguishing mark of public service broadcasting. It is equally important that public broadcasting maintain its editorial independence and cultivate its credibility before the public.

The challenges to public radio and television are thus colossal. But in the long run, people will want to listen to and see their national productions, transmitted in languages that they know. They will continue to want to see the reflection of their own changing reality. And that is the strength of public broadcasting; with the cooperation of the public, there is a good chance that public radio and television can deliver the service.

It is in recognition of the prime importance of the educational and cultural functions of public service broadcasting that UNESCO's General Conference at its 27th Session in 1993 adopted Resolution 4.6 which requested the Organization "to support and promote comprehensive action focusing on the role and functions of public service, and in so doing to take the advice of the international, regional and national professional organizations concerned and of the National Commissions". In pursuance of the resolution, UNESCO organized a three-day International Round Table on the subject at its Secretariat in Paris on 3-5 July 1995.

The general objective of the Round Table was to discuss the situation of PSB in the new technological and communication environment and propose ways of strengthening its cultural and educational functions. The meeting brought together some 60 participants and observers from national and international broadcasting organizations and associations; regional radio and television unions; UN agencies; as well as professional, research and cultural organizations and institutes.

In preparation for the Round Table, UNESCO commissioned a number of background papers on the subject. This publication presents the edited texts of seven of those papers. The pertinent issues dealt with in the background papers were by no means exhaustive but they provided a starting point for discussion and debate at the Round Table during which participants shared their

experiences and proposed concrete measures by which public radio and television can more faithfully fulfil their public service mandate, despite the economic, financial and commercial restraints prevailing in the media industry.

In Chapter 1, Marc Raboy of the University of Montreal reflects on the idea of public service broadcasting, how it has evolved and what it means today. He links the idea of public broadcasting to the notion of citizenship and argues that it is necessary to guarantee its de-linking from both the political authority of the state and the economic leverage of the market. The key to this is not so much a particular structure or funding formula, but a set of objectives and practices based on democratic principles and the view that broadcasting can be a means of social and cultural development.

Raboy then maps the current world situation by developing a typology of the different systemic and institutional models one encounters at the present time. He identifies and discusses three principal types, namely, (i) public service core systems, (ii) private enterprise core systems, and (iii) state core systems. Within the different core systems are found various institutional models, characterized by different forms of ownership and control, mandate, models of financing, types of content and relationship to the audience.

On the basis of that typology, Raboy proposes a tentative 'ideal-type' PSB that takes account of the need to clarify our conception of public service broadcasting in the new world context, the role that could be played by a range of broadcasting institutions with public service briefs, and strategies for dealing with various previously identified constraints.

Pierre Juneau, President of the World Radio and Television Council, recalls in Chapter 2 that the original position in most countries when radio was established and when television was developed was to use the broadcasting media for education, culture, information, entertainment and enlightenment. Juneau observes that countries have not always pursued these objectives with consistency, commitment or ability and that the will to make the proper use of these technologies has weakened. Present technological and industrial developments also pose tremendous challenges as to how those original purposes should be achieved.

Noting that a public service approach to television and radio, as opposed to a strictly commercial approach, would contribute to cultural diversity in the world, Juneau argues that a system which associates broadcasting entirely with marketing and industry is "an unfortunate error" which has caused grave cultural deprivation in many parts of the world. He puts forward the proposition that a strictly commercial approach to television - even in large and rich markets – is not reconcilable with cultural goals and contends that the most basic element of broadcasting policy is the maintenance, development and support of strong and politically independent public institutions. While acknowledging that the history of public radio and public television over the last 50 or 60 years has revealed the many pitfalls, weaknesses and faults of such institutions, he concludes that it is wiser to find ways to improve these institutions than to change the system.

The nature of global satellite broadcasting services and their impact on educational and cultural development is taken up by Anura Goonesekera of the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre in Chapter 3. Goonesekera presents a general overview and analysis of the content and orientation of satellite broadcasting services in the Asian region.

He examines the potential and challenges offered by satellite broadcasting for promoting cultural and educational services (both formal instructions and non-formal education) and proposes several approaches to encouraging such services. These include special projects to encourage cultural and educational programmes, and harnessing groups of professionals, especially non-government organizations, for this work; the formulation of an agreed code of ethics – a minimum set of guidelines – to which all purveyors of satellite broadcasting must adhere; and the institutionalizing of some formal ways of recognizing cultural and educational contributions of satellite broadcasting such as an international award for excellence in educational broadcasting programmes.

In Chapter 4, Alfred Smudits of MEDIACULT analyzes the cultural and educational functions of public service broadcasting in Western European countries. He observes that from its inception, broadcasting in Europe was expected to accomplish an important democratic and cultural mission and was given the task of providing the entire population with information, education and

quality entertainment. For economic reasons, the tasks implied in this mandate could only be performed by a state-regulated monopoly – i.e. public broadcasting services. This used to be the agreed opinion of the European countries and public service broadcasting prevailed until the early 1980s.

Smudits notes that since that period the media landscape of Europe underwent fundamental changes as deregulation of broadcasting was launched in almost all the countries. By the early 1990s, the broadcasting landscapes in all Western European countries had changed; it is now characterized by availability of more channels, more programme markets, more commercial air time; competition for programmes viewers and advertising market shares; internationalized media groups and investments; and concentration of television providers and media enterprises.

He examines the developments, the fundamental issues, perspectives and problems with respect to the cultural and educational functions of PSB in the wake of the changes. He concludes that if the PSBs are to effectively perform the democratic task of providing independent, free and pluralistic information and promoting cultural development, these tasks and functions must be formally enshrined in a broadcasting order which guarantees their independence and lays down the standards to be met, and ensures the provision of funds required to meet these standards.

Youri Khiltchevski of the Association for the Promotion of Culture assesses the status of culture and education in the programmes of electronic media in Eastern and Central European countries in Chapter 5. He notes that the present state of the broadcasting media in Eastern and Central Europe is characterized by three main factors: increased competition, limited financial resources and a struggle for survival. In these conditions, he argues, cultural and educational programmes with a relatively low rating fall victim first. Khiltchevski calls for a serious revision of the policy of financing of public television and radio broadcasting and an elaboration of the strategy of state companies as an institution maintaining the unity of the nation, its culture and spirit.

To encourage the cultural and educational functions of public service broadcasting in Eastern and Central Europe, he suggests the creation or strengthening of independent non-profit, non-commercial bodies which would produce and disseminate cultural and educational programmes; requirements on commercial

companies to allocate part of their time to cultural and educational programmes as a condition of licensing; the introduction of tax cuts for programme producers who specialize in creating and transmitting scientific, cultural and educational programmes; and the adoption of a professional moral code for editors and producers in the broadcasting media.

In Chapter 6, Charles Okigbo of the African Council for Communication Education examines the implications of the current wave of broadcasting liberalization for educational and cultural functions of broadcasting in Sub-Saharan African countries. He reviews the general functions of broadcasting in African countries and notes that, from its inception in Africa, public broadcasting was conceived as a vital tool of education and as channels for disseminating cultural information.

Remarking that liberalization of broadcasting increases the competitive atmosphere, Okigbo identifies and discusses a number of important implications for the educational and cultural functions of broadcasting in Africa. These include growth in entertainment-oriented programming that focuses on music for radio, and soap operas for television at the expense of educational programmes; a decrease in the use of radio and television for public affairs, civics and development information; reduction in international news coverage; and increase in transmission of foreign programmes at the expense of local productions.

Rafael Roncagliolo, President of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, discusses the public service functions of community radio and television in Latin America in Chapter 7. Observing that the most common and permanent feature in the broadcasting milieu of the region is the predominance of commercial stations, he notes that community radio broadcasting dates back to the decade of the 1940s and was marked in the early decades by the linkage between radio and education.

The distinguishing feature of community radio and television in Latin America remains its attitude toward and aptitude for furthering education and socio-cultural development. Roncagliolo refers to the growing number of organizations which are devoted to developing community radio and television broadcasting as well as the emergence of legislation related to community media and concludes that such media have gained legitimacy in the region.

The final chapter of this publication presents a synthesis of the discussions and debate generated at the Round Table with a focus on the major salient points raised. Through the Round Table and the present publication, UNESCO hopes to encourage a broad debate on the challenges facing PSB in the broadcast industry in different parts of the world.

S.T. KWAME BOAFO
& CARLOS A. ARNALDO
Communication Division
UNESCO, Paris
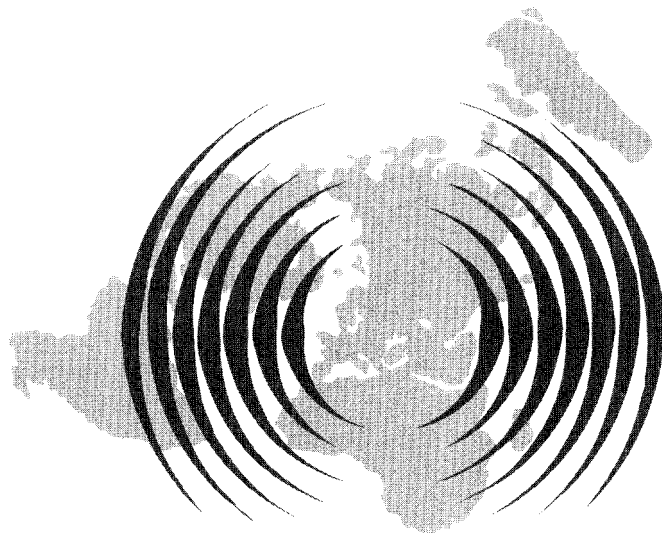
CHAPTER 1 The World Situation of Public Service Broadcasting: Overview and Analysis

Marc Raboy
Department of Communication
University of Montréal
Montréal, Québec, Canada
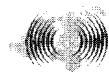
Introduction

This international Round Table on the cultural and educational functions of public service broadcasting comes at a fortuitous time, as the changing environment of broadcasting is on various agendas, from the Council of Europe to the numerous national states grappling with the challenges to their national communications systems; from the G7 and its grand design for a global information highway to the burgeoning number of non-governmental organizations active in the field of mass communication. At the heart of these debates is the question of the present and future status of public service broadcasting.

Meeting in Prague in December 1994, the Council of Europe's 4th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy identified the safeguarding of independent, appropriately-funded public service broadcasting institutions as essential to the functioning of the media in a democratic society. The Council's draft resolution on the future of public service broadcasting included a nine-point mission statement reiterating, in a particularly European perspective, the traditional objectives of public service broadcasting.'

Such statements, for all their worth, also point to the obstacles faced by conventional public service broadcasting in the current global context. In the contemporary debates on the changing environment of mass communication, there is no shortage of earnest outlines of goals and objectives for media with aims other than business or propaganda. There is no shortage of good will, or good ideas, but the realization of the ideals of public service broadcasting is rendered problematic by a series of political, economic, technological, ideological and developmental constraints.

In many parts of the world, the problem is still totalitarianism, and the equation of the public interest with the particular interests of the national state. Where totalitarianism has been overcome, the problems facing media in the transition to democracy are often the best example of the problems of democratization generally. In Eastern Europe, in most of Africa, and in much of the rest of the transitional world, public service broadcasting is a distant ideal, not yet a working reality. In those countries where the leadership has embraced that ideal, the lack of a receptive political and professional culture is often the next hurdle. Where neo-totalitarian or neo-colonial governments seek to retain power at all cost, the lack of autonomy of national media is also a problem of political will.

In the heartland of traditional public service broadcasting, Western Europe (and in countries with similar systems such as Canada, Australia and Japan), the vogue towards liberalization and market reform mixed with a lack of official faith in the continued importance of public service broadcasting leads to a syndrome where precious experience is being washed away. Problems of financing, problems of mandate, interpretations of purpose point, here too, to a more fundamental problem of political will.

What is there in common between a country such as Cambodia, seeking to build a national broadcasting system virtually from scratch, and the G7 member seeking to trim its deficit by attacking the tax base of public service broadcasting? On the surface very little. But in fact, national peculiarities apart, questions concerning the structures of broadcasting are increasingly global ones. In the new broadcasting environment, the issue of public service broadcasting reduces to: what is it to do, and how is it to be paid for? Or put another way, what social and cultural goals attributed to broadcasting require a specially mandated, non-commercially driven organization, publicly owned, publicly funded to the extent necessary, and publicly accountable?

Broadcasters, politicians, media professionals and creative people, community activists and scholars world-wide are wrestling with these questions today. While the diagnosis is global, the prescriptions are necessarily context-specific. When we put them together, however, we find in the range of models, examples
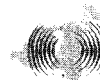
and ways of framing the issues, the basis for their global portrait, and a sketch of a solution.[2]

Changing Structures of World Broadcasting Systems

Fifteen years ago, when the International Commission on the Study of Communication Problems chaired by the late Sean MacBride reported to UNESCO, the structure of the world's broadcasting systems was a relatively unproblematic affair. The subject occupied a mere two pages in the MacBride Report, where public service broadcasting did not even require a separate index entry (UNESCO, 1980).

In 1980, national broadcasting systems could be typed according to the prevailing political systems in each of the countries concerned. Most European countries had a single monopoly broadcaster - although operating according to very different sets of principles in the West and in the East. In Africa, too, national broadcasting was strictly government owned and operated. At the other extreme, the American free enterprise model of broadcasting was operational in most of Asia and the Americas (with notable exceptions). The number of countries with "mixed" systems was small (the MacBride report mentioned the UK, Japan, Australia, Canada, and Finland). Where it existed, community broadcasting was a strictly local, marginalized phenomenon with few links to the mainstream. In 1980, the letters CNN did not have the evocative authority they do today.[3]

Since that time the world has changed. The evolution of broadcasting has been marked by the following three sets of parallel developments:

1. the explosion in channel capacity and disappearance of audio-visual borders made possible by new technology;
2. the disintegration of the state broadcasting model with the collapse of the socialist bloc and the move towards democratization in various parts of the world; and
3. the upsurge in market broadcasting and the introduction of mixed broadcasting systems in the countries with former public service monopolies.

Far from being distinct from one another, these phenomena are in complex interrelationship with respect to the emergence of new forms of broadcasting, locally, nationally and internationally. The consolidation of a world broadcasting market has been abetted by the collapse of the iron curtain, just as that process was accelerated by the technological obsolescence of attempts to control access to information and the means of communication.

At the same time, the re-evaluation of welfare capitalism – spurred on by an uneasy marriage of ideological and economic considerations – coinciding with the arrival of the new generation of broadcasting technologies, has further strengthened the market model. It also undermined the view that broadcasting is a sphere of activity analogous to education or health care – that is to say, a primarily social and cultural rather than an economic or political activity (Servaes, 1993: 327).

As *The Economist* magazine put it in a major report in 1994, television has changed the world but the world has not (yet) changed television:[4]

> *Television is a one-way conduit for entertainment, sports and news, broadcasting in real time to a passive, mass audience. It plays, you watch. If what is on does not appeal, you change channels; if nothing appeals, you are out of luck. Satellites do nothing to alter this model of television. They just transmit it to more people in more places (The Economist, 1994: 4).*

Until the 1980s, television was mainly limited to the OECD and Soviet bloc countries. Since then, the number of sets has tripled, although still unevenly distributed, and the number of satellite stations has gone from O to 300 (although there are still only two really global channels, Turner's CNN and Viacom's MTV).[5] In 1980, there were 40 channels in Europe, today there are 150.

In 1993, every American home paid $30 per month for its free television, via the cost of advertising passed on to consumers; the new broadcasting industry economics will be a dog's breakfast of advertising, subscription, and pay-per-view. But people only watch around seven channels, so the more choice there is, the less likely it is that any particular one will be among them. This is not heartening news for broadcasters.

One of the characteristics of the current context which easily leads to confusion is the blurring of distinctions between formerly distinct activities: broadcasting and narrowcasting, broadcasting and telecommunication, public and private broadcasting. The 1994 policy debates surrounding the new information superhighway have seen a flurry of new alliances and repositioning of broadcasting industry players nationally and internationally, private and public. Broadcasting will henceforth be evolving in a more complex multimedia environment, and its previous subdivisions into distinct 'domains' such as terrestrial, cable and satellite broadcasting are quickly becoming obsolete. Questions concerning the future of public service broadcasting will be played out and resolved in a broader policy framework. This means both greater constraints as well as new possibilities, but the principal normative question will remain: "What should be the public function of broadcasting in a democracy?" (van Cuilenburg and Slaa, 1993).

The context of technological convergence and the accompanying policy debates can help clarify the concept of public service with respect to media generally – and hence, to develop a more appropriate conception of public service broadcasting. In telecommunication, the concept of universal public service has been much more clear and straightforward than in broadcasting. The principle of universality has been tied to the operational provision of affordable access (not an issue in broadcasting as long as the main means of transmission was over-the-air, but increasingly so with the addition of various tiers of chargeable services).

The displacement of universal service by subscriber-based and pay-per-view services is the strongest factor favouring a shift towards the consumer model in broadcasting, and needs to be countered by policy measures and institutional mechanisms to promote the democratic function of broadcasting. This can only come about through a rethinking of what we mean by public service broadcasting.

Broadcasting may be the quintessential cultural industry (Sinclair, 1994), it is increasingly the closest thing we have to a universal cultural form (Collins, 1990). Until recently, national broadcasting systems were seen to be the main vehicles for ensuring that the national culture was reflected in broadcasting, and

with the obvious exception of the USA, success in this respect was tied to a national public broadcasting system. National broadcasting systems are now for the most part more broadly constituted, and at the same time, national broadcasters control a decreasing share of every country's audio-visual space (Caron and Juneau, 1992). But are their messages any less prominent in national consciousness? This is an extremely difficult question to answer with any degree of certainty.

One important aspect of this question is to recognize the problematic nature of national identity itself. Identity today is increasingly multifaceted and national identity is a particularly contested issue in many countries, even among some of the most politically stable. This poses another challenge to broadcasting, which has traditionally been organized at the national level. Where public broadcasting has been well-established, it has almost invariably been through the presence of a strong, often highly centralized national public broadcaster. It is not only the external pressures of globalization that challenge this model today, but also the internal pressures brought about by the fragmentation of traditional notions of nationhood (see Pietersee, 1994). If public service broadcasting is to speak to the real concerns of its public, it has to rethink its approach to one of its most cherished objectives, the cementing of national unity. This may be especially difficult for politicians to accept.

Traditionally, public service broadcasting has been expected to represent the national as opposed to the foreign. It maybe time to refocus these conceptual categories, in terms of the local and the global. There is a certain universal appeal to the products of Hollywood-based mass culture - that is, ultimately, the only possible explanation for their success. At the same time, specific publics will be interested in specific types of broadcasting programming. The global cultural industry recognizes this by developing products targeted to "niche markets". Public broadcasting has a different role, principally by conceiving its audience as a public rather than a market. Some programmes may speak to a particular national public, but on any given national territory there will be less-than-national broadcasting needs to be fulfilled. National networks, publicly or privately owned, can no longer be expected to be forces of cohesion; they can, however, be highly

effective distribution systems for programmes of importance to the communities they serve. For this to occur, we need a new definition of public service broadcasting, suitable to a new public culture, global in scope and experienced locally.[6]

The idea of public service broadcasting is not intrinsically tied to that of nationhood, rather with that of the public, and broadcasting, as a form of communication, with that of community (Carey, 1989). Therefore, we need to take a fresh look at public service broadcasting in the context of a changing role for the still present, still formidable (for lack of a structure to replace it) nation state. As the alternative to the state becomes the market, the alternative to public service broadcasting is construed as private sector broadcasting; this is logically flawed as well as politically short-sighted. The globalisation of markets is both global and local (global products are usually produced in a single place, distributed world-wide and consumed locally, everywhere). As the nation state is left marooned between the global and the particular (Ellis, 1994), so is public service broadcasting. This might explain the success of speciality services, and the economies of scale justified by global products in search of small local markets; but it is false to assume this means there is no longer a social need for public service broadcasting; it rather demands redefinition, for as Ellis (1994) has stated, only public service broadcasting "puts a social agenda before a market agenda".

In this context, the idea of public service broadcasting stands out more boldly than any of the existing structures set up to manage broadcasting in its name. This chapter shall look at three dimensions of this subject. The first is conceptual, and asks the question: what is public service broadcasting? The second is descriptive and analytical and establishes the portrait of the current world situation, as reflected in a typology of existing models. In the third part, we will try to refocus the issues facing public service broadcasting by suggesting a series of structural approaches that could be useful to promoting the ideal of public service broadcasting in the present economic, political and technological environment.

What is
Public Service Broadcasting?

The idea of public service broadcasting is rooted in the enlightenment notion of the public and of a public space in which social and political life democratically unfolds (Habermas, 1989), as well as in the tradition of independent, publicly organized broadcasting institutions created to deliver radio programmes to audiences in the period between the two world wars.

In some cases, public service broadcasting refers to one or more institutions, while in others, it is an ideal (Syvertsen, 1992). Thus, in some countries, public service broadcasting refers to a particular organization or sector of the broadcasting system, while in others, the entire system may be viewed as a public service. In some cases, public service broadcasting is seen as a developmental goal to be achieved. While in many cases public service broadcasting may indeed be in "crisis" (Rowland and Tracey, 1990), the ideal that it represents is certainly very much alive.

It is unnecessary here to review the origins of public service broadcasting, except to recall that both the institution and the ideal (or a certain conception of it) originated in the experience of the BBC and its founder Sir John Reith (see McDonnell, 1991). The BBC still stands as the quintessential model of public service broadcasting world-wide, particularly in the view of national governments seeking to establish or to revitalize their broadcasting systems. It is indeed often impossible to separate the idea from the practical example of the institution, but do that we must. While the BBC is probably still the most successful example of a national public service broadcaster, and the UK among the most successful at anticipating and adapting to the new context of the 21st century, it is not necessarily an appropriate or easily transportable model for many situations. The ideal, on the other hand, is a universal one – to the extent that democratic values can be said to be universal.

There is no easy answer to the question "What is public service broadcasting", but a reasonably thorough attempt was made some years ago by the UK's now defunct Broadcasting Research Unit, in a pamphlet first published in 1985 (BRU, 1985/1988. See also Barnett and Docherty, 1991).

The BRU document presented those elements of public service broadcasting which "should be retained within whatever systems are devised to provide broadcasting as new communications technologies come into use. It is not therefore a defence of the existing public service (broadcasting) institutions as they are today or as they may become; it is concerned with the whole landscape..." (emphasis added).

The BRU approach supported the view that broadcasting should be seen as a comprehensive environment. Its "main principles" can be summarized as follows:

1. universal accessibility (geographic);
2. universal appeal (general tastes and interests);
3. particular attention to minorities;
4. contribution to sense of national identity and community;
5. distance from vested interests;
6. direct funding and universality of payment;
7. competition in good programming rather than for numbers; and
8. guidelines that liberate rather than restrict programme makers.

As public service characteristics, the list also points to the inherent pitfalls of such an exercise. While some of the characteristics (i.e., accessibility) are straightforward enough, certain others (i.e., contribution to a sense of national identity) are highly problematic, insofar as in many states (including the British) the question of nationhood itself is not fully resolved. Distance from vested interests implies an ideal situation where the broadcasting institutions do not have their own vested interests. A notion such as good programming begs the question of taste: good, according to whom?

The real problem, however, is not how to improve the list but rather how to apply any such set of principles. Indeed, the exercise points to a need to return to even more fundamental values regarding broadcasting and its role in society (Blumler, 1992).

"Traditional value judgments concerning the objectives of public broadcasting provide inadequate guidance to broadcasters and policy makers about how to decide what resources should

be allocated to public broadcasting as a whole and to the different components of public broadcasting", concluded Robin Foster on the basis of the British debate, in a 1992 report to the David Hume Institute (Foster, 1992: 24). Foster's analysis led to the suggestion that viewers and listeners should be consulted regarding the level of resources to be put into particular types of programmes – a proposal not likely to be endearing to broadcasters or policy-makers, although logical and coherent with respect to both public policy objectives for broadcasting and the prevailing discourse of consumer sovereignty. "As an input into determining the public broadcasting contract, ways should be found of establishing what the public wants public broadcasting to be; giving the public involvement in deciding what is provided" (Foster, 1992: 31). This raises another important issue: what do we mean by 'the public'?

Numerous authors have been engaged with the need to redefine our conception of the public in light of the changing nature of late 20th century mass media (See, for example, Curran, 1991; Garnham, 1992; Dahlgren 1994). If this is relatively straightforward for certain actors in the sphere of broadcasting – advertisers, for example, who conceive of their target as a market, or ratings-driven broadcasters who quantify it as an audience - it is not so evident for public service broadcasters and the makers of public policy. Smith (1991) has noted:

> *Broadcasting takes place in the public sphere and we come to it both as consumers and as citizens. There is no fixed definition of the public service dimension in broadcasting. It changes with the altering circumstances of politics and social conceptions of need... In the context of the burgeoning market-place of programmesz and of channels public service itself changes in emphasis, without diminishing the salience of its earlier meanings, which originated with the scarcity of frequencies but also in the nature of the medium of broadcasting itself. Where commercial broadcasting is linked to the social world by means of markets, public service derives its legitimacy from the role its viewers play as citizens.*

The notion of citizenship has severe implications for broadcasting. Citizenship can not be passive. Citizenship is political. Citizenship evokes the image of Tom Paine and the unfinished

struggle for "liberty, equality, fraternity" (Keane, 1991, 1994). When public service broadcasting is linked to the idea of citizenship, it must logically be decoupled from the authoritarian power of the state. At the same time, it can not be commodified. This is not a question of principle but of purpose. The main point of distinction between public service and private sector broadcasting is that the latter is only commercially-driven, while the former, despite the various shapes and forms it assumes from time to time and place to place, is necessarily propelled by a different logic.

It is critical to understand the subtleties inherent in this distinction. Within the realm of conventional public broadcasting, there are two schools of thought regarding commercial activity. One has it that commercial and public service objectives are wholly incompatible and cannot be combined within a single service. The other view is that they can coexist and public and private broadcasting can compete in the advertising marketplace to the mutual benefit of both. Without seeking to resolve this dilemma, I would like to suggest that there is a third conceptual and structural approach to this question: assuming that certain activities of broadcasting can be financed commercially and others can not, why not redistribute the benefits of the commercial sector to finance the non-commercial sector? This systemic approach is partially recognized in some countries which legally define their national broadcasting systems as public services, thus legitimating the regulatory intervention of the state; but it is not operationalized anywhere through the appropriation of the fruit of lucrative activity to subsidize the rest. It is just assumed – with no basis in logic, only in ideology - that commercially viable broadcasting should be left in the private sector and unprofitable broadcasting activity should be subsidized in some other way. On the other hand, one could just as logically argue that, insofar as the social basis of broadcasting is public service, the profits of the lucrative sector should be redistributed within the system. If this is an unlikely formula, it is not because of any conceptual flaw, but because of broadcasting's capture by private industry.

Indeed, the leaders of the global broadcasting industry have turned this idea on its head by claiming that the product they are selling is a public service. As early as 1960, CBS Executive Frank Stanton proclaimed that "a programme in which a large part of

the audience is interested is by that very fact... in the public interest" (quoted in Friendly, 1967: 291). More recently, Rupert Murdoch has stated: "Anybody who, within the law of the land, provides a service which the public wants at a price it can afford is providing a public service" (quoted in Ellis, 1994: 1). To the extent that 'the public' is just another way of describing the aggregate consumer market for broadcasting, they are of course correct, which is why, once again, it is important to get the terminology straight. Meanwhile, the idea of public service broadcasting has been undermined by the erosion of the public commitment to the service that has been provided by actually-existing public broadcasting institutions. In many cases, this erosion has been egged on by the abuse of the term by national governments seeking to use broadcasting for a higher national purpose, claiming that this is in the public interest.

As Ellis (1994) points out, the continuing role of the nation state is not to act as the bearer of national unity or the essence of national identity, but to negotiate antagonisms and set the limits of acceptable communal behaviour. In this context, there exists a need to establish a consensus that holds civil society together, regardless of the disparate elements making it up. Such a consensus can only be based on shared conventions, relying increasingly on the rituals of communication. The role of public service broadcasting in this context is to provide a space in which social antagonisms can be explored and worked out, not cater to accentuating difference, as commercial multi-channel broadcasting has a tendency to do. "No longer an agent of national unity, public service broadcasting can provide the forum within which the emerging culture of multiple identities can negotiate its antagonisms", notes Ellis (1994: 14). Exploring new possibilities for consensus rather than imposing it, is the opposite of the former role of public service broadcasting - which goes quite a way to explaining why the traditional strategies of the major national public service broadcasters no longer work, and why they are in trouble as they seek to accommodate a new raison d'être. "We have been so preoccupied by the challenges to Public Service Broadcasting from within broadcasting that we have failed to notice the profound changes that have taken place in the public whom broadcasting is supposed to serve" (Ellis, 1994: 16).

Public broadcasting is first of all a public good (Garnham, 1994), and "public goods are goods which cannot be appropriated privately. If such a good is supplied, no member of the collectivity can be excluded from its consumption. Therefore, public goods must be produced by institutions other than a market economy and distributed by a mechanism different from markets" (Berger, 1990: 128). The first step is determining what makes public broadcasting a public good; this is not immediately self--evident, which is what Yves Achille (1994) means when he writes that public service broadcasting is suffering from a crisis of identity. Achille refers to a triple crisis of public service broadcasting: identity, financing and functioning. If the identity crisis could be resolved, the financial problem – essentially a question of political will – could then be addressed. As to the fictional question, in countries with an established public service broadcasting tradition, nothing less than a zero-based review of existing institutional structures can bring public service broadcasting into the 21st century with a hope of building public and political support for its new role.

In a broadcasting environment that treats the public as a body of clients or consumers, the role of public broadcasting is to address people as citizens. Public broadcasting can do this only if it is seen as an instrument of social and cultural development, rather than as a marginal alternative service on the periphery of a vast cultural industry (see Raboy, *et al.*, 1994).[7] This implies a freshly conceived role for the state, which must see itself more as architect than as engineer: that is to say, the role of the state is to design and facilitate the functioning of a multi-faceted national broadcasting system, rather than as the directive patron of a dedicated national broadcaster.

"The crucial choice", as Graham Murdock has written, "is not, as many commentators suppose, between state licensing and control on the one side and minimally regulated market mechanisms on the other. It is between policies designed to reinvigorate public communications systems which are relatively independent of both the state and the market, and policies which aim to marginalise or eradicate them" (Murdock, 1992: 18). The object is to create "a new kind of public communicative space, rooted in a

constructive engagement with emerging patterns of political and cultural diversity" (Murdock, 1992: 40).[8]

One of the most difficult conceptual new fields to open is that which seeks to look beyond the exclusivity of traditional institutions to imagine new vehicles for meeting public service objectives. Here, a progressive approach to public broadcasting can take a page from experiences with development. Indeed, strategic intervention in broadcasting can take a page from the sustainable development model. Development theory, once built around the idea that the introduction of full-blown communication systems to traditional societies would hasten "modernization" and hence economic, social and political development, has gradually adjusted to the notion that small-scale horizontal communication operating at the grassroots level can be more beneficial in fostering autonomy and endogenous development (O Siochru, 1992).

In this context, small scale media technologies, opportunities for indigenous cultural expression through such means as theatre, puppetry and video, exchanges between communities via computer, telecommunication and broadcasting, can often be more appropriate for meeting the objectives of democratic communication than conventional broadcasting institutions centrally organized at the national level. In countries where these do not even exist, it can be more politically fruitful to conceive of meeting public service broadcasting objectives at the community level. This does not obviate the need for national broadcasting, but as with so many development issues, the choices to be made involve strategic priorities. In fact, the social demand for local and regional broadcasting is pronounced even in the most developed countries, and one of the most bitterly expressed criticisms of the dominant national public service broadcasters is their tendency to abandon local and regional needs as they retrench around high-profile prestigious national services.

Public Service Broadcasting:
the World Situation

In this section, I shall develop a typology of the various existing models of broadcasting one encounters in the contemporary broadcasting environment. Such an exercise is necessarily fraught with pitfalls, and requires some indulgence on the part of the reader. The typology is meant to be inclusive rather than exhaustive, insofar as it aims to provide an accurate portrayal of existing types, without pretending to cover every particular situation.

Let me first of all distinguish between two general levels, which I call the 'systemic' and the 'institutional'. To clarify this distinction. a mixed broadcasting system in which one finds both public service and private commercial broadcasters is a type of systemic model; a national public service broadcaster, a private enterprise broadcaster, or a community broadcaster is an institutional model.

Despite the rapid movement towards globalization, broadcasting is still legally constituted within the confines of national borders. Although there is a great variety in degree of attention by the world's 200-odd national states, every state must at some point take some fundamental decisions about broadcasting, if only to consider the allocation of frequencies to which it is entitled by international conventions. The immediate result of these decisions is a national broadcasting system in every country, made up of one or more component parts.

Despite the great variety from one country to the next, we can essentially identify three types of 'core' system, that is, systems which while possibly encompassing other forms of broadcasting, are essentially built around a 'core' constituted by a particular institutional model. The notion of 'core' includes a strong historical component, because as we shall see, in many cases the current context is marked by an important movement away from the traditional basis of national broadcasting, towards something else which may not yet be easy to define. At present, we can identify three principal types of broadcasting system, namely (i) 'public service core systems', (ii) 'private enterprise core systems', and (iii) 'state core systems'. The latter category is further characterized

by sub-divisions that we can identify as 'residual', 'emergent' and 'transitional'.

Public Service Core Systems

These systems have evolved around the former public service monopolies (most of Western Europe), or where independent public service broadcasters have historically occupied the centre of the system (Canada, Australia, Japan). The dominant model in Western Europe until the 1980s, public service monopolies were characterized by their strong public service remits and the lack of direct competition, as well as a relative degree of autonomy from the state, varying from country to country according to national tradition. Nearly all of these have become "mixed" ownership systems today, and some would argue that traditional public broadcasting is becoming increasingly peripheral with the rise of the market sector in many of these countries, to the point that it can even be considered a residual form on its way out. This is doubtless too apocalyptic a view, especially if one considers that in some of these same cases, the system as a whole is still legally constituted as a public service. In any event, no country has done away with conventional public service broadcasting, and wherever it exists no important development in broadcasting can fail to take it into account.[9]

Mixed public-private ownership systems were pioneered in Canada and Australia in the era of radio. In Europe, Britain and Finland have had television 'duopolies' since the 1950s. Increasingly the dominant model in Western Europe, and a more-or-less explicit goal in many other parts of the world, mixed systems are characterized either by the economic insulation of one sector from the other (as in Australia, the UK or Sweden, where public service broadcasting is out of the advertising market), or by competition for advertising (the extreme example being Spain, where public television is exclusively financed by advertising, the same as the private sector). As public broadcasters become providers of subscription-based services, this area is opening up to financial competition as well. Mixed systems are characterized by strong competition for audiences and, in the older systems with strong public service traditions, by regulatory requirements to

ensure that private sector broadcasting contributes to the overall welfare of the community and to the social and cultural objectives of broadcasting.

We can also distinguish between the 'mature' mixed systems of the older, more stable democracies with relatively strong economies, and the 'immature' ones of emergent and transitional societies. Mature mixed systems, such as Canada's, are also characterized by various forms of cross-subsidization leading to an increasing hybridization of both public and private broadcasting (for example, the presence of advertising, or the availability of public funding for broadcast production, equally available to both public and private sector broadcasters). Competition tends to be more severe in the 'younger' mixed systems (for example, France or Sweden), but is generally leading to a disturbing flattening of the recognizable distinction between public and private broadcasting (Atkinson, 1993; Paracuellos, 1993; Achille and Miège, 1994). To some analysts, however, the mixed ownership structure is still a far preferable guarantee of broadcasting pluralism and diversity than the private enterprise core model that is held up as the alternative (Syvertsen, 1994).

Private Enterprise Core Systems

These are those national systems built around commercial broadcasting practices, where the role of the state has traditionally been limited to frequency allocation and regulation of privately-owned broadcasting undertakings. The most important example of such a system is obviously the United States. Private enterprise core systems are the rule in most of Latin America and parts of Asia, and have played an important role historically in cross-border commercial broadcasting originating from countries such as Luxembourg. A private enterprise core system is not necessarily incompatible with attempting to regulate broadcasting in the public interest, as the US Federal Communications Commission experience illustrates. In most countries where the mainstream of broadcasting is in the private sector, alternative forms have arisen to provide the range of programming that would not normally find its way into the schedules of commercially-driven broadcasters. The best example of this is the US itself, and its National

Public Radio and Public Broadcasting System. In much of Latin America, the main alternative to private enterprise broadcasting is community-based.

State Broadcasting Core Systems

These systems include the 'residual' systems of countries which have not yet broken with the tradition of a single, monolithic national broadcaster, [10] as well as 'emergent' systems which, although built around a state-owned and controlled broadcaster, are opening up to alternative commercial and community voices, such as one finds in parts of Asia and Africa where democratization is on the agenda. Many countries in those regions are seeking to develop new models appropriate to their particular needs, and emergent systems are currently experimenting with various combinations of public, private and community elements in a perspective that views broadcasting as a resource for social development. South Africa, where a nominally public service broadcaster was for so many years one of the main political instruments of the apartheid state, provides one of the more stunning examples of what we call an emergent broadcasting system. [11]

The former Soviet-bloc countries of East-Central Europe and the ex-USSR provide a particular sub-group here which we would describe as 'transitional', insofar as they seem to be more inclined towards the existing dominant models. Here, pluralistic broadcasting systems are being established on the foundations of former state authoritarian monopolies. These vary widely at the present time, and are evolving so rapidly that any attempt at detailed classification is bound to be quickly eclipsed by events. Generally, all of these countries have introduced some form of private sector commercial broadcasting and retained some form of government-owned broadcasting that could be plotted more or less on a continuum from state control to arm's length. Some have also grappled with the objective of setting up West European style public broadcasters, as well as allowing space for a 'civic' or community sector. [12]

One of the striking characteristics of the current world situation is the remarkable cross-fertilization of various broadcasting forms, resulting in a rapid shrinking of systemic differences across

the core systems that have just been described. Indeed, it is obvious that we are moving towards a global media system – requiring that broadcasting issues be addressed, eventually, in a global political forum.[13] But there are still vast differences between specific types of broadcasting undertakings, which makes it important for us to address the second level of our typology: institutional models.

By institutional models, we mean the particular forms of broadcasting one finds across the range of existing core systems. These are characterized by different forms of ownership and control, mandate, modes of financing, types of content and relationship to their audience. Institutional broadcasting types are not autonomous of the systems in which they develop, and often exist in symbiotic relationship with their neighbors. The main general categories are as follows: (i) national public service broadcasting; (ii) alternative public broadcasting; (iii) privately-owned commercial broadcasting; (iv) multiple ownership services (public-public or public-private partnerships and joint ventures); (v) community broadcasting; and (vi) state broadcasting.

While certain systems and institutions could prove difficult to categorize precisely, this typology is sufficiently inclusive to enable us to determine the main trends and tendencies in broadcasting in the world today. In addition, recognizing the different institutional models can be of important suggestive value to broadcasting planners and policy makers.

National Public Service Broadcasting

This model is characterized by a more or less independent status *vis-à-vis* the national state; more or less because, in spite of a legal arm's length relationship to the government of the day, crucial aspects such as funding and administrative structure are still subject to political decisions.[14] National public service broadcasters exhibit a wide range of sub-types distinguished by finding, mandate, and relationship to the commercial sector (Paradis, 1994). Theoretically, funding can come from either a licence fee, a direct government subsidy, advertising, subscription, or some combination thereof. In Europe, the BBC, for example, is funded strictly by licence fee, while Spain's TVE is exclusively advertising-based. Canada's CBC and the Australian ABC receive annual parlia-

mentary appropriations, supplemented in the Canadian case by television advertising. Japan's NHK is financed mainly by a voluntary contract with television-owners. In all of these countries, the continued purpose and legal remit of the conventional national public service broadcasters is at the heart of the debate on the future of public service broadcasting, but it is crucial to distinguish between the critique of the role of the traditional national public broadcasters and continued support for the idea of public broadcasting.[15] An important by-product of the critique of public broadcasting institutions has been the proliferation of new types of public broadcasting services, especially since the 1980s.

Alternative Public Broadcasting

In this category we can group the 'second services' spun off of the national public broadcasting institutions in many countries with public service core systems. These are usually specifically mandated, for example, to serve minority taste cultures, or regional broadcasting needs, or in some cases (example, Sweden), were created simply to provide a second programme choice in the days of the public service monopoly. More interesting examples as a distinct model are the more recent cases, such as Britain's Channel 4, the Australian Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), or the French-German cultural channel ARTE.[16] These are all examples of independent broadcasters with distinct public service remits set up by national governments outside of the institutional structures of the main public broadcasting organizations.

The political peculiarities of certain countries with public broadcasting traditions have also resulted in structures created by 'less than national' public authorities, such as the Canadian provincial educational television services, or the channels based in Spain's autonomous regions (Garitaonandia, 1993). The existence of a range of services – distinguished by type of ownership, control, financing, mandate, and target audience – usually adds significantly to overall programme diversity and is a good indicator of systemic balance between generalist and specifically targeted forms of public broadcasting. The American PBS service, although created as an alternative to mainstream commercial
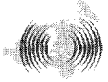
broadcasting in the prototypical private enterprise core system, should also be included here.

Privately-owned Commercial Broadcasting

Increasingly universal, insofar as it is now to be found everywhere outside the monolithic state-core systems (Switzerland being a rare exception), private enterprise broadcasting is nonetheless characterized by important differentiation according to scope, type of service, and ownership. Channel proliferation, globalization and narrowcasting are quickly making the conventional US network model archaic, even as it is only being introduced in many parts of the world. Conventional advertising-based broadcasting is being squeezed by the arrival of subscriber-based and video-on-demand services. 'The response has been the wave of mergers between broadcasters, production companies and owners of distribution networks (cable and satellite companies), and the tendency towards internationalization and the creation of global multimedia conglomerates. At the same time, commercial broadcasting is subject to local regulation which varies greatly from country to country, and in some countries private broadcasters are required to make specific contributions to meeting national objectives in broadcasting. In the emergent and transitional former state core systems, commercial broadcasting is often at the cutting edge of shaping the new systems, especially where it is driven by independent local forces.

Multiple Ownership Services

The hybridization of broadcasting services that has accompanied channel proliferation has also given rise to new partnerships between public broadcasters and private companies. Various speciality services in Canada, or the BBC's new global broadcasting channels in partnership with Pearson PLC are examples of this. In Russia, the conversion of Ostankino into a 51-49% joint venture of the Russian state and private enterprise may become a prototype for the creation of new public broadcasting services in transitional systems (although the extent to which such services can be considered 'public' remains dubious; see Richter, 1995). One

should also include in this category a number of unique examples of multinational services with public service briefs, such as the international Francophone Channel TV5 or the previously-mentioned ARTE.[17]

Community Broadcasting

Often too quickly dismissed as marginal, community broadcasting encompasses the proliferation of autonomous, often highly localized undertakings which have neither a commercial motivation nor the backing of state authorities as principals (while exhibiting characteristics of both private and public broadcasting, sometimes constituting vital alternatives to dominant monopolistic forms). In some situations, community broadcasting enjoys official legal status and is entitled to space in the system – provided it can find the necessary resources.

Community broadcasting generally has little access to conventional funding sources, being of limited interest to advertisers (where regulation does not exclude it from the advertising market), and coming far behind conventional public service broadcasting as a priority for public finding. Nonetheless, community broadcasting is often an appropriate vehicle for combining democratic, grass-roots participation and public policy objectives, notably in the area of development. Autonomous community broadcasting can usually count on broad public support, but this is not always sufficient to enable sustained activity. Since the mid-1980s, community radio and video producers have established themselves globally through organizations such as the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) and the international video association Vidéazimut. Along with free enterprise broadcasting, community broadcasting is probably the most widespread model, found nearly everywhere in a wide variety of forms (see for example, Thede and Ambrosi, 1991; Girard, 1992; Jankowski, Prehn and Stappers, 1992; Lewis, 1993; Rushton, 1993).

State Broadcasting

As opposed to models based in the private sector or in independent public sector institutions, a range of countries still retain close control over broadcasting activities - with a greater or lesser degree of autonomy for actual broadcasting systems. But state broadcasting can refer to a broader range of activities, including national broadcasting in state core systems of the emergent and transitional types described above, and international broadcasting aimed abroad by countries using broadcasting as an instrument of foreign policy, as well as broadcasting in general in countries with monolithic media systems. State broadcasting is not only antithetical to public service broadcasting, it is too easily confused with the idea of state intervention at the legislative or regulatory level in order to provide a public interest framework for broadcasting activity, particularly by critics arguing for the free market model.

Prospective for Public Service Broadcasting

Having reflected on the idea of public service broadcasting, and developed a typology of the main systemic and institutional broadcasting models to be found in the world today, it is now time to clarify our conception of public service broadcasting in the new world context, the role that could be played by a range of broadcasting institutions with public service briefs, and strategies for dealing with various previously identified constraints.

By linking the idea of public broadcasting to the notion of citizenship, we saw that it was necessary to guarantee its delinking from both the political authority of the state and the economic arbitrage of the market. The key to this is not so much a particular structure or finding formula, but a set of objectives and practices, based on democratic principles and the view that broadcasting can be a means of social and cultural development.

Our overview of the world situation enabled us to appreciate the wealth of the experience of actually-existing broadcasting. It also hints that there is no perfect model for public service broadcasting, but some models are closer than others to enabling the fulfilment of public broadcasting ideals.

I would now like to suggest some approaches to a number of contemporary broadcasting issues. These are not 'proposals', which would imply a dose of pragmatism that I prefer to leave to others for the moment, but rather, a way of looking at and thinking about public broadcasting, which suggests measures that, independent of their political feasibility, might actually make sense.

The history of broadcasting everywhere up to and including the present has shown that only through sustained public policy action can the medium begin to fulfil its potential. Historically, a combination of public pressure, enlightened self-interest and a favorable socio-political moment led governments in a number of mainly European countries to create public broadcasting institutions, placing them at arm's length from politics and sheltering them from the effects of commerce. Wherever this model was followed, public broadcasting became the central institution of the democratic public sphere, taking on increasing importance as broadcasting came to occupy more and more public space and time, and playing an important role in the democratization of public life.

Independence from politics and autonomy from the market have become the leading criteria for the definition of public space, but these have become relative values as broadcasting has spread and developed world-wide. No broadcasting organization today can function obliviously to market pressure and if politics is more acutely present in some situations than others, it is never far from the centre. More significantly, public broadcasting has had to face a rising tide of skepticism and political will, and its recent evolution has been characterized by a "struggle over decline, change and renewal" (Tracey, 1994).

At the same time, however, the limitations of market broadcasting, wonderful as a delivery vehicle for popular mass entertainment, have become strikingly evident (Garnham, 1994). The multi-channel environment provides a double-barrelled challenge for public broadcasting, obliging conventional broadcasters to adapt and opening the way to new possibilities (Avery, 1993). In the emerging democracies, particularly, the balancing act is to juggle the structural difficulty of creating new public broadcasting

institutions and the pressures for integration to the global broadcasting market.

Broadcasting was conceived for commercial purposes, but public broadcasting was introduced for purposes of cultural development and democratization. By creating appropriate institutions and developing public policy accordingly, various state authorities placed broadcasting in the public interest. There is no reason why this can not continue to be done today.

For this to occur, every jurisdiction first of all needs to have clear public policy objectives for broadcasting. Next, authorities need to recognize the necessity of independence for broadcasting organizations. Broadcasters, in exchange, need to accept accountability mechanisms which ensure the responsible exercise of their mandates (Blumler and Hoffmann-Riem, 1992). Finally, the broadcasting environment needs to be organized and structured in such a way as to maximize the use that can be made of all the resources flowing through the system.

This would require something akin to the socialization of the broadcasting sector. There is no justification for the removal of surplus value from the lucrative branches of broadcasting activity so long as public interest broadcasting objectives can not be met without public subsidy. Private sector broadcasting should have statutory obligations to contribute to overall systemic objectives, and public broadcasters should be allowed to engage in commercially lucrative activities – without being obliged to compete with themselves in order to make ends meet.

Especially given the new technological context of the multichannel environment, it is possible to organize broadcasting to encompass both market activities and public service, to maximize both consumer choice and citizenship programming. People watch programmes, not channels, and consequently the appropriate point for competition in broadcasting is the point of programme supply, with independent production companies vying for programme contracts from public service broadcasters. Construction and maintenance of technical infrastructure can remain in the market sector but delivery service should be subject to regulated tariffs.

On the other hand, programming should be done by public corporations, in consultation with representative users councils. Suppose that in a given jurisdiction, there were two public broadcasting corporations. Corporation A would have a mandate of doing generalist public interest programming, while Corporation B's mandate would be to seek large audiences. Corporation A's work could be subsidized by the profits generated by Corporation B. Thanks to the availability of multiple channels and video recording and playback technology, the public interest objectives of both citizenship and consumer sovereignty could be met without the information and resource loss brought on by public-private competition. Yet there would be room in such a system for a private sector of regulated carriers and competitive content providers. There would also be room for a variety of public services from the national to the local levels.

Since the early 1980s, broadcasting has been a site of ideological conflict between opposing models of society, a clash of concepts of democracy as well as notions of culture and economics (Rowland and Tracey, 1990). According to one side in this conflict, the general interest demands that there be public institutions mandated to intervene strategically to guarantee quality, diversity and independence in broadcasting that other institutional arrangements can not ensure; the other view holds that regulation and public policy regarding media are neither necessary nor legitimate.

Advocates of the public service approach to broadcasting must demonstrate concretely what institutional arrangements can be expected to meet their objectives and why these are possible only through regulation and public policy (Hoffmann-Riem, 1992). First of all, they must demonstrate what public service broadcasting should do in the new broadcasting environment, and especially, what distinguishes public from private sector broadcasting (see for example, Wolton, 1992a).

Private broadcasting, it may be argued, can also fulfil public service goals. However, it is unlikely that it would bother to try, if it were not pushed in that direction by the competition and example of public broadcasters. This points to one of the most subtle arguments in favour of public broadcasting: public broadcasting sets the overall tone of the market, acts as a catalyst and

serves as an example to all broadcasting services (Hultén, 1995). It also points to the need to conceptualize broadcasting as an eco-logical environment, requiring a healthy diet of balanced offer-ings as well as nurturing and protection (Raboy, 1993). Balance has until recently been guaranteed by the distinction between public and private services, but it is now threatened by two phe-nomena: the systemic disequilibrium shifting strongly towards private commercial services and the effects of commercialization on public services.

This shift can only be counterbalanced by an opposite one: creation of more public service mandated organizations, and removal of the pressure to meet commercial criteria. Overriding this is the legitimization of legally framing broadcasting as a pub-lic service, and consequently, considering the overall broadcasting framework as a public service environment. It is at this level that one should look at political developments such as the Council of Europe resolution referred to at the start of this Chapter. However, one has to go further to foresee a specific role for public service institutions. It is private sector broadcasting that should be con-ceptualized as the complementary form, providing services that public institutions can afford to abandon, not vice versa as at pre-sent. We need a world declaration situating broadcasting as a pub-lic service, comprised of different elements each with specific structural arrangements and purposes, but all dedicated to the improvement of humankind. On the basis of such a global posi-tion, individual political units could legitimately set public policy for broadcasting on their territory.

All broadcasting, to be successful, must be programme-dri-ven. But public broadcasting is policy-motivated while private broadcasting is profit-motivated. Public broadcasting is broad-casting with a purpose: to enhance the quality of public life, empowering individuals and social groups to participate more ful-ly and equitably. Profit-motivated broadcasting is only interested in large audiences. Policy-motivated broadcasting is interested in reaching the largest possible audience the most effectively, in light of the specific objective of the programme concerned.

Broadcasters have their own technical language for measuring this: private broadcasters, they say, are concerned with audience share, the number of people watching or listening at any point in

time, while public broadcasters are concerned with reach, the number of people who tune in over a period of time. There is another characteristic to consider, but it is difficult to measure: the intensity of the experience, and its impact on one's life. Public broadcasting aims to touch people, to move them, to change them. Private broadcasting, by nature, aims to put them in the mood to consume and above all, to consume more of what private broadcasting has to offer.

This may appear to be a crude set of distinctions, but more important to consider is the extent to which existing public broadcasting has integrated the objectives of private broadcasting. Indeed, a common lament in countries where broadcasting is the most developed, is that it is increasingly difficult to distinguish the programmes of public from those of private broadcasting. This is especially the case where both sectors provide advertising. Legislators and policy makers are more to blame than broadcasters for this state of affairs. By obliging public broadcasters to compete with private broadcasters on their terrain, the quest for the mass audience, we have flattened the difference. To the contrary, where private broadcasting has been obliged to compete with public broadcasting on the terrain of quality programming, the overall quality of broadcasting service has been raised.

A fundamental aspect of broadcasting as public service is universality of access. This is increasingly problematic as broadcasting evolves towards a pick-and-choose model analogous to the news-stand, where a variety of services are offered and the consumer selects and pays for his or her choice. In this context, it is essential that public broadcasting provides first of all a generalist programme service available to all and, ideally, free of charge to the user. As we move towards newer and more elaborate signal delivery systems, public authorities will have to ensure that everyone has access to the systems where public service is provided. At the same time, systems will have to be organized so as to avoid creating situations where better, more interesting, more rewarding, and ultimately more empowering services are available on 'higher' broadcast tiers at prices which exclude users on the basis of ability to pay.

This is the basis of the arguments for a public lane on the information highway that public interest groups and non-govern-

ment organizations are putting forth in national and international debates on the new information infrastructures. The issue is larger than broadcasting, but broadcasting is at the cutting edge. Technological convergence is going to require new conceptual and operational models for content-based electronic communication, but regardless of the future of conventional broadcasting in this context, the promotion of the public interest can only come through regulation guaranteeing system access for all those with something to communicate as well as for receivers.

Where is the money to come from? First of all, to the extent that political authorities, with public support, are prepared to make broadcasting a priority, it can come from the collective resources of society itself In Canada, one recent proposal estimated that the shortfall in projected budget cuts to public broadcasting could be met by reducing a projected increase in military spending by 1%. As stated at the outset of this Chapter, it is a question of political will. There is no escaping the necessity of public subsidy for public service, but even so, major portion of the required funding can come from within the system itself. If broadcasting is recognized as a public service, the redistribution of benefits from commercial activity to subsidize the rest is a legitimate measure.

Concluding Remarks

In the context of globalization, and the development of a global infrastructure for information and communication, the question of public broadcasting takes on a new international dimension as well. According to the head of the International Telecommunications Union, in the area of information infrastructures, "the gap between the information rich and the information poor is several orders of magnitude wider than in the area of basic service" (Tarjanne, 1995). In the context of the information highway, all the more reason to emphasize public services, as an equalizer, a leveller of the playing field, and an essential component of communication policies for development (see, for example, *L 'Afrique face aux autoroutes de l'information,* 1995). Alongside the calls for national and global infrastructures emanating from the centre of the world media and economic system, we are starting

49

to hear calls for a "public information infrastructure" geared to the democratic rights of citizens, as well as for a "global sustainable development infrastructure" (Schreibman, Priest and Moore, 1995).

The question of public service broadcasting is at the heart of contemporary media politics (Siune and Truetzschler, 1992). It preoccupies those who would still ascribe a social purpose to mass communication but fear that such a mission has been bypassed in the new world order dominated by unrelenting technological and market forces. But this is the short view. The question of public service broadcasting cries out for new approaches that look beyond the obvious and do not shrink from challenging received wisdom (Gustaffson, 1992). The challenge is not to defend any particular institutional territory, as it is often framed. It is rather how to invent something new, remembering that broadcasting service is first of all a public good.

Notes

1. Summarized, the nine points state that public broadcasting should provide: (i) a common reference point for all members of the public; (ii) a forum for broad public discussion; (iii) impartial news coverage; (iv) pluralistic, innovative and varied programming; (v) programming which is both of wide public interest and attentive to the needs of minorities; (vi) reflection of the different ideas and beliefs in pluri-ethnic and multi-cultural societies; (vii) diversity of national and European cultural heritage; (viii) original productions by independent producers; and (ix) extended viewer and listener choice by offering programmes not provided by the commercial sector (Council of Europe, 1994).
2. See Raboy (1996) which reports on a study undertaken jointly by the World Council for Radio and Television and the Communication Policy Research Laboratory (Department of Communication) of the University of Montreal with the support of UNESCO and the Canadian International Development Agency.
3. The Cable News Network was founded in Atlanta in 1980, and launched its international satellite channel five years later.
4. Writing and critical concern about broadcasting tends to focus on television, and that is reflected here. When we speak about broadcasting in this chapter, however, we are referring to both radio and television.
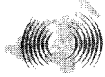
5. The 1 billion television sets in the world in 1992 were distributed roughly as follows: 35% Europe (including former USSR) 32% Asia; 20% North America (and Caribbean); 8% Latin America; 4% Middle East; 1% Africa. Set ownership was rising at a rate of 5% a year, and world spending on television programmes was $80 billion (The Economist, 1994, based on UNESCO figures).

6. The paradoxical by-products of globalization in broadcasting are countless. Here is just to consider: the US public broadcasting service (PBS) has a larger audience share per capita in Canada than in the United States (Paradis, 1994).

7. By cultural development, I mean "the process by which human beings acquire the individual and collective resources necessary to participate in public life" (Raboy, Bernier, Sauvageau and Atkinson, 1994: 292).

8. Conceptualizing the public as citizen also requires a less paternalistic attitude towards the citizen as consumer. John Reith would no doubt recoil at the suggestion of his countryman Alan Peacock that public funding be used "in ways which encourage consumers to widen their experience of cultural activities and which promote freedom of entry into the 'culture market' so that cultural innovators can challenge well-established institutions" (Peacock, 1991: 11). In other words, invest public money at the point of consumption as well as production, in the hope of stimulating demand and letting the market mechanism replace bureaucratic choice. This is not likely to enamour the public broadcasters – but it could have a salutary effect on public broadcasting.

9. The UK still provides in many respects the most stimulating model of this type, in the system's adaptiveness to new public service needs, a comprehensive funding formula, evident public support, and resistance to the domineering tendencies of various government agendas, be they economic or political.

10. There is deliberately both a value judgement and an element of prognosis in our characterization of these systems as residual.

11. The perils of such systems of classification become evident, however, as soon as one studies specific cases. India is an example which defies simple classification because of the particular historical role of the national broadcaster Doordarshan. Some might wish to debate whether India's should be considered a public service or a state broadcasting core system and if the latter, whether it should be considered 'emerging' or 'residual'. For that matter, there is often a fine line between public service and state broadcasting in every country, particularly in time of political crisis, and it could be argued that the ultimate legal authority of the state over broadcasting extends to the private enterprise core systems as well. Suffice it to say that a typology may be useful for general analytical purposes, but detailed examination of cases is bound to be more revealing.

12. See Kleinwachter (1995). KIeinwachter describes an ideal "participatory model" which Central and East European media activists sought to implement in the period immediately following the events of 1989. Such a

model would have combined US First Amendment freedom of expression rights; the British concept of broadcasting as public service; Germany's constitutional legal guarantees of broadcasting freedom; France's protection of national culture and language; international notions of the right to communicate; Dutch pluralism; Scandinavian approaches to local broadcasting and state subsidies without government control; and Luxembourgian economic liberalism. The evolution of broadcasting in these countries has taken a less idealistic path, however, which Kleinwachter breaks into four stages: (1) awakening to the new media freedoms; (2) disillusionment; (3) political struggles over control of media, especially national television; and finally, the present stage, (4) the building of new institutions, public and private, based on law, independent of government control, competing under market conditions, and seeking to integrate into translational European broadcasting frameworks and structures. Varying from one country to the next, the basic thrust is the replacement of monopolistic state-owned, party-controlled systems with independent ones but, in general, "... the new broadcasting systems in the former East bloc, confronted with the realities of daily life, now have the choice between domestic governmental control and foreign commercial control" (KIeinwachter, 1995: 44).

13. In Europe, it is also possible to identify an international (or regional in global terms) broadcasting system, to the extent that the European Union seeks to influence broadcasting development, but broadcasting is still legally constituted and regulated nationally by each member state, albeit with respect to Union regulations (see Venturelli, 1994).

14. See the German Constitutional Court decision of February 1994, ruling that the funding of public broadcasting should be constitutionally guaranteed and insulated from the variable humour of political decision-making. The Court bases its argument for enshrining the financial independence of public service broadcasting in law on the position that private broadcasting alone can not fulfil the public service mission of broadcasting (Eberle, 1994).

15. See Syvertsen (1992). In Scandinavia particularly, the broadcasting debate is tied to the general critique of the welfare state bureaucracy. See Hultén, 1992; Prehn and Jensen, 1993; Sepstrup, 1993.

16. Regarding this 'second channel' model, see Chaniac and Jézéquel (1993). Generally, the legitimating logic of this type of channel is audience reach rather than share. The issue of mainstream generalist versus specialized 'cultural' programming is of considerable polemical debate among advocates of public service broadcasting in some countries; see for example, the exchange between Dominique Wolton (1992b) and Jerôme Clément (1992) in Le Monde on the occasion of the launching of ARTE.

17. Interestingly, one finds in this category examples of national, international, and global broadcasting services. While the definition of national service is obvious enough, we can consider an 'international' service to be one based on participation by at least two countries, and a 'global' service as a broadcast undertaking emanating from a single centre and aimed at a world-wide audience.

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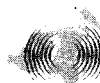
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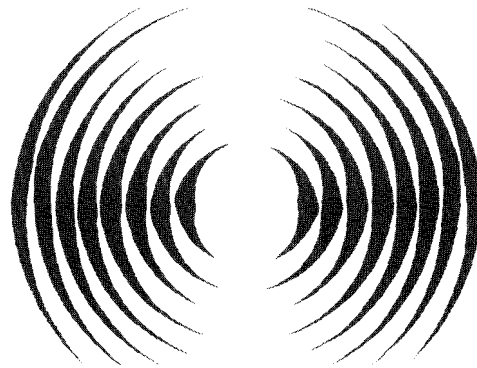
CHAPTER 2 Why Public Broadcasting?

Pierre Juneau
President
World Radio and Television Council
Montréal, Québec, Canada
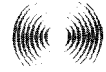
Introduction

The renowned novelist and member of l'Académie française, Jean d'Ormesson, wrote that the two most important institutions that can contribute to the broad cultural development of his country were education and television. By cultural development he meant not only the arts but generally the development of mental and imaginative faculties that enable people to give higher meaning to their lives and to society.

When broadcasting - that is radio - was invented in the 1920's, many leaders of our societies marvelled at its promises and at what this extraordinary instrument could do for the culture, education and information of the people. Today, the rhetoric often remains, and it now includes television, but the will to make the proper use of these technologies has weakened. Policy makers in all countries have allowed radio and television to often become trivial and shallow and more of a marketing vehicle. Having started in North America, this development has spread quickly to European broadcasting and is reaching the rest of the world. Developing countries will not be spared, despite their obvious need for a kind of broadcasting that pays attention to the cultural, social, educational and economic needs of people.

In developing countries, as elsewhere in the world, television viewers are naturally entitled to some entertainment from the small screen; the role that can be played by comedy or drama in expressing culture and identity, together with peoples' hopes and sorrows, is well known. Nevertheless, should we not be concerned about the probability that such extraordinary instruments of communication might be completely dominated by industries catering to audiences not as citizens but as mere consumers to be delivered to the business of advertising?

According to author Dominique Wolton, Eastern Europe, for example, is also "ready to take the plunge into the alluring world of commercial television and deregulation, even though the price to be paid for the delights of market-driven broadcasting will be certain loss of cultural identity – along with the attendant risks of cultural backlash."

The communications landscape has undergone obvious changes and change will continue. More and more television services are becoming available. In the liberal democracies, governments and regulatory bodies find they have little room to manoeuvre. They are faced with a host of socio-economic pressures in favour of a greater number of television channels; demand from audiences for access to the wonders of new technologies; competitive pressures from neighboring countries that have been faster off the mark with new services; pressures as well from business interests that want to develop these new services and from advertisers who are always on the lookout for new ways of delivering their messages.

A further factor to consider is the great fascination audio-visual activities have held for young people over the last several decades. This too has played a part in the proliferation of television services around the world. All these social pressures are making their effects felt. The multichannel television universe is made possible in part by many technological developments - Hertzian waves, co-axial cable, fibre optics, satellites, digitalization and the compression of signals. The increase in the number of channels will inevitably lead to even greater competition among broadcasters for the attention of viewers.

In North America and in countries of Western Europe, people spend on average around three hours every day watching television or listening to radio. Many don't watch at all, others watch or listen a lot more. Business organizations spend billions of dollars to reach these audiences with their commercial messages. As to politicians, they often think, rightly or wrongly, that radio and television are the key to their success or the cause of their failure.

If television and radio attract so much attention, why is it that we have not used these media more actively, more imaginatively for educational, cultural and social development? At the advent of broadcasting in the early 1920's, prime ministers, presidents
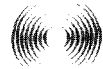
and many political leaders were immensely excited by the potential of these new media for the betterment of society. In Canada, Prime Minister R. B. Bennett, in a speech to the House of Commons on May 18, 1932 noted:

> *In this stage of our national development, we have problems peculiar to ourselves and we must reach a solution of them through the employment of all available means. The radio has a place in the solution of all those problemes. It becomes, then, the duty of parliament to safeguard it in such a way that its fullest benefits may be assured to the people as a whole.*

In the United States, Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce - and later a Republican President - said in a statement to a House Committee in 1924:

> *Radio communication is not to be considered as merely a business carried on for a private gain, for private advertisement or for entertainment of the curious. It is a public concern impressed with the public trust and to be considered primarily from the standpoint of public interest to the same extent and upon the basis of the same general principles as our other public utilities.*

In the UK, Lord John Reith, the first Director-General of the BBC remarked: "To have exploited so great a scientific invention for the purpose and pursuit of entertainment alone would have been a prostitution of its powers and an insult to the character and intelligence of the public."

Certainly, we should not condemn all of contemporary broadcasting but there is no doubt that the fear of people like Bennett, Hoover, Lord Reith and others, namely, that commercial advertising might drag broadcasting more in the direction of shallow amusement and triviality than in the direction of social and cultural development was well founded.

Broadcasting and Commercial Advertising

As years went by, the development of broadcasting in North America and in Western Europe was indeed driven - barring very few exceptions - by the logic of the advertising business and the entertainment industry, the 'fun industry'. In the ratings game that rigorously controls that industry, success and failure are

measured not in days, weeks or months, but in terms of minutes and even seconds. And these successes and failures translate into revenues amounting to millions if not billions of dollars.

In a strictly commercial, competitive system, programmes that lower ratings are out. What remains is entertainment formulas with a proven ability to draw large audiences. Moreover, an integral part of this approach is the systematic use of violence and the ruthless suppression of programmes which demand too much concentration from the viewer or dampen the pace of the action.

A further trend is the extent to which even public television broadcasters often feel obliged - or are, in fact, compelled by financial constraints - to compete with private sector television. In effect, whether they are large or small, they have to deal with a difficult quandary. They make use of a medium that has traditionally addressed mass audiences. This means rivalling with commercial broadcasters, who, as just noted, have to deliver the largest possible audiences to their advertisers, from quarter hour to quarter hour. If, on the one hand, their audience is too small, political authorities may consider them to be an elitist luxury. If, on the other hand, they try to expand their audience by resorting to more lightweight programmes like those offered by private competition, then people question the purpose they served.

Therefore, when one looks at the nature of television in so-called Western countries, or one listens to most of radio, it is normal to wonder whether these media can really serve development in developing countries. It is not surprising that people who, by their occupation, have to deal with very concrete issues of society like housing, unemployment, poverty, health, migrations and violence do not put broadcasting at the top of public priorities.

However, the consequence of this chain of circumstances is that developing countries in the South or in the East, countries that are emerging from totalitarian regimes, may not benefit from media systems dedicated to the imparting of knowledge, to the understanding of the problems of their society and of their future. Very often, through a sort of dumping process, they are more likely to inherit the by-products of our Northern 'fun industry'.

We are facing a problem here that obviously applies not only to the role of broadcasting as an instrument of development for poorer countries but to its role in richer societies as well.

In a speech to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in February 1992, Vaclav Havel, the President of the Czech Republic, was describing what he considers to be some of the greatest problems of civilization. After referring to some of the key environmental contemporary issues, he went on to list "the dramatically widening gap between the rich North and the poor South, the danger of famine, the depletion of the biosphere and the mineral resources of the planet" and "the expansion of commercial television culture" as part of what he calls "the general threat to mankind."

If this appears to be a too pessimistic or exaggerated perception, it may be because the communications environment that has developed around us is so overwhelming that we have become accustomed to it and that we find it difficult even to imagine any other set of circumstances. Perhaps we have lost the capacity to react and therefore we need philosophers and dramatists like Havel to alert us to the drama of our world.

The misgivings concerning the perception of frivolity or triviality that our radio and television programming often projects may well be founded, but why must we accept this state of affairs as a basis for national or world policy? Why can't we react like those who marvelled at the potential of broadcasting technology at the outset, and why can't we try to imagine how it could be used?

Why not use the media much more imaginatively so that, in developing countries, they can help people to understand the problems and possibilities of their own societies?

Isn't democracy the constant and progressive improvement in the level of participation by all citizens in the decisions affecting their lives? Democracy is not only the greater ability of professionals – politicians, professors, accountants, engineers, officials, artists or thinkers – to debate and manage the affairs of the community. This is why the so-called mass media which are accessible to ordinary people and which can address society as a whole can be so strategic, provided they are used for the benefit of citizens and not only as a vehicle to reach potential consumers.

There is a great deal of talk and excitement about the accelerating pace of technological development in electronic communications. The constant reference to the information highway has become a somewhat fastidious cliché carried by an ubiquitous bandwagon. At the same time as so many are waving their hands on that bandwagon, can anyone seriously claim that there is a great improvement in the content of the media that the mass of the people watch and listen – these ordinary people who are the basis of democracy?

There is - and there will continue to be - a remarkable improvement in the communication technology that serves business, industry, government and academia. But there is hardly any improvement in the way we use the 'community media' – that is radio and television. Will we in fact have sophisticated information highways for business, government and academia, and fun and games for the majority of people – 'for the masses' as the phrase used to go?

Public Service Broadcasting and Cultural Diversity

A public service approach to television and radio, as opposed to a strictly commercial approach, would also contribute to cultural diversity in our world.

"A diversification among human communities," said A. N. Whitehead, in Science and the Modern World, "is essential for the provision of the incentive and material for the odyssey of the human spirit. Other nations of different habits are not enemies: they are godsends. Men require of their neighbors something sufficiently akin to be understood, something sufficiently different to provoke attention, and something great enough to command admiration". T. S. Eliot (1948) has observed:

> When we consider what I call the satellite culture, we find two reasons against consenting to its complete absorption into the stronger culture. The first objection is one so profound that it must simply be accepted: it is the instinct of every living thing to persist in its own being... It would be no gain whatever for English culture, for the Welsh, Scots and Irish to become indistinguishablefrom Englishmen. What would happen, of cow-se, is that we should all become indistinguishable fea-

tureless "Britons; at a lower level of culture than that of any of the separate regions.

Depending on the circumstances and the person who speaks, the word 'culture' may mean the arts or the way people behave, the way they cook or eat, or it may refer to intellectual property or entertainment. And the phrase 'cultural industries' is now frequently used, meaning film, television, pre-recorded entertainment, periodicals, etc.

In his *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, T. S. Eliot says that culture, "...includes all the characteristic activities and interests of a people: Derby Day, Henley Regatta, Cowes, the twelfth of August, a cup final, the dog races, the pin table, the dart board, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut into sections, beetroot in vinegar, nineteenth-century Gothic churches and the music of Elgar."

While this is a wonderful definition, it is more practical when we speak of public policies to adopt a somewhat more focused definition. One that refers to formalized expression and interpretations of nature, of human behaviour or human hopes or goals. We may say therefore that culture is what a country says to itself, and about itself to others, whatever the technique of expression may be: theatre, film and television, novels, recorded entertainment, painting, architecture or ballet.

It is of course what makes a people interesting, worthy of attention by the rest of the world. It is how the people – the individual members - of a country express their dreams and hopes, and how they talk about their past and their future. It is what they care about. Like life itself it is infinitely diverse and constantly evolving. The identity of a country is of course expressed by the style and works of individuals. Not by the definitions of government. It is the result of a process not of definitions. That is why in democracies governments are expected to establish only broad frameworks for the facilitation of cultural expression by the people. They must not get involved in content or style.

Culture is, of course, the conservation and appreciation of past accomplishments, but it is also innovation, creation. It is what makes one nation feel equal to another, not in richness perhaps, but in dignity. It is sovereignty of the mind. Indeed, culture

lies at the very heart of political sovereignty. There can be no political sovereignty, therefore no authority over our own lives, our own future, without cultural autonomy and vitality.

Some believe that market forces will bring about the best possible broadcast service for the population. We, in the World Radio and Television Council, believe that broadcasting is a matter of social interest like education and that public policies and institutions are necessary for the benefit of citizens and society. And we believe that this can be achieved without compromising independence and freedom of speech.

Such an attitude is sometimes interpreted as anti-American. It is not. American culture is something we should seek, not fear. Just as we should be curious about Chinese, African, Spanish, Japanese, German, French or Arab culture. In our view, there is a broader more fundamental issue than the threat of American "culture" which policy makers should be facing – namely what should be the role of television in our midst.

Most countries in the world have taken the position, when radio was established and later when television was developed, that these media would be used for education, culture, information, entertainment and enlightenment. Countries have not always pursued these objectives with consistency, commitment or ability. Moreover, present technological and industrial developments pose tremendous challenges for them as to how these original purposes should be achieved. But the important point was and remains for countries to establish fundamental policies. How to achieve chosen policy is indeed a difficult matter, but it becomes enormously more complicated if the basic choices are not clear.

I have sometimes described a broadcasting system which associates broadcasting entirely to marketing and industry as an unfortunate error which has caused grave cultural deprivation not only to the U.S. but also to the rest of the world. It creates a cause for concern for the development of broadcasting everywhere and particularly in those countries where television may switch from being an instrument of political control and boredom to become only a medium of merchandising and commercialized entertainment.

The basic issue therefore is whether broadcasting will be con-

sidered mainly as an industry turning out a commercial "product" and associated totally with marketing. Or will it be first of all an institution to permit access to culture, knowledge and enlightened entertainment for all the people? In other words, should broadcasting be assimilated to education and other public services or strictly to business?

Moreover, is culture a value that should be accessible to all people, like education, or should it remain a luxury available for those who can afford it? And in this respect what use should we make of these enormously potent instruments called radio and television?

There are considerable efforts by the U.S. entertainment industry to combat the kind of cultural policies described here. This, for sure, has nothing to do with a defence of American culture, and even less with a greater diversity of cultural choices in the world. It has everything to do with trade, industry and profits. Interestingly, I have never heard an American writer complaining that his or her books are not allowed in countries like Canada or a filmmaker deploring that his or her films are not seen in Europe.

Cultural or broadcasting policies should not be intended to preclude the entry of the works of writers, composers, producers and actors from other parts of the world, including the U.S. And generally they do not. They should be intended to ensure that people of talent in any particular country will be able to find audiences for their works. It is clear that a strictly commercial approach to television - even in large and rich markets - is not reconcilable with cultural goals. Such an approach is even more unrealistic in smaller countries and in most countries of the world.

As a consequence, the most basic element of broadcasting policy in our view is the maintenance, development and support of strong and politically independent public institutions. The history of public radio and public television over the last *50* or *60* years has revealed the many pitfalls that such institutions can fall into, the many weaknesses they can develop or the many faults they can commit. It is wiser, however, to find the way to improve these institutions than to change the system.

The private sector in television should not, of course, be exempted from all social and cultural responsibilities. If the implementation of such responsibilities requires some fiscal incentives

or direct assistance similar to the techniques that have been applied in the film industry, then they should be considered.

Concluding Remarks

Technological developments, and the so-called information highway, will allow the creation of a much larger number of audiovisual channels – call them pay-television, pay-per-view or interactive television. One unfortunate result will be greater and greater competition and aggressive commercialism. Currently, there is a great deal of concern about violence on film and television. There is a chance that in a more commercially competitive context there will be more violence, not less.

Countries will need to insist more on the positive, that is on a type of radio and television that is based on the idea of public service. Marketing is fine. We need more trade, more economic activity. But we also need more and better education, more training, more enlightenment, more understanding of what our world is all about. We need it for the public at large because in a democracy it is the public at large that is entitled, and fortunately sometimes empowered, to participate in our basic political decisions.

There is hardly any task more important in the broad area of culture than rethinking the role that radio and television could play concerning education, citizenship, democratic values and the enlightenment of our societies and their people.

Where both imagination and statesmanship are needed is in the area where profits cannot be the motivation, that is: providing all the people, in developed as well as in developing parts of the world, with the material for the mind, and the imagination, that are needed to make them free citizens and inspired human beings.

Reference

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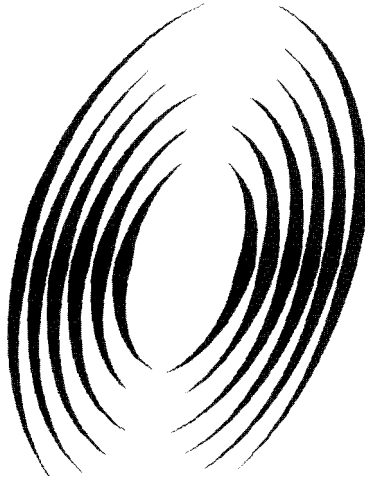
CHAPTER 3 Global Satellite
Broadcasting Services:
Educational and
Cultural Contribution

Anura Goonesekera
Asian Mass Communication Research
and Information Centre
Singapore

Introduction

This chapter provides a general overview and analysis of the content and orientation of satellite broadcasting services with special reference to the Asian region. It also examines the potential and challenges offered for promoting cultural and educational services and proposes ways of encouraging such services. In regard to the educational contribution of satellite broadcasting, we will examine the potential for both formal instructions and non-formal education. Cultural contributions will be examined in terms of the contents and the sources of programmes and their perceived value as cultural products.

The overarching theoretical framework would be that of multiculturalism. Basically, this refers to the claims of different collectivities for rights and cultural identities in a situation of multiple centers of values and traditions. Satellite broadcasting has hurled groups with different historical and cultural experiences into a common mediated experience of contemporary reality. In this constructed reality the centre has shifted from the individual nation states to points outside of such states. An effort to cope with this shift lies at the heart of the issues facing both the producing and recipient countries of satellite broadcasting services.

The present revolution in satellite broadcasting services is a result of a confluence of technological advances in three fields, namely computing, telecommunications and broadcasting. Historically, these three sectors evolved independently and separately, but today, due to developments in digitization, they are converging. The technical convergence of computing and telecommunications has created the sector of information technology (IT) which has developed rapidly in recent times. The IT sector comprising telecommunications software development,

computing and electronic networking is supported by substantial investments in research and development. Corresponding institutional and policy changes have also been anticipated reasonably well. However, the related process of convergence in the broadcasting sector, that is between telecommunications and broadcasting, has not progressed on the same level. This has led to a degree of confusion.

In the IT sector, emphasis is on liberalization and deregulation, providing private corporations with freedom to invest in IT related technologies such as telecommunication networks. We believe it is not incorrect to say that this economic logic determines the IT policies in many Asian countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand, where local and foreign investors are encouraged to develop telecommunication services. In the case of satellite broadcasting, on the other hand, another logic of a non-economic type seems to prevail. In this area, public policy seems to be governed by political concerns to safeguard a public sphere of pluralism and national sovereignty. This has, at times, led to confrontations between multinational media organizations engaged in commercial satellite broadcasting, and national governments. The recent fiasco relating to a Star Television programme, beamed to India, in which Mahatma Gandhi was referred to as a Baniya bastard, illustrates the tension that exists between public policy of governments and the commercial interests of transnational broadcasters operating outside the borders of recipient countries. The Gandhi fiasco has led to the issue of an open warrant in India for the arrest of Rupert Murdoch and some others working for Star TV! *(The Independent,* 6 July 1995).

Furthermore, educational and cultural contributions of satellite broadcasting need to be examined in the economic, social and political contexts in which such broadcasting has to take place. Very generally the contexts are two-fold. On the one side, we get the phenomenon of commodification of broadcasting. Satellite broadcasting is considered as a market operation, where cultural products are looked upon as commodities which can bring in profits to the investors only in so far as they appeal to a mass market. On the other side, we see politicization, which regards foreign satellite broadcasts as an intrusion on the sovereignty of the nation

state. This most pronounced in the recipient countries where the political regimes sometime see these broadcasts as threats to the stability of their countries. In its most extreme articulation these services are seen as enforced cultural imperialism from the skies. The political regimes take preventive steps to combat this, the most common so far being the restriction of the use of satellite dishes, thereby controlling their citizens from having direct access to satellite programmes. The issues of satellite broadcasting in such cases get politicized. It is a question of political power of national governments which see satellite broadcasting as being a potentially dangerous external interference. The issues relating to the educational and cultural contribution of satellite broadcasting can become closely linked with the more volatile issues of commodification of culture and politicization of broadcasting.

Dominance of Western programmes

One of the most common observations regarding the cultural influence of satellite communication in Asia is that of the dominance of western programmes and their irresistible seduction of indigenous Asian audiences away from their traditional cultural values (Yeap, 1994). This is borne out by the high volume of programmes offered by foreign countries particularly the U.S. For instance, Sen (1993) has observed that in 1990 the U.S. mass media products accounted for 75% of broadcast and basic cable television revenues and 85% pay television revenues world-wide. In addition, 55% of all theatrical film rentals and 55% of home video billings world wide are from U.S. products, and American records and tapes account for half of the global recording revenues. It is also estimated that about 20% of the total 700 satellite transponders in the Asia Pacific region are being used for television transmission. The proportion is expected to increase considerably in the future as the region accounts for two-thirds of the world's potential television viewers. Table 1 shows the large number of geo-stationary satellites in operation or being planned to be launched in the Asia-Pacific region.

Table 1: Geostationary Satellite in the Asia-Pacific Region

Country	No. of Satellites	Launch Dates	Coverage
Australia	4	1985, 87, 92, 94	Australia/NZ, PNG
Hong Kong	4	1990, 94(2), 96	Regional
India	5	1990, 92, 93, 95 TBD*	Indian sub-continent
Indonesia	6	1983, 87, 90, 92, 95, 96	Regional
Japan	13	1988(2), 89, 90, 90(2), 91, 92(2), 94, 95(2), 97	Japan/ International beam
Korea	2	1995	Korea
Malaysia	1	1995	S.E. Asia
P. R. of China	4	1988, 90, 94, 95	S.E. Asia
Thailand	2	1993, 94	ASEAN
Tonga	8	1983, 94, 96(2) 97, TBD(2)	Regional

*TBD = to be decided
Source: *Asian Communications*, June 1994

However, the cultural influence of programmes cannot be measured purely in terms of the volume of programmes available. What is more crucial is the percentage of available programmes actually viewed by television audiences. Some of the early studies of globalization of broadcasting were investigations of the global flow of television programmes (Nordenstreng and Varis, 1974; Varis, 1985). These studies concentrated on the supply of foreign programme fare in national broadcasts. For instance, the studies analyzed the proportion of imported material in the output of national channels and the countries from which such material was imported. They concluded that "the media in developing countries take a high percentage of their cultural and entertainment content from a few developed countries, and chiefly from a few large producers of those countries. The flow in the other direction is a mere trickle by comparison" (MacBride, 1980:63). As

Sepstrup and Goonasekera (1994) point out, there was no com-
mon conceptual framework in these early studies. They were
done on the assumption that international television flow among
countries have cultural and economic effects in specific regions or
on specific group of viewers. "Together with general media impe-
rialism theories, this assumption has been the only 'theory'
underlying data gathering so that no common conceptual frame-
work has been available for such studies" (Sepstrup and
Goonasekera, 1994:12).

The early studies concentrated on the supply of foreign pro-
grammes in national media. It was presumed that this supply
would lead to consumption of such programmes. Separate data
on the actual consumption of foreign programmes were not
examined systematically until recently. Supply of foreign pro-
gramme material is only one level (the first level) in the process of
acculturation of transnational media. It is a necessary but not suf-
ficient condition to generate cultural influences in the recipient
countries. There are other steps as shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Levels of Translational Flow of TV Material

	Independent Variable		Dependent Variable
1.	International flow of TV programmes	→	Transnationalization of TV supply
2.	Transnationalization of total supply	→	Transnationalization of consumption
3.	Transnationalization of total consumption	→	Potential cultural effects

(See Sepstrup and Goonasekera (1994), for an application of this model
in selected European and Asian countries)

According to this theoretical model, an understanding of the
educational and cultural contributions of global television will
require an analysis of both supply of global television material to
a country as well as its actual consumption by various groups in
that country. It recognizes that while supply of material is a pre-
condition for the consumption of such material, these have to be

treated as two different variables in order to understand the cultural effects on the recipient countries.

In 1990, AMIC, with assistance from UNESCO, launched a study of television programme supply and consumption in four Asia-Pacific countries, namely Australia, India, Philippines and Republic of Korea (Sepstrup and Goonasekera, 1994). The study examined foreign programme content available for viewers from three sources, i.e. foreign programme in national broadcasts; bilateral spill-over of national broadcasts to neighboring countries; and global satellite transmission such as CNN and Star TV It took sample data for a period of two weeks. Table 2 (see next page) gives the share of imported programmes on total national television programming supply by programme category for the four countries studied.

It is clear that the total supply of foreign programmes vary greatly from country to country. In Australia, it comprised 54.2% whereas in India it was 8.3%. It appeared that drama and movies are a favourite programme category in all countries except India, where sports programmes appear to comprise the bulk of foreign programmes. It must, however, be said that at the time the Indian sample was selected, international test cricket matches were being played by the Indians and this perhaps account for the dominance of sports programmes in this sample.

In terms of consumption, drama/movies appear to be the most popular general programme category. In Australia and Philippines, foreign programmes occupy a predominant position with 75.3% and 46.3% respectively. In Korea, it is only 19.6% and in India, it is only 0.2%. However, the situation in India has dramatically changed since 1992 when Star TV became freely available. In September 1992, it was estimated that Star TV had penetrated 3.7% of total households on an all-India basis, 5% in urban areas and 10 to 20% in major cities (Karnik, 1993). Obviously, the potential for exposure of Indians to foreign programmes is now very much greater than when this study was done in 1991.

Table 2: Share of Imported Programmes in Total National Television Programme Supply by Programme Category

Programme Category	Australia M*	%	India M	%	Philippines M	%	Korea M	%
1. Drama/ movies	2167.7	36.2	20.2	2.6	688.9	14.4	171.8	4.6
2. Light entertainment	434.8	7.3	0.0	0.0	404.3	8.4	71.0	1.9
3. Music	29.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	84.0	1.8	0.0	0.0
4. Sports	113.6	1.9	35.7	4.5	21.8	0.4	5.0	0.1
5. News	178.5	3.0	0.0	0.0	31.1	0.6	20.1	0.5
6. Information	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.3	158.6	3.3	8.0	0.2
7. Arts	22.7	0.4	0.0	0.0	46.6	0.9	59.0	1.6
8. Education	292.0	4.9	7.1	0.9	9.3	0.2	0.0	0.0
9. Religious	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	116.6	2.4	0.0	0.0
10. Others	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	3245.0	54.2	65.0	8.3	1555.0	32.7	335.0	8.9

M* = minutes

Source: Sepstrup and Goonesekera (1994), *TV Transnationalization: Europe and Asia*

Table 3 gives the co-efficient of utilization of programmes provided by national television. The objective of this table is to explore what percentage of the total programmes available to a viewer is actually viewed by him or her.

Table 3: Coefficients of utilization of national programming supply

Origin	Australia %	India %	Philippines %	Korea %
Domestic	4.4	12.0	1.9	3.9
Foreign	2.1	3.1	2.6	5.4
Total supply	3.2	11.3	2.2	4.0

Source: Sepstrup and Goonesekera (1994), *TV Transnationalization: Europe and Asia*

In Australia, 4.4% of domestic and 2.l% of the foreign programme broadcasting times were actually consumed by the viewers. The data show that very few of the available telecasts were actually viewed, hence the great competition to attract audiences. For Korea and Philippines, there is a higher percentage of use of foreign programmes than of domestic ones.

In terms of the cultural influences of global satellite broadcasting, an important implication of this finding is that such influences may not be as vast as imagined. It is not what is available but what is viewed which is important in determining cultural influences. And the percentage of what is viewed appears to be very small, and viewing is done very selectively by audiences. No doubt that the satellite broadcasting scene in Asia has changed considerably since 1990 when data for this study were collected. Therefore, the conclusion of the study has to be taken cautiously. What is important is the need to conduct systematic research on a continuing basis in order to understand the cultural influence of satellite broadcasting.

Another common apprehension expressed by critics of foreign programme fare is that local producers would imitate foreign programmes thereby creating clones of dubious cultural value. It is argued that they would bring about a homogenization of programme formats where programmes begin to look so alike as to be indistinguishable but for the artists or the language. Local creativity might be killed. However, the cloning effect is just one extreme form of adaptation or indigenization of programme. The influence of foreign programmes in shaping programme formats in recipient countries is more subtle and varied. As argued by Lee (1991), the absorption and indigenization of foreign cultural products can vary depending on the extent to which they absorb the form and content of foreign cultures.

There can be as many as four patterns of such absorption. Lee dubs them (i) a Parrot Pattern or wholesale adoption of foreign format (the cloning effect); (ii) Amoeba Pattern which keeps the content but not the form (e.g.. game shows); (iii) Corral Pattern which keeps the form but change the content (e.g.. foreign melodies with local lyrics); and (iv) Butterfly Pattern which absorbs and indigenizes foreign culture to an extent that one can hardly distinguish the foreign from the indigenous. For instance, it is said that great

movie directors such as Satyajit Ray of India brought about a unique confluence between the best techniques in the European cinema with his knowledge of the cultural nuances of India. The form of absorption and indigenization is influenced by many factors such as the demands of audiences, relative strength and weaknesses of local and foreign production, competition and stimulation from other cultures, demographic changes, dedication of the artists and government policies (Lee, 1991:52).

With the proliferation of satellite broadcasting, however, the control that national governments had in deciding what is to be broadcast has become weak. This is especially so in those countries where the use of dish antennae are not banned or are not controlled as is the case in India (see Table 4).

Table 4: Private Dish Ownership

Unrestricted	Permitted	Restricted
Australia	Bangladesh	China
Hong Kong	India	Malaysia
Korea	Myanmar	Singapore
Taiwan	Philippines	

Source: *Asia-Pacific Broadcasting*, February 1994

According to Karnik (1993), it was the live coverage of the Gulf war by CNN in early 1991 that marked the real beginning of translational satellite broadcasting (TNSB) in India. When this impact began to wane, Star TV, with its four English channel broadcasts, came up giving a fillip to TNSB. In addition, ATN which is uplinked from Moscow using a Russian satellite, and Zee TV from Hong Kong are also aimed at Indian audiences (Karnik, 1993). Indian cable television companies have extended the reach of TNSB programmes by retransmitting these through their cable networks. In fact, cable is the primary means of transmitting TNSB programmes in India because dish antennae are still too expensive to be owned by many Indians. One clear result of the advent of TNSB is the drop in the viewership of Doordarshan programmes which earlier enjoyed virtual monopoly of television

transmission in India. Doordarshan's popular programmes such as Mahabharat crossed 90% television viewership rating. Today, the rating for the most popular programme, the Hindi film, is down to 49% and the most popular serial "Jungle Book" to 36% (Karnik, 1993). There are not many reliable statistics regarding the viewership of TNSB in India. A sample survey done in Ahmedabad and Bombay indicates that English language channels have smaller viewership with 2% for MTV in Ahmedabad and 14% for STAR Plus in Bombay.

However, as Karnik (1993) observes, it is important to note that the cultural influence caused by TNSB is not limited only to the small percentage of the population who have access to these programmes. Apart from the "cloning effect" through the imitations of foreign popular programmes by local producers, there is also "Sanskritization" effect or emulation by those who are "lower" in the social/economic hierarchy of the practices of those who are higher on the social order as a means of climbing up the social ladder.

In contrast to India, in Japan, foreign television programmes have not fared particularly well except in the early years of Japanese television (from late 1950s to mid 1960) when quite a few American social drama programmes were broadcast on prime time and enjoyed very high ratings (Hagiwara, 1993). Since the mid-1960s, imported programmes have gradually lost popularity, the main reason being probably the strengthening of Japanese television industry which was facilitated by the growing Japanese economy. The ownership of television sets by the rural population was also an important factor for the drop in ratings of imported programmes. The rural people had a strong preference for domestic programmes, often complaining that western dramas were too complicated or confusing (Ito, 1989).

Use of Satellite Broadcasting for Education

While the major thrust of global satellite programmes in Asia has been the provision of entertainment and global news, there has been noteworthy international experiments in the use of the satellite medium for formal and non-formal educational and instructional purposes. Two such efforts are mentioned here.

The first is the efforts of the Pan Pacific Educational and Communication Experiments by Satellite (PEACESAT). The basic objectives of the project were to (i) increase the quality and capacity of educational institutions in the Pacific by facilitating the sharing of scarce resources and extending the availability of education to remote areas; (ii) improve professional services in sparsely populated areas through telecommunication support; and (iii) assist in applying the potential of satellite technology to the solution of domestic social problems and peaceful world development (King and Sanderson, 1983). Among the various activities carried out under this project was a graduate course of study on Communication and the Future. The programme linked students via satellite, in Honolulu, Wellington, Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, Niue Islands, Fiji and New Caledonia. Most of the students taking part were surprised at the amount of material coming forward from the fields that were not obvious from the first perusal of the matter. There was honesty in the interchange. that cut through cultural barriers. Overall the course was considered a success.

The other project is the Network College of Communication in the Pacific (NCCP) which is co-ordinated by the Department of Communication, University of Hawaii and the East-West Centre. NCCP is an Association of Communication Research Institutes and University Departments teaching post-graduate level courses in communication in the Asia-Pacific region. The objectives are to facilitate collaborative communication research in this region, develop a body of knowledge with specific Asia-Pacific content, strengthen post-graduate instruction by satellite linked technology and expand on-line knowledge throughout the region. [1]

While these two projects are international in that their basic aim is to link academic/research institutions in different countries, Asia has also seen several national satellite broadcasting projects in individual countries, that had promotion of education as one of their primary objectives. Two such projects are described here. These are the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) in India and the Palapa Satellite Project in Indonesia. Both these projects have become important landmarks in the application of satellite technology to distance education in Asia.

The SITE experiment in India began in 1975 with the use of US ATS-6 satellite. Specially designed programmes were telecast to 2,330 villages spread over six states[2] (Rajan, 1987). The educational content was not curriculum based. Most of these programmes were made in Hindi and dubbed into regional languages. Each capsule was about 22 minutes long and was the result of intensive workshops involving educationists, television producers and scientists. Among the benefits of SITE were the following: improved school attendance; increased children's vocabulary; more information sought by children from other sources such as books. Among adults it was observed that: illiterate women gained new knowledge; awareness of events in the country increased; illiteracy no longer posed serious barrier to the gain of new knowledge; levels in health and hygiene raised; practices in animal husbandry and farming improved. SITE was a one-time project. It was clear that the resource mobilization, dedication and motivation at the same level as in the experiment cannot be sustained in regular 'normal' programmes. However, SITE showed that a workable methodology for setting up a network for satellite communication for education and development is within the reach of the poorer countries.

Indonesia is the first Asian country to have an operational domestic satellite. Palapa was launched in 1976 and is used for telephone, telex, telegraph, radio and television on varying scales. The satellite has also been used for a pilot project on development education linking 11 universities in the eastern islands. Launched in 1980, it links the campuses of these universities to facilitate the sharing of scarce human and institutional resources. Tutor training and agricultural education have been the critical objectives. The project was linked with two U.S. universities – i.e. Washington State University and the University of Connecticut's Centre for Instructional Media and Technology (Rajan, 1987). Palapa is also used in instruction for students at the Open University (Universitas Terbuka) in Jakarta where it has student enrolment of about 150,000.

Apart from the formal educational instructions, Palapa has also contributed to the building up of an Indonesian nation by spreading the use of a common language, Bahasa Indonesia. According to Sumardjan (1991:15), "television functions irre-

sistibly as an agent of distribution of Bahasa Indonesia. In this regard, it is matched by radio. Without the two electronic media, Bahasa Indonesia would not have spread so rapidly and so widely among the ethnic groups in the country. This function has been enhanced by Palapa which enhanced the speed in spreading the national language over the population. Palapa became usefully instrumental in this process of creating a lingua franca."

Directions of Satellite Broadcasting Services

From the above account, it is clear that in most parts of the world satellite broadcasting services have developed in three directions. The earliest direction was in the use of satellites for national development purposes by individual countries. The case of Palapa in Indonesia, Insat in India are such examples. The key players in this situation are the governments. The motivation is the promotion of national unity, national security and social development. Educational broadcasting has an important place in this set-up.

The second is the setting up of global satellite services usually by multinational companies such as CNN or by public broadcasting corporations such as BBC. These are commercial ventures operating on the basis of free market principles and have proliferated in recent years all over the world. They have created the most concerns because of the primacy they place on commercial interests. If in the use of satellite technology by national governments we could discern the politicization of satellite programmes in keeping with a political agenda serving the interests of those groups in power, in the setting up of global satellite services we see a commodification of everything associated with that service beginning with the commodification of cultural products. There is and there will continue to be a tension between the global commercial satellite broadcast services and the national governments of those countries that receive these products. We believe that this tension will increase when free market policies of WTO/GATT, APEC and NAFTA come into full play. If our present reading is correct, cultural products such as television programmes, movies and music will be commodities in a free market and the more powerful countries such as the U.S. and Japan will have great

leverage in pushing these products into other countries. Local and indigenous cultural products may find themselves facing newer challenges. This is an area that has to be carefully researched.

The third direction in which global satellite services have moved is in the provision of special services by groups of professionals. The PEACESAT experiment and NCCP project are two examples where satellite technology was used for educational purposes. There are other projects where satellite services were used for health and rural education (See, for example, Stevenson, 1985). Future development in satellite broadcasting services may see many national governments launching their own version of international satellite broadcasts. These governments would see this as being pro-active and empowering and preventing their countries from being cast in the role of a victim all the time. "It is only by audience countries stepping up their own output of news, comment, interpretation, amplification and explanation and sending it out to the world that the imbalance can be redressed and people given the chance to form their own judgement" *(Business Times,* 16 November 1993, quoted by Yeap, 1994).

Singapore has already gone regional with its regional television broadcasts and is also marketing Singapore's Straits Times newspaper as a premier source of Asian News (Yeap, 1994). It is expected that many other countries in Asia will launch their own regional satellite broadcasting services. India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand are some of the countries capable of launching such a service in the near future. See Table 5 for a listing of proposed satellite services for the period 1995-1997 in the Asia-Pacific region.

Encouraging Cultural and Educational Functions of Satellite Broadcasting

In view of this rather rapidly changing scene of satellite broadcasting, it is best to adopt an eclectic approach in proposing ways of encouraging the cultural and educational functions of satellite broadcasting. The first priority is to get the facts and their implications as clearly as possible. As indicated in the first part of this chapter, there is a need to know not only what is available to the

audience for viewing but what percentage of this is actually viewed. Therefore, continuous empirical research is a *sine-qua-non* for understanding the phenomenon in order to encourage its cultural and educational functions.

Second, at least at the initial stages, it may be necessary to initiate special projects to encourage cultural and educational functions, particularly the latter. Groups of professionals need to be harnessed for this work. The most cost effective way of doing this is through non-government agencies.

Table 5:
Proposed Satellite Services in the Asia-Pacific Region

1995		*1996/97 (Due to Launch)*
1st Quarter	AsiaSat 2	Iransat 2
	PanAm Sat 4	Intelsat VIII
		Palapa C3
2nd Quarter	ArabSat 2	Rimsat 5
	Intelsat VII	Rimsat 6
	Iransat 1	Thaicom 3
	Koreasat 4	Unicom 1
	Rimsat 4	Unicom 2
3rd Quarter	Intelsat VII	
	Insat 2C	
	JCSAT 3	
	Palapa C1	
4th Quarter	Globostar 3	
	Koreasat 3	
	Iransat VII	
	SATAC 2	

Source: *Asia-Pacific Broadcasting*, June 1994

Third, serious consideration must be given to the formulation of an agreed code of ethics – a minimum set of guidelines – which all purveyors of satellite broadcasting must adhere to – so as not to cause offence to the audiences or to the governments of recipient countries. The Asian Broadcasting Union is now working on such a set of guidelines (Menon, 1994). Some scholars have even suggested the formulation of a regulatory regime in relation to the use of the resources of the sky in the same way that the international community has formulated the Law of the Sea. At least the minimum immediate requirement is to document the emerging public international law in this area. This will include a study of the international conventions, customs and practices that could one day crystallize into international law.

Fourth, there must be public education programmes directed at specific social issues such as teenage sex, child prostitution, violence, etc. Instead of blaming everything on transnational television, the local television stations must improve their own programmes to make them more attractive, especially for the young audience (Chu, 1994).

Fifth, some formal ways of recognizing cultural and educational contributions of satellite broadcasting should be institutionalized. These can be on the lines of already existing schemes for recognizing broadcasting excellence such as the Japan prize for educational broadcasting programmes sponsored by NHK and UNESCO. A sense of competition should be generated among satellite broadcasters to achieve excellence.

Six, a marketing scheme for cultural products from different countries should be encouraged. The main idea is to make the availability of programmes from a variety of sources known to the broadcasters. At present little is known about availability of programmes from countries outside the U. S., the U.K. and possibly Japan. Therefore, even if broadcasters would like to get programmes from non-conventional sources they cannot do so unless they are prepared to go on voyages of discovery.

Concluding Remarks

Finally, it is necessary for us to step back and look at issues from a broader philosophical perspective. We should begin by recognizing the enormous diversities in culture and the ethical considerations that arise out of this diversity among nations. Satellite technology has brought vast cultural contacts among people of different nations. It has provided unprecedented opportunities for the establishment of closer cultural linkages and identities. On the other hand, it has also raised fears of cultural domination and obliteration of ethnic identities. History has shown us that traditional indigenous cultures are strong and adaptable and are at times strengthened in face of challenges. History has also shown that there is a danger of a destructive backlash against all foreign influences – good and bad – when countries are faced with foreign cultural intrusions. Perhaps what is required most at the present stage of development of global satellite broadcasting is to provide systematic education, both formal and informal, as to the nature of this phenomena. This requires continuing research. We need an informed public discourse through the media, through the schools and through public debate.

The loud and clear message of global satellite broadcasting is that we live in the same world. It has good and bad, evil and innocence. No region of the world has the monopoly of the good and no region is totally bad. Communication across cultures facilitated through satellite broadcasts makes for more informed, more aware persons with possibly a less parochial outlook. It can promote a certain unity among diverse people and contribute to the emergence of a more tolerant, consensual culture crossing national borders. Trying to shut oneself from the 'intrusion' of foreign cultural influences may perhaps be like blinding oneself in the hope that one may walk with more safety in a jungle strewn with pit and precipice. The global spread of media is here to stay with us. We must learn to live with it. In order to harness its potential for good, one should look at it as an opportunity to open one's eyes through education and experience and not to close them in fear and ignorance.

Notes

1. The following institutions are partners in NCCP: Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University; AMIC; School of Communication Studies at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore; Institute for Development Communication at the University of Philippines; CIRCIT, Australia; Department of Communication Studies at Victoria University, New Zealand; Centre for Educational Research, New Zealand; David Lam Centre for International Communication at Simon Fraser University, Canada; programme in Cultural Studies at East-West Centre and Department of Communication, University of Hawaii.

2. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan.

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CHAPTER 4 The Case Of Western Europe

Alfred Smudits
MEDIACULT
Vienna, Austria

Introduction

European society is currently undergoing a process of mutation, a rapid and irreversible transformation of its broadcasting land-scape, which compels public service broadcasters (PSBs) to re-define their role in the cultural and democratic policy context. This mutation is still in progress and its outcome is uncertain. National and supranational broadcasting systems, private sector interests in the national and translational media industries, audi-ence behaviour and new bursts of technological development are all variables in a play not only for economic and cultural power, but also for the economic and cultural survival of PSBs.

This Chapter outlines the developments and the fundamental issues without discussing ongoing events – an impossible and not very meaningful feat, considering the speed at which changes are occurring. It focuses on West European countries. Although 'West European' has ceased to be a meaningful characterization since 1989, when it comes to demarcating geographical or politi-cal areas, it is used in the present chapter to denote the countries referred to as West European before the Eastern Europe was opened up. This approach precludes any reference to the specific problems of the so-called reform countries of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe.

The main emphasis will be on television, although the term broadcasting covers radio as well. The reason is that television is more powerful both in economic and cultural terms. What should be mentioned is that radio may follow different princi-ples, because operations are less cost-intensive. By and large, how-ever, the development and the problems of radio and television are very similar, so a separate discussion appears unnecessary.

A Changing Media Landscape

In the 1980s, the media landscape of Europe underwent a basic change. Public service broadcasting clearly prevailed until the beginning of the decade. Except for the United Kingdom, where commercial television stations had been admitted side by side with the BBC as early as 1959, public service organizations held a broadcasting monopoly until the late 1970s. In Italy, commercial radio was admitted in the mid-1970s and commercial television in 1980, and starting in the early 1980s, deregulation efforts were launched in almost all the countries. By the early 1990s, the public service broadcasting system in Europe had been transformed into a dual system, with commercial providers operating along and competing with public broadcasters.

The causes underlying this change were primarily technological, but also attributable to political and economic developments. New communication technologies - initially cable television, later satellite television, but also video – altered the basis for the political and economic appraisal of broadcasting, and as a result the role of PSBs came up for discussion.

The Traditional Role of Broadcasting

From its inception, broadcasting in Europe was expected to accomplish an important democratic and cultural mission. It was given the task of providing the entire population with information, education and quality entertainment. These are the main elements of basic cultural service and of the cultural, educational and information mandate.

This attitude was essentially based on the *European Convention on Human Rights* of 1950, which, on the one hand, states in Article 10 that "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and receive and impart information and ideas without interference from public authority and regardless of frontiers"; but, on the other hand, it says, "This article shall not prevent states from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises." In an interpretation of this article by the Court of Human Rights, it is

underlined that any measure aimed at interfering with media freedom must be based on a "pressing social need" (Council of Europe, 1993:2).

For economic reasons the tasks implied in the cultural, educational and information mandate of broadcasting could only be performed by a public-regulated monopoly. Economic theorists even considered broadcasting in its conventional (terrestrial) form the perfect example of a 'natural monopoly'. They held that, owing to its technological-economic nature, broadcasting will tend to obtain a monopoly position, and that for democratic reasons it appeared necessary to subject this monopoly to state control (Blaukopf, Hofecker and Smudits, 1985). This used to be the agreed opinion of the European countries until the early 1980s.

Guidelines for the fulfillment of the information, education and entertainment mandate (cultural mandate) had been issued, in which the criteria for objectivity, plurality of opinions, quality, etc., were laid down (Shaugnessy and Fuente Cobo, 1990). The technical infrastructure was supposed to guarantee a service for the entire population. The financial resources of PSBs were guaranteed by law and either provided by the state, i.e. through taxation, or through licence fees (Great Britain, Norway, Sweden), frequently supplemented by a regulated share in advertising revenue.

Providing service for the entire population was one of the principal characteristics of PSBs. Conversely, this means that no one could, in theory, elude what was offered, because there was no alternative. Nor could users furnish proof of "refusing reception", which was used as an argument in favour of mandatory fees. Criticism of the system centred on the fact that it was state-controlled and thus economically and politically dependent on the parties in power.

The Causes of Change:
Technological Innovations and Government Policies

In the late 1970s, technological innovations prompted a discussion about a new broadcasting order. The WARC conferences in 1977 and 1979, where a new frequency allocation plan was worked out for Europe, and satellite reception which started in 1982,

presented a challenge to both national broadcasting systems and supranational organizations.

In 1982, the Council of Europe adopted a *Declaration on the Freedom of Expression and Information* in which it was laid down that technological developments "should serve to further the right, regardless of frontiers, to express, to seek, to receive and to impart information and ideas, whatever their source" (Council of Europe, 1993:5). This was are-interpretation of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights in the interest of "free flow".

The development of cable television technology eventually cast doubts on the principal argument justifying the natural monopoly, because the receivers of cable television can be identified and pay only when they receive programmes through the cable television network. These changes prepared the ground for a competitive market. The argument that broadcasting inevitably implies a monopoly situation was pushed to the background. The legitimacy of maintaining the state monopoly was questioned. These ideas were primarily embraced by the media industries in the hope of finding new opportunities to realise profits in a new, free broadcasting market, but also by those social groupings that expected deregulation to open the door to democratization.

Changes in the political set-up of several European countries which subscribed to an all-out deregulation policy (not only in the field of broadcasting) eventually caused this attitude to be adopted throughout Europe. The 'big' countries (Italy, 1980; Germany and, France, 1984) were leading the way, and the 'small' countries, partly constrained by transborder communication, had to follow suit. By the end of the 1980s, all the European countries, moving at different speeds and prioritizing different media policies and communication technologies, had changed their broadcasting landscapes. The national broadcasting systems were deregulated, private providers were admitted to the market, and the state facilitated and promoted the development of the technological infrastructure, and was occasionally involved in its operation. Meanwhile, commercial domestic television channels can be received in addition to the PSBs in every European country, except Austria. Transborder satellite programmes of private

providers can be received, either directly or via cable, in every country.

The licensing mechanisms for commercial radio stations vary from country to country; what they have in common is, on the one hand, their lack of programme guidelines beyond rules concerning the content of commercial spots, the protection of young people and a ban on pornography, and, on the other hand, their emphasis on commercial aspects. In some cases there are restrictions on business link-ups to prevent monopolization (Robillard, 1993), but owing to the confusing ownership structure they are difficult to enforce.

The objective and the philosophy of deregulation were to further the interests of media enterprises, to open up new markets and to create a pluralistic broadcasting landscape in which variety is guaranteed by commercial competition and in which discriminating audiences can choose the programmes they are interested in from a multitude of channels. Any demands – minority demands included - would generate supply. The ultimate goal was a new national broadcasting order permitting the free play of market forces also in the broadcasting sector; the prerequisite for such a free broadcasting market was the development of an appropriate technological infrastructure (cable television distribution systems). This 'prerequisite' was to be authorised and eventually provided by the state.

As soon as satellite programmes became available -at first via broadcasting satellites whose signals were fed to cable systems, later via direct broadcasting satellites (DBS), whose programmes could be received by individual households – it became obvious that those who were claiming that the introduction of new communication technologies put paid to the legitimacy of a natural monopoly had used the argument as a Pretext for opening the doors 'to privatization. Because what goes for the reception of conventional, terrestrial programmes also goes for the reception of DBS – there is no way of checking by whom the programmes are received. Moreover, it soon turned out that the private providers started to compete for terrestrial frequencies as well and usually made their breakthrough, if they were able to secure such frequencies.

Finally, it was soon apparent that although deregulation caused channels to multiply it also generated a trend towards concentration. It should be noted, therefore, that the law of the 'natural monopoly' applying to broadcasting has not yet been refuted by the advent of new technologies.

Three Types of Broadcasting Organizations

The broadcasting organizations that have been emerging in the course of deregulation may be described as follows: most of the private channels are financed from advertising revenue; a few pay-TV channels (but also pay radio programmes) have been started which broadcast no commercial spots, offer topical and better-quality programmes (sector programmes, relatively recent movies) and are subscriber financed.

The deregulated media landscape thus includes the following three types of broadcasting organizations:

1. PSBs which have to accomplish a cultural mission laid down by law, which are supposed to provide programmes for the entire population and which are financed from licence fees and advertising revenue;
2. commercial channels which have to comply with very few regulations concerning their programming, which are financed from advertising revenue and reach broad population strata; and
3. pay-TV channels, also subject to very few regulations, with discriminating or more affluent audiences as their specific target groups, and funded from subscriptions only.

These broadcasting organizations were joined by the video recorder, a new medium which permits individual programming and has left its mark on the broadcasting scene. Taken together, these changes in the broadcasting landscape have had a tangible impact on audience behaviour: people can choose from among different providers and - in contrast to the time when PSBs held a monopoly position – can no longer be regarded as a homogeneous whole.
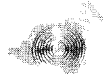
The state of broadcasting after the introduction of new communication technologies may be summed up as follows:

1. In almost all European countries private, commercial channels have been established along with PSBs;
2. commercial broadcast is principally regarded as a commodity (goods, service) and not as a cultural asset (basic service, cultural mission);
3. the national broadcasting scenes are demand-oriented: the channels that are most in demand have the best chances of survival; the legitimacy of PSBs is called in question;
4. the national broadcasting landscapes are in many ways influenced and shaped by transborder factors: in technological terms by satellite programmes, in economic terms by economic interdependence, in legal terms by specific media legislation, in cultural terms by the falling share of domestic programmes. As a result, the national broadcasting systems lose part of their coverage.

When commercial broadcasters compete directly with PSBs, the principles of the former are imposed on the latter.

Problems Spawned by Deregulation

The situation brought about by deregulation may be characterized as follows: (i) there are more channels, more programme markets, more commercial air time; (ii) there is competition for programmes, viewers, and advertising market shares; (iii) media groups and investments are internationalized; and (iv) television providers and media enterprises tend to concentrate (Peters, 1990).

These are the signs of an advancing industrialization of cultural creation and of cultural communication, of growing commercialization and mediatization (Smudits, 1988). An increasing number of technical vehicles become available for the transportation of cultural goods. These vehicles have be loaded and operated in accordance with the principles of economic rationality. This bundle of traits generates a number of very specific problems

which bear especially on the function and legitimacy of PSBs. Most of these problems are caused by the dynamics of deregulation which may be described as follows:

Private channels are mostly financed from advertising revenue. High advertising revenue can only be realized with programmes that get high ratings. The programmes with the highest ratings are those attracting broad population strata and, therefore, not the minority programmes. Moreover, the profits of a commercial broadcasting organization will be the higher, the lower the programme costs. It follows that the 'best' programme (within the commercial paradigm) is one that costs little and attracts a large audience, while the 'worst' is one that is very expensive and watched by a small number of viewers.

Domestic Productions, Cultural Labour Market, Cultural Identity

The above-described dynamics impacts on domestic productions, the cultural labour market and on cultural identity. Domestic productions are known for their high production costs and equally high acceptance risk. The costs of a newly produced programme are about ten times those of a programme purchased on the international market (Sonnenberg, 1990). Moreover, it is uncertain whether the newly produced programme will be accepted by the public, while the acceptance of purchased programmes can be assessed on the basis of previous experience.

This speaks in favour of purchasing relatively safe and inexpensive programmes on the international programme market and against the financing of own productions. As a rule, domestic productions involve indigenous cultural workers and artists. Hence, national broadcasting organizations are an important factor in a country's cultural labour market. Fewer domestic productions mean fewer employment and income opportunities for indigenous cultural workers and artists.

In a society in which the electronic media are the most important vehicles for handing down, passing on and developing the idiosyncrasies of the language and culture of the population, the

'electronic media' labour market has an important role to play in preserving and developing an independent cultural identity. If, for economic reasons, the cultural labour market is not resorted to, the infrastructure of audio-visual production will collapse, the cultural workers and artists will move off and home-made productions will disappear from the market. This constitutes a danger to the cultural identity of a country.

The uncertainties concerning copyright have an indirect effect on the cultural labour market. Cultural workers and artists have to put up with income losses due to the lack of definite rules for the payment of royalties in the case of transborder communication. Although their works are used transnationally, an international agreement on their compensation (cable, satellite penny) is still outstanding in many sectors. The fact that, owing to the unclear royalty situation, existing works can be used virtually free of charge, naturally motivates channel operators to re-use existing programmes instead of producing new ones.

The dramatic increase in the number of channels brought about by deregulation has raised the demand for programmes in the international audio-visual market. Various studies claim that European television channels have a programme deficit of between 400,000 and 250,000 programme hours. According to conservative estimates, an additional 37,500 programme hours would have to be produced in Europe every year (Sonnenberg, 1990).

Owing to the greater demand for programmes, the prices of attractive series tend to rise and the costs of own productions appear proportionately lower. Nevertheless, only very successful commercial channels have, so far, been prepared to invest in their own productions. This does not alter the fact that, at least for the time being, repeats, cheap series or show programmes rather than their own productions are used to remedy the programme shortage.

The biggest supplier of the European market is, of course, the American audio-visual industry. In 1987, more than 250% of the programme hours broadcast in the EC-countries were supplied by the USA, the estimate for the 1990s is about 40%, much of the increase being generated by commercial channels.

The Size of Domestic Markets

Whether and to what extent a country can keep its audio-visual industry operating and generating a sizeable output of domestic productions depends largely on the size of the domestic market. Small countries or countries with weak cultural industries have to cope with the problem that their own productions have no chance of recouping costs in the domestic market. The case is different in large countries or in countries with strong cultural industries, whose own productions can be sold abroad after having generated profits in the domestic market. This works to the disadvantage of small countries *vis-à-vis* big countries and of Europe *vis-à-vis* the USA.

In Western Europe, five dominant countries (France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Spain) are opposed to 15 relatively small states (disregarding the miniature states). Most of these countries have similar political cultures, traditions and economies. A Working Group on Broadcasting Media and Cultural Policy in the Small European Countries, set up in 1988, has identified the following five characteristic structural features of media systems in small countries (Trappel 1991):

1. dependence: the broadcasting situation in small countries develops in dependence on big countries, especially when there is transborder communication. When deregulation was under way in the 1980s, all the small countries could do was respond to developments in the big states;
2. shortage of resources: the capital, know-how, creativity, labour force, and audiences of small states are limited. This makes it difficult if not impossible to maintain or develop an independent cultural industry;
3. market-size: there is no domestic market, either at the consumer or at the production level, for big, cost-covering productions. Small countries have only minority audiences;
4. vulnerability: media enterprises in small countries depend increasingly on investments made by big enterprises which are all based in big countries. The national advertising budgets of small countries are frequently weakened by the activities of 'strong' neighbors;

5. transborder communication: this provides the population of small countries with a free offer of numerous channels which makes it difficult to argue in favour of the relatively high fees for PSBs; and

6. decline of corporatism: so far, media policy decisions in small countries have been based on a consensus between government bodies and the major domestic interest groups. Internationalization and the legislation passed by supranational bodies have shifted the traditional positions of media-policy agents to the disadvantage of continued, essentially national media policies.

One of Europe's specific features is the variety of cultures and languages. Small countries or countries belonging to a small language area are at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* big countries or countries belonging to a large language area, because dubbing or subtitling costs frequently are a serious obstacle to the purchasing of programmes. One way out of this problem are multilateral co-productions, although they do not solve the question of dubbing costs. This is why co-productions are primarily made by countries belonging to the same language area. It must be noted that the challenge presented by the variety of idioms goes beyond spoken language and includes also the picture language, which may impede acceptance even after language dubbing.

Concentration Tendencies

The high costs of attractive programming together with the need to produce for large markets have compelled companies to form groups on a European and world-wide scale. The general advantages of business combinations are (i) cost advantages (fixed cost digression, learning effects and economies of scale and scope); (ii) power advantages (information can be misused as a commodity); (iii) easy access to foreign markets; (iv) time advantages (fast product development); and (v) general synergy effects (Heinrich, 1994).

Business combinations may be horizontal, involving similar enterprises (e.g. two production companies), vertical, involving

different media enterprises (e.g. a production and a distribution company) or diagonal, involving media and non-media enterprises. An analysis of 207 European mergers in the television sector has shown that 30% were horizontal, 24% vertical and 20% diagonal mergers (Heinrich 1994). Four of the 20 largest media groups in Europe are located in Germany, three in France, three in Great Britain, two in Italy, and one in Luxembourg.

programmes of Commercial Stations

The dynamics of deregulation has resulted in a very distinct programming structure of commercial stations. Numerous studies have proved that commercial broadcasters air a disproportionate share of entertainment programmes (see, for example, Sonnenberg, 1990; Krüger, 1993). This is closely linked with the fact that they air markedly fewer own productions than PSBs. A large-scale survey has found that, also when defining their own role, commercial stations give precedence to entertainment over information and education, while PSBs give precedence to education over information and entertainment (Achille and Miege, 1994).

The fact that commercial stations have recently tended to air more information programmes and have even started to invest in own productions, while some PSBs apparently tend towards commercialization, does not suffice to confirm a convergence hypothesis with respect to commercial stations and PSBs. A study of the situation in Germany arrived at the conclusion that "growing similarities between commercial stations and PSBs are merely superficial and misleading, for any structural similarities between commercial stations and public service channels are made up for by the marked difference in programme content" (Krüger, 1993).

Position of the European Union and the Council of Europe on Media Issues

The gamut of problems arising with respect to the cultural and educational functions of broadcasting in general and of PSB in particular clearly reveals that national solutions are inappropriate for the maintenance and possible expansion of these functions.

For this reason, the competent, supranational European institutions – after having paved the way for deregulation – took action as soon as the first effects of deregulation became evident. The European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe (CE) took the lead in drafting guidelines for the future media landscape. Initially, the priority aim was to deregulate as well as to harmonise national broadcasting rules in order to permit smooth transborder communication or, in the case of the EU, to establish an internal market also for the electronic media. The correction of international market conditions that obstructed the development of an independent and strong European audio-visual industry soon became an added objective, whose achievement was meant to facilitate the supply of European broadcasting organizations with domestic audio-visual programmes.

Stage I:
Harmonisation and Promotion of the European Audio-visual Industry

In 1982, the Council of Europe passed the *Declaration on the Freedom of Expression and Information*, setting the course for the harmonization of the broadcasting rules of the European countries.

The first pertinent document was submitted to the EU-Commission in 1984. In the so-called "Green Paper – Television without Frontiers" (Commission, 1984), a case was made for deregulation, television being categorized as a service rather than a cultural facility. The principle of the free movement of goods and services was to be applied to television just as to all other goods, and television was to be adjusted to the rules of the internal European market. The EC "Television Directive" from 1989 (Richtlinie, 1989) contained the first binding provisions for the share of advertising (maximum of 20%), for sponsoring and for the protection of young people. Concerning the air time of a channel not filled with news, advertising, talk shows and sports, the directive recommended that at least 50% be filled with works of European origin.

The non-committal nature of the recommendation was underlined by the addition that the provisions were to be complied with as far as practicable and financially feasible. Even though no definite quota was fixed for programmes of European origin, the provision can be interpreted as an attempt to regulate the situation in the interest of preserving the European identity. In 1986, the first of four European Ministerial Conferences on Mass Media Policy took place in Vienna at the initiative of the Council of Europe on the topic "The Future of Television in Europe". The second one, held in Stockholm in 1988, was devoted to the topic "European Mass Media Policy in International Context".

At these first two conferences the overall assessment of the new media landscape and special ways of promoting the European audio-visual industry dominated the agenda. The results were translated into the EURIMAGE promotion programme, launched in 1988 to stimulate European programme production, and into the *European Convention of Transfrontier Television,* adopted in 1989 (Council of Europe, 1989) but as yet only ratified by one third of the member states. The minimum shares laid down in the Convention for programmes of European origin were more or less the same as those stipulated by the EU Directive.

In 1990, the EU launched the MEDIA programme (Measures to Encourage the Development of the Industry of Audio-visual Productions) which, like EURIMAGE, was designed to promote the European audio-visual industry. MEDIA covers six fields namely (i) distribution; (ii) improvement of production conditions; (iii) basic and advanced training; (iv) development of financing models; (v) utilization of audio-visual works; and (vi) development of 'secondary markets'.

The MEDIA programme was not designed to subsidize the production costs of individual film projects. This task is, on the one hand, performed by the national film promotion bodies which are not linked with MEDIA and, on the other hand, by the EURIMAGES project set up by the Council of Europe. The focus of the MEDIA programmes is on supporting measures which help to build a sound infrastructure. The third all-European promotion programme for the audio-visual industry,

AUDIO-VISUAL EUREKA, was launched at a ministerial conference in Paris in 1989. This programme also encompasses the Central and Eastern European countries. Apart from stimulating production, AUDIO-VISUAL EUREKA is committed to the introduction of high definition television (HDTV). It set up a European Observatory in 1992, which is to supply data on the development of the audio-visual media in Europe.

All these initiatives testify to the growing interest of the European countries in strengthening the European audio-visual production, so that it may meet the growing programme demand, generated by deregulation and the ensuing channel multiplication, with domestic/European products. In the wake of deregulation, we are witnessing signs of re-regulation efforts relating to the European market as opposed to the international audio-visual market. The priority aim is to lessen the predominance of American products in the audio-visual sector by protectionist market correctives. In the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) negotiations in 1994, it was obvious what Europe was striving for. France and Belgium, in particular, were eventually successful, against U.S. opposition, in having audio-visual products exempted from the most favoured nation clause, claiming that audio-visual products are not services in the conventional sense and must, therefore, receive special treatment and be exempted from GATT. The fact that the French efforts did not get the solid support of all the other European countries shows that the European position on the cultural importance of European audio-visual products is, for various reasons, not as uniform as one might gather from the promotion programmes (Albrecht-skirchinger, 1993).

Stage II:
Concentration and Pluralism

In 1991, the third European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy, devoted to the topic "Which Way Forward for Europe's Media in the 1990s" was held in Nicosia, Cyprus; the fourth one, devoted to "The Media in a Democratic Society", was held in Prague in 1994. At both conferences the threat posed to

cultural pluralism and the role of PSB by the growing concentration tendencies figured prominently in the discussion. This was a clear indication that reservations about unwarranted deregulation were mounting and possible national or supranational regulation was being considered.

The "Green Paper - Pluralism and Media Concentration in the Single Market", issued by the EU Commission in 1992 (Commission, 1992), testifies to the fact that the EU is at least ventilating the idea of re-regulation. Referring to the fact that deregulation has generated tangible concentration tendencies, the Green Paper raises the question if and how cultural pluralism and plurality of opinions ought to be protected. The Commission submitted three proposals:

1. the EU should not take action since the individual states were equipped with the tools required to ensure plurality;
2. an intensive and institutionalized exchange of information about the progress of concentration should facilitate the enactment of national anti-trust laws; and
3. the harmonization of the different provisions should be sought and effected by the EU Commission with the help of an independent media committee.

Opposition to centralism and the generally known fact that concentration tendencies in the media sector are difficult to track or to eliminate retroactively have as yet prevented a decision on this matter. However, the European Commission has taken practical steps against concentration tendencies. In November 1994, it prohibited on anti-trust grounds the foundation of a Media Service GmbH (MSG) planned by the Bertelsman and Kirch groups together with the state-owned Deutsche Telekom. The planned company had been intended to play a key role in the future digital pay-TV system. This means that the Commission at least intends to protect prospective markets from dominating groups. Time will tell if and to what extent these efforts will be successful, considering the variety of ways in which groups can obscure their activities.

The Cultural Impact Clause in the EU Treaty

The Maastricht Treaty is the first document in which the EU has taken a position on cultural policy. Although it is currently hard to estimate how this position will impact on media policies, it certainly deserves our attention. Reference is made to the so-called 'cultural impact clause' in Article 128, paragraph 4, of the Maastricht Treaty which states: "The Community shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of this Treaty." (Konferenz, 1992). This could be interpreted to mean that media policy decisions incompatible with cultural policies may be objected to. Under this article, a renewed discussion of the cultural function of broadcasting inside the EU, where it has been categorized as a service, is clearly legitimate. How objections arising under the cultural impact clause are to be formally submitted is as yet uncertain.

The media policy initiatives of Europe's multilateral institutions have, so far, been related to at least two distinct phases:

1. The first phase, which extended until the end of the 1980s, marked by channel multiplication and a growing programme demand - when the new situation brought about by deregulation was addressed for the first time. In this phase, efforts were mainly directed towards laying down common rules for transborder communication and towards safeguarding and strengthening the position of the European audio-visual industry in the world market.

2. The second phase in which more and more thought was given to the re-regulation of a broadcasting landscape in which the impact of commercialisation - in particular concentration tendencies and the threat to pluralism – became ever more obvious. In this phase, which commenced in the early 1990s, attempts were made to bring the role of broadcasting in a democratic society up for renewed discussion, and to assign a crucial function to PSBs.

### Deregulation and Public Service Broadcasting

The situation in which PSB finds itself in the wake of deregulation may be described as follows:

Deregulation and transborder communication compel PSB to operate in a competitive environment for which it is not equipped. If it accepts the terms of competition, there is the risk that it cannot fulfil its cultural mission and is consequently deprived of its legitimate claim to licence fees or state finds. If it refuses to accept the terms of competition, there is the risk that it cannot live up to the quantitative expectations linked with 'basic service' and that it may dwindle into a minority channel, thus losing again its legitimate claim to finance.

The future role of PSBs has been analyzed and discussed in a number of papers and studies all of which indicate that PSBs redefine their role, their tasks and aims in a deregulated media environment and refer to measures required to safeguard their statutory and financial basis. A study on the "Limits to the Adaptation Strategies of European Public Service Television" (Achille and Miege, 1994) found four strategies adopted by PSBs in coping with the introduction of private channels:

1. maintaining the status quo (Germany, Belgium);
2. opposition (BBC); some programming features of commercial stations are taken over (fiction), while the high quality standards of information programmes with an educational bias are emphasised;
3. identification (Italy, Spain); competition in the field of light entertainment; and
4. partial confrontation (France); self-commercialization of one channel, while preserving the traditional role of the other channel.

The strategy adopted depends on the specific market conditions and on the historical development, i.e. on the way in which PSBs define their role. From the above, it is obvious that there is more than one solution to the problems of PSBs and that individual strategies, relating to the situation in a given country, must be developed to safeguard PSBs. It is, nevertheless, legitimate to talk of a fundamental need to redefine the role of PSBs.
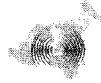
Redefining the Role of PSBs

The serious threat posed to the legitimacy of PSBs makes it imperative to re-define its missions. The Council of Europe has repeatedly underlined the important democratic and cultural role of PSBs, most recently and forcefully in 1994 at the Prague Ministerial Media Conference. Resolution No 1, contained in the final document entitled "The Media in a Democratic Society", deals with "The Future of Public Service Broadcasting" and underlines that efforts must be made "to maintain and develop a strong public service broadcasting system in an environment characterized by an increasingly competitive offer of programme services and a rapid technological change" (Council of Europe, 1994:8).

The tasks of PSBs are listed in detail; the most prominent among them are (i) pluralism and integration; (ii) basic service for the entire population and for minorities; (iii) promotion of tolerance, independence and objectivity with respect to information, quality programming including a significant proportion of original productions; and (iv) the provision of services which are not normally provided by commercial broadcasters (Council of Europe, 1994). Thus, PSB is still considered to derive its legitimacy from the provision of basic service and the accomplishment of its cultural mission.

Provision of Basic Service

With regard to basic service, one must be aware that the receptive behaviour of the population in a deregulated media environment, where many more programmes are on offer, must differ from that in the traditional PSB-monopoly environment. If services of interest to a wide public were to be assessed on the basis of ratings, it would be impossible to reconcile the tasks of providing programmes for the entire population with that of catering to minority needs. The necessary re-appraisal of basic service in a deregulated, competitive media environment must not mean that PSB is judged on the basis of ratings, but rather that it functions as a corrective to the programmes offered by commercial channels.

As far as basic service is concerned, PSB has to function as a market corrective by producing and/or offering programmes that would otherwise not be produced or broadcast, but whose production and dissemination is desirable in the interest of democracy. In addition to the tasks of catering for ethnic, religious, linguistic but also local minorities, one ought to mention the task of information processing and archiving that goes beyond current affairs reporting and assigns to PSB the function of electronic archives or possibly museums.

The definition of basic service also covers the provision of educational programmes as a corrective to the impending knowledge gap. If and to what extent these offers will be taken up by broad population strata should be discussed in the educational-policy context. The role of PSB would, first of all, be to prepare the ground.

Cultural Mission

In a deregulated competitive media environment, the cultural mission clearly implies a corrective function to the laws of the market. The idea is to facilitate the production of programmes for which there is no mass audience in the free market and which would, therefore, fall victim to commercial considerations. This can only be achieved by a political consensus whereby such programmes are regarded as valuable cultural goods, serving the development of socially desirable, ethical and aesthetic values and relating to reproducing or furthering cultural identity.

PSB must in particular be charged with the tasks of(i) giving small cultural enterprises which are at a disadvantage in competing with big culture industries, or unknown, young cultural workers and artists access to the market; (ii) paying special attention to regional and local cultural creation, often at a disadvantage in competing with cultural industries operating in urban centres; and (iii) helping socially underprivileged groups to gain market access with their cultural activities.

The cultural mission of PSB implies the promotion of the domestic cultural labour market, the domestic audio-visual production and cultural identity and variety. In the light of its cultural mission, PSB may also be considered the research and

development department for the production of those cultural assets which have little or no chance to develop in the free market. In a study undertaken for the Council of Europe, Blaukopf (1990) summarizes these concept as follows:

> *In order to fulfil their task of promoting cultural diversity and European unity they will require the assw-ante that possible losses in the mass appeal of their programmes incurred as a consequence of catering for cultural needs will not be used as an argument against them. Such an assurance can take the form ofmaterial support for cultural programmes. More essential, however is the moral support based on the consensus of society as a whole that the use ofcommunication technologiesfor cultural purposes is considered as indispensable as the existence of national libraries, museums, educational institutions, etc. This moral encouragement cannot develop on its own. But it can be kindled by individual promotional measures in favour ofthe production and dissemination of cultural goods and ly policy declarations – both at the European level and at the level of individual states – in favour of a specific element of the European cultural heritage, i.e. European broadcasting culture (Blaukopf 1990: 49).*

The new mission or role that maybe assigned to PSB in a given national broadcasting environment is inextricably linked with the system of finding of PSBs. Pertinent measures will be successful only if the underlying conditions are formally established, be it by fixing minimum proportions of such programmes (quotas), or by incentives to cultural workers and artists to offer their products to PSBs (awards, specialised festivals). Above all, however, sufficient funds must be available to finance these measures.

The Size of Domestic Markets

The tasks of providing basic service and accomplishing a cultural mission will vary in importance, depending on the size of a country and the type of enterprises. In small countries with weak cultural industries the existence of a safely established PSB is crucial in sustaining an independent audio-visual culture. But also in large countries it is evident that in a deregulated environment the cultural and educational functions are largely performed by PSBs.

Not a single commercial cultural channel has become established as yet (Roberts, 1990; Blaukopf, 1990), and the transnational channels that have adopted a cultural label, such as ARTE, a German-French venture, or 3 SAT, the joint channel of the German-language PSBs, are the products of cooperation among PSBs. Once the need to safeguard PSBs has been recognized, their existence and funding must be guaranteed by law. If the PSBs are to perform the democratic task of providing independent, free and pluralistic information and of functioning as the research and development departments for cultural development, these tasks and functions must be formally enshrined in a broadcasting order which guarantees their independence and lays down the standards to be met, and, above all, ensures the funds required to meet these standards.

According to the final document of the Prague Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy, the state has "to guarantee the independence of public service broadcasters against political and economic interference", primarily by "appropriate structures such as pluralistic internal boards or other independent bodies", while "the control and accountability of public service broadcasters, especially as regards the discharge of their missions and use of resources" must be guaranteed by appropriate means (Council of Europe, 1994:10).

With regard to finding, the document states that "participating states undertake to maintain and, where necessary, establish an appropriate and secure finding framework which guarantees public service broadcasters the means necessary to accomplish their missions. There exists a number of sources of finding for sustaining and promoting public service broadcasting, such as: licence fees, public subsidies, advertising and sponsorship revenue; sales of their audio-visual works and programme agreements. Where appropriate, finding may also be provided from charges for thematic services offered as a complement to the basic service" (Council of Europe, 1994:10).

It is impossible to say which funding model is to be preferred, the one via licence fees or public subsidies (taxes) or the one via licence fees and advertising; this will depend on national traits and traditions. However, there is evidence that independence

from advertising revenue prevents commercial competition. An international comparative study on the responsiveness of broadcasters concludes that in the countries where PSBs are financed exclusively from licence fees or state subsidies (such as Great Britain and Sweden), PSBs and commercial stations compete primarily in the field of journalism; in countries where the competition between PSBs and commercial stations extends to the economic field (i.e. advertising revenue), the public service broadcasting has been weakened. It was also found that wherever competition from private providers is strictly regulated – as in Great Britain - both sectors bear their share of accountability. (Woldt, 1994).

Having addressed the principal factors influencing the fate of PSB in a deregulated environment, it must be underlined that starting from the conviction that PSB has an important democratic and cultural function also in a deregulated media landscape, it is imperative to look for effective measures which are designed to provide the re-defined basic service and to accomplish the re-defined cultural mission. Since the financing of PSB from licence fees or public funds has to be justified, and the sources of funding have to be determined, the necessary framework seems to be a cultural market economy (Blaukopt 1990).

As there seems to be an evident antagonism between the market economy approach, on the one hand, and the cultural approach, on the other, the Western notion of market economy points to the possibility of overcoming such an antagonism. Economic theory and economic policies have for decades shown that the aim should not be fettered market economy, but rather 'social market economy', i.e. an economic policy governed by the laws of market but regulated by social considerations in favour of underprivileged sections of the population and for the benefit of the society as a whole. In a similar manner, the concept of a 'cultural market economy' should gain ground: according to this concept, the market mechanism is to be controlled whenever cultural interests are at stake.

Public Service Broadcasting
and Cultural Market Economy

In a deregulated media environment, the legitimization of PSBs depends essentially on whether cultural policy measures intended to serve as correctives to the laws of the market are legitimate from the point of view of the market economy. The fact that in the programmes of advertising-financed broadcasting organizations entertainment takes precedence over educating the viewer may serve as a justification for measures designed to keep a proper balance between culture, entertainment, information, and education. The need to interfere in the development of the system of producing and disseminating audio-visual programmes has repeatedly been stressed – also from an economic angle.

The British White Paper on Broadcasting in the 1990s applies three criteria in evaluating broadcasting organizations: competition, choice and quality. Certain correctives ('safeguards') are deemed necessary in order to counteract those consequences of a free market economy which may be deemed undesirable:

> *There is some international evidence to suggest that even in a more open market, where a large number of services can exist, a few services become considerably more popular than the rest and attract much of the viewing time ~..). There will need to be regulatory safeguards – e.g. on media ownership – to ensure that the opportunities are realised to provide the viewer with a broader and more varied choice (Home Office, 1988:5).*

Such safeguards may be looked upon as contradicting the laws of the marketplace; their legitimacy will, therefore, have to be based on essentially cultural considerations. There are, however, limits to interventions of this kind: they should not be conceived as instruments likely to destabilize the functioning of a market economy. Such corrective measures can only be justified when relating to specific cultural needs which the free market can either not satisfy at all or only at the risk of reduced quality (see Fohrbeck and Wiesand, 1989).

From a study carried out at the request of the EU, it would appear that 'corrective measures' on the part of governments,

although changing in character, will continue to play a decisive role in the future. The authors of this study came to the conclusion "that the growth of competition in television will not lessen the role played by the governments in organizing a country's audio-visual system, but it will mean that it will be a different kind of role. From being essentially statutory and political in character, government intervention is gradually becoming regulatory and economic" (Lange and Renaud, 1988:3).

These findings may serve as a corrective to the still prevalent idea according to which deregulation will (i) do away with state intervention altogether; (ii) contribute to the sovereignty of the consumer; and (iii) foster fair competition. Cultural communication in the area of deregulation is affected by the antagonism "between the laws of the marketplace and the imperatives of the public service" (Milano, 1989). Cultural policy measures can be instrumental in overcoming this contradiction by fostering the production of cultural goods not only in the interest of society as a whole but also for the benefit of private commercial broadcasters whose programmes depend on the availability of cultural goods and on the existence of creators of culture.

Cultural policy measures corresponding to the concept of "cultural market economy" are not destined to contradict the laws of the market but rather to enhance the cultural gains to be derived from a market economy. Against this background, it is no longer decisive whether a broadcasting service is private or public; what counts is the presence or absence of regulations based on the principles of the cultural market economy (and applying to both private and public broadcasting services). Hence it is not a matter of abolishing or safeguarding PSBs, but of putting in place a media policy based on cultural values and providing an appropriate regulatory framework for both private and public broadcasting services. The implementation of this idea, which ties in with the notion of a cultural market economy, requires purposeful measures to safeguard the funding of such a regulated system. There is no need to invent such measures as a variety of measures conceived as market correctives (in the interest of culture) can already be identified in several European countries. These include:

Levies on the Income of Advertising

In the United Kingdom, part of the income of private television companies – which is derived from advertisements – is allotted to the financing of a television channel that has to fulfil precise cultural obligations, i.e. Channel 4. In Iceland, part of the income from advertisements has to be devoted to cultural activities both live and in the media. In accordance with the Iceland Broadcasting Act of 1985, 10% of the rates of all broadcasting advertisements have to be paid into a Cultural Fund of Broadcasting Services.

Support for the Training of Creators of Culture

The idea that means should be found for the training of the creators of cultural goods is included in the Draft Federal Law on Radio and Television which was discussed in the early 1990s in Switzerland. Article 50 of this draft law provides that the fees to be paid by broadcasters in return for the granting of licenses should be used, in the first place, for the training of creators of programmes and for the support of media research.

The Use of Income from Levies on Blank Cassettes

A levy on the sale of blank cassettes was introduced in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1985. In France, Article 38 of the copyright law of 1985 provides that a substantial part of the income from this levy is to be used for collective purposes such as the professional training of artists, direct aid to creation and the dissemination of live performances by the media. The Austrian copyright law (1980) contains similar provisions. They are a clear indication of the will to transfer part of the money spent on the acquisition of the technical carriers of cultural communication to another sector of the economy. Initially, part of this income could only be used for social purposes, but the copyright law was revised in 1986 and now permits collecting societies to establish funds for both social and cultural purposes. In about the same manner the Spanish Decree of March 1989 stipulates that 20% of the total income from the levy on blank cassettes has to be used

for the support of young authors of work of art and for perform-
ing artists.

Taxing Media Consumption

Another way of obtaining funds for the promotion of culture is
the taxation of media consumption. Austrians who own televi-
sion or radio sets have to pay the usual licence fee and – in addi-
tion – a surcharge, a kind of 'Penny for Culture'. The idea behind
this surcharge apparently is that consumers of media programmes
should make a contribution to the preservation and development
of national culture. The 'Penny for Culture' – which seems to be
unique in European countries – may be looked upon as a policy
measure in favour of cultural identity. It is certainly conceivable
to levy a similar surcharge on the consumption of cable and satel-
lite programmes, the revenues being used to maintain PSB.

Concluding Remarks

All the examples cited above - and many others which could be
mentioned – tend to show that the concept of a 'cultural market
economy' is no longer an abstract model submitted for theoreti-
cal discussion but has become a clear cut current trend in the cul-
tural, media and legal policies of quite a number of European
states. Such measures, moreover, will have to apply not only to
the PSBs but also to the entire broadcasting landscape. Once
again, it is underscored that the crucial question with regard to
deregulation is not whether broadcasting services are private or
public, but whether or not the prevailing media policy framework
corresponds to the principles of a cultural market economy (and
encompasses both private and public services).

What is up for discussion is not the abolition or the safe-
guarding of PSBs, but a media policy based on cultural values
which provides an appropriate regulatory framework for both pri-
vate and public service broadcasting. The future of PSB in a
deregulated European media landscape will mainly depend on
whether and to what extent PSB and commercial channels can be
subsumed under the principles of a cultural market economy.

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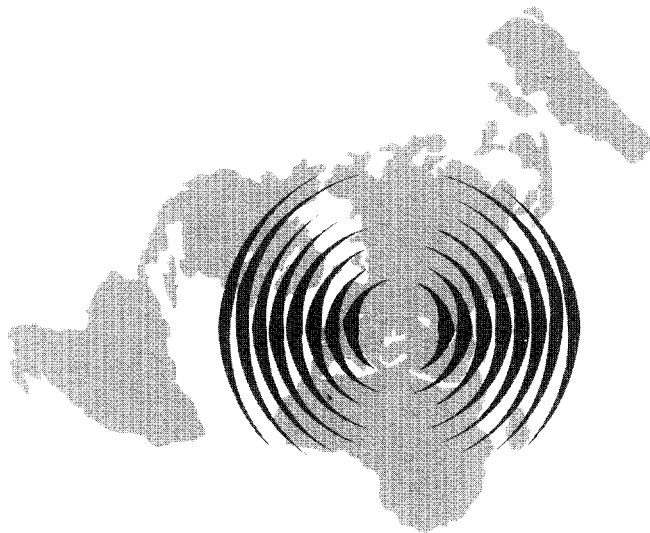
CHAPTER 5 The Situation in Eastern and Central Europe

Ambassador Youri Khiltchevski
International Association for Culture Development
Moscow, Russian Federation
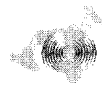
Introduction

Pondering on the processes we are witnessing we cannot help drawing the conclusion that the world at the end of the 20th Century is at a turning point. It is not merely a change of stage in world history. It is the beginning of a new era in civilization when the old order of things recedes into the past and the new powerful trends toward integration of global dimensions, considerable scientific and technological progress and fundamental changes in the conditions of life and work of human beings come to the fore. The forms of social development and the inner world of people undergo a radical change and there is a universal reassessment of moral values and ideals.

These processes open broad vistas full of great opportunities and dangers for the future of humanity. A completely new geopolitical situation emerging on the vast expanses of Europe and Asia after the downfall of Communist regimes and disintegration of the USSR calls for a comprehensive study of the problems that arise and elaboration of a new conception of cooperation between the international community and Eastern Europe."

The course of developments in this region confirms that the process of democratization is thorny and contradictory and that in their transition to a fundamentally new system of state and social development, these countries will have to overcome a plethora of economic and political crises.

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* The reference is to the region comprising Central Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, that is former Soviet republics and socialist countries, with the exception of the German Democratic Republic. The conventional term 'Eastern Europe' is used here for brevity, although it is not accurate in many respects.

One Czech author described the situation as he saw it: "Of course, if you have an aquarium you can cook fish soup although I doubt it will be tasty. But the attempt at turning soup into an aquarium with live fish would be the first such experience in the history of humanity." In these circumstances, it is hard to overestimate the role of culture, education and mass media organizations which may unite or disunite people, stabilize or destabilize the situation.

After the ages of domination of printed matter, the motion pictures and sound have become the major vehicles of dissemination of culture, and inalienable components of national cultural policy. Television and radio are, undoubtedly, the best means of 'democratizing culture' because they bring major cultural events to the knowledge of people who cannot watch them in real life because they take place too far away and people cannot afford to go and see them first-hand or are unaccustomed to it by their way of life and upbringing. These factors are of major importance in assessing the present state of culture and education in Eastern European countries and above all in the countries of the ex-USSR. Television and radio, which are still virtually free of charge against the background of the manifold increase in the cost of books and tickets to concerts, exhibitions and theaters, take up most of the free time of people in these countries.

In Eastern Europe, where reforms and market economy intertwine in a motley picture, it is important to emphasize the importance of culture for economic development: "Culture is the key to the modernization of society and should not be overshadowed by the dynamic market. In fact, it must receive financial assistance, particularly during the period in transition."[1]

An assessment of the present status of culture and education in the programmes of electronic media in Eastern Europe makes it possible to draw a number of conclusions and suggest some steps toward stimulating the cultural and educational functions of television and radio. It seems to be useful to draw attention to the problems confronting mass media organizations in Eastern Europe. They are speedily re-organized on a public and state scale with the chronic shortage of funds and imperfect legal basis. The search for new models and sources of financing, difficulties in reforming the state and public television and radio and developing

their private commercial versions, insufficient attention to the formulation of state policy aimed at supporting the cultural and educational functions of the mass media show that they face big and baffling problems in this region.

On balance, television has taken a step forward to meet the interests of the mass audiences. Its diversity has improved but the public is losing interest in culture and the quality of cultural and educational programmes has declined. Is it possible in these conditions to avoid the clash between the cultural and educational functions of the television and commercial interests? Is there a parallel between the processes unfolding in Eastern Europe and in Third World countries? What should be done to prevent the erosion of national culture and traditions by mass culture? These and similar questions present a challenge to the international community which is faced with the problem of creating incentives for cooperation between the countries of this region and other states. This approach was supported by the Director-General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor, who said: "It is through culture, education, transfer of know-how, information and communications that we can diminish the imbalance, inequality, injustice and common evils of international chaos, which have come to supersede the artificial balance of terror."[2]

The mass communications media of Eastern European countries and above all television and radio should become an effective means of solving this task owing to their unique status and influence.

The Role of Mass Communication Media in Implementation of Cultural Policies

The collapse of the USSR and Communist system in Eastern Europe undermined the foundations on which they were built. The region was open to the historical winds of change blowing out the remnants of the old regime. But as they carry them away these winds bring in premonition of further great upheavals. The danger of various nationalist, ethnic, social and political crises is very real. The events we witness today in Yugoslavia or Russia may also occur in other regions of the post-Communist world.

Communications vacuum and cultural entropy are typical of the state of society in these countries.

The cold war is over, there is no doubt about it. But it would be premature to write it off and put it in the archives. We should keep its lessons in our memory. But this is only part of the problem. We invested a great deal of intellectual and moral capital in it and our world outlook was formed by it. Today budding democracy in this region is being threatened with two conflicting tendencies: destruction of national cultures by so-called cultural imperialism or standard civilization, on the one hand, and self-isolation of national cultures and absolutization of their distinctive features and national identity, on the other. Thus the fate of democracy depends not only and not so much on the state of economy as on the cultural background and morality in society. This is the import of globalization of democracy.

Vaclav Gavel notes that the Eastern European countries have won freedom but they are far from enjoying genuine democracy and smoothly running economies. To achieve these objectives, political leaders must not confuse the goal with the ways leading to it and must choose adequate means.[3]

We must rid ourselves of the delusion that economically backward countries must first strengthen their financial situation and then achieve democracy. Globalization of social change and the growing interdependence of nations rule out the view of the road to democracy as a narrow path where the people follow in one line in the footsteps of their predecessors, that is follow the same recipes and models. However, for all their diversity and specifics, the processes unfolding in Eastern Europe require a unified analytical treatment.

It should not be overlooked that no other field of technology has recently influenced the conditions of life, way of thinking and system of perception of man so strongly and universally, as audio and visual technology which is developing at a lightning speed. The electronic media exercise a strong influence on modern society, filling in leisure time and recreating energy. They inform, teach, educate and entertain and affect the frame of mind, world view and culture of society.

The mass media play a prominent role in the processes of cultural integration or disintegration of nations. Just as radio broadcasting assimilates the language as its main instrument and, by transforming it to a certain extent, presents it as a national standard, television assimilates and modifies collective rites. It would be ill-considered to say that television is a place of worship of modern society and that people learn of real values from 'the Big Brother' rather than from parents or educators. One can hardly share the contention that television contributed to the 'exterritoriality' of the person and that the electronic mass media have eroded the close link between the location of man and access to information (incidentally, this charge is also made against literature and the press).

In practice people often use new technologies and new forms of culture to reassert old customs. Visions of new worlds and new horizons through the agency of national and international broadcasting are used, as a rule, to reassert the old views and beliefs. And yet, broadcasting provides new forms of preserving the old and creating new customs which attract as large an audience as the whole of society. Live reports from the site of events about reforms in Eastern Europe show that the reporters give up any claim to objectivity and advocate national ideas. Recent events have placed in doubt the conclusions of many Sovietologists that television is a powerful instrument of the integration process and that national television usurps the role of protector of national heritage.

Television has the power of national unification but, as in the case of the USSR, it arouses the indignation of people on the outskirts of the centralized state. Both in the USSR and Eastern European countries the limited efficacy of the public systems of mass communications media was accounted for by the widening gap between the claims to national pride and unity made by the semi-official news agencies and the feelings and national traditions of the people who treated these statements, as a rule, with apathy and cynicism.

In the field of culture the media are regarded not only as a means of delivery of culture to the consumer but also as a technical and aesthetical factor, without which and outside of which the culture of the 20th Century cannot exist. Possessing artistic and

information value, the media develop in accordance with the laws of art and, in spite of their young historical age, are trying to be equal to the age-long traditions of development of spiritual wealth.

If there is a problem of communication between cultures, it is inseparably linked with the problem of culture as a means of communication. How, by what means and in what forms mass communication is effected in the framework of a certain cultural medium depends on the communication mechanisms at the level of transmittal of cultural messages, mechanism of recording and re-evaluation of past culture in the historic and present time of its existence. This process of formation of the cultural communication system is not yet complete but in the long term it may become a universal system.

The educational and cultural role of the media was recognized by many leading figures in science and culture. Replying to the question as to how to adapt art to the radio and the radio to art, Bertold Brecht said: "The main thing is to make use of both art and the radio, subordinating them to purely pedagogical purposes."[4] Pointing out the influence of television on the coming generations, sociologist K. Popper said the same thing: "For a child TV becomes part of his world. He may or may not learn to distinguish between the real world and the illusory television world... But it is almost an insoluble task not to allow oneself on an emotional plane to take seriously what is shown on television."[5] The scientists agree that television can contribute to the development of our civilization or destroy it.

Traditionally, television performs three main functions: information, education and entertainment. The question is how these functions are allocated on the air, what predominates and what is discriminated against. Today, cultural and moral pluralism gains strength in the Eastern European mass media and the interests and habits of viewers and listeners continue to diverge. Increased leisure (often accounted for not by technical progress but by the growing unemployment), diversification of interests, differences in morals, expectations and tastes of various groups have led to the fragmentation of the mass audience. The distinctive feature of television audiences in Eastern European countries in the 1990s is their instability: the viewers do not hesitate to switch from channel

to channel in search of 'their programmes'. According to various researchers, only half the dwellers of big cities in Eastern Europe watch television programmes to the end. The other half switches to other channel within the first ten minutes of the beginning of the show.

Another important trend is a considerable change in the age structure of the population. Socio-political and economic instability in Eastern Europe at the end of the 20th Century has led to a decrease in the birth-rate. The audiences began to grow older and considerable adjustments are required in the programme policies. Children remain one of the largest segments of television viewers. According to estimates, every week they spend 16 hours in winter and 12 hours in summer watching television. All these factors make it necessary for the television and radio companies to set a new task – to find the audience for each of their programmed. To accomplish this task they must be sensitive to the cultural trends in society and social changes and respond to them in their broadcasting policies.

In this context, of some interest is the study of programmes on Russian television made recently by sociologists in Moscow. The data they received, however incomplete, give an idea of the priorities of Russian television viewers.

In terms of the general audience of television viewers, there is a steady tendency of growth of entertainment programmes (two-thirds of television time) with a fairly high percentage (about one-fourth of television time) of socio-political and information broadcasts (reflecting the high level of politization of Russian society). All other genres, including culture and education, account for less than 10%, and this in the morning and late at night when the number of viewers is the lowest.[6] These figures speak for themselves, if we take into account that the time devoted weekly to television by an average person in the CIS member countries between the 1960s and 1980s increased more than ten-fold[7] and is continuing to rise due to the universal spreading of video and cable TV

Based on the foregoing, it is not difficult to compute a formula of television success for an abstract channel with the largest audience. The formula prescribes simple rules: give up cultural, educational and journalistic programmes, restrict the showings of

popular science television films to travel films and open doors as wide as you can to soap operas, feature films, all kinds of shows and the news.

What will happen if everyone abides by this formula of success? Raising the ratings of programmes at all costs (this strategy will inevitably be chosen by commercial channels) will result in squeezing out many television genres designed for small audiences. The first to be hit will be educational broadcasts and programmes about art the ratings of which do not, as a rule, exceed two to four percent.

Is the figure too high or too low? Neither, considering the circumstances. The audience of a theater play filmed and shown on television is hundreds and thousands of times that of the theater itself. A differentiated approach to national cultural traditions in television programming which was practised in Poland, for example, makes it possible to increase the television audience to 15-17%. With the further inevitable growth of the number of television channels (this trend will persist) the audience of each of them will decline rapidly. And then the same two to four percent will look much more impressive than today.

At the same time in countries such as Russia or Bulgaria, where they have many cultural programmes on television they are watched only by 5% of viewers, that is one-eighth of those who watch cinema films, one-fifth of those who watch television news and even less than those who watch commercials.[8]

Referring to reasons for this shift in favor of entertainment in Eastern European countries, Polish producer Zanussi points out that in the past people in Russia and other countries of Eastern Europe devoted more time to reading and going to the theater because they did not have normal freedom while they had a lot of free time. But now they have much freedom but little money. The feeling of depression and tiredness leaves them no other choice but 'watching the most primitive shows'.[9] It is not accidental that the endless serials – soap operas – are compared with the worn down bedroom slippers. The audience's preference for them can be easily accounted for because the worse the economic, social and political situation in the country, the stronger the compensatory function of the media makes itself felt. The mass audiences flee from the harsh realities of life to care-free entertainment (it

should be recognized that the early interest in the productions of this kind appearing on the television market of the CIS countries has fallen off a bit because the audiences are 'overfed' with these programmes).

The change of interest of the audiences in television in general and in specific programmes in particular should be appraised in this context. The syndrome of universal distrust has spread to television and the radio, only 25% of Russian citizens trust them.'[10] In other words, the boundless trust of the audiences in television as a mass encyclopedia of cultural life stimulating an interest in knowledge and the taste for art has changed to passive acceptance of entertainment.

Some people rarely watch television because they are well informed, preoccupied with their professional activity and can afford to see a live show. But for most viewers television is the main and not infrequently the only way of access to culture and knowledge. Characteristically, the main consumers of cultural and educational programmes do not belong to the category of well-educated viewers. They constitute a permanent television audience (these are mostly aged people, predominantly women, townspeople and villagers). Studies of the tastes and habits of these categories of viewers, skilful combination of conflicting interests of the audience and, most important, the content of cultural and educational programmes are the key to their success or failure. The so-called popularization of culture on television is often a losing game because it divests culture of its unique charm and attractiveness and does not stimulate independent analysis and criticism.

Discussion of the cultural criteria of television and radio broadcasting is often conducted on diametrically opposed lines: either television and the radio are regarded as the carriers of culture, regardless of the content of the programmes or only the programmes featuring artists, actors and writers are listed among cultural actions. In this context, it seems to be appropriate from the methodological point of view to use the recommendations of experts of the Council of Europe who suggest that cultural programmes should provide information about cultural events; promote a cultural or artistic event; disseminate this event among the

viewers by audio and visual means in comprehensible form; and create an artistic value in its own right typical of television. [11]

During the past two years, the division of air-time between commercial television and radio broadcasting stations has been almost completed in Eastern Europe. The preceding period of a steep rise in the number of participants in this business is over. The present stage is characterized by increased competition and struggle for survival. The actual situation did not confirm the hopes for getting high dividends from advertising, which, according to some estimates, can provide funds for only one-third of operating television and radio companies in the Czech Republic, for one example. For this reason, foreign investments made earlier in this sphere are dwindling. It goes without saying that in these conditions cultural and educational programmes with a relatively low rating fall victim first.

The financial situation of state-owned television and radio companies is typical of CIS members. Since the state sources guarantee at best only about half the minimum budget of the television and radio companies (in practice they often fail to do so) and 80% of finds are used to pay for communications services, there are virtually no funds left for broadcasting proper. [12] The enlistment of services of commercial entities to finance public channels transforms them into quasi public and quasi commercial companies which pursue the policy of financing culture and education from 'the left over budget funds', undermining the morale of their workers.

The situation can only be changed through a serious revision of the policy of financing of public television and radio broadcasting and elaboration of the strategy of state companies as an institution maintaining the unity of the nation, its culture and spirit. The specialization of channels of public television and the winning by each of them of its own more or less permanent audience is one of the ways of breaking the deadlock. The experience of a few independent non-commercial channels offering low-rating programmes (of the ARTE type in France) is very interesting in this respect, although the stance of the opponents of this initiative is paradoxical. They believe that "in this way the major state channels are invited to free themselves from the burden of cultural programmes''. [13]

And yet the main requisite of raising the role of television and radio in performing their cultural and educational functions is the elaboration of a clear-cut conception of the state (public) cultural and educational channel, improvement of the quality of audience-oriented cultural programmes and enlistment of the services of the leading authors, producers, well-known actors, prominent scholars, critics and specialists for creating these programmes.

State of Broadcasting in Eastern Europe

To identify how to increase the contribution of the electronic mass media to the preservation and proliferation of culture and improvement of the educational level of audiences, it is necessary to examine in detail the status of television and radio broadcasting in Eastern Europe in the mid-1990s.

It is common knowledge that television never looks the way society wants to see it and yet, it always looks as a replica of society. Perhaps, it is for this reason that the main feature of the present state of television in Eastern European countries is its critical situation. The first sign is the lack of understanding of its role in modern society. In the years of perestroika (restructuring), television was a destructive force in society; it crumbled the old foundations, dogmas and stereotypes. Unfortunately, today, having accumulated its destructive power, television cannot identify itself as a stabilizing and constructive force. What is it supposed to do at the present stage? Lead and shape public consciousness and direct it in the interest of progress and society? Or simply register the situation in the public mind and inform the country's population of what is going on in various segments of society? Or, perhaps, television should follow in the wake of public consciousness, that is to say not to influence it in any way but merely cater to its calls? An avalanche of questions of fundamental importance has swept the mass media but clear-cut answers have not yet been given to them.

Another sign of the crisis situation is the feeling that television is self-sufficient as a public institution. that it is a value in itself which exists outside society, as it were. Hence the appearance of programmes of purely aesthetical orientation employing exclusively the technical facilities of television but lacking in con-

tent. Still another group of crisis phenomena results from the lack of understanding by the state of the status, role and ways of development of the mass media, including television and radio. There are no clearly formulated laws or legislative acts related to television; no priorities are set in economic policies in this field. Hence chaos and spontaneity, a sort of Brownian movement in the turbulent development of the electronic mass media.

The crisis in transmission of television and radio signals has come to a head. The 'heavy earth-light air' conception adopted at an early stage of development of telecasting in Eastern European countries provided for the transmission of the signals not via satellites but with the aid of the ground network of radio-relaying stations. As a result of this decision, up to 80% of funds, sometimes even more, are spent to deliver television signals to the audience. At the same time the signals can be received only on two state channels in CIS member countries. These channels are used not only by national but also regional state television companies, of which there are more than 90 in Russia alone. In remote regions where access to culture is difficult local broadcasters suspend those cultural and educational programmes which are transmitted on national channels during prime time. Instead of them, regional studios relay local programmes which are, as a rule, of poor quality and commercially-oriented.

Now a few words about the crisis in understanding national and supranational interests in the cross-border information space. What is the essence of these interests? Is Russia, for example, interested in transmitting television signal only across its territory or beyond it (as was the case in the past)? To what extent are the ex-Soviet republics and other countries of Eastern Europe interested in receiving Russian programmes? National companies in the present CIS members were very much dependent on programmes from Moscow. When they gained their sovereignty and, as a consequence, the right to use the air in full independently, these states faced the situation where their potential was clearly insufficient to fill in the air with their products.

Another characteristic feature of the state of television and radio in this part of the old world is the swift development and emergence on the television and radio markets of private broadcasting and programme-producing commercial organizations and

their tough competition with state television and radio broadcasting companies for the audience.[14] The early 1990s saw explosive changes in video and cable television technology which seriously influenced the structure of leisure of people in Eastern European countries.

On the whole, we share the view of many experts that the electronic mass media in Eastern Europe have wakened up after years of lethargy and are now in permanent search for new ways to the future.[15] In this context, it is extremely important to see how cultural and educational functions can be performed in the situation of the general crisis of the mass media in this region.

For example, at present the specialized Russian Universities Channel shoulders a great load of work in Russia performing cultural and educational functions. Popular science, language teaching and artistic programmes on this channel take up to 45% of air time and children's programmes about 20%. The maximum audience reached by this channel is more than 40 million people (European part of the Russian Federation).[16]

The efficiency of the channel is not yet high. The typical ratings of most of its programmes amount to one or two percent and the maximum ratings do not exceed four percent. This is due to the acute shortage of funds for the production of programmes, failure to broadcast at prime time and the outdated structure and inefficiency (as a consequence of inadequate financing) of its permanent professional personnel.

It is noteworthy that, at the writing of this chapter the government of Russia, under the heavy pressure of commercial and political lobbies, was considering at least four projects of liquidating this sole cultural and educational channel and turning it into a commercial company under the pretext that it was too costly for the state budget. A similar situation arises in connection with Orpheus, the only national radio channel of classical music, which has recently been awarded a prize by UNESCO for its activity.

The popular educational programme is telecast on the first channel of Bulgarian national television in the morning, and there are also a number of cultural and educational programmes on the national radio. In its 18-hour programme for the audience of 3.5 million people, the Khristo Botev channel presents the arts, litera-

ture, music and discussion topics for listeners of different social and age groups. The specialized *Orpheus* programme is devoted to classic art. The specialized popular science *Znaniye* programme (four hours on the air daily) is a sort of radio university dealing with humanities, natural sciences and foreign languages.

The Radio Bartok national programme in Hungary is a literary and musical channel for intellectuals broadcasting predominantly classical music. The state radio of Hungary is on the air for 700 hours per week. It allocates 28% of its time to classical music, 27% to light music and 5% to literary programmes. Educational programmes take up 13% of the time on the national television channel of Hungary which still leads in popularity.

Many specialized television channels, including those mentioned above, assume that the complexity and importance of scientific and cultural subjects should not rule out the employment of virtually all genres and creative endeavor available to modern television. Complicated problems can be brought home to viewers not only by the learned lecturers. Educational channels make strenuous efforts therefore to secure material assistance which they need to produce feature films on culture, law, economics, popular science and entertainment shows.

A new project announced in January 1995 is an excellent example of international cooperation in using the media for educational purposes in Eastern Europe. This project in the framework of the New European Initiative includes radio courses in English and Russian which will be broadcast by the World Service of the BBC and radio stations in Eastern Europe. These programmes will be supplied with visual aids, such as textbooks and audio cassettes, which will be reproduced on location to make them available to all who want to study English, from those already employed to those who are looking for a job, from housewives to workers and students. Radio courses will be issued in 19 languages of Central and Eastern Europe. The Russian *Radio-1* radio station and national radio networks of Ukraine and Belorussia have already started broadcasting them.

At this stage of transition in the social and economic development of Eastern European countries, it is important to earmark priority actions in culture and education on the channels of the

mass media and implement them in concrete programmes at regional and inter-regional levels. In versatile modern Europe there is an organic need for a European public forum for discussion, exchange of opinion and promotion of cultural and educational initiatives outside the framework of purely state projects, For instance, there is an interesting idea of creating an all-European educational channel. In this context, discussion should be focused on the specific role of this channel in its relationships with national, state television and radio broadcasting companies and on linguistic, technical and financial problems.

Among other examples are the initiatives of the International Television Congress of CIS Countries in Kiev (October 1994) which spoke in favor of launching an international channel of satellite broadcasting under the motto "Culture Via TV" and the proposal of Cable Plus, a major Czech cable television company, for creating a union of cable television of Eastern Europe to work out the principles and co-ordinated actions in the field of legislation, technology and financing of cable television. In pursuance of these ideas the European Broadcasting Union may be requested to set up an all-European channel, *Euroculture*, on the models of *Eurosport* and *Euronews* television channels which already exist and enjoy popularity.

Some Proposals for Enhancing Educational and Cultural programmes

The activity of the European Union also provides some opportunities for cooperation. In a special programme for Eastern European countries, it emphasized the support of cultural integration and preservation of cultures of small peoples as priority matters. Taking into account the whole spectrum of these problems, UNESCO could work out a special programme to encourage the cultural and educational functions of the mass media in Eastern Europe, exchanges and joint production of television and radio programmes on cultural and educational subjects. At the same time we know from experience that it is advisable to avoid programmes of global scope and concentrate on a limited but

well-prepared number of pilot projects in the framework of selected countries or at a regional level.

In the framework of these projects special studies of these processes could be made in countries on the way to economic change and opportunities for using modern technology of the mass media for recording and preserving the works of national and cultural heritage.

A workshop with the participation of experts of major European public television and radio broadcasting companies organized with the assistance of UNESCO could be a stage in the implementation of this programme. The main purpose of this workshop would be to inform the participants from Eastern Europe of the principal demands (thematic, technical, relating to creativity, form and content) made on scientific, educational and cultural programmes of developed countries in East and West. It would also be expedient to create an international television market under the auspices of UNESCO and hold a festival of feature films and educational programmes. The setting up in Eastern European countries of experimental television and radio studios producing cultural programmes could be part of the programme.

Worthy of note are the proposals for creating joint television programmes (for the purpose of improving quality and cutting back costs of production) dealing with gaining knowledge of universal human values and studies of problems, such as 'Media Without Borders', 'Media and Democracy' and the like. Summarizing the proposals mentioned above, it is important to find the sources of financing such programmes and studies so that they would not become projects like that of *Route de rêve*.

Being aware that it is impossible for UNESCO to undertake this job owing to its limited resources, emphasis should be made on using the broad contacts and influence of this Organization to arrange the 'marriage' of the national sources of financing to the potential foreign investors. In this context, it is important to take into account the financial potential of fairly strong and numerous private commercial enterprises in Eastern Europe which take an interest in sponsoring cultural activities. Assistance to these initiatives through the agency of national commissions and their inclusion in the system of contacts with international funds, associations and other non-governmental organizations of the

UNESCO system would stimulate these activities with the assistance of state appropriations for culture and education.

It also seems likely that the high professional level and international prestige of Russian and other cultures of Eastern Europe may encourage major foreign firms and banks, especially those which already co-operate with Eastern European countries, to join in financing large-scale prestigious projects. Being apprehensive of making considerable investments in the economy of these countries, foreign companies are more willing to invest in culture not only in pursuit of profit but also for the sake of prestige. Support of these generous initiatives by UNESCO and other international organizations of the UN system and co-ordination of activities between them and such bodies as the Council of Europe, Nordic Council and European Union are first priority tasks.

Under the auspices of UNESCO, authoritative recommendations could be made to the governments of Eastern European countries concerning the development and optimal use of the mass media potential in culture and education. It is possible even now to make an attempt at formulating the basic outlines of these recommendations. The states must undertake to institute or improve independent non-profit, non-commercial bodies which would draw up and disseminate on the national scale programmes dealing with national and world culture and programmes of an educational character. Profit motivation should be eliminated from this type of mass media activity. It must be financed from the state budget, public funds or by conducting special television subscriptions.

Recommendations could be made to government authorities in Eastern Europe that, in the course of their work on drafting and improving the legislative basis of television and radio broadcasting, they should provide for the standards and mechanism to make it binding on commercial companies to allocate part of their time to cultural and educational programmes. This could be made a condition of licensing. Another option is a state order. A third option is the introduction of tax cuts for those producers of television products who specialize in creating scientific, cultural and educational programmes and for those broadcasters who transmit them.

One reliable technique for enhancing the cultural and educational functions of the mass media, which is badly used in Eastern European countries, is to advertise cultural and educational programmes more efficiently and in greater detail in periodicals and specialized publications. The preparation by television companies of material announcing these programmes should be included in the state order and financed from the budget.

Broadcasting organizations in CIS members operate in a legal vacuum and this is a serious hindrance to the activity of television and radio companies. The federal law on television and radio broadcasting adopted in Russia in 1995 will have to bridge this gap. The law says that the state "shall promote in every way the development of television and radio broadcasting with a view to widely disseminating education and culture, protecting public mores and morals" (Article 1); "creating the requisites for preserving and developing national culture; ensuring cultural and aesthetical development, disseminating and propagating cultural values" (Article 6). On the basis of these objectives, the state undertakes to resort to licensing and other legal policies in order "to encourage the production of television and radio programmes for purposes of aesthetical education of television viewers and radio listeners, their involvement in the spiritual wealth of domestic and world culture and development of creativity and the artistic taste" (Article 27). Moreover, the state television and radio companies are obliged to disseminate cultural and educational programmes lasting from 30 to 80 minutes without interrupting them by commercials.[17]

It is noteworthy that the obligation to disseminate cultural and educational programmes is applied to every license holder engaged in transmitting television and radio programmes. If this approach is extended to cover private companies in the future, as is the case in a number of European countries, culture and education will be assured of legal support.

On the other hand, it is impossible to cultivate morality in the mass media exclusively by legal action to make them contribute to world culture; it is also impossible to achieve this by using force. One of the possible solutions is the adoption of a professional moral code for editors and producers in the television and radio network in the first place. High morality of the

people working in the mass media which disseminate culture is based on their awareness and strict fulfillment of a number of commandments formulated by the historian and writer Paul Johnson at the Twelfth World Conference of Mass Media.[18] They include the requirement that the mass communication media must be perfectly aware of their main function: to educate people by communicating information. This is their moral calling and their main contribution to the improvement of world culture.

Conclusion

To sum up, it should be noted that the mass communication media in Eastern Europe are torn by contradictions today. One of the main problems is the lack of interest of society in culture. It cannot be solved by increasing the number of television or radio programmes pursuing cultural and educational purposes.

Public opinion polls in Eastern Europe confirm that orientations in the world of culture are not very important for public attitudes which have changed radically. Today the tastes of the majority and the needs of art have very little in common. In recent years television has taken steps to meet the demands of mass audiences. But the quality of its cultural programmes deteriorated because they were oriented to the average viewers and average standards. It seems that this trend can only be checked or held back with a thoroughly elaborated strategy, taking into account the tastes and educational level of the audience, employing different approaches and special language in cultural and educational telecasts.

Participation of the state in financing television and radio broadcasting will be its contribution to culture, regardless of the ratings and revenues from cultural programmes. The need for maintaining a potent state television is dictated by the national interests and state policy and the tasks of cultivating aesthetic tastes and protecting public morals. Modern society, e.g. in Russia, cannot adhere to these principles by relying exclusively on commercial television. The problem is that the process of transformation of the state mass communication media, complicated as it is, should unfold hand in hand with the development of many independent commercial companies. Provision of normal

conditions of work both for the public and private broadcasting channels, elaboration of relevant normative acts regulating their coexistence and taking into account the interests of culture and education are the major components of the cultural policy of the state. The educational functions of television and radio broadcasting are especially topical in the context of complicated social processes making themselves felt in the post-Communist society. To educate people is to withdraw them from the state of impotence and help them understand what they themselves and society as a whole are capable of. This task defines the ever growing role of the mass media in exercising a positive influence on the younger generation. Television is part of a person's world and its influence can be decisive for the intellectual, emotional and moral development of teenagers. The maxim that modern children have three parents - mother, father and television - is very appropriate here.

It is difficult to speak about the prospects of the cultural and educational functions of the mass media because the socio-political changes in a number of countries of this region are unpredictable. However, the general trend of development of communicative processes towards ever greater differentiation reflects the cultural and ethical situation in the era of the scientific and technological revolution. The main distinction of the new situation in culture and communication is that it is in constant change. In all appearances, the progress of science and technology will lead to new interactive artistic communication which may provide a basis for a fundamentally new type of art. The highest form of dissemination of culture will be an art inalienably linked with the mass media. This is a tendency in the foreseeable future. The progress of society and culture complicates communication in the field of culture, stimulating development of the mass media and emergence of new systems meeting the highest standards of complexity of transmitted information which must be compact, vivid and easy to understand. These modified mass media will exist in modern culture not as vehicles of information but as self-contained artistic systems.

The activity of the mass media in Eastern Europe has brought about changes in the functions of culture and can help solve a number of urgent problems in this field. The artistic productions

of the mass communications media – both retrospective (updating classical cultural heritage) and prospective (creative) – creates unprecedented educational opportunities and brings forth the tendency to communication with art on an individual basis. The development of technical and technological facilities of the mass media enhances this tendency, turning it into a regular feature of cultural practice, an urge for culture of great numbers of people. In this context, it can be assumed that the proportion of cultural and educational functions of the mass communications media will grow and they will serve as the integrating and guiding lights in the complex social and economic situation in the countries under consideration.

All-round assistance to the development of cooperation between the countries of this region and on a European scale and increased contacts at the international level in this sphere of activity of the mass media can be co-ordinated and enhanced with the cooperation of UNESCO and other international organizations. The unity of European culture and civilization, and the need for preserving the European cultural space provide a basis for launching concrete projects and programmes in this area of international cooperation.

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CHAPTER 6 Broadcasting Liberalization: Implications for Educational and Cultural Functions of Broadcasting in Sub-Saharan Africa

Charles Okigbo
Executive Co-ordinator
African Council for Communication Education
Nairobi, Kenya

Introduction

The modern mass media of radio, television, newspapers and magazines came to Africa at the instance of European colonialists. But even before their introduction, Africans had a plethora of mechanisms for communicating among themselves. For instance, Egypt had a well-developed system of writing and printing pre-dating modern civilisation, and the Tiv people of Nigeria could use the horn to send coded messages in relay manner to far-flung villages. Across the continent today, the modem mass media are used hand in hand with the resilient traditional media that have survived years of relegation to only subservient positions.

The colonial governments and the settler communities in Africa appreciated the value of the modern mass media, and thus did not allow any significant delay in introducing them to Africa. The BBC began broadcasting in 1922, and two years later (in 1924) broadcasting began in South Africa. Three years later (in 1927) it started in Kenya. This was about the time that the first American radio stations to seek regular public listenership made their bow.

The BBC was instrumental in setting up many radio broadcasting stations in the territories controlled by the British. The French had an equally extensive involvement that was coloured by two factors. First, the French cultural policy of assimilation needed radio as an instrument for its propagation, and secondly, the geographical terrain of French colonies that stretched contiguously from Gabon in the south to Morocco in the north made it attractive for an entire series of relay stations to be established.

Not even in the establishment of television stations did Africa lag very far behind the rest of the world. Though experimental television broadcasting began in the United States in the 1920s, it was not until 1941 that commercial broadcasting was started. Colour broadcasting was started in 1953 (Emery and Emery, 1978). The first television station in tropical Africa was established in the Western Region of Nigeria in 1959. From then on, it spread like wild fire. In Kenya, Alex Rothney established the Heath Robinson Television Station in 1960 (Abuoga and Mutere, 1988) and the Eastern Nigerian Television was established in the same year. Between 1960 and 1965 television was introduced in many countries of sub- Saharan Africa, among which are: Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zaire, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal. Those countries that could not immediately join the bandwagon, have recently done so now, among which the most recent are Cameroun (1985), Chad (1987) and mainland Tanzania (1992). Radio and television in sub-Saharan Africa have served the dual functions of extending traditional communications and introducing innovative new technologies.

Liberalization of Broadcasting

Many countries of sub-Saharan Africa are experiencing a 'renaissance' of political independence. While the first political independence was granted (albeit unwillingly) by the colonial regimes, this second independence is being wrested from the hands of military regimes and despotic civilian governments. This wind of democratic changes that is sweeping through African countries has resulted in, and also benefited from increasing cases of media pluralism. The relationship between multipartyism and media pluralism is intricate and it is not easy to say which leads to the other. In some cases demands for multiparty structures have led to media pluralism and licensing of private broadcasting. In other cases, the licenses were granted by one-party or even military regimes.

The movement for deregulating broadcasting and thereby allowing private entrepreneurs to own and operate radio and television stations has gained some strength and persistence in sub-Saharan Africa. A number of sub-Saharan African countries have

undertaken studies or set up commissions on broadcasting liberalization, and many of them have already granted broadcasting licenses to private entrepreneurs. To cite a few examples, Mali has more than 15 operational private radio stations; the National Broadcasting Commission of Nigeria (NBC) has granted broadcasting licenses for one radio and six television stations, as well as 11 cable/satellite retransmission stations that are now fully operational.

A recent study of private broadcasters in Eastern and Southern Africa found what may be a general pattern all over sub-Saharan Africa, namely,

1. private broadcasting licenses are often granted to individuals with close connections to government;
2. these new commercial stations broadcast a restricted diet of popular music and religion; and
3. since they are dependent on advertising revenue, it is often not worth their-while to broadcast in the full range of national languages or to seek an audience outside the main cities (Article 19, 1995: 1).

The new independent stations will not live up to what people expect of them if they are in reality owned by government officials. In Uganda, for instance, the editor of the government newspaper and the head of an intelligence agency are said to be director and partner respectively in the two existing radio stations. In Zambia, the Deputy Minister of Finance has been granted a license. In Kenya, the only alternative television station (Kenya Television Network) is owned by the ruling party, KANU. A second license for private television was granted to Stella-vision, a sister company of the *Weekly Review* magazine.

The on-going restructuring of broadcasting in Africa has resulted in a variety of pluralistic manifestations, not all of which are positive. As Bourgault (1995:99) has noted: "in some cases, 'pluralism' has meant more access by foreign owners to African audiences." Among the examples of foreign interests in the privitised airwaves are Radio France International, Africa No. 1, and BBC Afrique which now constitute radio broadcasting networks in Francophone Africa. The situation in Anglophone Africa is

less serious, but equally disturbing. The private stations in Uganda are believed to be partly owned by expatriates, and the Kenyan private television station (KTN) is now managed by a British journalist.

Despite the limitations of the new private stations in Africa, they portend great hopes for democracy, media freedom, social mobilization and subtle challenge to the monopoly of state-controlled broadcasting. Each individual country, and indeed individual station, has to address the challenges in the context of its understanding of the functions and responsibilities of private broadcasting.

Functions of Broadcasting

The educational and cultural functions of broadcasting in sub-Saharan Africa can be traced to the general structure and functions of human communication. The structure of communication within any society is a reflection of the cultural chains of power, play, education, socialization and marketing, among other vital human pre-occupations. Such a structure shows what is allowed, tolerated, or prohibited, as well as the relationships between individuals or groups. In essence, the structure delineates the functions of communication in society, within which parameters we can identify the functions of broadcasting in particular societies, e.g. sub-Saharan Africa.

General Functions

Noting how communication is a feature of life at every level of human societies, Lasswell (1972) identified the three key functions of communication as:

1. the surveillance of the environment, disclosing threats and opportunities affecting the value position of the community and of component parts within it;
2. the correlation of the component parts of society in responding to the environment; and
3. the transmission of the social heritage from one generation to the next.

These three functions underline the broad categories of communication use for education and culture, though they leave out the two other important functions of entertainment and economic promotion. Looking at it from the viewpoint of the individual rather than the society, Schramm (1972: 19) called communication "the great relating tool" that "relates individuals to each other, making it possible for groups to function and for societies to live together harmoniously. " Broadcasting is the supreme relational medium which, in spite of its mass audience appeal, allows individual members of the audience to develop a personal relationship with stations, programmes or even actors and actresses. Broadcasting is also central in the consideration of the two additional functions of communication i.e. entertainment and economic promotion.

Broadcasting in sub-Saharan Africa has lived up to its expectations with respect to the general functions of communication in society. All across the region, there is abundant evidence that both the old public and the emerging private stations have played significant roles in each of these areas: surveillance, correlation, cultural education, entertainment and economic promotion. The above uses can be bifurcated into educational and cultural functions, each of which has significant implications in the region.

Educational Functions

The electronic media have immense potentials for use as tools for improving both formal and non-formal education in sub-Saharan Africa. Their establishment during the colonial era was partly to facilitate the education of their audiences made up of local elites and foreigners who were in government or the private sector. From its earliest applications in Africa, public broadcasting was conceived as a vital tool for education in both formal school settings and the non-formal sector of general use. The earliest broadcasts incorporated school work and civics, intended to mobilize public opinion in support of the colonial governments and their policies.

For example, in the Gold Coast (Ghana), Governor Hudson, who is credited for his vision of public broadcasting, "intended that radio should be a tool for in-and-out-of-school education"

with the transmitter dedicating "half an hour each day to schools." Notably, the responsibility for this educational role of radio was reposed on the Educational Department (Ansah, 1985:2). In Governor Hudson's views, the educational benefits from the innovation of educational radio were not in doubt:

> *By means of this innovation, it will be possible to keep in direct touch with a widely scattered and influential body of teachers and with the adolescent school boy and girl. I have no doubt that this broadcast will be successful... and that it will have a wholesome and substantial effect on . . . teachers and school children, whom it is intended to reach (Hudson, 1939).*

The educational function of public broadcasting was not (and is still not) very far from its use in developing pro-government opinions and attitudes. The education of the school and general publics is usually expected to have a trickle-down or two-step flow effect on public opinion. Governor Hudson had rightly noted of his innovative educational radio programme that such contents are of "great value as a means of conveying information or urgent propaganda to an intelligent and level-headed section of the community which is capable of exercising a strong influence for good on public opinion" (Hudson, 1939). Hudson's sentiments and expectation of the early broadcasting operations were not restricted to the situation in Ghana. After all, his broadcasts were designed to go beyond Ghana, and in fact were reported to have been received in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa and East Africa.

In Nigeria, early radio was a tool for civic education in the hands of the colonial administrators. It was the misuse of the centrally-controlled radio that led to the establishment of the first television station in Nigeria, The colonial governor had refused the leader of the opposition, Chief Obafemi Awolowo the opportunity to defend his party against some allegations, and the Chief reacted by establishing WNBS/TV, even ahead of the Federal Government.

The First President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah (1965:3) was emphatic on the educational role of television when he remarked at the inauguration of Ghana Television that "Ghana's television will be used to supplement our educational programme and fos-

ter a lively interest in the world around us . . . Its paramount object will be education in the broadest and purest sense".

Educational programmes are difficult to classify, and will include broadcasts for in-school children, adult learners, and the general public. Also included are public information campaigns designed to educate listeners and viewers on the concepts and methods of social development. If we accept this expanded view of educational broadcasting, it will follow that many sub-Saharan African countries would have more than 20% of their airtime devoted to educational programmes, as UNESCO (1989) reported from its survey of educational radio in selected countries.

Educational broadcasting in Africa is fraught with difficulties, not only "because it generates turf wars between other ministries involved," as Bourgault (1995: 88) has noted, but also because of its potential as a political weapon and a transformational tool. Interested parties, such as church organizations, the government and professional bodies are all too eager to control the content of educational programmes. In some countries, the governments or ruling parties have established parastatals responsible for educational broadcasting, while in others, education units have been created within state broadcasting apparatus.

The educational use of radio was not lost on the French authorities who controlled broadcasting in the French territories of sub-Saharan Africa. The various relay stations that dotted Francophone tropical Africa had centrally produced educational programmes that were designed to elevate the knowledge level of the Africans who were expected to qualify for assimilation into French culture and civilization. To that extent, the focus of the French was more on the cultural functions of broadcasting.

Cultural Functions

Broadcasting by nature is an involving medium, and not surprisingly, the early public stations were given specific roles of disseminating cultural information. Nigeria's WNBS/TV became an instant success in its uniquely local programming content that reflected the rich wealth of Yoruba culture. It set an enviable example of cultural promotion which could not be matched by Federal Nigerian television when it was introduced a year later.

The content of early Nigerian television had much that reflected the positive aspects of African culture. Though the technology was imported, the early broadcasters tried to adapt cultural values and forms to fit the new medium. There were local drama presentations, folk dances, story telling and coverage of indigenous festivals. Not surprisingly, indigenous drama and other cultural forms have continued.

Though the pioneer broadcasting stations in Africa played significant roles as media for disseminating cultural information, some of them were not originally intended for the use of indigenous Africans. In Kenya, the interests and needs of the settlers were deemed more important than the cultural and educational needs of indigenous Africans. With independence, however, it became imperative to programme for the cultural needs of African audiences who enjoyed not only more political freedom but also stronger economic power which made radio and television sets more easily affordable.

Even in Francophone countries where the electronic media were used to promote assimilation, a new wave of Afro-cultural revolution found expression in increased local content, designed to promote the more positive aspects of African culture. Not only are there now more programmes in the local languages, but more importantly, different manifestations, symbols, and artefacts of African culture are now common items on the broadcast menu.

Culture is an evolving, and not a static phenomenon. Therefore, African culture as portrayed in the contemporary broadcast media ought to reflect contemporary developments. Such are evident in some television drama, music entertainment and discussion programmes. In their attention to their roles in education and culture, there is a remarkable difference between public and private broadcasting stations in tropical Africa, with the former having more serious content than the latter, which are driven more by the profit motive, competition for market share, and other elements of the free enterprise ideology.

The airwaves are supposedly owned by the public, whose interests deserve to be served by broadcast operators. The increasing liberalization of broadcasting will inevitably lead to more private stations, and ultimately increase the competitive atmosphere.

These factors will have many important implications for the educational and cultural functions of broadcasting.

Implications of Liberalization

Many political and social developments in sub-Saharan Africa exemplify the bandwagon effect whereby events in one country lead to similar developments in adjoining states. In the decade of the 1960s, it was political independence, which in many countries went hand in hand with the establishment of radio and television stations. The inheritors of political independence soon turned themselves into one-party despots which led to domino-style coups d'etat. Recently, the African region has been witnessing two simultaneous revolutions of multi-party democracy and media pluralism.

Broadcasting liberalization is one of the elements in the evolving structures of media pluralism. Though broadcasting came through government and thus has had a very long history of public service all across the region, it is increasingly becoming privatized in many countries which allowed private entrepreneurs to own and run their own stations. This will necessarily affect the roles of broadcasting within the contexts of education and culture.

Educational Functions

With regard to educational functions, the most obvious implication of broadcasting liberalization is the over-emphasis of the new private stations on profit, at the expense of the kind of educational content that Governor Hudson promoted in pre-independent Ghana. Whereas many public radio and television stations in the region have regular educational programmes for in-school listeners and viewers, the new private stations are directing their attention more to advertising targets.

The dominant strategy is entertainment-oriented programming which focuses on music for radio, and soap operas for television. In Nigeria, for example, the new private radio station, *Ray Power FM 100* has captivated the market with its music programmes. But for purposes of education, the state-owned stations

are still the best electronic schools, with the Enugu-based public station taking the prime position because of its "university of the air" programmes designed to lead to the award of diplomas to its distant learning students by the Institute of Management and Technology.

It is doubtful how long the existing public stations can continue to provide educational programmes or schools broadcasts in the face of ever-increasing competition from the emerging private stations. The long tradition of public broadcasting can be threatened by the commercially-oriented private stations, unless appropriate measures are taken to prevent this.

An illustration of the private radio stations in Africa today is *Radio Horizon-FM* in Burkina Faso. Licensed in 1990, the station is proving to be a model for other private operators. Though there is educational content, this is not as important to the programmers as the entertainment aspects. In the words of the President and Director General, Moustapha Thiombiano, "I set up this radio station to help the masses. I wanted to bring joy to radio" *(Topic*, 1995). Education is not completely left out, but it is obvious that the station's forte is the wide-open mix of music, languages, and programmes for all ages. As a result of the seeming success of *Horizon-FM*, the public station is adopting a more musically-oriented programming approach too. The net effect is that not only are the private stations not paying adequate attention to educational content, but more seriously, some public stations are now beginning to imitate the private stations.

Non-formal Education

The public stations in sub-Saharan Africa have been a reliable medium for public affairs and civic education, although they often reflect mostly the government or official view of current affairs. This tradition of non-formal education on public affairs may not be continued by the new private stations, many of which appear to be averse to serious civic content. The public stations have been the major channels for educating the people on such social issues as family planning, gender equality, agricultural development and even inter-ethnic harmony. The orientation to accept new development ideas has often entailed use of didactic

informal discussion, demonstration or dramatic entertainment formats. There is abundant evidence indicating that a great deal of learning and teaching has been made possible by both the serious and entertaining content of public stations, especially where the programmes are packaged for specific development objectives.

But with their eyes on profit, the new private stations in sub-Saharan Africa have not yet played any significant role in this important use of radio and television for public affairs, civics and development education. If the private stations continue with their present focus on music and pure entertainment, their listeners and viewers will be deprived of vital development knowledge, which the public stations usually provide.

International Affairs

What is the record of the new private stations with regard to international news coverage, and how does this compare with the performance of the public stations? Many of the public stations have been a ready source of international news for their audiences. Such news has often reflected the biases and diplomatic or ideological inclinations of the particular governments. This shortcoming notwithstanding, the stations have been found quite useful, except in those situations where they have been used as government megaphones. In such situations, the audience members supplement with international stations such as the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Voice of America and Radio France International.

The private stations have not been around long enough for us to have adequate comparative data, but there is reliable episodic evidence which shows that their attention to international affairs coverage leaves much to be desired. Because of cost considerations, and the questionable belief that their viewers and listeners do not care for international news, the private station operators have tended to have only minimal international news coverage.

A habitual listener to only the new private radio stations is likely go from month to month, without knowing the main international currents, unlike his/her counterpart who listens to the public stations. If the private stations do not increase their attention to educational and international affairs coverage, they will

cultivate a generation of radio and television 'idiots' ('radiots' and 'videots') who will be largely ignorant of both local and international current affairs issues.

Broadcasting, both in sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world, has not lived up to expectation, as a tool for creating international understanding. As the world increasingly becomes interdependent, "the suffering or the happiness of some can no longer be insulated from the quality of life of others on our planet" (Couloumbis and Wolfe, 1986:406). The problems of underdevelopment cannot be confined to only certain areas of the world.

An internationalist perspective of the problems of world development argues that unless these are shown to be capable of affecting the well-being of all humankind, they will not be cured; and if they are not cured, they will escalate and culminate in civil and international disasters, at the expense of all. Broadcasting has the potential to be a useful tool for enlightenment on international affairs and promoting international understanding. This is one of the challenges for the new private stations of sub-Saharan Africa.

Political Education

It is in the area of political education that the new private stations have the best chance to show their mettle. Because many of them are independent, and not owned or operated by governments or political parties, they have a better chance to be objective in their coverage of politics, and thereby provide the much needed political education which is necessary for the promotion and sustenance of democracy in Africa. But, as delegates to the 6th Conference of the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC) - held in Dakar, Senegal, in January 1995- learnt, the new private stations have not necessarily brought greater choice or even better programming. According to one participant, in some countries "with liberalized radio, a plethora of commercial stations have emerged, all adopting the same formula. The stations air a lot of imported music and other commercial trappings designed to attract advertisers" (Mwangi, 1995:6).

The poor record of the private stations in providing objective and balanced political education can be rationalized by their fear

of repression from government or their unwillingness to be associated with any group that is not pro-government. 'Opposition' stations are still a rarity in sub-Saharan Africa, and will be a very long time in coming, since the state broadcasting authority or the government is responsible for licensing private stations.

One of the challenges of private broadcasting in sub-Saharan Africa is for it to be a show case for objective, responsible and balanced coverage of politics, and avoid the political slogans that public stations have come to be associated with. According to the Burkinabe pioneer private station owner and operator Moustapha Thiombiano: "for thirty years, since most African states achieved independence, the predominance of political slogans on the radio over the free exchange of information and cultures has slowed down development and done a great deal of damage to the minds and ways of thinking of the African people" (Topic, 1995:36).

If Thiombiano and his fellow private station operators do not have a more positive and activist stand on political education, they will equally stand accused, 30 years from now, of squandering the opportunity to speed up development, and bring about an authentic political culture of sustainable democracy in Africa.

The private stations need to join hands with other social structures to promote political stability and encourage the nascent culture of political democracy. The private stations can help bring massive internalization of elementary democratic norms, and take the democratic movements to the grassroots. Political stability and democracy can only be sustainable if they are home grown. This is one of the tasks of the private stations to tackle.

Cultural Functions

Though the broadcast media came later than the print media in tropical Africa. they have become an integral part of the people. They are now 'extensions of the individuals and their communities. Radio has penetrated even the most remote villages in the region. Television's penetration and impact are not adequately captured in the empirical data of number of sets in use, or bought every year. Radio and television are cultural tools, and the recent arrival of private stations has many significant implications,

among which are cultural imperialism, Afro broadcasting, cultural pride and political stability.

Cultural Imperialism

The media, being so much part of our lives, are believed to exert some influence on our receiving cultures. This is made possible not only through programme content but also such other elements as journalistic practices, values and styles of presentation. To the extent that these influences are negative and foreign to African cultures, they constitute cultural imperialism. In Francophone countries of tropical Africa, the public broadcasting stations have been accused of "crusading for French culture" (Nyamnjoh, 1988). There is abundant evidence of "dependence on French companies, French equipment, French aid, and French experts." Even with school broadcasting, the intention is to promote the French language and culture.

The situation in Anglophone Africa is not as serious, but does show evidence of British influence. After all, the BBC was instrumental in the establishment of at least 15 public radio stations in tropical Africa, and the BBC model of public service broadcasting has been adopted in many Anglophone countries. However, the critical question is how will the introduction of private broadcasting change the unwholesome foreign influences on African broadcasting and culture? The new private stations are not champions of African culture, nor have they shown themselves to be averse to foreign cultural content. In fact, because of cost factors and the difficulty in having local productions, many private stations are more guilty of importing foreign programmes than the public stations.

All across the continent, there is a tendency for increased programme importation to go hand-in-hand with increased entertainment programming. According to Bourgault (1995: 106), "today, in many African countries, imported fare consists of over 50 to 70 percent of the programming." Among the imported programmes are reruns of U.S. serials such as *Dallas*, *Dynasty* and *The Jeffersons* which are now competing with South American and Australian soap operas, most notably *Lady of the Rose* and *Neighbors.*

There is a marked absence of an indigenous African broadcasting aesthetic, because of the adoption of Western production and presentation formats. Public broadcasting has been constrained by an insidious culture of political patronage which adulated politicians and government officials, and discouraged any unfamiliar creative methods. The expectation that private broadcasting will overcome these constraints has not yet been realized, but there is still hope for positive change in the direction of more emphasis on aspects of indigenous African culture.

Afro Broadcasting

Broadcasting technology is universal, but the technique and content need to be adapted to reflect the cultures of the broadcasters and audience. In sub-Saharan Africa, there is an uncoordinated attempt by local broadcasters to incorporate elements of traditional communication into broadcasting formats. Thus in Nigeria, radio and television are being used extensively for announcing deaths and funerals, while in Cameroon they are employed to send personal messages into the hinterland. Because these are paid announcements, the private stations will maximize their use.

There is need for more traditional elements of African culture to be incorporated into contemporary broadcasting. In many parts of the world, radio and television are being integrated into the evolving cultures of the peoples. In Africa, more of the rich culture of the people needs to be incorporated into contemporary broadcasting. For broadcasting to make its mark in African cultural development, it should be Africanized by being made to incorporate more elements of authentic African culture.

African countries can make a significant contribution to the development of broadcasting in the world, especially with regard to media operations at the grass roots level. Though community media are not an African invention, the typical communitarian nature of many African societies has added unusual colour to many grass roots media projects in Africa. Among these are the Karate Kids project in East and West Africa, the Radio Listening Clubs of Zimbabwe, the Wonsuom Clubs of Ghana and the Small Systems Video Technology of the University of Zambia. A

new generation of African broadcasters, using indigenous African creative forms and building on Africa's traditional oral communication media, can expand the horizons of radio and television, as tools for enlightenment and entertainment.

Cultural Pride

The international media, especially those of the West, have been accused of projecting a mostly negative image of Africa through their unbalanced coverage that focuses on negative news developments. Recent news coverage has tended to portray Africa as a continent stricken by conflicts, chaos, famine, poverty and political instability. Such coverage fuels the pervasive feeling that the continent is doomed and incapable of significant progress. The ultimate result is the pervasive pessimism that is affecting Africans, Africanists and members of the world community.

African journalists and political leaders have not done much to counter Afro pessimism, nor have African media been used in a systematic manner to project a more positive (but not necessarily propagandistic) image of the continent and its potentials for development. There is so much happening in Africa that deserves to be objectively covered in the African media. In the campaign for a more positive coverage of Africa, the private stations can play a useful role.

Some of the public broadcasting stations have not vigorously promoted African culture because they have been burdened by their colonial history, or constrained by the general reticent attitude of the people towards African culture. This is more the case in East than in West Africa. The new private stations could be at the vanguard of the movement to make Africans proud of their culture.

Major Actors

It is important to identify the key players in the new game of liberalized broadcasting in sub-Saharan Africa. The government is still the most critical actor since it is responsible (either directly through its authorizing ministry or indirectly through the license-granting commissions it creates) for the ultimate approval or dis-

approval of applications to establish private radio and television stations. As Article 19 found from its recent study of the media in Eastern and Southern Africa, most individuals who have been granted broadcasting licenses are pro-government business people or government officials.

The opposition parties in Kenya and the Catholic Church in Uganda may have to wait for a change of government before their applications for broadcasting license get a favorable response. The broadcast media are such powerful communication tools African governments are not too eager to put them in the hands of opposition politicians. Opposition politicians do not behave differently when the wheels of fortune turn them into government, as Zambians have learnt in President Chiluba's relationship with the media.

The second important actor is the group of private entrepreneurs who have been granted license to operate private stations. These entrepreneurs are usually not much different from government officials in political ideology or cultural orientation, and in many cases may be only proxies for politicians. This kind of situation tends to lessen the objective and critical uses of the new private stations as vanguards for educational and cultural change. Thus it is safe to conclude that even with many private stations licensed in sub-Saharan Africa, the more things change, the more they remain the same.

If there is going to be any significant change in the performance of alternative stations, this will most likely come from community broadcasters, who constitute the third group of actors in the arena. Some critics are of the opinion that it was the failure of public broadcasting that gave impetus to the demand by community action groups to be allowed to operate stations.

Community broadcasting takes various forms in different parts of the world. Whereas in Western countries it is seen as the voice of marginalized people, and in Latin America as the voice of people's revolution, in Africa it is still gathering strength before it becomes a significant movement. But even at this introductory phase, it has the force of community involvement and the potential to be more objective and critical than both private and public stations. Its potentials for use as tools for educational and cultural purposes are limited only by the imagination of the operators.

However, community broadcasting, more than its alternatives, can suffer from a schizophrenic complex about its mission in society, and this can detract from its effectiveness for educational and cultural purposes.

Conclusion

Both traditional and modern mass media have played very important roles in the overall development of sub- Saharan Africa, especially in education and culture. The broadcast media, though a later introduction than print, have never lagged behind as tools for providing surveillance of the environment, correlating the parts of the society, transmitting the cultural heritage, entertaining the people, and educating in both formal and non-formal settings.

The politics of the region has been affected in important respects by the broadcast media. The introduction of radio and television had a political ring to it, and their use as political tools has continued up to now, having been found to be strong weapons for political education and propaganda by colonial administrators, nationalist movement politicians, one-party rule despots, and most recently politician-advocates of multiparty rule. The emerging new politics of democracy and the increasing expectation of media use in promoting educational and cultural development are making new demands on broadcasting, especially in this age of growing numbers of private and community stations.

The new private stations have not given adequate attention to their educational functions through school broadcasts, civic education, news and political coverage. The emphasis on foreign music has not encouraged their full use in promoting African culture. Nor has the pro-centralist political bias of their operators permitted their objective and critical participation in promoting pro-democratic political development. These shortcomings notwithstanding, the future of broadcasting in sub-Saharan Africa is very bright.

Educational programmes on radio and television will ever be popular in Africa, as educational facilities increasingly become more inadequate, and modern communication technology

makes it easier to reach remote villages. The media's use in cultural development will also witness an upswing as radio and television in particular are called upon to be more proactive in the promotion of African culture and the counteracting of cultural imperialism. Liberalizing broadcasting increases the potential range of broadcast operators, and thus expands the opportunities for the stations to be used for educational and cultural development. Matching the opportunities with actual performance is the challenge for both the public and private stations in the era of broadcasting liberalization in sub-Saharan Africa.

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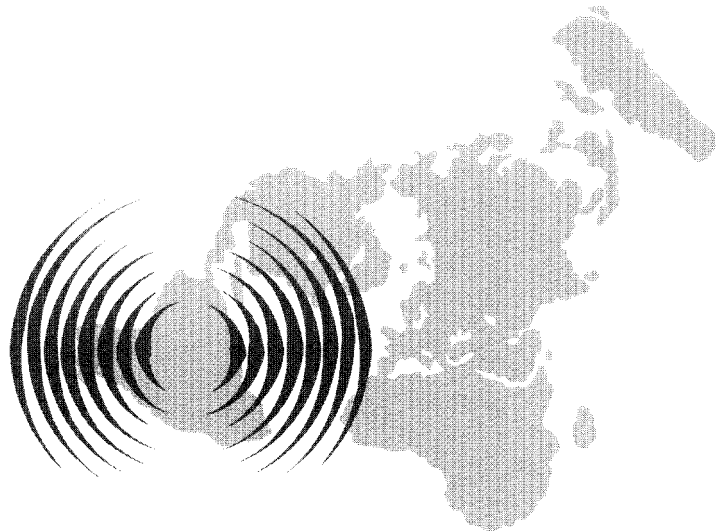
CHAITER 7 Latin America:
Community Radio and
Television as Public Service
Broadcasting[1]

Rafael Roncagliolo
President
World Association of
Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)
Lima, Peru

Introduction

It has been repeatedly stated, with good reason, that this century has been one of the shortest in history, beginning in 1914 with the First World War – or perhaps in 1917 with the Soviet Revolution - and ending with the fall of the Berlin wall and the fragmentation of Eastern Europe.

The above dates seem to be the political boundaries and coordinates of this 20th Century. Speaking in technological and cultural terms, however, the century began in 1896 with the simultaneous advent of radio and cinema: telecommunications and audiovisual communication. Mankind thus entered into its fourth communication galaxy, to use McLuhan's metaphor;[2] the first being the many thousands of years of vocal communication, the second a few thousand years of writing, and the third being five centuries of printing and books.

The fourth galaxy covers the last hundred years of electronic means of communication, probably destined to be succeeded by a new galaxy of bits and bytes, information technology, 'compunications' and information highways, whereby the home delivery of cultural goods via cable and telephone will end up replacing the culture consumed in specific places (theaters, universities, political meetings, polling centres).[3]

Primitive Models'

Private competition and advertising funding undoubtedly comprised the original model of organization of radiophonic activities, inaugurated in the United States with the 1912 Radio Act. The business began with the sale of receivers, rapidly covering the

sale of spots for promoting commodity trading and then expanding to the commercial promotion of fashionable music and the broadcasting of mass sporting and cultural events.

A second model was inaugurated on 30 October 1917 (according to the old Orthodox calendar), with the radio broadcasting station of the Russian People's Commissioners' Council. Like other media, the radio was expected to serve both the State and the Party. This form of State monopoly has been used explicitly and implicitly by various military dictatorships in Latin America, but it has only been legally and securely established in Cuba since 1960.

The third model - public service - began with the British Broadcasting Corporation which started broadcasting on 14 November 1922. Under this paradigm, radio broadcasting (and subsequently television) was financed through property and sale of radio receivers taxes, while commercial advertising was cast aside. This system became fairly generalized throughout Europe and was introduced in African and Asian colonies, so that by the end of the 1960s the vast majority of the world's countries had public service radio broadcasting stations, whereas only a few maintained the first and second models.

Radio Broadcasting in Latin America

Radio broadcasting in Latin American began on 26 August 1920 when the brand new Radio Argentina transmitted the opera *Parsifal* by Wagner from the 'Coliseo' Theatre in Buenos Aires, using a 5-watt transmitter. From then on, the Argentine air space witnessed the development of Radio Sudamerica in 1922, Radio Belgrano and Radio Splendid in 1924, Radio Mitre in 1925 and Radio Municipal in 1929.

Mexico joined Argentina on 9 October, 1921, with the Tarnava Notre Dame radio station in Monterrey, followed by Cuba in October 1922 with the radio of the Cuban Telephone Company, and then Brazil in the same year, where the firm Westinghouse carried out a transmission on Mount Corcovado, on which tourists can now admire the famous Christ of Rio de

Janeiro. Brazil actually claims that the world's first transmission of the human voice through hertzian waves took place in the bay of Rio de Janeiro a few days before Marconi obtained the British patent.

Peru began broadcasting in 1925, Venezuela in 1926, Uruguay in 1929 and Ecuador in 1930, by which time radio stations were operating in practically every country in the region. In all these countries radio broadcasting was a private commercial venture, although there were a few symbolic national and educational radio stations.

It is not surprising, therefore, that this same model was applied three decades later, with the advent of television, with a few exceptions arising from government concern for the power of audiovisual means of communication. Thus in Chile and Bolivia, television was handed over to universities and in Colombia, the State reserved for itself the management of the channels, calling a public tender for the programmes (therefore programming companies became comparable to the private broadcasting companies of other countries). Furthermore, several countries experienced State monopolies (Argentina under Peron; Cuba since 1960), or mixed property television systems (Peru during the last military governments). Nevertheless, the most common and permanent feature has been the predominance of commercial radio broadcasting stations, financed through advertising.

Latin America is a non-typical, maybe exotic, region, in terms of its radio and television systems, for three reasons:

First: because of the way its broadcasting services were organized. Non-commercial radio stations and television channels account for less than 15% of the transmissions and audiences. All of the countries have public radio stations, but some – like Ecuador and Paraguay - have no public television, even though in most of them television broadcasting was introduced by the Ministries of Education.

Second: because the transmission infrastructure and levels and the consumption of radio and audiovisual messages are such that there is an opulence rather than a paucity of transmissions. Some examples[6]:

1. The countries average 500,000 hours of television transmission, or 444% more than Latin European countries.
2. Venezuela, Colombia and Panama have a higher ratio of VCRs to television sets than either Belgium or Italy.
3. Bolivia has one of the world's highest ratios of television stations (75) to television sets (10,000) – a clear indication that the number of transmissions is not tied in with the degree of economic development.
4. In Argentina, two out of every three families have cable television link-ups and there are more than 2,000 companies offering this service in the country.

Third: because of the rapid growth of social movements and networks that operate communications instruments, as explained below.

Community Radio

Community radio broadcasting dates back, strictly speaking, to the decade of the 1940s, when Radio Sutatenza was created in Colombia, laying the groundwork for Acción Cultural Popular, the first systematic effort at education via radio. This movement spread and was later consolidated through ALER, the Latin American Educational Radio-broadcasting Association. This interlinkage of radio and education is basic to the idea of public service and marked the birth of community media in Latin America.

In about the same period, Bolivia's 1952 revolution spawned the birth of miner, farmer and Catholic radio stations, inaugurating Latin America's tradition of community radio stations[7]. It is important to recall that these pioneering radio stations emerged in association with social organizations and movements, thus making them an early and genuine expression of civil society.

During the 1960s, and above all in the 1970s and 1980s, the community radio and television movement spread, spearheaded by community and university stations. The formal emergence of non-governmental organizations made it possible to set up radio broadcasting stations that compete heavily for audience preference, as is presently the case of the Peruvian stations of

Radio Cutivalú in Piura, Onda Azul in Puno and Yaraví in Arequipa.

Community radio stations can be small and informal, including networks of loudspeakers, or fairly large, with even an urban or metropolitan coverage. Their distinguishing feature in all cases is their attitude toward, and aptitude for, furthering education and development.

These communication instruments were first organized into national and regional networks like ALER, and more recently have been linked up in the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), with members in all of the region's countries. By joining the international movement represented by AMARC, Latin American community radio stations follow the anti-monopolistic development of European free radio stations, African educational radio stations and North American ethnic minority and university stations.

Popular Video and Community Television

Community groups quickly took advantage of the appearance of video on the scene[8]. At the beginning of the popular video movement in Latin America, in the 1980s, an important distinction was made, between video as a product and video as a process. In product-video, the purpose of producing audio-visual materials was to create an object to be broadcast, transmitted, received and consumed. Process video, on the other hand, was a different way of using the equipment, treating the video recorder and the tape simply as tools for oral history, collective memories, group consciousness and the process of self-education and popular self-organization.

Having started with these two types of practices, the people's video groups successively undertook the following lines of action:

1. Video record: corresponding to process video in the pure sense, i.e. the use of video to gather the history of a small or large community and to support the community's organizing process, which forms both its subject and its object. Video record often emerges from grass-roots experiments with print, radio or slide media.

2. Group video: also a form of process video, although it is meant actually to produce tapes, either for the use of the group itself or for limited circulation.
3. Special-events video: Production of tapes to be shown in public squares and parties, followed by group discussion, as has been made by TV Viva in Brazil and Lu-Pan-Gua in Bolivia.
4. Counter-news video: During the dictatorships, counter-news video (as Teleanalisis in Chile) was the tool to give a different version of facts and news, opposing and confronting the 'official version' of events.
5. Mass-broadcast video: Finally, in Latin American a strong trend was developed among grass-roots video groups to try to overcome the opposition between video and television by conquering the space of the mass media. So, many groups started to produce specifically for mass broadcast.

As a result of this expansion of the target populations, popular video groups became more and more interested in drama and in better quality productions, all of which led to the development of numerous community television stations under the responsibility of social groups, parishes, municipalities and civic organizations.

The Current Networks

Latin America is undoubtedly a region of networks. The fact that it is a multinational unit closely consolidated by its geography, language and history, has nurtured a capacity for intraregional organization and communication which is also atypical.

Within this framework, the lack of vitality of the Latin American and Caribbean Radio Broadcasting Union (ULCRA) is not surprising, as it is a reflection of the previously mentioned precarious nature of the public radio broadcasting services of which it is composed. On the other hand, there are a vast number of organizations devoted to developing community radio and television.

In November 1994, the 'Group of Eight' - which as indicated by its name comprised eight regional organizations - held a *Latin American and Caribbean Festival of Radio and Television Fans* in Quito, Ecuador, in which over 400 groups from every country in the region participated. The Festival proved that community radio and television were no longer a marginal phenomenon in the region's sphere of communication and played a prominent and recognized role on the broadcasting scene.

Theoretical Reasoning Behind the Idea of Public Service

In Europe, there has always been a clear-cut distinction between the *economic profitability* governing commercial ventures and the *socio-cultural profitability* motive behind public service undertakings.[9] This dichotomy has never existed in Latin America, where public radio and television have above all been political instruments, rather than being oriented toward public service, and have failed to have any important socio-cultural impact.

Based on the Latin America's experience, three different operational motives for broadcasting could be distinguished, namely:

1. The economic profitability motive, distinctive of commercial enterprises, in which communication is financed through advertising and the primary recipient market is subordinated to the secondary market of advertisers who buy publics, according to the classic presentation of Dallas Smythe.

2. The political profitability motive, characteristic of government or party apparatuses that use broadcasting as an instrument of domination, manipulation and imposition – in short, of power. This is the reasoning of authoritarian systems and it is the hallmark of Latin America's State-owned media.

3. The socio-cultural profitability motive, the European ideal of public service, which in Latin America has been developed, not by the state but by non-governmental organizations without commercial ends, through which civil society is organized and expresses itself.

Community radio and television are accordingly defined by this socio-cultural motive, which corresponds to the idea of service, and by the aims of strengthening democracy and achieving self-sustained development. This definition makes it possible to resolve the following misunderstandings:

Community radio and television are not defined by a legal status, but by an operational motive. They can be registered as either public or private (university, regional and municipal stations) enterprises. What is important is that they be non-profit enterprises without partisan aims.

Their size or coverage are unimportant. Their community nature is not synonymous with smallness of size or informality. In fact, the stations that exist in Latin America are all striving to upgrade their technical standards and those that are being set up seek to do so with proper equipment, such as, for example, Radio Trinidad FM in Paraguay.

Even less can community ownership be equated with aesthetic poverty, poverty of quality or boredom. The discourse and denunciations that undoubtedly characterize these media in their early stages rapidly give way to entertaining and playful communication that touches upon all aspects of human life.

The Conquest of a Legal Status

In the past two years, the existence of these community media has begun to engender a series of legislative measures aimed at their legalization.

Chile already has a law in its books for radio stations with a minimum coverage, which authorizes a maximum FM power of 1 watt; it does, however, forbid the sale of advertising, which still constitutes a discriminatory measure. Colombia, on the other hand, where a highly advanced democracy is upheld by its constitution, up to 500 watts are authorized and advertising is permitted, but not any political propaganda.'[10] In Ecuador the legal figure of "community radio stations" exists, with a maximum permitted FM wattage of 150 and 250 for AM broadcasting.[11] Paraguay also safeguards the rights of community radio stations, while in Brazil and Bolivia, the Uniao de Redes Radiofonicas and Educación

Radiofónica, respectively, have reached advanced stages of negotiation for this purpose. And in Mexico a proposal has been put forward to create 'citizen radio and television' stations.

In this way, the coexistence of private, public and community stations, corresponding to each of the three sectors into which contemporary democracy is organized, is advancing on the radio and audiovisual broadcasting front in the region.

Concluding Remarks

Community media have clearly gained their legitimacy, as shown at UNESCO's Santiago, Chile Seminar in May 1994. It is pertinent, in concluding this brief chapter, to cite the first chapter of the Plan of Action adopted by the Santiago Seminar:[12]

1. *Promotion of community media in rural, indigenous and marginal urban areas*
   A. Taking into account the increasing importance of community media in the democratic process in the region, to request the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), with the assistance of professional organizations and research institutions, to survey the current situation of community media concerning legislation, frequencies, power limitations and advertising restrictions, with a view to making recommendations for the consideration of the governments concerned.
   B. To request the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) of UNESCO and donor agencies to support projects for the creation of new community media, both print and broadcast, and projects aimed at strengthening existing community media in accordance with international norms, especially those media serving women, youth, indigenous populations and minorities.
   C. To call upon professional organizations and the regional and national representatives of international organizations involved in community development issues to

encourage community media to exchange information among themselves and with other media. In so doing, they will contribute to the development of communication networks.

Notes

1. This chapter is a substantial reformulation and extension of an article by the author "Latin America: a new conception of public broadcasting", to be published in Raboy, Marc (Ed.). *Public Broadcasting for the Twenty-First Century.*

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5. Pasquali, A. and Vargas Araya, A. (Eds.) (1990). *De la Marginalidad al Rescate: los Servicios Públicos de Radiodifusión en América Latina 1990.* San José, Costa Rica: ULCRA – EUED.

6. Roncagliolo, R. (1989). "Adiós a las dicotomías", *Corto Circuito*, No. 4, May, Paris.

7. Beltran, L. R. (1994). "Neoliberalismo y Comunicación Democrática en Latinoamérica: 'Plataformas y Banderas' para el Tercer Milenio". In *Nuevos Rostros para una Comunicación Solidaria*, Quito: OCIC-AL, UCLAP, UNDA-AL.

8. Roncagliolo, R. (1991). "The Growth of the Audio-visual Imagescape in Latin America". *Video the Changing World*, Montreal: Black Rose Books.

9. Richeri, G. (1988). *La Televisión entre Servicio Público y Negocio.* Barcelona: Gili.

10 Republica de Colombia, Ministerio de Comunicaciones, "Decreto Número 1695", August 1994.

11. Registro Oficial, Organo del Gobierno del Ecuador, Año III, No. 691, May 1995.

12. *Report of the Seminar on Media Development and Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago*, Chile, 2-6 May 1994, p. 63.
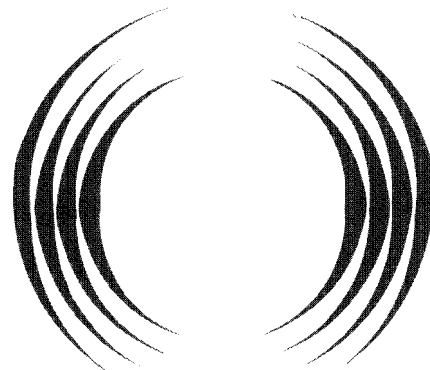
CHAPTER 8 International Round Table on the Cultural and Educational Functions of Public Service Broadcasting: Synthesis of Discussions

Ruth Teer-Tomaselli
Centre for Cultural and Media Studies,
University of Natal, South Africa

&

S. **T. Kwame Boafo**
Communication Division
UNESCO, Paris

Introduction

The background papers which were presented at the International Round Table on the Cultural and Educational Functions of Public Service Broadcasting generated lively debate and discussions among the 60 participants. In this concluding chapter, we attempt to present a synthesis of the three-day discussions with a focus on the salient points and major suggestions made to strengthen the capacity of public service radio and television to promote culture and education.

Challenges to Public Service Broadcasting

More than any other form of public communication, public service broadcasting epitomizes the normative position of the social responsibility paradigm. Developed as a coherent philosophical position in the 1930s by John Reith, the first Director-General of the BBC and the founding author of quintessential public service charters for broadcasting corporations across the Commonwealth, the notion of public service broadcasting refers both to an ideal and a model for specific institutions.

In Europe and across the world, particularly among the Commonwealth and the countries of Africa, Asia and the Middle East, public service became the dominant institutional form of broadcasting. Accepted by an ideological legitimacy and protected by regulation, public service broadcasting institutions grew in size, political importance and expenditure. The centrality of broadcasting today is underlined by the realization that throughout the world, there are more television sets available than telephones and more radios than television sets. Indeed, broadcasting

is the quintessential cultural industry and the closest thing we have to a universal cultural form.

The main principles and features of public service broadcasting were summarized at the Round Table as (i) universal geographical accessibility; (ii) universal appeal across tastes and interests; (iii) particular attention to the needs of minority groups; (iv) contribution to a sense of national identity and community; (v) distance from vested interests; (vi) direct finding and universality of payment; (vii) competition in good programming rather than for numbers; and (vii) guidelines that liberate rather than restrict programme makers.

Some participants noted that by the 1980s, public service broadcasting as an institutional form was suffering from 'an historic mid-life crisis', a failure to communicate and share expertise, an inability to change with the requirements of changing circumstances. It was observed that public service broadcasting was faced with challenges and dilemmas from at least five directions:

1. market forces have been favoured by ideological and political tendencies in an age of 'information capitalism', and the competition makes public service broadcasting institutions appear as liabilities on the public purse;
2. rising costs and inflation, taken together with falling revenue from licensing and loss of market share, have tested government's commitment to provide continued adequate funding;
3. new technologies, most notably digital signal compression and editing as well as cable and satellite signal distribution, have undermined the concept of spectrum scarcity as a rationale for regulation;
4. the ideal of a national broadcasting system as a mainstay of indigenous culture is undermined by the disparity between the low cost of imported programmes and the high cost of indigenous productions; and
5. impartiality and political independence, the traditional commitment of public service broadcasting, have come under stress, not only in less developed and transitional societies, but also in prosperous 'first world' countries.

The Concepts of 'Public Service'; 'Commercial' and 'Private' Broadcasting

The conceptual meanings of the terms 'public service', 'commercial' and 'private' when applied to broadcasting generated considerable debate among the Round Table participants. The general opinion was that the primary objective of commercial broadcasting was to make profits, while public service broadcasting **was** driven by public policy objectives and audience needs. To fulfill their objectives, commercial broadcasters need specifically targeted or niche audiences, while public service broadcasters generally need to address mass audiences.

However, some participants were of the opinion that it was inappropriate to make hard and fast distinctions between public service broadcasting and commercial forms of broadcasting since in some contexts the two were often combined, with the commercial arms cross-subsidizing the public service broadcasting mandates. There was a blurring of these two forms of media. While there were criteria for both, the definitions of the forms of broadcasting were no longer watertight categories, but should be seen as a continuum. It was agreed that a distinction should be made between public service broadcasting and private broadcasting, although it was acknowledged that private broadcasters could fulfill public service mandates.

In terms of the funding of public service broadcasting, participants noted that no single model of funding existed; rather there was a range of finding possibilities including (i) public funding; (ii) direct contributions by the state; (iii) commercial activities; (iv) levy on the private sector; and (v) a trust fund into which revenue from both public service and commercial broadcasters could be directed, and redistributed according to a formula based on how well each fulfilled a public mandate.

The Ethical and Cultural Imperatives of Public Service Broadcasting

A number of participants observed that broadcasting was not just a technical question, but also involved moral and ethical issues and mentioned the need to develop a political will to sustain pub-

lic service broadcasting. Some participants contended that public service broadcasting should seek to foster the creation of a social consensus – a political will to create an independent institutional structure; in this respect, governments should stand behind the existence of public service broadcasting. When such a political will no longer exists public service broadcasting should endeavour to restore that will by enlisting the support of their viewers and listeners.

A few participants pointed out that the need for the broadcaster to find a new mechanism to address the public service objectives was strategically a political and ideological question. It was essentially strategic – since otherwise public service broadcasting was in danger of disappearing or at least being marginalized. Creating the political will for a public broadcaster to operate within civil society was a long-term strategy. In this regard some speakers called attention to the need to maintain or preserve the editorial independence of public service broadcasting, and protect the notion of freedom of expression. This could be done by maintaining at an arm's length the role of the state in the regulation of broadcasting. It was pointed out that for many societies in transition to democracy, the historical lack of editorial independence of broadcasting organizations was a severe handicap to their acceptance. In the past, in many cases, the authorities in what was previously 'Eastern Europe' had turned radio into a propaganda tool; consequently in some of the countries there was low credibility in public broadcasting institutions.

Several participants noted that the issue of the ethical value of public service broadcasting was closely allied to the question of the relationship between the broadcaster and the state. It was observed that in Eastern and Central Europe, for instance, further democratization of broadcasting organizations was required to hold at bay the direct interference of the state. There are serious efforts to transform state-owned channels to public channels in that region.

On the issue of the contribution of public service broadcasting to cultural development, it was observed that the cultural mission of public service broadcasting implied a corrective function to the laws of the broadcast market to facilitate the production of programmes for which there was no mass audience. This was par-

titularly important in a deregulated and competitive market, as is the case in West European countries. In the view of one participant this could be achieved by a political consensus whereby such programmes are regarded as valuable cultural goods which serve the development of socially desirable, ethical and aesthetic values and which strengthen cultural identity.

Some participants argued that culture was vivid and adaptive, and there was a need to exchange cultures in order to break down barriers. It was also suggested that culture was a multi-faceted concept with at least two strong dimensions: (i) the preservation of the values, norms attitudes, history and achievements of a people; and (ii) an on-going strategy of transformation and adaptation to changing circumstances. Public service broadcasting should reflect the best of the old and integrate the best of the new. Popular culture was an important part of cultural integration, particularly in less developed and transitional societies.

The Audience

A central theme running through the discussions was the place of the audience in public service broadcasting. As one participant remarked, broadcasting could not be adequately discussed without a full consideration of the question of audience and a key question was on how to keep the audience loyal to public service broadcasting.

Several participants raised the issue of the nature and composition of audience for public service broadcasting and the most appropriate ways of measuring these. The consensus was that audience situations differed from country to country and that in many countries there was a very real danger that audience for public service broadcasting would drop to the point where the audience would be insufficient to justify the maintenance of public service broadcasting.

Some participants drew a distinction between 'audience reach' which was equated with the 'penetration' of potential audience and 'audience share' which was equated with 'viewership' and 'listenership'. It was remarked that since there was a finite number of viewing and listening hours among the audience, it would be more useful to talk of 'reach' (i.e. potential ability of

people to listen or watch if they so choose, and which was more representative of the population as a whole) rather than 'share' (i.e. how the channel fares *vis-à-vis* other channels within the media landscape, and which was the primary method used in the advertising world).

A participant noted that whether the salient measurement was 'share' or 'reach' depended largely on the interests and objectives of the broadcaster. A small, focused audience was sometimes better for advertisers with something specific to sell, while a mass product demanded a mass audience. He suggested that public service broadcasters must take the same approach, and decide precisely what they are trying to achieve: either the largest possible audience or a potential audience which are part of the population, for instance a cultural or linguistic minority. However, another participant posed the question: if public service broadcasting is to be confined to a specialized service, which one is it to be? Information? Entertainment? He contended that generalized broadcasting across genres remained the choice of both suppliers and users, and that the most popular channels – both in Europe and the United States – were not the array of specialty channels, but the broadly based terrestrial channels.

It was observed that to fulfill their mandates, public service broadcasters should be reaching the overwhelming portion of the population. Public service broadcasters needed to provide a range of programming which was universal and responded to the interests of most people within a given area. This would imply that they address a wide range of programmes, including genres which are both entertainment and informational in orientation.

While there was support for the idea that public service broadcasting should cover programming diversity through servicing the needs of minorities, a number of speakers pointed to the need for public broadcasters to be mindful of maintaining substantial audiences. The point was also made that in a situation where public service broadcasting was not financed outright by the government then it was important to defend 'share' and 'reach'.

Local Content and Regional Co-operation

Another salient point made during the discussion was the distinction between 'local' broadcasting, taken to mean the production and dissemination of broadcast material within a national border, and 'regional' broadcasting, which refers to transborder cooperation.

Several participants were of the opinion that, in the face of the globalization of technology, the commodification of broadcasting and the fears of media 'imperialism' as an intrusion on the sovereignty of the nation state, the promotion of localization in broadcasting had become a rallying point for public service broadcasting. A number of participants from both developed and developing countries called for the indigenization of media to adapt them to local and national cultures.

It was noted that the actual level of local content varied greatly from country to country. In the Arab countries as a whole, radio airs mostly local programmes, while on television the ratio of foreign programming to local programming in the prime-time slots is 60-40%. In Africa, there are only a few countries, such as Nigeria and South Africa, where local content is above 60%. The dilemma of African countries coping with international programming was posed by a participant who observed that while a US$ 100 would buy an episode of *The Young and the Restless,* the same amount was insufficient to make more than a few minutes of local production.

A number of participants stressed the need for cooperative ventures in programme production in those parts of the world most vulnerable to 'media imperialism'. Others were of the opinion that collectively, public service broadcasters had access to a significant pool of shared experience, and that public service broadcasting programming should address various communities, both nationally (within borders) and regionally (across borders).

189

Public Service Broadcasting
and New Information Technology

An important question raised during the discussion was whether public service broadcasting should make use of all technical means available, including pay television, interactive television, media on demand and internet. Two schools of thought were outlined on this question. The first was economic, and questioned whether PSB should expand into the media 'market'. The second position proposed that in each country, according to its means, the priority was for public service broadcasting to use new information technologies in order to compete successfully with private channels.

Several participants observed that if public service broadcasting institutions did not take advantage of new technology, they would be marginalized. The general consensus on this issue was that new technologies should be exploited by public service broadcasting institutions - within the confines of economic feasibility - to further their educational and cultural mandates.

Concluding Remarks

The background papers presented at the Round Table and the ensuing discussions strongly indicated that public service broadcasting as an institutional model of broadcasting had a significant function to fulfill in cultural and educational development of society. In concluding this synthesis, it is worth noting that, although the Round Table did not result in specific recommendations or resolutions, several suggestions were made in the course of the discussions to strengthen public service broadcasting institutions as instruments for cultural and educational development. The suggestions included the following:

1. There should be a culturally and regionally specific approach to public service broadcasting so that, while the basic philosophy is the same across different nations and regions, institutional structures, methods of funding, and programming goals may differ as circumstances dictate.

2. Public service broadcasting institutions should strive at developing programme formats which offer entertainment to the audience while at the same time offering it content of high information, education and cultural value.

3. Public service broadcasting institutions must endeavour to sustain political will supporting their existence and maintain the audience support.

4. Public service broadcasting can, and should, operate at different levels - national, regional, local and community levels. While retaining national channels to serve national integration and keeping their ability to address national audiences, at the same time public service broadcasting institutions should also operate at regional and local levels to provide content of immediate and direct interest to the audience at those levels.

5. *The* cultural role of public service broadcasting consists primarily in reproducing the national or ethnic culture of the audience in the entirety of its programming so that the audience can always be kept in touch with their history, language, arts, religion and other cultural values and traditions. For this purpose, public service broadcasting should rely primarily on domestically produced programming. It should also seek to indigenize programme genres, forms and means of expression and content, so as to adjust them fully to the culture of the audience.

6. Public service broadcasting has played an important role in enhancing access to good quality education particularly through distance education methods. This role should be significantly enhanced in view of growing demands for life-long education.

i'. Public service broadcasting institutions should use new media technologies for programme production and delivery. They should take advantage of advances in communication technologies in developing educational applications, particularly with a view to ensuring interactivity.

Annex: List of Participants

1. **AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR COMMUNICATION EDUCATION (ACCE)**
   DR CHARLES OKIGBO
   Executive Coordinator
   P. O. Box 47495, Nairobi
   KENYA

2. **ARAB STATES BROADCASTING UNION (ASBU)**
   DR NAWAF ADWAN
   Directeur du Département de Recherche
   P.O. Box 60
   17 rue Al-Monsora, Tunis 1014
   TUNISIA

3. **ARD (GERMAN TELEVISION)**
   P.O. Box 200665
   D-80006 Munich
   GERMANY

   Represented by:

   PROF. DR PETER VON RÜDEN
   Executive Consultant for Cultural and Educational Programmes
   ARD/NDR
   Hevzmoov 37
   22417 Hamburg
   GERMANY

4. **ASIA MASS COMMUNICATION RESEARCH AND INFORMATION CENTRE (AMIC)**
   DR ANURA GOONESEKERA
   Senior Programme Specialist (Research)
   39 Newton Road
   Singapore 1130
   SINGAPORE

193

5. ASIA-PACIFIC INSTITUTE FOR BROADCASTING DEVELOPMENT (AIBD)
MR DATO ABDULLAH MOHAMAD
Director
P. O. Box 1137
Pantai, 59700 Kuala Lumpur
MALAYSIA

6. ASSOCIATION FOR MASS MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS [BALKAN MEDIA]
MR VALENTIN STAMOV
Vice President
Lubotren Str. 96
1407 Sofia
BULGARIA

7. BRTN
MR CASIMIR GOOSSENS
Directeur général &
MME JAQUELINE CAENBERGHS
Chef du Département des Relations Internationales
A. Reyerslaan 52
B-1043 Brussel
BELGIUM

8. CARIBBEAN BROADCASTING UNION (CBU)
Wilkins Lodge
2 Mile Hill,
St. Michael
BARBADOS

Represented by:
MR CHARLES JAMES
General Manager
Dominica Broadcasting Corporation
P. O. Box 1, Victoria Street
Roseau
DOMINICA

9. COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING (COL)
DR ABDUL KHAN
Head, Communication and Information Technologies
P. O. Box 10428, Pacific Centre
777 Donsmuir St., 17th Floor
Vancouver, B.C.
V7Y IK4 CANADA

10. **Conseil International des Radios-Télévisions d'Expression Française (CIRTEF)**
M. ABDELKADER MARZOUKI
Secrétaire général
Bd. Auguste Reyers, 52
1044 Brussels
Belgium

11. **Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA)**
M. FRANÇOIS HURARD
Chef du service des programmes
39-43, Quai André Citroën
75739 Paris Cedex 15
France

12. **European Broadcasting Union (EBU)**
M. JACQUES BRIQUEMONT
Délégué aux Organisations Européennes
B.P. 67
17 A Ancienne Route
1218 Grand Saconnex,
Geneva
Switzerland

13. **Global Access Television Service (WETV)**
Dr DAVID NOSTBAKKEN
Executive Director
IDRC
250 Albert Street, P. O. Box 8500
Ottawa
Canada K1G 3H9

14. **La Cinquieme**
M. ALAIN BRUNET
Conseiller du Président
10, rue Horace Vernet
92136 Issy les Moulinaux
France

15. **MEDIACULT**
Dr ALFRED SMUDITS
Secretary-General
Schonburgstrasse 27/4
A-1040 Vienna
Austria

16. NORTH AMERICAN NATIONAL BROADCASTERS ASSOCIATION (NANBA)
MR MICHAEL MCEWEN,
President &
MR SPENCER MOORE,
Secretary-General
1500 Bronson Ave.
Ottawa, Ontario
CANADA K1G 3J5

17. ONE WORLD GROUP
MR RITCHIE COGAN
Director
302, BBC Yalding House
152, Great Portland Street
London WIN 6AJ
UNITED KINGDOM

18. RAI – RADIO-TÉLÉVISION ITALIENNE
M. DARIO NATOLI
Via Teulada, 66
00195 Rome
ITALY

19. SOCIÉTÉ SUISSE DE RADIODIFFUSION ET TÉLÉVISION (SSR)
MME TIZIANA MONA
Chef des Affaires générales
Giacomettistrasse 3
Case postale
3000 Berne 15
SWITZERLAND

20. THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR THE MEDIA (EMI)
PROF. DR BERND-PETER LANGE
Director-General
Kaiserstrasse 13
D-40221 Düsseldorf
GERMANY

21. THE INDEPENDENT TELEVISION COMMISSION (ITC)
DR JOHN ROBIN MOSS
Head of Educational Broadcasting
33 Foley Street
London W1P 7LB
UNITED KINGDOM

22. THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MASS COMMUNICATION RESEARCH (IAMCR)

School of International Service
The American University
4400 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20016-8071
USA

Represented by:

PROF. MARC RABOY
Department of Communication
University of Montréal
C.P. 6128, succursale Centre-ville
Montréal (Québec) H3C 3J7
CANADA

23. THE PACIFIC ISLANDS BROADCASTING UNION (PIBA)

P.O. Box 116
Port Villa
VANNATU

Represented by:

MR WALTER THOMAS
General Manager
Fiji Broadcasting Commission
P. O. Box 334
Suva
FIJI

24. UNION OF EGYPTIAN RADIO AND TELEVISION

TV Building
Corniche EL Nil
Cairo
EGYPT

Represented by:

MR HAZEM FODA
Head of Paris Office
186, Bd Haussmann
75008 Paris
FRANCE

25. UNION OF NATIONAL RADIO AND TELEVISION ORGANIZATIONS IN AFRICA (URTNA)
M. EFOE ADODO MENSAH
Secrétaire général
101 rue Carnot
B.P. 3237
Dakar
SÉNÉGAL

26. WORLD RADIO AND TELEVISION COUNCIL (WRTC)
MR PIERRE JUNEAU
President
1340, boul. Saint-Joseph Est,
Montréal (Québec)
CANADA H2J 1M3

27. MR O. IBRAIMOV
Vice-Prime Minister for Culture & Education
Bishkek
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

28. DR KAROL JAKUBOWICZ
Institute of Journalism
University of Warsaw
Grzybowska 16/22 m. 601
00-132 Warsaw
POLAND

29. AMBASSADOR YOURI KHILTCHEVSKI
International Association for Culture Promotion
c/o UNESCO Office
15/28, Bld. 2, Bolshoi Levshinsky per.
11904 MOSCOW
RUSSIAN FEDERATION

30. MR HANS DIETER KLEE
Schwalbacher Str. 15
D-50969 Köln
GERMANY

31. PROF. MARC RABOY
Department of Communication
University of Montréal
C.P. 6128, succursale Centre-ville
Montréal (Québec) H3C 3J7
CANADA

32. DR RAFAEL RONCAGLIOLO
   Director
   Instituto para América Latina (IPAL)
   App 270031
   Av. Juan Aliaga 204
   Lima 17
   PERU

33. DR. MAHMOUD SHALABIEH
   Department of Journalism & Mass Communication
   Yarmouk University
   Irbid
   JORDAN

34. DR TAMAS SZECSKÖ
   Scientific Adviser
   Hungarian Radio
   Br–dy-Sándor-u 5-7
   1800 Budapest
   HUNGARY

35. DR RUTH TEER-TOMASELLI
   Centre for Cultural and Media Studies
   University of Natal, Durban
   Private Bag X10
   Dalbridge 4014
   SOUTH AFRICA

36. PR O F. GEORGE WEDELL
   Director
   The Public Interest in Broadcasting Project
   18 Cranmer Road
   Manchester M20 6AW
   UNITED KINGDOM

Observers

37. ASSOCIATION CATHOLIQUE INTERNATIONALE
   POUR LA RADIO ET LA TÉLÉVISION (UNDA)
   MME MARTINE ROGER-MACHART
   Déléguée auprès de l'UNESCO
   12 rue Malher
   75004 Paris
   FRANCE

38. WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATION (WACC)

MR PHILIP LEE
Co-Director
Forum Sector
357 Kennington Lane
London SE11 5QY
UNITED KINGDOM

39. WORLD PRESS FREEDOM COMMITTEE (WFPC)

MR RONALD KOVEN
European Representative
9, place du Président Mithouard
75007 Paris
FRANCE

40. DÉLÉGATION DE LA COMMISSION DES COMMUNAUTÉS EUROPÈENNES

MS CÉLINE DURAND
12, Ave. d'Eylau
75016 Paris
FRANCE

41. MR B. BLIN

10 Rue de l'Ermitage
78000 Versailles
FRANCE

42. MR MUZAFFER ADALI

12, Rue du Bac
75007
Paris
FRANCE

Specialized Agencies of the United Nations System

43. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)
MR CHRISTOPHER POWELL
Press Information Officer
Health Communication and Public Information Unit
20, ave. Appia
CH-1211 Geneva 27
SWITZERLAND

National Commissions for UNESCO

44. AUSTRIAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO
Mentergasse 11
A- 1070 Vienna
AUSTRIA

Represented by:

DR ALFRED SMUDITS
Secretary-General
MEDIACULT
Schonburgstrasse 27/4
A-1040 Wien
AUSTRIA

45. CANADIAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

350 Albert
Box 1047
OTTAWA K1P 5V8
CANADA

Represented by:

MR MICHAEL MCEWEN
Senior Vice-President, Media
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
1500 Bronson Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3S5
CANADA

46. COMMISSION DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
POUR L'ÉDUCATION, LA SCIENCE ET LA CULTURE
MME CORINNE MATRAS
Chargée de mission pour la communication,
l'information et l'informatique
36, rue La Pérousse
F-75775 Paris Cedex 16
FRANCE

47. FINNISH NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO
Ministry of Education
P. O. Box 293
00171 HELSINKI
FINLAND

Represented by:
MR JOUKO BLOMBERG
Yleisradio OY
Finnish Broadcasting Company
P.O. Box 79
FIN-00024 Yleisradio
Radiokatu 5
Helsinki
FINLAND

48. GERMAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO
MR PETER NITSCH
Ministry of Interior ORR
Graurheindorfer
Str 198
53117 Bonn

MR DIETER OFFENHÄUSSER
Head
Section of Communication, Information and Informatics

PROF. DR. PETER VON RUDEN
Member
Colmant Strasse 15
53115 Bonn
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

49. PERMANENT DELEGATION OF MALAWI TO UNESCO
MR HARRY MONONGA
Charge d'Affaires
20 rue Guler

50. PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO UNESCO
MR VLADIMIR ENTINE
2nd Secretary
Maison de l'UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15
FRANCE

51. SWEDISH NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO
Ministry of Education and Science
S-103 33 Stockholm
SWEDEN

Represented by:

MS HELENA SANDBALD
Sveringes Television AG
S-105 10 Stockholm
SWEDEN

52. PERMANENT DELEGATION OF UGANDA TO UNESCO
MS NORAH LEMA KATABARWA
Deputy Permanent Delegate
13 Ave. Raymond Poincare,
75116 Paris
FRANCE

UNESCO Secretariat

MR HENRIKAS YUSHKIAVITSHUS
Assistant Director-General
for Communication, Information and Informatics
and representative of the Director-General

MR ALAIN MODOUX
Director
Communication Division
and Secretary of the meeting

MR CARLOS ARNALDO
Chief
Free Flow of Information and Communication Research

and MR KWAME BOAFO
Communication Division
Vice-Secretary of the meeting

SECRETARIAT

MR GERVASIO KALIWO
Communication Division

MR JOHN ROSE
Communication Division

MS ADRIANA VOGELAAR
Learning without Frontiers Coordinating Unit

SECRETARIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE

Ms MILENA CACERES VALDERRAMA
Communication Division

Ms BARBARA CAVIGNAC
Communication Division

Ms DAPHNÉ MULLET
Communication Division

Ms VÉRENE SERET-MUKAMUSONI
Communication Division

Ms KATICZA TUSCHSCHERER
Communication Division

Ms ALIMA GOGNOUMBOU
Administration

Ms VALÉRIE GDALIA
Administration

Ms ESTEDAR NEGGA
Intern

Mr MICHAEL ONU
Intern

Mr SONY T. XAVIER
Intern

OTHER SECTORS

Ms MAHA BULOS
Section for the Promotion of Books & Reading

Mr K. FOUCAULT
Environment and Population
Information for Development Programme

Ms MIRTA LOURENÇO
Culture of Peace Programme

Mr SHINJI MATSUMOTO
The Use of New Technologies in Culture

Ms SUSANA SAM-VARGAS
Environment and Population
Information for Development Programme