Wellsprings of Knowledge: Beyond the CBC Policy Trap

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Abstract: The CBC/Radio Canada is in a policy trap which is endemic to all cultural policy today. A casualty of the 1990s policy focus on the cultural industries, the traditional public interest discourse has failed to gain a toehold in arguments favouring a continued state role in the development of cultural capital. This paper explores a cultural capital perspective and argues for a closer link with and co-ordination between education and culture in policy fields at both the theoretical and operational levels. The paper concludes that the instrumental utility of a cultural capital approach is ultimately too limiting. What is needed is a theoretical shift from public interest rhetoric to a democratic rights-based discourse. Such a shift in the conceptual underpinnings of cultural policy implies radical decentralization and deconcentration of control within the CBC. New models of democratic cultural governance are needed to reclaim public broadcasting.

Résumé: Radio-Canada/CBC s'empêtre dans des politiques communes à toute culture politique aujourd'hui. Le discours traditionnel sur l'intérêt public, victime des politiques des années 90 axées sur les industries culturelles, n'a pas réussi à s'infiltrer dans les arguments favorisant une participation soutenue de l'état dans le développement du capital culturel. Cet article examine une perspective appuyant cette idée de capital culturel et prône un rapport et une coordination plus étroites entre éducation et culture dans les politiques, autant au niveau théorique qu'opérationnel. Cet article conclut qu'une approche prônant l'idée de capital culturel a en fin de compte une utilité instrumentale trop limitée. Il faudrait plutôt changer d'approche, passant d'une rhétorique défendant l'intérêt public à un discours démocratique fondé sur les droits de la personne. Une telle modification dans la conception des politiques culturelles entraînerait l’appui d’une décentralisation et déconcentration radicales à Radio-Canada. En somme, pour reconquérir la radiodiffusion publique, il nous faudrait de nouveaux modèles de gouvernance culturelle démocratique.

The CBC is in a policy trap: controversies over shutting down supper hour news, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission’s (CRTC) license renewal decisions, and allegations of political editorial tampering during the Gustafson Lake and APEC affairs swirl around the CBC while its television

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audience share declines. Per capita funding levels have sunk to the bottom half of all public broadcasters, one fifth the level of Ireland or Germany. The political nadir was reached in the 2000 federal election campaign when the leak of the Alliance's plans to privatize CBC-TV failed to generate any sustained public debate, coinciding with an early resignation of Mme. Guylaine Saucier, the CBC's Chair of the Board. The CBC's only supporters are insiders: insider listeners or insider employees. The politics of self-interest, or fragmenting public interest, are rampant. To defend public broadcasting has become politically incorrect in Canada: a call for either the status quo or a return to a dimly remembered or fictitious golden age.

The policy trap
Official broadcasting policy in Canada, like many European nations, has its roots in the doctrine of public service which established a public radio and television monopoly (Rutherford, 1990). For the period of its hegemonic nationalist model, broadcasting policy in Canada was based on a stable division between elites and masses and an effective consensus around the public service principle among elites of all partisan stripes.1

The Canadian public service doctrine was structured through three axes: Canada versus the U.S.; public versus private ownership; and high versus low culture. These axes have often been collapsed in policy discourses, resulting in a three-way reductionism: that the private sector reproduced American low culture, or its corollary; that the public sector reproduced Canadian high or merit culture (Angus, 1997). Such reductionism has led to a systematic suppression of key issues. The ideological compact between public service broadcasting and the nation masked internal social differences (Raboy, 1996), obscured transnational identity construction and flows (McGuigan, 1992), and avoided questions of democratic accountability. Public broadcasting culture was universal, eurocentric, and uniform. Two solitudes of policy discourse across English and French linguistic communities (de la Garde, Tremblay, Dorland, & Paré, 1994; Fletcher, 1998), a weak overlay of cultural federalism (Beale, 1999), and the privatization and stratification of policies concerning other ethno-linguistic groups (Roth, 1998) marginalized debates over public broadcasting and its relation to cultural, economic, or social policy concerns.2

In the 1990s, for the first time, the non-partisan compact supporting the public interest doctrine failed. The Reform party called for privatization of the CBC, revising that position by 1997 to target only CBC-TV. The call was later picked up by the Alliance, but buried in the 2000 federal election. Early in the decade, the Liberal government enacted cuts totalling $400 million, or 33% of the parliamentary appropriation. On top of a decade of indirect cuts by Conservative governments, achieved by not adjusting appropriations for inflation, the CBC's budget was reduced to half its size in the early 1980s, in constant dollars (Mandate Review Committee, 1996). Coalitions supporting the CBC failed to emerge. The Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, which claims to represent 40,000 members, escalated its oppositional lobbying tactics in defence of the CBC, targeting back-
bench MPs in swing ridings, staging protests in the Minister’s home riding, and leaking internal memoranda to the press—but failed to bridge to other social movements, artists, or groups active in cultural politics. Independent policy inquiries, by the Parliamentary Committee or the Mandate Review Committee, experimented with new ways to frame the case for a public broadcaster unsuccessfully. *Making Our Voices Heard*, published almost at the same time as UNESCO’s *Our Creative Diversity*, used a “made in Canada” cultural development frame to make the case for cultural policy and the centrality of a public broadcaster. Easily superseded by furor over the recommendations for an alternative funding structure manipulated by the cable lobby, the changes in conceptual framework were ignored.³

Today, the public service doctrine is in retreat. Policy literature shows an almost complete absence of language promoting Canadian national unity or national consciousness, a premise abandoned in law with the 1990 *Broadcasting Act*. A decline of deference has become the political characteristic of the times (Nevitte, 1996). There is a backlash against shadowy bureaucrats imposing cultural tastes, or elites defending special public institutions. The CBC now finds itself a public broadcaster in name only: increasingly adrift from political support, unable to justify its existence, and insufficiently distinguished from its private sector competition.

The CBC’s policy trap is endemic to all cultural policy today. The strong association between nationalism as a movement, modernism, and public interest in culture has crumbled. The rise of free trade, the forces of economic globalization and digital networks, and the emergence of social movements pressing for recognition of minority groups, combined with postmodern cultural theory, have had a fundamental impact on cultural policy (McFadyen, Hoskins, Finn, & Lorimer, 1994). Nationalism as a defensive cultural stance is being displaced by new forms of cosmopolitan identity or a resurgence of tribalism, or local ethnic identity (Jensen, 1998). Eurocentric cultural elitism is in retreat. Modernist public interest discourse has little resonance in an age of postmodern politics (Mulgan, 1994). Left behind is a fundamental ideological vacuum at the heart of contemporary cultural policies (Bennett & Mercer, 1996).

Yet a public broadcaster still remains one of the primary sites of popular cultural practice in many nations. In a Bourdieu-inspired study of Australians’ everyday cultural habits, public broadcasting proved the most open and accessible of cultural forms (Bennett, Emmison, & Frow, 1999). When rate of participation is compared across class structure for those with extensive postsecondary education and income and those with less formal education, public broadcasting has proved the least stratified cultural practice.

All cultural policymakers are struggling with the basic questions: Why do we need cultural policy? What does it represent? What difference does it make? Who should decide? How can political support for culture be mobilized? How can public broadcasting open up access to culture? What is the political opportunity structure for advancing cultural policy?
In cultural policy networks today, the idea of social or human capital is emerging as a legitimate sphere for state intervention and replacing national identity or unity discourse. Investments in healthy social relations are now seen as conducive to innovation in the knowledge economy and to sustainable economic growth. Cities use their cultural resources to attract the high-skilled labour they need to establish technopoles. A cultural capital or resource-based frame for cultural policy discourse establishes an instrumental need for culture, at the engine of innovation.

**A cultural capital argument**

Scholars must rethink the role of public broadcasting in the so-called knowledge economy. A casualty of the 1990s policy focus on the cultural industries, the CBC has failed to gain a toehold in the arguments favouring a continued state role in the development of human capital, or innovation in the globalizing economy. Federalism bifurcates the obvious convergence between public broadcasting and education in this country, to the detriment of successful repositioning of the CBC.

Let us turn first to where new economists have identified why cultural policy is needed, ceding important ground to cultural theorists in the period of neo-liberal cultural policy. Unlike more radical neo-liberals, Canadian thinkers of this view identified both the salient differences between culture as a commodity and other goods and services, and the rationale for legitimate state intervention. The intrinsic nature of external benefits to the cultural commodity necessarily implies a condition of market failure (Hoskins & McFadyen, 1996). Merit goods such as education or other public goods may necessitate continued state intervention. The debate was over the scope and means of cultural policy, not the basic need for it. To concede any basis at all for intervention in the public good represented an enormous neo-liberal rout quite different from Anglo-American economic theory, but few picked up on it.

The rise of a new school of economists focusing on innovation systems and endogenous growth added new importance to soft cultural resources in the knowledge economy (Murray, 1999b). The shift is away from traditional, physical, or manufactured assets to search for the source of non-traditional, intangible, or intellectual assets.

Where may the source of these intellectual resources be found? The term wellspring refers to the source of a stream which sustains life within and beyond the riverbanks, or which may deny life by becoming dammed up or polluted. Just as flows of water from such wellsprings feed the biological systems around them, appropriate knowledge flows into, within and among companies in an economic system, enabling them to develop competitive advantage (Leonard-Barton, 1995). In her leading book on building and sustaining sources of innovation in the knowledge economy, Dorothy Leonard-Barton posits that companies and nations, like individuals, compete on the basis of their ability to create and utilize knowledge. Managing knowledge is as important as managing their finances. Leonard-Barton’s thinking is typical of high tech consultants such as PriceWaterhouse Coopers whose recent survey of the six forces shaping the global economy
finds that the “most intense battle in global business today is not for capital or advanced technology or market share. It is for talent” (URL: http://www.pwc-global.com/6forces).

If there is one element that characterizes this new liberal orthodoxy about the state’s role in culture, it is that cultural resources may be seen as a means to build what Robert Putnam has called social capital, that is, the trust and civic engagement to participate in the economic and social institutions’ democratic public life. Culture may also be defined as a venue, a building site, where rules of social engagement, commitment to inclusiveness, and the basic means of civic participation are disseminated. Finally, culture may be seen as the laboratory of social innovation, where new symbolic resources are created or, conversely, where memory — democracy’s most powerful tool according to John Ralston Saul — is made.

As Rowland & Tracey have explained,

Broadcasting was originally seen as a cultural enterprise … responsible for generating and disseminating its linguistic, spiritual, aesthetic and ethnic wealth, carrying a responsibility for sustaining and renewing the society’s characteristic cultural capital and cement. Implicit in all of this was that a public service system should at least occasionally present audience members with material that would stretch their minds and horizons; awaken them to less familiar ideas and tastes in culture, the arts and sciences, and perhaps even challenge some of their uncritically accepted assumptions about life, morality and society. (quoted in Blumler, 1992, p. 11)

As this quotation suggests, important democratic assumptions reside behind this reified resource or capital cultural planning perspective. The philosophical origins of cultural capital are rooted in the idea of democratic autonomy. Democratic autonomy connotes the capacity to reason self-consciously, to be self-reflexive, to be self-determining; the ability to deliberate, judge, choose, negotiate, or act in public or private life. Autonomous spheres of action in culture, society, politics, and the economy are needed to enjoy freedom and equality (Held, 1996).

This capacity to reason brings us to an important element that some have called communicative competence as a subset of cultural capital, that is, the means to read, speak, or participate in culture, or to acquire the knowledge of the symbolic and cultural ways to exercise cultural and political freedoms. In a cultural capital paradigm, this implies new policy attention to the concrete indicators of access to culture: redistribution of cultural capital (money and formal and informal learning); physical and virtual proximity to public cultural resources; breadth of reach and participation in cultural activities; the capacity to engage in cultural dialogue; and commitment to the efficacy of cultural politics (Murray, 1999a).

A cultural capital perspective is premised on the idea that the knowledge economy is forcing a closer link between education and culture in policy fields. Education serves as a gateway to virtually all forms of cultural, political, and eco-
nomic participation. Public investment in education, then, of a kind and level capable of offsetting the effects of different social backgrounds, remains crucial to any program of government that is concerned with enhancing the life-chances of its citizens. As Bennett, Emmison, & Frow (1999) write, “Government support of culture is connected to community as a part of a broader program of ‘governing differences’ through which cultural resources are connected to the task of managing the relationships between the increasingly complex and differentiated ways of life which make up the fabric of… civil society” (p. 243).

Evidence suggests that bifurcation of culture and education was not the intention of the early creators of the CBC. The Aird Commission, which was responsible for its general outlines, recommended a joint federal-provincial body, insisting that provincial legislatures pass motions supporting the principle of public broadcasting and envisioning a decentralized programming coalition coast to coast. Five provinces argued against exclusive federal jurisdiction over public broadcasting in a later challenge to the constitutional jurisdiction over broadcasting. In part, they were inspired by an interest in its educational purpose, an area of broadcasting policy that was not resolved in jurisdiction until the late 1960s (Peers, 1969).

In a critique of federal cultural anglophone policy, Fernand Harvey (1998) has suggested that it is this feature of the constitutional structure which has guaranteed the failure of English Canada’s cultural policy from its outset. In his view, effective public cultural institutions must be built upon by educational policy: there is an intimacy in the relationship between the two that cannot be broken. It is an interesting view, and one that certainly shows the close relationship between the relative success of public broadcasters in Quebec, France, and Britain which have integrated jurisdictions over culture and education.

Perhaps most important, a cultural capital perspective throws resource imbalances in public investment into stark relief. In the 1999 federal budget, fully $58 billion was spent on all forms of education in Canada, compared to $760 million for the CBC. Even if we consider non-formal learning to represent just 5% of all educational spending, an amount equivalent to a modest research and development budget outside of formal educational structures, this would yield a budget of some $2.5 billion, close to funding levels equivalent to the early 1980s in constant dollars and on par with the spending in Ireland and Germany.

If the trends in educational policy are mapped against those in broadcasting or cultural policy in general, interesting divergences emerge. Educational policy is increasingly decentralized. Governance is shifting to local and regional district school boards, but a move to co-ordinate the setting of standards and evaluation of outcome is emerging at provincial and national levels. New workplace partnerships with student placements are being forged. Accreditation is being liberalized. In the preparation for the transition to the Internet, more schools are being wired up, but the focus on distribution has overlooked content creation (Lewis, Smith, & Massey, 1998). Virtually no non-commercial market in educational software exists. Even the basic mapping of such trends raises issues: What are the opportu-
nities for a public broadcaster in all of this? Especially one making the transition to Internet delivery?

A cultural capital perspective suggests that the CBC must rebuild the democratic merit goods of news, analysis, documentaries, and history in its program schedules as it has begun to do under its new President. It must forge new partnerships with schools and community groups and develop new youth audiences and staff. The CBC must be aggressive as a portal for Canadian information on the Internet, building its already superior comparative advantage there. This requires setting aside format distinctions between educational and general interest broadcasters, forging new partnerships with non-commercial educational content providers, and expanding its provision of children’s and youth informational programming.

A cultural capital approach can begin to raise important policy questions. How best can public broadcasting be used to lever non-formal learning in the so-called knowledge economy? What new partnerships may be found with existing community-based and educational broadcasters, civil society groups, and new content providers in new media educational production?

It is important not to overstate this relationship between education, the regeneration of youth audiences with a transition to new technologies, and the future of democratic public broadcasting. In their study, Accounting For Tastes, Tony Bennett, Michael Emmison, & John Frow (1999) note the difficulty all public broadcasters have in attracting youth audiences, and question if this is a lifecycle phenomenon, a new cosmopolitanism in cultural practice.

Public broadcasting cannot be merely reduced to formal education. Indeed, a combination of broadcasting and education has proved problematic at jurisdictional and operational levels in Canada. But a gradual strategy of co-operation and dialogue between such sectors on project bases, as tested in the development of the Canada: A People’s History series involving historians as ideologically diverse as Strong-Boag, Bercuson, and Granatstein might pave the way to future change in policy. This series is surprising not only for its audience appeal (reaching heights of 1.5 million) but also for its as yet unexplored prospects for secondary development of curriculum materials for use across Canada in multimedia formats.

This new liberal-democratic concept of cultural capital does not carry with it the elite, eurocentric, or paternalistic values of earlier public interest theory. Or it need not. It stipulates that the gap between the knowledge-rich and the knowledge-poor should be reduced over time, and that the absolute condition of the knowledge-poor should be improved over time. It stipulates that culture, as a resource, is both formative and a product of knowledge systems. Perhaps most importantly, it suggests that policymakers need to theorize about the role of basic public institutions like the CBC in the changing conceptions of productivity, social capital, and political engagement in advanced democracies. Critical analysis of the idea of cultural capital and the role of public cultural institutions in
contributing to the wellsprings of knowledge takes cultural policy into the heart of economic, education, and social policy realms.

While a cultural capital perspective makes an important initial contribution to reconceptualizing the CBC’s escape from its policy trap, it is ultimately limited by its incremental neo-liberal roots. Focus on the resource, or means, to cultural change in the knowledge economy obscures fundamental questions about the ends of that change. Not enough attention has been paid to the philosophical or political grounds of cultural rights, or the impact of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms on Canada’s cultural policy discourses, and on the CBC in particular.

Moving to a democratic rights-based framework

Debate over the scope of rights flows from the definition of culture. The prevailing definitions in Canada conceive of culture in a very broad anthropological sense as a way of life or ways of living together (Baeker, 2000). Culture may thus be treated as the context for democratic rights (Kymlicka, 1995) or as the forms through which people make sense of their lives (James, 1999). Cultural rights may be explored as an outcome, metaphor, or surrogate for political rights. They may be treated as an object of quasi-property rights or as societal resources, as may be seen in any cultural capital perspective.

If conceived of as human rights, the existence of cultural rights does not depend on being enacted into law. A human right has three general characteristics: it is possessed by all human beings, equally; it is not the result of particular status; and it is assertable against the whole world (Carmichael, Pocklington, & Pyrcz, 2000). Initially, cultural rights flowed from seventeenth and eighteenth century political rights protecting freedom of expression and association from arbitrary rule. As such, they are often implicit or derived from other rights, and not carried explicitly in many conventions. A review of the main human rights documents, nationally or internationally, finds six main dimensions to cultural rights.8

First, cultural rights may be thought of as intrinsic, implying a right to identity. They may be expressive, guaranteeing free speech or expression and implying that there is a right to practice everyday life in different ways. They may be instrumental, providing the informational tools, education, or capacity to function as a cultural citizen, or guaranteeing access to basic cultural resources. Fourth, they may be seen as democratic or procedural, based on a right to cultural autonomy where individuals have the right to decide the terms of their own lives (Held, 1996) (or the right to choose); or predicated upon equality rights where everyone is treated equally, or imply the right to participate in cultural life. Fifth, they may be normative, referring to the civil values of the right to respect for human dignity, tolerance, or the security of being, that is, the right to live in freedom from fear of arbitrary cultural genocide. And, finally, they may be deliberative, that is, setting out the principles of recognition of cultural status, representation in cultural decision-making, or control over cultural self-determination.9

Progressive social movements are beginning to move new assertions of these rights to the centre of the global arena. The work of the Cultural Environment Movement (CEM) is typical. Together with the Third World Network, the Centre
for Communication and Human Rights in Amsterdam, and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), the CEM adopted an international covenant of standards and communication rights in 1996 based on the following principles:

- culture and communication are basic to the life of all individuals and communities (the intrinsic right);
- all people have the right to develop their own skills to tell their own stories, and must learn the facility in reading, writing, story-telling, critical cultural awareness to do so (expressive);
- all have a right to fair and equitable access to local and global resources they need to participate (instrumental);
- all have a right to participate in and make decisions about culture and communication (procedural and deliberative). (Duncan, 1999, p. 177)

Such initiatives from new social movements around democratic media, public journalism, or alternative cultural expression have been slow to coalesce (McChesney, 1997). They have not addressed the political challenges of world governance. Where would such an international covenant be housed? In UNESCO? The UN? Or as a separate entity springing from civil society?

Perhaps, most importantly, how would a declaration, protocol, or accord set out dispute resolution mechanisms? Cultural rights are empty unless they are enforceable. While the protocol accepted for the UN Convention on Political and Civil Rights sets out the institution of an ombudsman and a provision for international human rights complaints-handling, the UN has not yet instituted such a mechanism. Democratic socialists Ed Broadbent and Stephen Lewis have argued that it will be impossible for activists to advance the cultural rights agenda without such basic reform to world governance in other, more fundamental, human rights.

The Canadian foreign policy push to explore the idea of a separate instrument on cultural diversity, to protect cultural policy and regulation from liberalization under the World Trade Organization, is grappling with similar issues. Advancing the debate over cultural rights in the international arena requires a reflexive awareness of the limitations of discourses on universal human rights and liberalism, which have frequently been used to silence dissent by minorities (Henry, Tator, Mattis, & Rees, 2000).

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms raised the craft to new heights in balancing nineteenth century British civic ideals with modern particular identities. Sections entrenched in 1982 recognized aboriginal treaty and other rights and the need for the preservation and enhancement of multicultural heritage in addition to the linguistic and cultural rights of the founding cultural dualism. The subjects clauses (represented by Section 1 in the Charter) establish that intrinsic and procedural cultural rights explicitly set out are subject to limitation only if compatible with promoting the general welfare in a democratic society. No procedural cultural rights can be complete without clear democratic conventions about where the individual rights to expression or culture may or may not be superseded by others or by the majority. In Canada, the principle of defeasibility, that is, where
individual autonomy or freedom of expression may be defeated or restrained, is based on the demonstration of harm. Our legal tradition is exemplary in this regard, exploring the full ambit of these freedoms and restraint on expression in the large jurisprudence on protection to racial groups against hate literature (Peterson & Hutchinson, 1999).

Other Canadian legal and political theorists (Taylor, Kymlicka, Henry, and others) have a great deal to offer in breaking through the impasse of a mutually exclusive, bipolar understanding of the relationships between collective and individual rights.

The most comprehensive defence for collective or group-differentiated rights arises from Will Kymlicka. Kymlicka (1995) sets out three levels to such group-differentiated rights: the right to self-government; the right to express particularity which may require special legislation; and the right to special representation. His effort to universalize a right to particularity which is philosophically and logically based on grounds of freedom and justice and not just the right to association is a bold one (Laycock, quoted in Carmichael, Pocklington, & Pyrcz, 2000). Central to the argument of balancing individual and collective rights is that the classic liberal concept of the autonomous individual has always been overlaid with the idea that such autonomy may not bring harm to others. The international system of national sovereignty has always superseded individual rights to the detriment of the emergence of a global civil rights regime. Nonetheless, the fact that protections for group-differentiated rights for women, racial groups, and a range of other minorities are entrenched in the preamble to the Canadian Charter, and are interpretive and not substantive, suggests to critics like Carol Tator and Frances Henry that minority rights are still too vulnerable.10

This brings the second main argument to conclusion. While a cultural capital perspective on cultural policy assists public entities like the CBC in finding a new instrumental rationale for continuing state protection—as a valuable cultural resource—a broader democratic rights-based framework proves a stronger theoretical framework for its reform. As Table 1 demonstrates, a rehabilitated and democratic rights discourse raises a range of industrial, social network, rights, and standards issues.

A rights-based approach sees public broadcasting as built on the intrinsic right to cultural identity, the right to cultural expression, and as a guarantor of procedural democratic rights. Public broadcasting implies the full range of deliberative powers over representation in cultural decision-making or control over cultural self-determination. Where public interest discourse has seen public broadcasting in Canada as inclusive, cohesive, or based on special status for bilingualism or latterly aboriginal cultures, a framework of rights addresses the question of proportional representation of new racial and fast-growing populations of minorities in Canada, moving to critical multiculturalism, based on respect for ethnocultural diversity, and power-sharing (Henry, Tator, Mattis, & Rees, 2000). Accountability frameworks are radically overhauled. Table 1 illustrates that such a rights-based approach addresses democratic entitlement in the full context of
Table 1: Transition from Public Interest to a Cultural Rights Discourse in Public Broadcasting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Interest Approach</th>
<th>Rights-based Approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rights Formulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• inclusive</td>
<td>• proportionate rep. of racial minorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• national unity/social cohesion</td>
<td>• multiple, hybrid identities—mediator of conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• bilingual and bicultural, with special recognition of aboriginal intrinsic identity</td>
<td>• critical multiculturalism, recognition of diverse intrinsic identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• representative</td>
<td>• direct democracy (or hybrid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Network</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• holistic, inclusive mandates</td>
<td>• diversity in mandates</td>
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<tr>
<td>• organic state-society-citizenry</td>
<td>• pluralistic civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• cultivate taste</td>
<td>• lead and reflect taste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• quality</td>
<td>• innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• dual official languages</td>
<td>• multicultural in representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• independent from market</td>
<td>• independent from state and market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• citizen-audience</td>
<td>• civil society depth, engagement with NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• professional/journalistic</td>
<td>• multiple</td>
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<tr>
<td>• news-oriented: separate appeal system</td>
<td>• all genres: conjoint with private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• producer-oriented (freedom of the artist protected)</td>
<td>• public-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• juried/elitist standards of excellence</td>
<td>• multiple standards, juries of citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• efficiency</td>
<td>• value for money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• express public morality</td>
<td>• debate and challenge public morality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• instructive</td>
<td>• educative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• editorial objectivity: independence</td>
<td>• editorial autonomy, critical subjectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• monopoly</td>
<td>• competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• vertical integration of production, transmission, distribution</td>
<td>• structural separation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• in-house production</td>
<td>• commissioner-broadcaster</td>
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<tr>
<td>• comprehensive</td>
<td>• specialized</td>
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<tr>
<td>• fordist-industrial</td>
<td>• flexible postfordism (disaggregated, outsourced)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• apprentice, guild training</td>
<td>• foster talent, create synergies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• mass demographic</td>
<td>• youth demographic rebuilt, multiskill training, plural non-formal,</td>
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<td>• mono-service</td>
<td>• multiplex service</td>
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<tr>
<td>• majority service</td>
<td>• majority and minority services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Intensity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• state investment</td>
<td>• security of public investors</td>
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<tr>
<td>• indirect taxation</td>
<td>• transparent taxation: multiple revenue sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• no valuation of intellectual property</td>
<td>• valuation of intellectual property reserves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• governance centralized</td>
<td>• decentralized: co-ordinated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Adapted from: Blumler (1992); Peers (1969); Held (1996); and Henry, Tator, Mattis, & Rees (2000).
reformulated practice and organization. A public broadcaster is independent from both state and market, dependent upon a deepening relationship both to civil society and the groups or social movements which define it, as well as more direct links to viewers and listeners. Reconceptualizing the CBC as widely and publicly held by citizens suggests that the need to protect the security of public shareholders may frame limits to trade liberalization, on grounds defensible even within the now dead MAI (Multilateral Agreement on Investment).

The transition to a rights-based framework raises questions of deliberative democratic control. The best guarantor of such rights is an effective system of cultural federalism in the CBC. To restore such federalism requires radical decentralization and deconcentration of powers in the CBC, structural separation, and new models of cultural governance. A democratic rights-based framework, then, suggests directions for organizational reform. The transition to a rights-based discourse will not transform Canadian cultural policy overnight, but it will provide an important counterweight to the technological and economic transformations at the base of broadcasting which threaten to undercut any rationale at all for a public, democratic, and non-commercial alternative medium.

What is to be done?
The case for radical decentralization for the CBC can be made on several grounds. First, there is the convergence between culture, education, and human resource development in the new economy, and the jurisdictional need for closer co-operation and sharing of control over non-formal learning among federal, provincial, and municipal agencies.11 There is urgent need for critical mass and creative leadership from the CBC in non-formal informational programming in existing and new media—especially for young audiences. There may even be program distribution synergies to be found. Second, there are the emerging holes of market failure in Canada, where the private broadcasters are redirecting their program emphases.

Regulators are changing direction in a wholesale bid to allow new concentration of ownership among Canadian private broadcasters.12 Changes of ownership in the private sector involve rationalization of resources. As a consequence of its 1999 TV Policy Decision, the CRTC will no longer require a specific number of hours of local news or current affairs as conditions of private broadcast licenses. Instead, it is relying on a carrot approach, allowing a special top-up incentive in Canadian content certification for non-news programming originating from the regions. Various studies (Brinton, 2001; Gates, 2000) have shown a marked decrease in the number of hours of regional programming on private television—and a drop of some 32% in total financing of western production in the period 1994 to 1998. Together with trends in the newspaper industry, where Thomson and Hollinger propose to sell off all their smaller market presses, diversity in information and news are genuinely threatened. A two- or three-tier market of communication entitlement is emerging, with smaller centres left without either commercial newspapers or television, and a minimal news presence in local radio (Hackett & Adam, 1999). Does this contravene the right to access to information?
What are its democratic impacts? Does the CBC have a special obligation to smaller communities where it is frequently the only alternative news source? A public broadcaster must act in the case of market failure to affirm the provision of choice. Market dynamics may change over time.13

Third, there is the demise of community-based initiatives in the rest of the system. Even less studied than the television policy decision (CRTC, 1999) is the impact of the CRTC’s deregulation of community cable television in a bid to redirect cable investments into priority programming with the creation of the Canadian Television Production Fund. The death of the concept of the local license and of participatory community television has abandoned the notion of access to broadcasting and challenged policymakers to rethink the role of the public broadcaster. If, as many critics have argued, a public service mission must bind the system as a whole, with its many pluralistic elements, then the redefinition of obligation of the private sector imposes democratic access responsibilities back on the CBC, while not derogating from the need to establish other alternative communication fora.

How would this kind of radical decentralization work? Perhaps the best model is CBC radio, where more than half the schedule is regional and the regional director has significant autonomy to program for audience needs. Important access times are set aside for the general public. Community partnerships on education, charity food drives, and so on are well publicized. On-line Internet access is extensive. Certainly, the move to more democratic access on the part of citizens and civil society groups is a decisive change to the model of professional, bureaucratic control that underlies the modern paradigm of programming at the CBC. Like radio, some of the television scheduling needs to be depersonalized—perhaps 10%—and some but not all of it may be accomplished on-line. Such 1970s-style return to the cultural democracy of the Pelletier era has struck the media intelligentsia as unrealistic, perhaps even politically incorrect.14 But the point is not access for access’ sake. The goal is more alternative programming and points of view.

In organizational terms, what is needed is serious attention to the idea of asymmetrical regionalism, something the CBC Board of Directors and senior management appear to have considered but rejected. While the solution of different local news hour closures for different markets was apparently debated by the Board, the relative merits of markets in deciding which to cut or retain, or why, and problems of redress of historical grievance, raised their ugly heads. In this defensive view, it would be much more logical not to be seen to play favourites.

The problem is that a system of sustainable regional, regional to national, and regional to regional programming requires a much more solid theoretical basis. A rights-based discourse helps propel this thinking. Should service levels be roughly proportionate to population? In this model, budgets for each region are set roughly proportionate to population, subject to cross-subsidy of national merit programming. Exploring this model raises questions about Canadian social history of human rights and the transformation of multicultural policy (Meisel, undated) and
recognizing or re-evaluating the relative cultural investment in bilingual networks, well above their representation of the population. It challenges existing models of distribution. CBC has proposed in the past to multiplex its signal, offering at least five different time zones to all regions. In Germany, for example, citizens move and may continue to receive their home province public service. Such regionalization implies a core program schedule that is distinctively different, to warrant simultaneous delivery.

Asymmetrical regionalism implies more than form or function. There are content or production implications. One size does not fit all in scheduling in this country. Markets across Canada have very different time zones and peak and seasonal rhythms of viewing. Audiences in the regions have different cultural tastes—the top ten programs are different in any given week across the country. And there is very different local competition. Regional CBC directors have to have flexibility to counter-program to their audiences, to pre-empt national schedules, to offer key regional programming in prime time, and to experiment with new genres.

One way to achieve asymmetrical regionalism is through a fundamental shift in CBC thinking about its regional program activities. This shift would include:

- allocating funds from non-programming costs to strengthen regional program service;
- giving local management far greater flexibility in developing and scheduling programming suited to the needs of each region;
- continuing to provide a strong local news and current affairs service in each community, but focus on being a clear alternative. (Mandate Review Committee, 1996, p. 89)

Asymmetrical regionalism carries with it the benefit of ethno-cultural diversification: the major cities (Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver) will all have non-white populations approaching 40% of their total by 2006.

Structural separation needs to be addressed. While proposals for structural separation are rarely made, they were initially intended to protect radio (but were never endorsed internally). Structural separation, however, could be extended to protect the editorial autonomy of the regions. Would splitting up the Corporation allow greater creativity? Or make it more vulnerable? An alternative model would create an internal market like Producer’s Choice (a system of internal market competition established at the BBC) where regional directors bid for programs relevant to their audiences and are held accountable in terms of audience performance and other benchmarks.

The idea of setting audience targets challenges a growing argument that the CBC cannot be all things to all people, though it has become a dominant cliché in the debate among political columnists and internal management in recent events. Public broadcasting is based on plurality of programming: to please most of the people some of the time, and some of the people most of the time. A rights-based approach to public broadcasting opens up debate and dialogue over effective diversity of expression and the CBC’s role in advancing it.
Finally, a powerful case can be made that to be fully democratic, a system of cultural governance would have to be characterized by effective cultural participation, adequate understanding, equal voting, control of the agenda, and genuine inclusivity (Held, 1996). This implies that cultural institutions like the CBC and other NGOs cannot hide from questions about strategic manipulation of information about membership, internal procedures to protect democratic deliberation, or fairness of treatment of minority dissent. Cultural NGOs must engage in broader questions about how and in what ways non-state activities may be democratically re-ordered (Held, 1996). For the CBC, this implies that policymakers address the following principal deficiencies in its current system of cultural governance.

The CBC is a state broadcaster, not a democratic public broadcaster
It is over-regulated and under-accountable. For it to regain any sense of identity with the public, the system of accountability requires major redesign. The CBC's centrality to public intellectual life in this country depends on its perceived legitimacy: independent from the state, above market imperatives, and a democratic, relevant, and popularly-accountable entity, not an elite or bureaucratic organization.

The CBC is still too close to government
Appointments to the Board need to be opened up to the Parliamentary Committee and include a broader cross-section of Canadians from all walks of public intellectual life. New citizens of different racial and linguistic backgrounds must be represented. The next President should be insulated from partisan influence and appointed by the Board; experience with broadcasting (all too often not characteristic of past appointments) should be a primary requirement. The Board may include, ex-officio, CEOs of other public entities including, perhaps, other not-for-profit broadcasters, the BBC or French public broadcasters, the Canada Council or National Arts Centre, and other NGOs representing artists and cultural interests anchoring part of its arts line-up.

The system of media accountability needs complete overhaul
The Office of Media Accountability should be taken outside the CBC. While the ombudsman may be retained, it is not appropriate for the CBC to rule on its own ethics. No matter how rigorous its internal studies (on sexist gaffes during the federal election coverage of the Alliance, on federal editorial bias in the Quebec referendum, the Milewski affair in APEC coverage, or bias to the RCMP in coverage of Gustafson Lake), rulings or professional standards must be made independently. Should the CBC join the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council? Or should a new entity be created to better enforce standards of news journalism across all media? These are fundamental questions in democratizing the CBC and its role in news standard-setting, which in the end have to do with more than just territorial politics.
The various roles of the Board, the CRTC, the Auditor General, and the Parliamentary Committee need co-ordination under the direction of the Minister

Before the last license renewals, some argued that the CRTC review should rule first and foremost on the value-for-money issue, that is, whether the CBC had sufficient funds to complete its mandate in the next license term. To do this, it could have postponed its hearing and asked the Minister for a report from the Auditor General. As it was, the economic data the CBC submitted to the hearing was simply not enough for the Commission to decide that its recommendations were beyond the Corporation’s financial means, leading to the ignominious battle between the then Chair of the CRTC and the new CBC president.19

Before democratic governance can be achieved, the CBC must bring back the idea of the citizens’ advisory council.

Since the Aird era, advisory councils made up of citizens have been suggested to advise the CBC on programming and seek new ways to involve citizens. While it has tried to improve its annual reports, its on-line talkback correspondence, its use of Internet for on-line polling, its lists of experts to be more broadly representative of ethno-cultural groups, and its Town Hall meetings (which are contentious, as the Town Hall of June 7, 2000, proved with Serbian attacks on CBC news objectivity), these efforts at citizen inclusion need critical review. The CBC must lead the way in digital democracy. Arguably, as studies of local governance at Simon Fraser University’s Institute of Governance suggest, scale of locality matters. As the size of a community increases, voting turnout decreases. Scale can be inverse to belonging and social action.20 What is certain is that there is a need to better monitor and evaluate media performance in general, and the CBC’s in particular, from an independent basis in civil society, involving academics, industry practitioners, and civil society NGOs.21

New directions of research are critically needed to preserve a democratic public cultural space in the era of globalization (Fletcher, 1998). We need more critical ethnographies of the impact of the CBC on new citizens and youth, more television criticism of its productions, and, especially, valuations of CBC archives, with not-for-profit exploration of its repurposing in the digital age (see URL: http://www.presevatory.com). This implies a fundamental rethinking of several criteria for democratic cultural policy evaluation: access or openness; equity or tolerance; and fairness or social justice and social dialogue. Culture and the CBC are always political: we must ask political questions about them (Fletcher, 1998).

Conclusion

This paper does not intend to suggest that culture, or the CBC as its popular instrument, is a panacea for democracy, but that cultural policy and the CBC must be reframed to contain both the procedural guarantees of democratic cultural participation and the normative democratic guarantees of greater equity and social justice. Utopian? Perhaps. In the absence of broad-based global, national, and regional social movements which prioritize cultural policy (beyond basic human needs to protect security, or freedom from cultural genocide), the political opportunity structure for democratic public broadcasting is bleak. But global move-
ments are surfacing in opposition to free trade in cultural services. The debate
er over cultural and communication rights among NGOs is beginning. Direct action,
constitutional challenges, and new forms of policy intervention may take shape as
the global concentration and vertical integration of commercial media escalates.
A cultural capital or democratic cultural rights-based framework may help make
the political case for renewing and reforming Canada’s public broadcast broad-
caster. The CBC is one of the main public institutions mediating conflict and cul-
tural change in this country. To escape its policy trap, it is time to treat it as a
wellspring of knowledge and look for new forms of cultural dialogue and democ-
ratization.

Notes
1. Amid the economic collapse of the 1930s, there was a multi-party consensus around the creation
of the CBC. Despite modest political differences among the two, three, and then five federal par-
ties, successive Acts passed with a mandate for the public broadcaster essentially unchallenged.
2. One of the ironies of Canada’s regulatory history is that any movement for democratic access
broadcasting with a communitarian ethic was channelled not through the public broadcaster but
through the private cable sector (a regulation since abandoned by the CRTC) (Salter, 1988).
3. What is cultural development as a policy paradigm? Associated with a tradition of dirigisme in
Europe, it is a policy understanding shared by UNESCO, the Council of Europe, France, and
Quebec, as well as some newly industrializing countries like Singapore (see de la Garde, Trem-
blay, Dorland, & Paré, 1994). The cultural development approach has worked well within Quebec
and can explain the extraordinary success of Radio Canada which is insulated from political
attack, despite signs of internal difficulty (creeping commercialism, unwieldy costs, and lack of
sensitivity to programming outside of Montreal). Quebec nationalist development has been a
remarkable product of success due to language, efficient counter-programming, a literary canon,
and auteur and oral traditions which grow a “sense of belonging to an interpretive community” (de
la Garde, 1997, p. 28). The problems of cultural development paradigms are well known among
international circles and minority groups. See the discussion of developmental democracy out-
lined elegantly by David Held in his Models of Democracy (1996). The cultural development
approach in Making Our Voices Heard (Mandate Review Committee, 1996) met with wide
approval (Hoskins & McFadyen, 1996).
4. For representative reading of answers to these and other questions of democratic communication,
see Duncan (1999). For a sympathetic and critical reading of cultural populism, see McGuigan
(1992). Cultural diversity is an emergent policy discourse, reframing multiculturalism in a trade
context; see the call for a separate cultural accord outside of the World Trade Organization from
the Sectoral Advisory Group on the Cultural Industries at the Minister of Canadian Heritage’s
5. An astonishing estimate by PriceWaterhouse Coopers finds fully three quarters of the corporate
market value in the world resides in intellectual resources (URL: http://www.pwcglobal.com/
6forces).
6. See URL: http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/People/Education/educ14a.htm (or /educ09.htm).
7. The Arts for Jobs era corresponded with the rise of cultural industries as a preoccupation in
national cultural policy. The history of the cultural industries is well known (Dorland, 1996). In
practical terms, a cultural industry preoccupation allowed the Federal Government to: (a) use the
CBC to provide seed funding for independent producers to kick start the sector in the early 1980s;
(b) relocate control over funding for certain categories of undersupplied public production outside
the CBC in Telefilm, and later the Television Production Fund; (c) promote the CBC’s blazing
of international sales before their private sector counterparts; and (d) plant co-ventures with the
private sector in areas like Newsworld International, Showcase, or other specialty channels. The
CBC served as an important industrial catalyst in the early development of major independent companies (Alliance) and in the successful policy launch of specialty channels, and as a storehouse of inventory to be resold (at undisclosed discounted values) to specialty networks. The full extent of the economic impact of the CBC during the cultural industries period of federal policy cannot be estimated. Most agreements (with Showcase and so on) were secret. The CBC does not publish its own program sales, domestically or internationally. Early analysis of the profit levels of independent producers often found margins equivalent to the amount of subsidy obtained from Telefilm. Since most of the licensing fees triggering such investment were from the CBC in the 1980s and early 1990s, it is fair to say the CBC, like Telefilm and other agencies, was instrumental in the growth of these companies, bridging them to their initial public offers. Policy analysis elsewhere has suggested that the BBC, like many public broadcasters, also undervalues its inventory in resale to private ventures significantly. Ironically, it is cut-rate syndication deals between the BBC and American specialties such as A&E and the History Channel which began to undercut the audiences of the CBC when received in Canada, raising questions of predatory pricing among international public broadcasters (see Neil, 1995).

8. These documents are: the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982; UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (URL: http://www.unhchr.ch/); UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

9. In the last decade, a number of charters of cultural rights have appeared: Article 94: Canadian Writer’s Union Response to the MAI; People’s Communication Charter, authored by Cees Hamelink and adopted at the founding convention of the Cultural Environment Movement; Founding Principles, adopted by the Advisory Board of the Canadian Conference of the Arts for the international network of NGOs in Greece 2000; Charter of French Television Viewers’ Rights, Les Pieds dans le Paf, Media Development, 4, 1991; and Working Proposal for a Cultural Accord, by Professor Ivan Bernier (unpublished).

10. Canada’s advance in reasoning out some of the dimensions of cultural rights on the basis of group differentiation cannot be extended easily to other social movements, including peace or environmental issues, indicating a fundamental weakness in recent democratic theory.

11. This is not meant to ignore the legitimacy of efforts by educational broadcasters like the TVO, Télé Quebec, B.C. Knowledge Network, or the privatized ACCESS, but simply to recognize that the broadcast format for specialized formal education has not worked well in Canada, and has received scant provincial support. Total provincial grant to TVO was some $50 million in 1998-99; to KNOW B.C. some $8 million. See URL: http://www.knowtv.com/; URL: http://www.accessstv.ca/home.html; URL: http://www.scn.sk.ca/; URL: http://www.telequebec.qc.ca/se/index.html; and URL: http://www.tvontario.org/oeca/ag_marketing.html.

12. Arguably, over $10 billion changed hands with the sales of WIC to Corus and CanWest Global, CTV to Bell Canada Enterprises, and Videotron to Rogers in 1999. Corus has also sold 20% equity to Liberty Communications in the U.S. Public benefits, extracted as 10% of the transactions under CRTC regulation, could total over $1 billion. Yet the public benefits process is unwieldy, secret, and subject to the whim of the private broadcasters’ largesse. They are increasingly being privatized, that is, interpreted to mean direct industrial benefit on the screen in priority program categories. There are no systems to monitor the performance of the public benefits (see B.C. Film, 2000). The recent bid of $2.3 billion for 25 CTV stations allows a rough valuation of existing CBC assets — BCTV alone was valued at $295 million and, on average, WIC stations at about $90 million. While there are many variables to discount or amend the value of CBC holdings, a total of 13 owned and operated stations would conservatively be estimated at a floor of about $1.4 billion, with no value set for the affiliates (see Surtees, 2000).

13. But voters do not rally around market failure — they do rally around the idea of a right to communication, if grounds for grievance may be demonstrated. The CBC’s coventure on a special digital channel licensed in December 2000 called “Land and Sea” addresses only part of these concerns.

14. Again and again in public hearings, citizens told the CRTC they do not want a superstation out of Toronto or Montreal. The Commission echoed them in Decisions 2000-1, 2000-2, and 2000-3,
calling for a need to give greater voice to the regions in prime time (CRTC, 2000). The CBC itself had promised 13 half-hours a week in prime time of regional current affairs programming. The CRTC upped the ante by calling for an additional 6 hours of drama, variety, documentaries, or entertainment magazine shows produced by the regions for the national network. That is 6 out of 28 available prime time hours or a little under a fifth, well below any formula of representation by population outside of the centre. Currently, about 3 hours or so out of prime time are from the regions, according to the CBC’s own application, an amount the CRTC proposed to double. Critics have argued that this will dumb down the network (leading to more On the Road Again), but they conveniently ignore the excellence of top series, such as Da Vinci’s Inquest or This Hour Has 22 Minutes, which are drawn from the regions. They have also argued that shooting from the regions will increase costs. No so. Labour costs are cheaper away from the inflated Toronto markets, and there is a regional bonus of some 5% from the Television Production Fund for shooting in the regions, topped up by provincial film funding agencies to some 10%, suggesting it may be less expensive. A counter-programming strategy may well be effective against either increased imports from abroad or an internationalizing strategy in entertainment on the part of the private broadcast sector. Ignored in this debate has been the value put on the CBC for its global voice—importing more of the best of the rest of the world, on the model of a TV5 or shortwave radio overnight—or for building a market of exchange among public broadcasters and their public constituencies. Just as the CBC has to push to be more responsive to the regions, so it must push its global reach, rebuild its international bureaus, collaborate on co-productions with other not-for-profit broadcasters, and work to build audiences for alternative non-commercial programming around the world. For accounts of the supper hour controversy, see Cobb (2000), Gessel (1995), Neil (2000), Posner (2000), Simpson (2000a, 2000b), Strachan (2000a, 2000b, 2000c), and Winsor (2000).

15. For example, Radio Canada takes about a third of all CBC spending, but broadcasts to under a quarter of the population.

16. It also suggests that francophones outside of Quebec may be served by Radio Canada’s regional Quebec arm. What value is placed on bilingual production in the regions?

17. The CBC is ahead of most of the private broadcasters in the number of visible minorities it hires, but still less than half of the share of the population. Management is disproportionately white, male, middle-aged, and from the centre. Programming is insufficiently diverse and not skewed young enough since more than 60% of Canada’s visible minorities are under the age of 24.

18. Hoskins & McFadyen (1996) have identified the Catch-22: if the CBC competes aggressively for audiences with broad, common denominator-type programming, it is accused of being like the commercial broadcaster and hence redundant and unworthy of public subsidy. If it provides distinctive, minority-taste programming, its small audiences bring into question its relevance and value for money, and it will be undercut by other niche channels.

19. CBC management’s manipulation of the extent of the financial crisis in the last round of cuts over the supper hour news—said to save between $60 million and $130 million—was completely undercut by later announcements that the CBC with Power Corporation had just sold its Newsworld International Service for an estimated $150 million, half of which was to accrue to the network. Clearly, the Minister’s role must be to direct and co-ordinate policy matters and overall strategic direction. For example, the CBC’s over-the-air transmission woes, estimated to contribute a large percentage of the 40% of fixed direct costs in its budget, could have been offset by the idea of a basic Canadian package available by satellite, cable, or telephone for free or, conversely, by the idea of a fee for local retransmission which would change copyright fundamentally. An idea that has been sandbagged by the CRTC as being beyond its mandate, such as a signal fee, might achieve wider cross-subsidy by other means.

20. Advisory councils have worked well for educational broadcasters like TVO and Knowledge Network, introducing an idea of a membership community. With regular citizen consultations, the CBC will not delegate the task to the CRTC, which reached over 4,000 citizens in the last license hearings who expressed their views in support of a regionally and racially responsive CBC.
21. The 1996 Mandate Review Committee (MRC) suggested that it was important to move away from models of commercial ratings measurement to measure the public accountability and value of the CBC. The case was made on the basis that to measure audience share as apples with apples requires mapping the CBC’s performance against its private competitors in attracting audiences available for Canadian shows at that time. In addition, the MRC argued that reach was a concept that was underused: universality of a public broadcaster must still be defined as reaching at least some of the people some of the time, as long as the cumulative weekly audience reached was a strong majority. Implicit, although not stated, was the expectation that this majority would be aggregated across a number of minorities, across all social segments. Also important was weekly use, or time spent with the relative broadcasters, as a measure of salience in everyday life (MRC). Other ideas were explored by an international conference of some 50 public broadcast audience researchers and policymakers around the world (see Savage, 1995). As a BBC programmer mentioned, “the problem with performance indicators (and measuring things in general) is that you elevate the things that are easily measurable and you forget the things that are difficult to measure or impossible to measure. They are most often the things that matter the most in what we would like to call public service broadcasting.”

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