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# 1 The Nation-State and Global Media

THE electronic media pervade our daily being, and yet we hardly have a grip on what radio and television mean to the political geography of modern life. Imagery affects loyalties: that has always been known. What has been less clear is that the structure and capacity of communications and the fate of governments are inextricably intertwined. Throughout the world, the organization of broadcasting and the dissemination of television programmes are changing and often radically. The millions of images that float through the public mind help determine the very nature of national allegiances, attitudes towards place, family, government, and state. No wonder that in all locales—developed or undeveloped, democracy or dictatorship, transition society or not—the question of the structuring and future regulation of media is so important.

In the late 1940s, during his post-war search for a new utopia, the poet W. H. Auden longed for an 'ideal open society [that] . . . would know no physical, economic or cultural frontiers'.<sup>1</sup> Today, the open society that knows no physical or cultural frontiers is upon us, or at least appears to be through its media version. Satellites drive signals within their own 'footprints', regardless of borders. Everywhere, historic images of collective identities are shifting. Seventy years of a power-oriented, strongly directed Soviet Union, with a committed policy of controlling imagery, were insufficient to prevent the very badges of loyalty from being turned against those who propagated them. Czechoslovakia dissolved in the whisper of an election. The set of imposed identities that was Yugoslavia was insufficient, alone, to maintain unity among those with long-nurtured bitter hatreds. The sign—without force—proved incapable of maintaining a polity. Images may sustain the idea of a people, but they are not sufficient to maintain the bonds of a state far beyond the convenience of its citizenry. Still, communal symbols reinforce cohesion, affect the duration and nature of any particular hegemony, and, therefore, have a central place in the idea of the state.

Nation after nation has learnt the modern impossibility of maintaining a monopoly over imagery, but the effort to do so persists. The open society—one that, in Auden's words, knows no cultural or physical frontiers—is difficult to achieve, partly because democratic values, without concrete loyalties, leave the apparatus of public life too weakened. The task, then, is to determine how the state can generate, sustain, or encourage narratives to communal well-being and remain true to democratic values. If the state cannot undertake these tasks satisfactorily, the question becomes one of state survival.<sup>2</sup> The focus in this book is on those instruments for communication that have been employed primarily to undergird the established order, though they have also been used, at times, effectively to undermine it. Radio and television have been generators of mass public imagery, inscribed with special powers. Who runs broadcasting, how it is organized, what images are permitted to pass through towers and transmitters—all these questions have been the subject of almost a century of debate. But radio and television are only an example, only a segment, of the general subject of images in society. When we think about the impact of these media, it must be in the context of the collection of symbols and signals that compose society and constitute its stimuli. Those who worry about curriculum in the schools are cousins to those who fret about the appropriate level of dignity for the flag. Those who are concerned about images of race and depictions of women are cousins to those who are concerned about violence and obscenity and those who fight over the appropriate means of funding and encouraging the visual arts. Advocates of public-service television have this much in common with their opponents: both groups see the importance of imagery in altering the nature of community. Throughout, the search is on for the proper phrasing of public debate over impact, social limits, and the effects of new technology.

This plethora of changing signals, floating, then raining from space, poses impressive problems of belonging, identification, nationalism, and community. Each nation thinks it is important to teach its own history to its children. Monuments constructed in public squares are important for more than their time. They are temples of remembrance, building loyalties for the future. A national public debate about the flag—its desecration and reverence—can still raise passions with those on both sides feeling themselves patriotic. Even in a world exploding with information, there is a role for a government-funded public broadcasting system that will enrich and help to define and reflect the national

identity. And the struggle over the content of the curriculum in public education and in college still flares with an explosive brightness that indicates what the participants consider to be at stake.

There is little consensus about these issues: about the content of public space and the government's responsibility over the images that appear on the television screen. For most of this century, especially in the United States, the role of government in regulating broadcasting was predicated on the scarcity of opportunities for individuals and firms to send forth their ideas and programmes. Bursts of technological change have undermined these assumptions, but not necessarily eliminated the social ills that they addressed. In other parts of the world, it has been not the move from scarcity to abundance, but transformations in the idea of the state (often, itself, related to technological change), that have led to a similar need for re-examination.

### **Beginnings and Consolidation**

The first half-century of broadcasting—the period from 1915 to the mid-1960s—was the era, generally, of the nation in control of its radio and then its television structures. That was the time of pioneering and of consolidation; it was a period that ended at the introduction of the satellite and in the morning of cable television. It was a half-century marked by events that in many ways emphasized the political and cultural needs of the state. The mentality of the first generation of broadcasters was affected by the sense of national identity that emerged in the wake of the First World War. The first director of programmes of the British Broadcasting Company, for example, started his radio tenure collecting and editing, for his government, intercepted wireless propaganda of the Central Powers.<sup>3</sup> For each of the major Western powers, modern communications were part of a tendency towards centralization and an emphasis of national over regional influences. The bureaucracy almost everywhere matured in the protectionist and isolationist mood of the Depression. Their successors were more cosmopolitan, but not by much. For them, the instructors in the need for strong state identity were the antagonisms of the Second World War and the harsh separateness of the Cold War. Even in the United States, where the division between government and the press is so highly valued, it was a matter of pride that executives could move back and forth from the Voice of America to the private networks. It is little

wonder, in a period so condemned to the importance of borders, that national concerns over the shaping of imagery would be so pronounced.

Radio, actually, had an essentially non-national birth. Almost by definition, radio waves are not respecters of national boundaries. And, as a technology, the first application of radio was to conquer boundaries, to reach out, for navigational safety, beyond borders, through transmissions from ship to shore.<sup>4</sup> Conceptually, the earliest audience uses of radio were of little significance in terms of the government's substantive interest in content. From the outset, music, a cross-cultural commodity, was a mainstay. And programmes existed to sell equipment, not for any other purpose, covert or expressed. Given this infancy, radio could have been considered a mechanism precisely to cut across national lines, to reach an audience of hobbyists and crystal-set makers irrespective of state identity.

And yet, the international or transnational use of radio was not to be its major characteristic. Shortly after its ship-to-shore beginnings, the struggle was to contain radio within national borders, to provide that its growth would occur within the protective and insular supervision of the government. Where possible, there would be strong limits on the intrusion of signals from one country to another. Policing this process came to be a chief function of international broadcasting organizations, a function echoed, fifty years later, during the early days of satellite communications.<sup>5</sup> In Canada, by the late 1920s, the first fears were being expressed of over-dependence on US programming and of competition for frequencies from the United States.<sup>6</sup> The drum roll for national consciousness was often phrased in terms of the 'public trust' or the 'public service'. This was the moment—a flash that vanished—of unrequited insight by Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce, who was charged with the initial regulatory responsibilities. Hoover argued that radio should not be considered 'merely as a business carried on for private gain, for private advertisement, or for the entertainment of the curious. It is to be considered as a public concern, impressed with a public trust, and to be considered primarily from the standpoint of public interest.'<sup>7</sup> In 1923 the Sykes Committee, established by the British government, stated that 'the control of such a potential power over public opinion and the life of the nation ought to remain with the State'.<sup>8</sup>

The almost immediate government reaction to threats from transnational broadcasting was the subject of a brilliant little book on the early history of the BBC by the famous economist R. H. Coase.<sup>9</sup>

In 1925 an 'unauthorized' radio service, using the Eiffel Tower in Paris as its transmission point, broadcast an English-language programme directed to the United Kingdom, with advertising from a London department-store chain, hoping to build a British audience. Immediately, British government and broadcasting interests sought to limit the competition. By the early 1930s there was a vigorous business in English-language broadcasting, supported by British advertisers, emanating from France and directed at British listeners. To protect the national broadcasting monopoly (and the arrangements with the newspaper industry that were involved), it became government policy to suppress foreign commercial broadcasting in English.<sup>10</sup>

The US experience is often contrasted with that of the British, and, in many ways, the traditions are quite separate and distinct. Neither US industry nor Congress sought the emergence of a powerful national public-service entity with a monopoly over audience and a state charter. Still, the history of broadcasting in the United States is the history of frequency allocation by government and licensing by the government as well, a history that underscored the state-organized nature of the medium.<sup>11</sup> By treaty with Mexico and Canada, the United States sought to minimize the number of television signals originating outside its borders that were directed at American audiences. Foreign ownership was limited. Powerful radio entities—'clear channels'—were licensed that could reach across a huge expanse of the then-forty-eight states and served to redefine internal identities. The establishment of the clear channels was a domestic version of the international debate over patterns of signal transmission and patterns of cultures. Government licensing contained substantive content restrictions for the licensees. The very act of licensing and the threat that a licence would not be renewed assured that the bond between broadcaster and state would be a close one.

In one country after another, the state first came into the picture to help in the structuring of the industry, to regulate entry, to limit competition. And, once in, the state stayed as a substantial factor in determining the role of the broadcast media in the society. Radio became instrumental as a forum for explanation, for patriotism, for mobilization, and for maintaining morale in the Second World War. In Germany and Italy the potential of radio and film for instilling a mad loyalty to the state was soon being perfected. This preoccupation with the power of radio became the norm, not the exception. Afterwards, radio, and then television, remained a tool not only in building the

new society and providing reinforcement for national attitudes, but in projecting competing official views around the world. As Eli Noam has written, 'the single and unified nation-state, the main unit of governance around the globe, was matched and served by its national monopoly communications network, usually owned and operated by the state as a public service, like the road system'.<sup>12</sup> These bonds were strong in the Soviet Union and in post-war Central and Eastern Europe, where the state and broadcasting were the same, or, much to the same effect, were both under the control of the Communist Party. Radio, and then television, were direct, unequivocal instruments of state policy in totalitarian and authoritarian regimes—'engineers of the soul', to adapt a phrase used by Stalin with respect to the function of the arts. Control of these tools of mass information and persuasion was central to the idea of a commanding state. Not only was broadcasting an instrument of the state, but the government media had exclusive use of the airwaves. To the extent that there was purposive, or even accidental spillover of signals across borders, jamming was an active policy to enforce the monopoly voice.<sup>13</sup>

At the end of this first half-century of broadcasting, while the policies of the countries of Western Europe were often far more benign and more plural than those of the East, radio and television were still, by and large, strongly connected to the state. In France, by the mid-1970s, the ORTF was a scandalous handmaiden of the government, with new directors-general appointed with each election. In England, to be sure, there was a tradition of independence and a structure that largely immunized the BBC from the influence of the government of the day. In many ways, the BBC was *sui generis*. But even there, except within the sacred precincts of the true believers, it was argued that the BBC was part of the establishment of the state. A growing critical movement suggested that the vaunted independence disguised deep hegemonic relations between the ruling élite and those in control. Anthony Smith has captured this well, writing about the BBC's 'protective view of society and its institutions'. It had been the practice, not only in Britain, but throughout Europe, to discern, from time to time, 'those practices and institutions which comprise the settled external order which it deems its duty not to disturb'.<sup>14</sup>

Government officials throughout the world have used their power to influence the direction of broadcasting to support particular conceptions of the state and national identity. These efforts have ranged from censorship or specific directions as to what stories to cover and

what could not be said to structural interventions. Both those in control of the state and those in charge of broadcasting have had strong ideas about the role that the media could play in altering or reinforcing proper habits of speech. For decades, the BBC was an instrument of elocution enhancement, a blanket of propriety, with the specific intent of influencing the way a population conducted itself. In some settings radio and television language was the language of empire, present or past: Russian throughout the Soviet Union; French in francophonic Africa; English in the Celtic lands. The history of language and broadcasting itself is a useful study of the relationship of state-making to the media.

### Broadcasting and Propaganda

In the United States, the relationship between radio and government in the Second World War as a means of unifying the home front was an example of this not always pernicious tendency.<sup>15</sup> More notorious was the period of McCarthyism; for that was a time in which the leverage of state power was used to identify and purge the expression of themes, of stories, and of news approaches allegedly hostile to the dominant view of American culture. In the celebration of the American free market of ideas, one tends to forget how searing, how thorough, and how lasting the impact of McCarthyism was. Unambiguous signals emanating from congressional hearings placed an ideological frame around the programmes that were broadcast.<sup>16</sup> Reinforced by these pressures, radio and television stations in the 1950s purged their rolls of commentators, script-writers, and actors who were suspected of Communist sympathies.<sup>17</sup>

As basic a question as the award of frequencies—internal boundaries of the air—has always reflected particular notions of the nature of the state. In the United States, the Congress, as early as 1927, directed the then Federal Radio Commission (FRC) to construct a system that provided equitable distribution of licences among areas; the nation was divided into zones with one FRC commissioner representing each zone. The successor agency (the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)) established the policy that, if possible, every community would have its own station, even if that meant that there were fewer national services or that a less efficient comprehensive allocation would result.<sup>18</sup> In France, in England, and in most of Western Europe, almost all frequencies were held centrally, and this was particularly true of

television. In Canada, from the 1920s forward, the structure and administration of broadcasting became a fulcrum for the persistent struggle between a 'national' Canada and its diverse parts. Allocating frequency between broadcasting and competing uses was another pointer, for it might disclose the extent to which the government considered it important to have multiple voices in the society, some of which might not always be subject to control. Using frequency sparingly, providing only for a limited number of signals, is a less visible form of control. Government could determine, as it sought to do in South Africa, whether the polluting quality of television would be permitted at all; when colour television could be introduced; or, as in France in the late 1960s, whether television should be permitted at dinner-time. It was, almost everywhere, a government decision whether the medium could be used to show advertising and alter the advance of consumerism in the society.

Still other examples of the state and national identity relate to the family of activities called propaganda, which, among other things, constitutes the positive use of television and radio to enforce ideas of nationhood. Even those Western democracies that have the strongest constitutional prohibitions on censorship recognized how important and how necessary propaganda had become in the twentieth century. We remember and revere the stirring speeches of Winston Churchill in the Second World War, but we should not forget that they were part of concerted, substantial, and effective efforts in each warring state to win hearts and minds, to maintain and strengthen loyalties.

Crises are the test of utility, and the role of radio and television in times of national strain is of such force that no leader is willing to leave the direction of the most effective means of mass persuasion solely to chance. That is why the television tower is still among the first objectives of revolutionaries, why control of imagery remains so important in war and other crises. But it is not only a matter of crisis. The fireside chats of Franklin D. Roosevelt are a pleasant token of sustained White House shaping of public attitudes—a capability now so bureaucratized and institutionalized that the White House has had a Director of Communications and 'spin control' becomes a euphemism for the science of creating national narratives. By ritualizing and sometimes creating great national events, such as those informal talks between President and people, the coronation of the Queen, the inauguration of the President, the first moonwalk, or the funeral of John F. Kennedy, government use of radio and television has played, and



continues to play, a vital part in establishing the new mythologies of the state in modern times.<sup>19</sup>

It is because of this long and intimate history of the state's relationship to the broadcast media that the belief persists that the state can continue to affect the content of radio and television. Interest groups expect that government officials can use their power to influence television to represent a particular vision of the good society. Those who object to violence and obscenity in the United States have prevailed on Congress to force rules that limit indecency and programmes that might be deleterious for children. Those who think that less dominant ethnic groups within the United States should be better represented on the screen have consistently lobbied for government pressure to obtain change. Portrayal of women, portrayal of business, portrayal of gays, portrayal of the elderly, portrayal of Democrats and Republicans, portrayal of Native Americans, or of those for or against abortion have all been the subject of inquiry and, sometimes, action by the Federal Communications Commission. And this is the case in the United States, where, because of the First Amendment, the relationship between state and broadcaster is thought to be the weakest, where the broadcaster is most protected by law (indeed, by the Constitution) from over-zealous interference in the broadcaster's depiction of society.

### **Transformation and Globalization**

I have already tried to show how, during the entire historical period from the introduction of radio until the 1960s, there was virtually universal determination to maintain control of broadcasting, generally speaking, within national boundaries. If one looked at the world's radio and television systems, an essential, almost ever-present feature would be their rootedness in a single place and their exclusive relation to that place. That was the constant. There were exceptions, and exceptions of great importance: in the congested pattern of territoriality of Europe, and elsewhere (the United States-Canada border, for example), there was unavoidable spillover of signals. And in times of conflict—and as the modern tools of propaganda were well learnt—the use of broadcasting as an instrument of ideological persuasion, to be used against an enemy, became more and more an everyday practice.<sup>20</sup> For the great empires, even the empires of freedom, having radio follow the flag became a tradition. But these exceptions (and the purposeful foundation of Radio Luxemburg) were technological,

screened-off changelings: short wave for access to international and foreign signals, highly directed broadcasts for purposes of ideological conversion,<sup>21</sup> and the accidents of the cross between border and technology.

If the idea of 'home', of a bond between the nation and broadcasting, was the common theme, the seeming difference was in the mode of financing. Governments varied as to whether advertising-supported programming would be permitted, whether broadcasting would be a private undertaking with a minimum or absence of government subsidy, public airwaves aside. During this long period, most Western nations were wrestling with the way in which their broadcasting systems should be structured within these alternative nodes in the light of domestic ideologies, public needs, and technological change.<sup>22</sup> Those writing about diversity, public service, and cultural values focused on these differences and their impact on programming. From the perspective of the moment, the disparities among the various national solutions were of extraordinary significance. The gulf between the BBC, free of advertising pressure, and American commercial television, filled with advertising and non-reliant on subsidy, seemed enormous. Yet, in retrospect—from the television of the future—it will be the similarities, not the differences, say between the United Kingdom and the United States, that will begin to emerge. What will be significant is the capacity the state had to shape broadcasting; informally or formally to have it incorporate, reflect, and shape the community's identity.

For, as the first half century of broadcasting came to a close, there were already strong signs that the state-based primacy of first radio and then television was under attack. Radio Luxemburg was a constant counterpoint to the vaunted supremacy of the national broadcasters, the ethereal threat that commercial broadcasting, appealing to popular tastes, could someday overwhelm the European state-based systems.<sup>23</sup> Much later, the significant creativity of pirate radio—adventurous young broadcasters of the 1960s, using the protection of international waters for zany and triumphantly boisterous successes—also demonstrated the potential weaknesses of the broadcasting behemoths. Mischievous and entrepreneurial modernists, they saw a market opportunity in the BBC's conservative policy towards popular culture. It was the boundary itself that was the basis for arguing immunity and the capacity to compete. After a long battle, the pirates were routed, but the BBC (and public-service broadcasting in the Netherlands and

beyond) was forever altered, the idea of competition had been firmly planted, and popular music programming in the United Kingdom was revolutionized.<sup>24</sup>

Apart from the directed intrusion by novel forms of transmission, some scholars were arguing that national dominance over their media, the very capacity to tie the media to local identities, was being overwhelmed by a sea of programming flowing from the United States. Herbert Schiller, a Marxist sociologist from the University of California at San Diego, wrote an aggressive and influential book which claimed that a purposive cultural imperialism, jointly sponsored by American television producers and the US government, was responsible for the weakening of national media structures around the world, whether in Europe or in less-developed areas.<sup>25</sup> A generation of research sprang up to disprove the Schiller thesis, and the Schiller thesis no longer holds the sway it once did.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps this post-Schillerian avalanche demonstrated that the United States was not a purposive villain. But the work reinforced the notion that programme flows and programme influences from various external sources—US and otherwise—were increasing markedly, and programme offerings on television outlets in widely disparate settings were getting to look more and more alike.<sup>27</sup>

In this first round of changes—changes in the programme market—the structures of broadcasting remained relatively constant, but the content began to be less national in its composition. In this transformation, American-made programming flowed, in an accelerated pattern of growth, to a wide variety of national systems all across the globe. The reasons range from the power of monopsony buyers, to lower costs, to greater ease in physical distribution, to the development of a European, and then a world taste for things American, to the Schillerian charges of US manipulation of the market to advance imperialistic, capitalistic tendencies.<sup>28</sup> The important point is that the national character of broadcast services began, for the first time, to be put in serious doubt.

The old order, shaken by these global programming interrelationships, this movement towards sameness, was threatened anew at the turn of the 1970s by a technological wonder. Broadcasting had always been an industry of turmoil and change: consider the shifts from radio to television, from black and white to colour; from light entertainment to influential cultural force; from supplemental source of information to controlling news presence. But now there would be a change which

would substantially erode the local nature of broadcasting regulation and tear at the capacity of the state to determine content. The coming of the satellite began physically to undermine the national character of state television. Notions of space, time, and distance—always key to the profile of communications technologies—seemed to be altering even more rapidly than before. Satellite and cable, together, have placed into question notions of scarcity that seemed to legitimate state monopolies and state licensing schemes. These changes would reduce the state's capacity to use broadcasting to reinforce the current public and political order.

Cable television alone did not seem so much of a threat to the national hegemony. True, there was the potential for a larger number of channels into each home, with an implicit threat to the national channels in European settings. But the pace of cable's introduction, its technology, its relationship to government—all these seemed well within the control of the state. The US FCC, in the early 1970s, considered it within its authority to determine what signals cable television could carry (and therefore how much of a threat it would be to existing broadcasters), to divide the market for programmes so that only certain films or sports events would be carried exclusively on cable, and to require the blacking-out of programmes that conflicted with local broadcast carriers.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, European and other governments maintained control of what they thought were the key decisions concerning the entry and growth of cable television.

The synergy between communications satellites and the new technologies brought a new era into being. The introduction of satellites meant that new networks could efficiently be established which conveniently elided national lines for the distribution of programmes. And it was primarily because of the new retailers—the cable television systems with their newly available shelf space—that satellites could find an earth-based economic outlet of sufficient magnitude. The emblem of the new order was the specific satellite that could broadcast direct to the home, a technology created in the early 1970s that would someday mean that a producer in one country could, through a specially configured satellite, send information and programming directly to households in another, bypassing not only the national television service, but even the cable systems constructed under national control.

Of a sudden, it appeared that the powerful images of television would be receivable without the check of a nation-based gatekeeper.

The entry of this technology was not so rapid as anticipated, but the psychological impact of its potential altered the way governments and broadcasters thought about the delivery of imagery. There would be no intermediary, no entity, no corporate giant, no government-controlled funnel through whom the signal would come. Before the direct-broadcast satellite—with the exception of terrestrial spillover and the jammable largely short-wave propaganda services such as the BBC World Service and the Voice of America—almost all information could be said to go through a national intermediary: mail through the post, radio and television programming through the local licensees, even books through local bookstores. Now, there was the possibility that television (primarily, but radio as well) would become truly global.

Immediately, government tribunals were established to determine how to cope with this potential technological breakthrough, one which was seen as inconsistent with historical broadcast structures. In the United Nations, in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)<sup>30</sup> and in other international settings, governments sought a set of rules that would place responsibility on the state from which a programme service, destined for a direct-broadcast satellite, would emanate. That government, it was argued, should ensure that satellite signals were not purposely directed at areas in which the local government had not given its consent. Failing that, the government of a signal's origin should ensure that no programming sent forth should break commonly set international standards (with restrictions on advertising and on content). Finally, these debates were given expression in an international resolution, establishing standards for direct-broadcast satellite emissions. The United States abstained.

### Defining the Future

Much is at stake in the transition from the national to the global—most important, perhaps, the continued capacity of the state to engage in the ancient task of nation-building. 'National television' cannot be understood without a clearer definition for 'national identity'. Rather than rely on essentialist meanings of the term (what it is *really* to be French or German or Hungarian), a more functional, though less aesthetically satisfying approach is necessary. 'National identity' becomes any given set of language practices, myths, stories, and beliefs propagated to justify a dominant group in maintaining power, or to justify a competing group in replacing them or shifting power among them.

These elements of national identity are usually bound up in arguments asserting that the common interests, history, and customs binding the residents of a nation-state far outweigh any conflicts among them. Central to the struggle for power among groups within the nation-state is deployment of the symbols and rhetoric of national identity: my coalition and its values embody the national identity better than others.

Broadcasting approaches, in its use and transformation, other tools of nationhood. One can consider by analogy the close relationship between established religions and national identity. Dominant, sometimes established, churches, like dominant, established broadcasters, set forth the framework of national identity, of prefiguring the state's claim to legitimacy, supporting it with a set of moral precepts, providing a history and a vision of the future.<sup>31</sup> As an example, the Church of England has been a profoundly important element in the national identity of the United Kingdom (and the Commonwealth), Islam is the centrepiece of national identity in the fundamentalist republics; and Judaism is interwoven with the national identity of Israel.

Broadcasting encompasses the narrative force of economic ideologies as foundations of identity. The making of economic systems into civic religions, and therefore centrepieces of national identity, has been a strong twentieth-century phenomenon. The loyalty due to religion became the requirement of Communism; by reflex, a similar set of loyalties has become true for 'the market economies' or capitalism. Ideology, in this sense, has become an element in national identity; or, where ideology has been the justification for power, then ideology has been grafted into identity. And broadcasting, even today, is an instrument for the carriage and promotion of these competing ideas of the good.

Since this book is about government structuring of broadcast systems, some sense of limitation of this term is necessary. Government structuring refers to the specific efforts by governments to determine the ownership, management, and content of systems for the distribution of television signals and the associated aspects concerning the production of programmes. Few governments are *laissez-faire* in this regard. Even vaunted efforts to 'deregulate' may be merely the allocation of market share, in terms of power or sway of ideology, from one group to another. Government restructuring of broadcasting reflects many other aspects of government policy: attitudes towards education, towards language, towards minority cultures, towards religion, towards

internal concepts of federalism, and towards ideas of citizenship and participation.

Deregulation, globalism, and the lack of criticism of government may oddly coalesce: the emphasis on market forces can reduce the function of television and radio as *the press*, as a critic of the state. Heroic private networks and great public-service broadcasters have been praised (with a bit of golden-age romanticism) precisely because they can pose threats to a complacent status quo. Ironically, by subjecting these organizations to greater market forces, however, television programming develops a new form of neutrality; its managers become co-administrators of the global culture of consumption. Transformed, broadcasting no longer has the same politically subversive potential; if subversive, it is so in a new way, sapped of what was potentially its explicitly critical perspective. Globalization becomes virtually synonymous with a tendency toward depoliticization, part of an effort by the state to diminish the potency of the media to disturb the status quo.<sup>32</sup>

### A New Typology

As a result of all these changes,<sup>33</sup> technological and political, a new typology, a new way of looking at broadcasting structures begins to emerge, away from national boundaries, away from the old categories of public-service versus market-driven systems. The old categories persist, but seem increasingly weak and unusable. Styles of ownership and forms of financial support become more and more similar across national settings. And, while debates continue about the transformation of local terrestrial broadcasters (the future of the BBC, for example), the dramatic possibilities lie in reconceptualizing the nature of the audience across national lines.

Traditional national approaches to regulating television imagery must adjust to those transformations that Ithiel de Sola Pool presciently called 'technologies of freedom'.<sup>34</sup> Rather than thinking of broadcasting entities as primarily 'public' or 'private', our mental categories have a new divide: global broadcasting enterprises, regional (supranational) broadcasting enterprises, and, then, a residual category of broadcasting entities that work primarily within traditional borders, often more locally than before. It has already become almost impossible, consistent with maintaining democratic values and following international norms, to determine means of 'protecting' domestic audiences, or dividing

markets through government supervised restraints. In the new environment, the confounding question is determining what constitutes, in American terminology, the public interest in the global-communications era and how that public interest implicates the state. If the broadcasting structures of the past have been so closely tied to national identity, the question will arise what kind of identity is associated with a transnational communications period. Additionally, the shift will be to considering what supranational structures, if any, can be constituted as a match for the transnational programme providers.

Global broadcasting generally implies the search for a transnational—perhaps even intercontinental—virtually universal audience. Implicit in our aspiration for the global, inherent in its muscular challenge, is a television largely unmediated by any state, or any government entity, including a public broadcasting authority.<sup>35</sup> The new generation of producers and reconstructed broadcasters—the great multinationals—have the possibly illusory goal of reaching audiences regardless of locality and without negotiating with governments to reach their audiences. Globalism, in this definition, depends not just on the reach of the producer but on the power of the state. Only if the state has little control over the capacity of the signal to be received or exercises no such control is a scheme of spreading narratives considered global. Signals can become global because they are selected by 'the market'. A clearer way of defining unmediated global television is to confine it to that set of signals beyond the control of the receiving state.

To say that the programming is global does not mean that it comes from nowhere, or has no cultural impact. Deciphering its impact is already a small industry. It is becoming important to determine how the global menu of programming gets developed; what constitutes the relationship between the global menu and the national; what means are or ought to be available to improve the global menu, to make it more responsive to audiences, more efficient in terms of choices available, and more sensitive to intensity of interest on the part of the consumer.

The counterpart to 'global' imagery is broadcasting that must pass through the skein of governmental authority. 'National' radio and television involve some combination of the furtherance of state power and of a state-defined national identity. The proliferation of new nation-states, or newly assertive nation-states, underscores a need to re-examine what is meant by national television, and how national television functions in an era of greater globalism and pressures towards



regionalism as well. National television, in this definition, implies a television (and broadcasting structure) that has some implicit or explicit obligation to reinforce the community that constitutes the state, whether it is one or more 'nationalities', and is seen as an instrument of the state to shape the image it holds within the populace. The case for a television service with obligations other than to the market will ultimately rest on the need for reinforcement of the idea of community, the strengthening of democratic values and the idea of the state. But because this is a strong role, it may be hard to mount in a state divided as to the nature of its sovereignty or the set of images associated with the relationship between community and state.<sup>36</sup>

These are hardly neat categories. The point, rather, is that emerging broadcasting patterns are not congruent with the borders of existing countries and have the potential to undermine them and build new loyalties. The new patterns can be accidentally or purposefully redefining. Broadcasting to the Basques in Spain and France, straddling borders, or to Palestinians in Jordan, Israel, and contested territories, provides examples. But broadcasting policies are also arranged to help support the integrity of a group of states or substantial portions of states. Europe is a region in that sense, and its Broadcasting Directive is an effort to use television and radio to undergird a European culture and identity. Without hyperbole, it could be said that the history of US broadcasting involved the creation of a more homogeneous United States out of its culturally dissimilar and previously antagonistic parts. Canada's history of mediation between a national whole and decentralized diversity is similarly reflected in creating the reality of a region through the media.<sup>37</sup> What is important is whether, as technology alters the space for the delivery of television signals, regional governing mechanisms emerge or are adapted to supplement or displace the now less-significant state.

Trying to determine the correct conceptual way of thinking about radio and television structures in this moment of change is far from an idle task. Massive changes in political thought and political boundaries make the invention of new broadcasting structures a matter of great political and economic importance. In the West, the transformations have been technology driven, largely influenced by the expansion of channel capacity. In Central and Eastern Europe and the republics of the former Soviet Union the political shift—towards the market, away from statism—determines that every broadcasting system there is in transition.<sup>38</sup> Both in the West and in the transition societies,

fundamental problems exist that bring planning for change to a stalemate. New parliaments seek to determine which combination of models to adopt, both among the public-service and private, wholly market-based structures. To the extent that 'state' television is considered an option, there are difficulties in defining what the state should be for these purposes, how to finance cultural and political dreams, and the relationship that should exist between the state and the furtherance of particular national or cultural goals. Since the operative categories are shifting, there is the classic problem of policy-makers engaging in meaningless conflict over outmoded outcomes and failing to take advantage of the opportunities clearly enough to think through the broadcasting structures that will inevitably evolve. In other words, policy-makers may be working primarily with the vocabulary of the old axis (state/private) while the context in which they are operating requires decisions that recognize the new (global/national/regional).

The continued role and function of the state in its relationship to the media, during these times of change, are a vitally important puzzle. The future of the state itself may be at stake. The transformation of the media has consequences for the internal workings of democratic societies and for current patterns of world influence and domination. This book deals with the vocabulary of that change. In Part One I examine two possible justifications for continued state intervention: reinforcing national identity and building a civil society that sustains institutions of democracy. Part Two plays out these ideas in the context of transition societies, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In Part Three I turn to the United States and the problems of speech, identity, and communications policy in a society where discussion is framed by the First Amendment. The goal is to help develop a novel jurisprudence for these times: a constitutional mode of thinking of the relationship of a democratic state to the media of its citizenry. There is, in all of this, a relationship between geopolitical remapping and the transformation of television structures, part of an ongoing evolution of the link between community and communications technology.