

Conferees made several general observations about policy and media policy that may help clarify the domain of policies and the sorts of actions required to implement them. The need to be clear about domains is basic. It frequently was noted that the different programs that implement media policy actually represent variously media policy, cultural policy, and industrial policy. Each has different goals and is implemented by different means. Moreover, how we think about the media and their operations is central to setting policy. These matters tend to be neglected and taken for granted. In this regard, Thelma McCormack suggested that in order to de-emphasize considerations of profit in the debate on state support, the media ought to be treated as public goods, like the environment, streets, or the armed forces. Nevertheless, because public financing is difficult when there is not widespread public support or use, Richard Collins suggested that Canadian media need to become more financially self-sufficient by producing material that is more competitive in the export market, selling rights to the broadcast spectrum, etc.

Marc Raboy called attention to how the structure of policy making and implementation undermine its effectiveness, noting, for example, that all symbol preparation and movement are treated as equivalent. As a consequence, Canadian policy makers do not distinguish sufficiently the media and telecommunications even though such key issues of privacy and access are entirely different for the two. Moreover, Canadian policy is made and implemented in both federal and provincial legislative bodies and interpreted (also a policy making process) by numerous federal (e.g., CRTC, CBC, Canadian Heritage) and provincial agencies with little coordination. He also emphasized how unrealistic it is to expect integration among the federal and provincial units when national unity is such a contentious issue.

In a different but related vein, John Meisel suggested that Canadian policy makers often do not analyze situations and respond to them as systemically as they might. Specifically, Canada and other countries may not be able to solve their media problems until the United States, the major exporter of media material, solves its problems.¹⁰ In the "Power Rangers" case, for example, the nature of the product created the controversy. But this also is an issue in the United States, where violent programming for children is also a concern but enforcement of legislation to control it is lax. Although Canadian concerns about American imports might abate if Americans could solve their media problems, the 'country music' case suggests that, even if the improbable were to happen, the issue would not go away. Observations such as these can provide major guidelines for policy makers before they address more specific alternatives. The problem of course, is that these are all contentious political issues.

In addition to the many ideas proposed by the conferees, I included some comments about and suggestions for policy in my draft introductory paper. Because that material may have led them to ignore those possibilities, I want to conclude by repeating them. The Canadian content regulations for broadcasters that have been so widely criticized are a practical starting point for this purpose. Over the years a varying proportion of programming considered Canadian has been a goal for and/or a criterion against which to judge broadcasting performance. The criteria for qualifying as Canadian also have varied. Moreover, the audience usually is not informed as to which material is considered Canadian or why. Although the criteria and proportions have varied because it has not been feasible to exclude U.S. broadcasting and offer almost exclusively Canadian material, that has been the goal for both public and private Canadian broadcasting.

Three aspects of Canadian content -- subject matter, quality, and participation in production -- should be considered separately because by doing so it becomes clear that Canadian content regulations serve more than media policy. The three may or may not be related. Subject matter, in so far as it encourages the choice of Canadian themes, primarily implements cultural policy. Participation in production or performance primarily implements economic or industrial policy. Even anonymous Canadian participation in production may qualify material as Canadian because there is not enough obviously Canadian entertainment material to enable broadcasters to meet quotas without curtailing broadcasting during hours that U.S. stations are still