Chapter Ten

Hispanic Media Globalization

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In general terms, the main factors behind globalization can be summarized as follows: firstly we have financial factors, such as the liberalization of some markets and the power of transnational corporations. Secondly there is an important factor that concerns the language: English is considered the most international language in the world. Thirdly we must consider new technologies such as the Internet, satellite and cable systems. These have contributed to the extremely fast development of globalization in recent years. Finally, there is the fact that the nineties have been described as the “information era”. Information became increasingly more important at work and in daily life in those years, thereby increasing the relevance of media during that decade (Stephens, 1995, p. 27). So, recent globalization is closely related to the media market.

Media play a key role in cultural globalization. In this sense media globalization depends mainly on the existence of global media companies (GMC). According to Levitt (1983, p. 92), “the global corporation operates with resolute constancy as if the entire world (or major regions of it) were a single entity; it sells the same things in the same way everywhere”. From this view, some media conglomerates can be considered global companies. These global media companies are also characterized by being big companies integrated vertically and horizontally, they are leaders in their domestic markets, affiliated to foreign companies and operating in different countries. They promote the international distribution of media contents and develop the production of global media. Companies from different countries share most of their ownership, which brings knowledge and penetration into those countries.

According to Lee (in Chan; McIntyre, 2002, p. 64), TNCs (Transnational Corporations) are not actually global corporations. At most, they are national with operations abroad. However, besides these international corporations, language is a key factor in globalization processes. Not only because it is a communication system that favors human and trade relations, but also because it is a necessary means to create the
messages in both news and entertainment programs. Therefore language can be understood as an opportunity to develop this process or as a barrier.

From the 1980s globalization happened primarily in one direction (from the US to the rest of the world) and in one language (English). That is why the critical school has always approached with suspicion this phenomenon. Globalization has actually been considered as an invasion of the rest of the world by USA culture or at least as an invasion carried out by a few countries into the others (Nordenstreng and Varis, 1974; Beltran and Fox, 1979; Boyd-Barrett, 1980; Straubhaar, in Elasmir, 2002). It has been asserted that globalization is another manifestation of “American imperialism” (Lee, 1980) and that it has either destroyed local cultures or made them dependant on the dominant culture (Evans, 1979; Hamelink, 1983; Schlesinger and Morris, 1997: 55; Sutz, 2002).

Nevertheless in the late 1990s some new trends relating to Asian, Indian, Eastern European and Spanish media companies arose in the global market. Many different cultures are spreading all over the world.

The aim of this paper is to show that there is a new form of globalization built around a language other than English and based on another culture that is not the Anglo-Saxon one. When studying other possible forms of globalization we would like to check if their influence on the rest of the world is as strong as American influence or if, on the contrary, it is to be understood as the growth of a market that helps to promote both autochthonous and local markets. It is actually a matter of answering the question posed by Boyd-Barrett (1997, p. 22), “if the concept of globalization is to have a dynamic and positive influence as a tool for the advancement of the study of international communication what else must happen, what must change?” In this sense we will examine these new information and entertainment products that are being distributed all around the world thanks to the increase of both Spanish and Hispanic markets. We will then examine whether these products have any distinctive features with regard to their American counterparts. For this purpose the following questions will be considered: Is there a new form of globalization based on a language different to English and how wide is its scope of action?

What are the main features of this new form of globalization and what are its dimensions? From a cultural approach, is it more similar or different to the products made in USA? Could it be stated that this new form of globalization is either a substitute or a complement to the earlier cultural globalization?

In order to analyse all these questions, the paper will be structured as follows: first of all we will consider the dimensions of this new emerging market and its main agents. With this purpose we will analyse the reasons for the expansion of Spanish media companies in Latin America. We will take a look at the presence of Latin American companies in foreign countries, especially by means of both the distribution of “telenovelas” and the growth of the Hispanic media market in the US. Finally an account will be given of the agreements and alliances established between Latin American, US and Spanish companies in recent years as a consequence of their
international expansion and the growth of this market. After that, we will try to give a proper answer to the aforementioned question, "Is it possible to talk about a global Spanish media market?" We will therefore look at the advantages and strengths as well as the disadvantages and barriers of this new market and also at its most characteristic traits. At last, some conclusions about this new form of globalization will be drawn.

Dimensions of the Latin media market
We take the term “Latin” to denote the managerial decisions related to the distribution of media products in Spanish speaking territories, whether in Latin America, the USA or Spain (Ben Amor-Mathieu, 2000). There are Spanish companies linked to this market, as well as North, Central and South American ones. There are also other European companies linked to this market, because they consider Latin America as an emerging potential market in which they can expand their activity. We will therefore use the term “Latin” to encompass the entire Spanish speaking market.

Expansion of Spanish media companies in Latin America
The relationship between Spain and Latin America has been very close for many centuries. Language and culture have been two key factors for the development of these relations. In the media sector this relationship became closer especially after 1996 (Bonet & De Gregorio, 1999, p. 80–81), when Popular Party won the elections. Before 1997 these relationships were mainly based on distribution agreements. The first company to establish alliances with Latin America was the public television channel TVE, which in the 1980s produced a show called Trescientos Millones (“300 millions”) that was produced and broadcast both in Spain and Latin America. Later, after privatization of the television market, the private channel Antena 3 TV made different agreements with the aim of broadcasting its contents via satellite in the American continent. Newspapers and magazines such as El País, ABC and ¡Hola! were not only distributed within Latin America, local editions were also published in those countries. The factors that explain these alliances are as closely related to the liberalization of the television market as to the maturity of press and magazine markets in Spain and also to their need to search for new markets. This phase, however, is perhaps too premature to talk about as globalization.

After 1997, the process increased and new aspects appeared in the market field (Medina, 2001; 2003). The number of Spanish companies that made agreements with American companies rose. Not only for distributing their products in the new continent, but also for developing new business in emerging sectors in collaboration with leading groups in Latin American countries.

Some small corporations had initiated relationships with certain Latin American companies by that time. For example, Recoletos spread its know-how and performance in specialized and financial news publications to Chile, Mexico and Argentina. Grupo Correo, for its part, developed media interests in Argentina together with the
newspapers Clarin and La Nación. As the national production of fiction was carried out in Spain, the production companies such as Globomedia or Zeppelin considered production agreement and distribution strategies for Latin America.

In the same period, other major corporations such as Prisa and Telefonica implemented internationalization strategies regarding Latin America. Prisa set up businesses in sectors such as the daily press, radio, music and financial news in countries like Argentina, Colombia and Bolivia. Telefonica was for many years the monopoly provider of telephony services and was privatized in 1996. Since then it expanded with radio, television channels, cable, telephone, Internet and film and television production companies in association with leading local companies in Argentina, Peru, Brazil and Venezuela.

Political factors, as much as cultural, economic and financial reasons lie behind this expansion, besides the increasing development of the media market in Spain. Since 1996, the Spanish government, according to its neo-liberalism policy, promoted the privatization of public companies and expressed a growing willingness in encouraging cooperation with American companies (Ruesga & Aparicio, 1993; Rato, 2000). We have a clear example of the growing interest of the Spanish government in cooperating with American companies in the facilities given to Televisa group to enter digital television Via Digital owned by Telefonica (Fernández & Paxman, 2000, pp. 330, 373, 470).

Among other reasons, there were relevant historical relationships and common cultural roots between Spain and Latin America (Brown, 2001, p. 4). The cultural and linguistic proximity facilitates their commercial relationships. Spain has consequently become a strategic country for the expansion of European companies into Latin America and for American companies wanting to expand into Europe. Furthermore, commercial relationships increased after some political reforms took place in almost all Latin American countries, such as the deregulation and liberalization of markets, as much as the removal or reduction of legal and tax barriers (Fox & Waisbord, 2002, pp. 12-14). All these circumstances contributed to the internationalization of these countries.

Among their economic targets, Spanish media corporations intended both to increase their revenues and to diversify risks, as well as to maximize their resources through synergies and economies of scale. New markets, new consumers and new business opportunities were thus needed. On the other hand, Latin American companies required foreign investment to develop their industrial sectors.

Since the capital risk and investment involved in the audiovisual sector is higher than in other media, this market requires a constant search for new markets and foreign partners in order to undertake joint ventures not only for financial reasons. European legislators emphasized the relevant role of television in the communications market within the global scenario (EC Directive, 89/552; Gershon, 2000, p. 38). Consequently, television production increased and media companies started investing in audiovisual businesses. Moreover, the domestic market began to saturate; there was
not enough space to diversify revenue. It was necessary to apply vertical and horizontal integration strategies, as well as ownership concentration in order to be able to be competitive and to succeed (Sánchez-Tabernero & Carvajal, 2002). These multimedia companies became profitable in the domestic market and decided to invest in new areas. Latin America thus became the first target market for Spanish capital. To sum up, the development of the audiovisual sector and the advancement of new technologies encouraged investment in these sectors, both in Spain and in Latin America (Heuvel & Dennis, 1995).

Many Spanish-Latin American associations were created with the aim of tightening bonds and exchanging knowledge, information and programs. Roncagliolo (in García Canclini, 1999, pp. 69–70), distinguishes between public associations, such as ALASEI (Agencia Latinoamericana de Servicios Especiales de Información) and SIETCOM (Servicio de Información sobre Nuevas Tecnologías de Comunicación), and private associations, such as OTI (Organización de Televisión Iberoamericana) and AIR (Asociación Internacional de Radiodifusión). Moreover, numerous international cinema and television festivals have arisen during the 1990s, which are actually a meeting place for producers and distributors. In these events the different products are promoted and negotiations for eventual purchases of programs are usually initiated. Among these festivals it is worth mentioning “Spain TV Expo” in Miami, which is organized by the Oficina Comercial de España (Spanish Commercial Office) and the Instituto Español de Comercio Exterior (ICEX, Spanish Institute of Foreign Trade). In one year, 135 companies from 27 countries in Europe, Asia, North America and Latin America attended the market for television programs, “Latin American Screens”, whose fifth conference was held in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia).

After the investment boom of the 1990s, in 2001 some companies decided to apply more careful policies, thus suspending part of their activities in Latin America. The terrorist attacks of 11 September gave rise to a period of uncertainty that affected both the economy and the stock market. As a result, many dot-com companies failed. Some Latin American countries were going through severe economic crises, especially Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela. These were the main factors that led some companies to provisionally abandon these less profitable sectors (Rodgers, 2002; The Economist, 2002a). This was the case with Telefonica, which started to sell some of its Cablevisión shares (Argentina) because it did not generate enough profit. Consequently they decided not to take a controlling share of the company.

Despite all the uncertainty, as well as the low profitability in the short term of some investments and the instability of many Latin American countries, Spanish companies persisted in expanding in this continent.

**International expansion of Latin-American companies**

In this section, we refer principally to the internationalization of companies outside the Latin-American sphere, since these large enterprises first spread in their own countries.
The European distribution of one of the star-products of Latin-American television, the “telenovela”, dates from the beginning of the 1980s (Teran, 2000: 34–36). However, this trend was aided in the '90s by the growth of subscription television in Europe, the opening-up of Eastern-European nations, the development of new technology, especially satellite, cable, and pay-per-view television, and the need for Latin-American companies to look for new sources of income. The demand for new television content explains why many broadcasters wanted to offer these popular Latin-American “telenovelas” as part of their scheduling, as they appeal to a broad section of the viewing audience and can be acquired at a low cost.

In Table 1 you can see the costs of acquiring “telenovelas” in different countries. The same table also compares these figures with the relative acquisition costs of American series in the same countries, and shows that the former are in fact much cheaper than the latter. The differences from one country to another are related to their GDP, the size of the population, income per capita, investment in advertising, the growth of competition in the audio-visual sector and the relative interest in acquiring these programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purchasing country</th>
<th>Telenovelas</th>
<th>USA series</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>7,000-9,000</td>
<td>5,000-25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2,000-5,000</td>
<td>24,900-132,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (Hispanic channels)</td>
<td>2,500-5,000</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>500-700</td>
<td>3,000-5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>300-800</td>
<td>1,300-3,000</td>
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The principal countries involved in the production of “telenovelas” are Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina and Colombia. “Telenovelas” are a typically Latin genre, and are distinct from American “soap operas”. They are exported as a finished product, with very few alterations, except the dubbing into other languages. Their popularity makes them high-yield products, capable of maintaining a regular viewing public. In many cases, they manage to rival the American series.

“Telenovelas” are the driving force behind the international expansion of some Latin-American media groups (Michelin, 2003), and Spain has become a key area in the international strategies of these companies. Many “telenovelas” are distributed first in Spain, and then in other European countries (Mato, in García Canclini, 1999, p. 245), and some Latin-American groups have signed agreements with Spanish companies with the aim of distributing these programs throughout Europe (Fuenzalida, 2000, p. 303). Notable examples of this are the distribution of “telenovelas” by the Mexican group Televisa, via their international satellite channel “Galavisión”, launched in 1988; the presence of the Cisneros group in Spain, which opened an
office in Madrid in 1996 to extend its activities into the European market, the Middle East and Southeast Asia, and the distribution of “telenovelas” by the Brazilian company Globo, which at the end of the 1980s was exporting to 128 countries (Moran, 1998, p. 29). One example of the success of “telenovelas” in Europe is Zona Visión, a London-based company that in 1988 launched Romantica, a channel that specialises in “telenovelas”. In the year 2000, its signal reached five million viewers in 26 countries, including Poland, Russia, Croatia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and the Czech Republic. The majority of these “telenovelas” are produced by Venevisión, Televisa and Globo. Table 2 shows a list of some of the Latin-American “telenovelas” exported to other countries.

Table 2. Exported “Telenovelas” (1980–2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCING COUNTRY</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PURCHASING COUNTRIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td><em>La felicidad no se compra</em></td>
<td>Italy, Brazil, Portugal, USA, China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td><em>Rosa Salvaje</em></td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td><em>Los ricos también lloran</em></td>
<td>Spain, France, Italy, Switzerland, USSR, China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td><em>Cuna de lobos</em></td>
<td>Sweden, Australia, Germany, Venezuela, China, Italy, Russia, New Zealand, Norway, Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td><em>Cristal, La Dama de Rosa, Rubí, Arrayán, Ambiciones</em></td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td><em>Yo soy Betty, la fea</em></td>
<td>Spain, USA, Canada, Mexico, Bogota, Venezuela, Chile, Peru</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fuente: Teran, 2000: 34–37; 57

A number of companies have not only exported programs, but have also begun to make use of the format itself, producing series in other countries, mainly in the United States and Spain (Sinclair, 2000, p. 79). An example of a successful format is the Argentine program “CQC”, which has been part of the Tele 5 scheduling for six seasons. These companies have managed to create an industry in its own right, and have presented over 500 titles at international festivals (Orozco, 2002, p. 126). Certain producers have even developed a consultancy service for foreign production companies.

We can now look at the other branch of Spanish global expansion, that is to say the growing Hispanic media market in the United States, which has given rise to an increasing interest in Latin-American products, in both the information and entertainment sectors.

*The Hispanic media market in the USA*

As Spanish media companies have invested in Latin America, so Hispanic media
companies have increased their presence in the US. The growth of the Hispanic population accounts for the increasing importance of the Hispanic media in North America, as well as the interest in Latin America shown by foreign companies, who see it as an easier means of breaking into the US market. This growing population within the US is also one of the reasons why some American companies are now beginning to look to Latin America, and have signed agreements with Spanish companies.

The total Hispanic population in the USA has risen by more than 50 per cent since 1990, due to immigration and a high birth rate (US Census Bureau, 2001 and 2000). As such, it is a young population, whose average age is just 29. In the year 2000, the Hispanic population in the US was almost as large as that of Argentina (37 million). Spain had only three million more people. Table 3 shows the evolution of the Hispanic population in the US in recent years. According to the US census of 2000, half of all Hispanic people lived in just two states: California and Texas. The cities with the highest percentages of Hispanic population in America are Los Angeles, Laredo, Brownsville and Hialeah.


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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Population</td>
<td>203m</td>
<td>226m</td>
<td>249m</td>
<td>281m</td>
<td>78m</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Population</td>
<td>9.1m</td>
<td>14.5m</td>
<td>22.4m</td>
<td>35.3m</td>
<td>26m</td>
<td>286%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Hispanic vs US population</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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As a result of the growth of the Hispanic community in the US, different media have gradually emerged, aimed at these sections of the population, and promoted by American companies in collaboration with Latin-American associates (Soruco and Ferreira, in Merril, 1995, p. 340). In television, the most important Hispanic operators are Univision, from Televisa and Venevisión, available to 80 per cent of TV households; Telemundo, created in 1987, reaches 40 per cent of the audience, and in 2001 was sold to NBC, and Azteca Television, which takes its programs from the Mexican channel TV Azteca and reaches about 60 per cent of the Hispanic market through 24 affiliated channels. These channels are not just important for the audience they reach, but also for the investment they attract from advertising. Furthermore, there is a huge boom in Spanish language newspapers and magazines.

At the same time as the Hispanic market expanded in the USA, relationships between American and Latin-American companies increased in number. Televisa formed a
partnership with News Corporation for the production and distribution of “telenovelas”, special events and sports programs. Similarly, it joined forces with the Discovery Channel to produce its Spanish and Portuguese versions, to be shown in Latin America and across the Iberian Peninsula. Telemundo looked for new suppliers for its “telenovelas”, such as Globo in Brazil, Argos in Mexico and Caracol in Colombia. For Latin America to be considered a potential distribution zone for US television is certainly not a new phenomenon. In fact, it is the United States’ second largest market for expansion. Some companies plan the development of their content in Spanish, an example of which was the inauguration of CNN in Spanish in 1997. On the other hand, many advertising campaigns in the US for American products such as Wendy’s, Wall Mart, PepsiCo and Coca-Cola are in fact aimed at the Hispanic population.

As a result, during the 1990s, the communication barriers between North, Central and South America opened up to such an extent that the number of agreements between companies to produce and distribute information and entertainment programs has risen dramatically. The United States needs the collaboration of Latin-American companies in order to reach its huge Hispanic population, and for the Latin-American companies, access to this market means increased revenue and influence (Sinclair, 2003).

Agreements between Spain and the USA related to the Hispanic market

The objective of Spanish companies, once they have established themselves in Latin America, is to turn their attention towards the United States. Direct investment in the United States presents too many risks for most Spanish companies. For this reason, working hand-in-hand with Latin-American corporations that are already established in the United States can prove to be an easier option. The Hispanic market in the USA is seen as a potential growth area by a number of Spanish companies.

In addition, Spain is once again viewed by the United States as a strategic enclave for signing agreements with European companies. Because of these factors, recent years have witnessed the signing of numerous deals and partnerships between Spanish and American companies, such as Endemol with CBS, Telefonica and Disney, RTVE with Comcast and Sogecable with Warner Bros.

Hence, in the nineties there was a marked expansion of the Hispanic market in the US. This accounted for the growing interest in the Hispanic media, and even for the closer relationships between media companies from Latin America, the United States and Spain. Moreover, there was an increase in the production and distribution of Spanish information and entertainment content. These conclusions lead us to the key question of the paper, namely, whether it is possible to refer to a global Spanish market and whether Spanish contributions to media globalization offer the world information and entertainment that is significantly different to that set by the English-dominated media. These questions will be addressed in the following sections of the paper.
Chapter Ten Hispanic Media Globalization

Is it possible to refer to a global Spanish market?
There are some authors who are convinced that there is a new globalization based on Spanish-language production. According to Veciana-Suarez (1990: 23), "in a few years, the Spanish language networks of the late '80s will be compared to the English-language networks of the '50s". However, in order to answer this question, we should distinguish between the strengths of this market related to both a Spanish and Latin-American point of view, and the disadvantages or barriers that might prevent this market becoming a global one.

Advantages and strengths of the Spanish media market
It is possible to identify some of the factors of globalization, in order to consider the feasibility of a global Spanish market.

Firstly, looking at the Spanish expansion, it should be made clear that this process is carried out by big companies; not only Spanish ones, but also Latin-American groups with whom they have signed agreements. These are multimedia companies with an important market share and significant powers of negotiation. Spanish companies have then imparted their knowledge, expertise, management style and know-how to their Latin-American affiliates. They have invested in new ventures to launch new, technologically emergent businesses or to develop existing ones. Thus from the Latin-American market perspective, an influx of foreign capital has produced a favorable situation in which local media companies and industrial sectors have developed, increased their financial capabilities, incorporated new technology and new programs, and strengthened their capacity for action (Sussman and Lent, 1991, p. 20; Moneta, in Garcia Cancilini, 1999, p. 20; Sánchez and Hernández, 2000, p. 25).

On the other hand, an increase in the supply of Spanish media products has been generated on both sides of the Atlantic. Gershon (2000, p. 57) noted that, "in Europe, Asia and Latin America, the demand for new sources of programming is likely to increase, given the rapid expansion in television channels due to new media technologies [...]". It should be noted that television and film production companies in Brazil, Venezuela and Argentina are becoming important regional suppliers of television programming and are exporting their program software to such countries as Spain, Portugal and Hispanic broadcast stations and cable services located in the United States".

For Spanish companies, this has meant some short-term advantages, and in some cases, strategic advantages. For some Spanish companies, an increase in revenue was recorded. For example, Recoelets' revenue rose in the first quarter of 2001 thanks to its operations in Argentina. For others such as Prisa, RTVE and Telefonica, this was as a result of their relations with Latin-American companies and early links with US companies. Their agreements with American countries in general have reduced the risk of investment and overcome some of the political barriers that once blocked access to the market (Mastrini and Becerra, in Quirós and Sierra, 2001, p. 194). Likewise,
some Latin-American companies such as Televisa and Caracol have been able to break into the European market thanks to their dealings with Spanish media groups. The Hispanic market in the United States is now an area of great potential as much to the Spanish and Latin-American companies as to their American counterparts, not only from an economic point of view, but also from a political one. American candidates need to draw the Hispanic population to their political campaigns, particularly in those states where it is more sizeable, like Texas and California. As such, from a political perspective, to win Hispanic votes it is necessary to control the Hispanic media, and to exert influence through these media it is also necessary to have a good understanding of Latin-American culture (Veciana-Suarez, 1990, p. 25).

There were some European companies, such as Pearson, Canal Plus, Mediaset, Kirch and Bertelsmann, who invested in Spanish media groups in order to extend their markets into other countries (Medina, 1998; Mastrini & Becerra, in Quirós & Sierra, 2001, p. 205). In this respect, Spain became a strategic location for the expansion of their activities towards this new, potential-filled market. Its language and cultural proximity facilitated commercial relations and the signing of agreements between the various countries. Though the Spanish market cannot be considered global in the true sense of the word, it does remain sizeable, comprising almost 600 million people.

Furthermore, the distribution of Hispanophone products is not limited to Latin-American countries, Spain or the Hispanic market in the USA. Thanks to the success of “telenovelas” and their distribution via satellite, Latin-American culture is now known in many European and Asian countries (Mazziotti, 1996). One example of the interest in these genres is the proliferation of international festivals focusing on Latin-American programs, at which countries from all over the world are represented. The same could be said of music and news from these Latin countries.

It has been recognized that the injection of foreign capital and the emergence of new projects can hinder local development, but in many cases these factors have actually stimulated it, as well as increasing local production (Straubhaar, in Elasm, 2002, p. 79). In fact, it has been shown that given a choice between two products of equal quality, audiences prefer that which is produced nationally to the foreign alternative (Lee, in Chan & McIntyre, 2002, p. 68).

These strengths could in fact indicate a new dimension of globalization with different characteristics: new exporting countries, new production centers outside Hollywood and alternative cultural values. But one must remember that this type of globalization is also subject to its own barriers and limitations, which will be addressed in the following section.

**Disadvantages and barriers that affect the Spanish global market**

There are other factors that preclude the consideration of this process as a phenomenon of globalization. We are dealing with only a fraction of the global market, that is to say the Spanish-speaking part, and even within this sphere, products only reach Spain and the largest and most developed Latin-American nations: Mexico, Argen-
tina, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru and Brazil. So there are a number of countries that remain excluded from this market. Even Spanish-language advertising in the US is of little significance when one considers the sums of money spent on the English-language media.

On the other hand, development within Latin America varies between countries. The economic instability of countries such as Colombia, Argentina and Venezuela has nurtured a sense of uncertainty among investors and made the market more difficult to extend. Expansion meant greater expenditure, and some companies saw no return on their investments in the last few years. Thus investment in these countries must represent a strategy for long-term profitability, whilst many companies are still seeking short-term gains.

Moreover, certain countries, such as Peru and Colombia, are still lacking democratic, liberalized political systems. Freedom of information depends greatly on the political power, and although the right to free enterprise exists, it is not exercised. There is still neither free press, nor independence of the media from the political power (Gallimore, 1995, p. 58; Schlesinger & Morris, 1997, p. 55; Waisbord, 2000, p. 57). Indeed many of these countries are yet to experience free-market economy and democratic systems (Soruco & Ferreira, 1995, p. 339). As such, foreign companies find their activities obstructed by problems with the economy, taxes, politics and labor, and have not yet found the profitability they were hoping for. For example, Telefonica ended 2002 with losses because of the poor results of its Argentine subsidiary, AtCo. Perhaps then it is necessary to wait a few years for liberalization and democratization to take hold of these countries (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002). Those in favor of globalization suggest that international companies could actually help to achieve democratic societies more quickly and efficiently (Sánchez-Tabernero & Carvajal, 2002, p. 145; The Economist, 2002).

Company development has also been uneven. In Latin America, the only groups to have benefited are the leading companies, the old family monopolies (Heuvel & Dennis, 1995, p. 15). These are also the only groups to have broken into Europe and the United States. According to Mowlana (1996, p. 199), “although the distribution of information has become global, the actors controlling it are few”. These are Televisa, Cisneros, Globo, Venevision, AtCo and Clarin. Once more, this expansionist globalizing process has benefited the major players, and left smaller companies to one side (Mastrini & Becerra, in Quirós & Sierra, 2001, pp. 192–204).

Some authors recognize that when certain products are distributed outside their own countries they sacrifice their autochthonous values in order to adapt to an ill-defined global culture. Specifically, they argue that the influence of the United States in news production, especially in the Hispanic media, creates a barrier that prevents the dissemination of a Hispanic viewpoint (Verciana-Suarez, 1990, p. 26). Furthermore, as has previously been noted, this market is only global for certain sectors, such as television fiction, cinema, music, and some information products; for other areas, like publishing, international strategies face greater obstacles. More than any other,
television is the medium *par excellence* that benefits from internationalization (Elasmar, 2002, p. 182). This can perhaps be attributed to the fact that the popular culture it principally broadcasts displays certain universal qualities that are accepted in every country it reaches (Cooper-Chen, 1994).

Though the Latino market is a large market, nonetheless it is far from being international, not simply due to language, but because there are particular cultural differences that can at times raise insurmountable barriers (Hesmondhalgh, 2003, p. 184).

The Spanish language can still make foreign markets harder to access. Programs need to be dubbed even in Latin America because of the different idiomatic and cultural requirements. Although Spanish products have been distributed in Latin America, this is far from being an automatic process, as many of them, particularly fictional programs, must first be adapted to suit the new culture. Whilst there are some similar cultural roots, there remain a number of significant differences between products from Spain, Latin America and the United States, the connotations of which have a bearing on importation. Each Latin-American country has its own, inherent cultural characteristics that differentiate it from its neighbors.

These cultural differences are not only found in products, they also become apparent in the internal development of companies, and imbalances often appear in the running of companies that have foreign partners. Managerial problems related to personnel policies, task coordination and labor organization have arisen, because general routines and work habits are noticeably different between Spain, Latin America and the US. Such difficulties can sometimes damage the image of these companies in America. Gallimore states that cultural barriers are the most difficult to overcome (1995, p. 63), “it does not matter whether a country is rich or poor, there are always barriers that prevent the optimal development of the media in that country ... Experience also indicates that the physical barriers are easiest to overcome, whereas the barriers erected by human attitudes and actions remain steadfast and immovable fixtures on the horizon of the information highway”.

After studying the barriers that hamper the growth of this market, one may conclude that it is a market with a number of internal weaknesses, that is very diverse within, and that in many cases is dependent on the United States. As such we can claim it to be complimentary to a globalization that is defined by the imperialism and ascendency of the United States. However, it retains certain characteristics that differentiate it.

**Conclusions**

The first conclusion we are led to by this study is that globalization outside the English-language dominated media takes place on a much smaller scale, so to apply the term “globalization” is perhaps a little pretentious. Some authors believe that rather than talking about globalization, it would be better to label the process “internationalization” (Beck, 2000, p. 166). Globalization in this sense is considered
as the presence of media companies in most Hispanophone countries, therefore Spain and much of Latin America, and the Hispanic market in the US, as well as the distribution of their products in the rest of the world. So we are dealing with a widespread phenomenon that continues to grow and extend across the globe (Fuenzalida, 2000, p. 309).

Secondly, it is not universal, in the sense that not all cultural products are affected equally (Fox & Waisbord, 2002, p. 20). The demand for Latin-American material has risen, but has focused upon music, “telenovelas”, some Spanish fiction, as well as the increased flow of information from Latin America to the rest of the world over the Internet. International distribution of these particular products has been made possible by the evolution of cable and satellite.

Latin culture has different characteristics to that dominated by the United States, but is also within itself heterogeneous. So for all their cultural similarities (Davila, 2000), we must still distinguish between products made in Spain, Latin America, and those products made for the Hispanic market in the USA. According to Mowlana (1996, p. 208), “any discussion of a new world order must take into account the diversities of a global culture”.

In general, Spanish fiction has been influenced by that from the United States, above all in its reflection of a state of well-being and a consumer society, although it retains a “castizo” (typical Spanish) tone and its own unique guile that sets it apart (Sutz, 2002). The roughness of the dialogue, the wordplay, the comic situations and the personalities of the characters often need to be altered to align with other cultures, in which a softer, gentler tone is more common. Similarly, Spanish products are imbued with a European sense of drama and rationality.

Latin-American “telenovelas” are characterized by their focus on feelings and passion. “Racial pride” also appears as a recurring theme. There is a clear distinction between good and bad characters, which usually have a certain social significance, principally in regard to class distinctions. The production of “telenovelas” is radically different to American series. “Telenovelas” usually feature one main protagonist, whose story affects the rest of the plot and the remaining characters; in US series, there is a multitude of characters, all of equal importance, each of whom carry the thread of the plot. “Telenovelas” concentrate on classic themes: unrequited love, the rich and poor, hatred, vengeance and the ever-present “moral” at the end; US series have a more realistic tone, there are less social differences, passions do not run so high, and humor is always present. “Telenovelas” are also produced much more quickly than American shows. They are produced at a speed of one episode a day, whilst US series are produced on a weekly basis (Michelín, 2003).

Finally, information and fiction aimed at the Hispanic market has a far more “American” approach, because in most cases the target population considers itself from the USA.

Despite these differences, it is possible to identify some special characteristics when contrasted with American media culture. Firstly, there is cultural proximity (Straub-
haar, 1991). The most important link is the common language, Castilian (Sinclair, 2000, p. 131; Sánchez & Hernández, 2000, p. 14). Elsewhere, in fictional programs the characters are generally more psychologically complex, morality plays a guiding role in the characters’ actions and decisions, and the nuclear family remains relevant to society. This is essentially a culture based upon traditional values.

Thus we are dealing with the international distribution of a culture with different features to that produced in the USA (Schlesinger & Morris, 1997, p. 64). It can therefore be seen as an indicator of pluralism and diversity. In the same way, new technology and the opening of other markets in Asia and Eastern Europe are leading to the expansion of other cultural phenomena. This leads us to suppose that globalization has engendered worldwide production and distribution of cultural products from different geographical areas (La Porte & Sábada, 2002, p. 122). Some authors consider the “dependentist” theories too simplistic, and the theory of American imperialism overdone. According to Straubhaar (in Chan & McIntyre, 2002), “there are a number of other geocultural markets emerging: Western Europe, where the European Community has been trying to create a region-wide cultural market; Latin America, linked also to other “Latin”-based language markets in Italy and France”. The Hispanic world is therefore another part of this process (Martín & Becerra, in Quirós & Sierra, 2001, p. 183).

So the expansion of the Spanish media market, rather than a substitute for English-based globalization, completes it. What these global or transnational corporations must not disregard is the necessity to adapt their strategies and products to the local market. Cohen (in Chan & McIntyre, 2002, p. 178), states that although the information sector would appear to be one of the most exportable, “news materials need to be continuously adapted for the local political and cultural context”. Ultimately, market development depends on its acceptance by the audience. As The Economist (2002) points out, globalization is not opposed to the promotion of, and respect for, local cultures. In some cases it actively promotes them. As such, if globalization encourages relations between different cultures, the growth of industry will encourage the better understanding between people from different cultural environments.

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