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**“ALL THINGS CONSIDERED”: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY
EXAMINING THE COMMERCIAL PRESENCE
WITHIN PUBLIC RADIO**

by

Peter P. Nieckarz III

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Sociology

Western Michigan University
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June 1999

“ALL THINGS CONSIDERED”: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY
EXAMINING THE COMMERCIAL PRESENCE
WITHIN PUBLIC RADIO

Peter P. Nieckarz III, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 1999

This dissertation addresses the commercial presence within public radio. A case study of three NPR affiliate stations was conducted to determine to what extent public radio is being influenced or compromised by increased commercial rationality. It also addresses how they have been able to resist commercialism and remain true to the original ideals of public radio. The research included active interviews, observations, and document analyses of data collected from field research at each of the three stations in the sample. Analysis of the data indicates that public radio stations have grown more commercial due to declining tax-based subsidies, and increased dependence on “listener sensitive income” which is the combination of business underwriting and individual listener donations. Dependence on these revenue sources has caused stations to make programming decisions that are quite similar to those made by commercial stations. It is suggested that the course of public radio over time is largely an indicator of larger cultural and economic trends that commercialize more and more cultural elements previously able to exist on much less economic or non-commercial terms. It is suggested that in comparison to these

societal trends, public radio is still able to provide a significant alternative to the commercial radio market, but the continued existence of that alternative may be threatened.

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mention their names, but ethical standards prevent it. I'm sure they know who they are.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about the growing impact of commercial dynamics on public radio. Like any social organization, public radio exists within a larger social environment that is influenced by economic or commercial concerns. Public radio has stood in resistance to such dynamics, and at the same time, it has been created, maintained, and influenced by the very same dynamics. Public radio was founded with the intent that it would be insulated from commercial dynamics. Whether or not these intentions have been successfully carried out depends on one's perspective. The glass of intent could be half-empty or half-full.

It seems as though more and more elements of our lives are becoming dominated by commercial dynamics. We live in a capitalist society- this means that most everything that transpires is based on whether it can produce a profit for the parties involved. The Marxist tradition argues that all things are rooted in the economic system, therefore reflecting it. However, there have been many societal or cultural elements that have operated and existed on terms that were not dominated by commercial rationality, including some for-profit activities. Those less-commercial, or non-commercial activities are now starting to function with a much stronger commercial rationality and influence.

A prime example of this phenomenon can be found in the publishing industry. The world of publishing has traditionally been an area where artistic writing and scholarly endeavors could be disseminated to the public. In his article titled The Crushing Power of Big Publishing, Mark Crispin Miller (1997) illustrates how the publishing business has evolved from a subsistence level “cottage industry” to a huge profit-driven corporate venture. Needless to say, publishing has always been a business, but Miller suggests that it has become increasingly dominated by bottom-line rationality. These business ventures were originally started out of a love for books. Publishing was an industry driven by the substance of what was published. Profit margins were comparatively small. The article explains how one time independent publishers like Random House and Little Brown were all eventually bought out by larger media conglomerates like Time-Warner. The result of this is that the publishing industry is now driven by profit. The actual quality of the product plays a secondary role. The tail now wags the dog.

Miller (1997) says the impacts on publications are various. First, the books have suffered *editorial neglect*. Editors once performed a very different role in publishing...

Where the houses prized the subtle labor of their editors, now the giants want their staff not pouring over prose but signing big names over lunch. Hence, countless books are incoherent and obese- as reviewers often note, decrying flaws that ought to have been caught already by the editor (p. 12).

Miller also argues that the text is also neglected by proofreaders whose work is now done by less experienced free-lancers.

Another effect of this business-minded trend is that many of the titles that are published amount to nothing more than marketing schemes for other projects being produced by the parent company. Books related to television shows or movies are placed on the market to further promote those ventures. Publishers may also just be cashing in on a tremendously popular movie or television show that sells any merchandise bearing its name or identity. A third result is that publishers are now hesitant to publish books that have little promise for returning sufficient profit. When low profit-potential titles are actually published by large commercial presses, they often receive little promotion, thus ensuring their fate. Lastly, the traditional practice of including footnotes and indexes in non-fictional works is now being frowned upon by publishing companies for fear that it might scare readers away.

These trends within the industry have also taken their toll on the alternative offered by independent and university presses traditionally less concerned with the balance sheet than larger corporate publishers. University presses are now constrained by the increasing cost-consciousness of university administrations. Consequently, these academic publishers are also “giving in to market pressure”.

Miller says that the presence of these dynamics in the publishing industry has lead to what he refers to as the *narrowing of culture*. He suggests that one possible cause for this trend lies in the large-scale nature of publishing today. Trying to appeal to a mass audience may inherently compromise the work...

When book publishing was still a cottage industry it was ‘the freest form of expression we have’ Curtice Hitchcock wrote in 1937. ‘The large scale circulation magazine, the newspaper, the motion picture, or the radio program, since they are intended for mass audiences, must

perforce avoid taboos held sacred by any substantial portion of the audience, or they fail (p. 13).

This comment gives us a view of how the publishing industry has changed over the years. It started out as a culturally minded business and evolved into a business minded culture as publishers grew into more complex business entities focused on mass appeal.

In another article published in The Nation, Miller discusses the popular music industry in much the same vein as he discusses the publishing industry. He argues that although much popular music over the years has often been associated with political and social protest, the music being released is usually the product of a large recording company which cultivates, finances, and distributes the music of artists based on its perceived potential to sell copies numbering in the millions. Musical acts that were once given several years by the record company to develop into a commercially viable act are often ousted after their first or second release if sales are not satisfactory.

Health care in the United States is also evolving into an extremely business-minded pursuit. Granted, health care has never been free in this country, and physicians and other health care providers have always made good money in those careers, but health care organizations were not as profit driven as they are now. Eitzen and Zinn (1997) allude to the new business focus in health care when discussing the rise of private for-profit hospitals...

Traditionally, hospitals in the United States have been nonprofit organizations run by churches, universities, and municipalities. Since the mid-1960's however, private profit orientated hospital chains have

emerged, and more than 20 percent of them are owned privately (p. 442).

Profit driven health care leads to higher prices for care received by patients. Citing an article by Geraldine Dallek, Eitzen and Zinn indicate that profit driven hospitals charge an average of 47 percent more per admission. They also cite a second study found that for-profit hospitals charge an average of 22 percent more per admission. The differences in charges usually have to do with higher costs of X-rays, tests, medications, and other ancillary services. Ultimately, the rise in costs leads to more limited access to health care.

The general trend of culture based on profit is an important issue. Miller's notion of the narrowing of culture is not to be taken lightly. If the evolution of culture is commercially driven, then eventually the range of cultural expression is limited to only that which can produce a profit and remain commercially viable. If cultural elements and expression are limited by commercial criteria, then ideas and human interaction are limited and defined by commerce. Anything not supporting commercial interests will eventually fall out of existence. This, in turn, will have a profound impact on human perception, identity, and democracy. Real difference amongst ideas would cease, yielding to a more homogenous culture, inhibiting debate, dissension, communication, and protest. These are all essential elements of a democracy.

The Case of Public Radio

The phenomenon of cultural elements becoming increasingly subject to economic rationality is also represented in the realm of public broadcasting, an institution founded on the very ideals of flouting commercial pressures.

Growing up I was only marginally aware of public radio. My mother listened to it from time to time, but I did not pay much attention. My first real experiences with public radio came while I was an undergraduate at Lake Superior State University in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, in 1992. I was developing an interest in "real" jazz, and wanted to start exposing myself to it on a regular basis. I searched the dial and found an overnight jazz program on the local NPR affiliate. I often fell asleep with it on my clock radio, and would awake each day with Morning Edition already tuned in from my jazz excursions the night before. Eventually the daily exposure to Bob Edwards drew me in. I started to actively listen and it developed into a pleasant routine after a couple months.

The fall of 1993 brought me to Minnesota, the Mecca of public radio. Morning Edition faded out of my routine, but I became hooked on Fresh Air, and All Things Considered. I found NPR programming not only informative, but a joy to listen to. I was still being enlightened by jazz programming. From these experiences, I was becoming deeply aware of how important public radio was. The news programming was the best I have ever encountered, and the music could not be found elsewhere on the dial.

Having become familiar with NPR and its affiliates, I saw commercial media in an entirely different light. Sometimes I think this is what made me aware of the importance of media in society, and lead me to take an interest in that subject in an academic sense. I became increasingly aware of how commercialized many aspects of our life are, especially commercial media. The primary goal of these entities is to deliver an audience to advertisers. This is how they make their money, the actual content of the programming that attracts consumers ultimately does not matter, as long as they tune in and buy products. Facilitating artistic expression and serving public interest matters comparatively little to corporate executives who are compelled to improve the bottom line for shareholders. Foremost in their minds is attracting the largest possible audience. Perhaps one redeeming quality of this system is that sometimes a substantial audience *is* drawn to quality public affairs and cultural programming. Therefore, these things *do* make it onto the commercial airwaves on occasion, but the frequency of such an event seems to be growing as rare as the independent pharmacist.

As time passed, I began to realize that public radio was *also* subject to commercialism. Underwriting spots on commercial television now bear little difference to paid spots on commercial television. I started to realize that underwriting on both public television and radio were nothing much more than a euphemism for commercials. I was also aware of the threat that public broadcasting was receiving from Congress in the aftermath of the 1994 election. In the midst of all this, I realized that perhaps public radio was not an idealistic stronghold of resistance

to commercial market forces. Publishing companies and the music industry were always a business venture, a heightened focus on the bottom line may not be so far fetched. However, public radio was not and is not a business, its mere existence was based on opposing such forces. Nevertheless, public radio still may become more and more like a business, reacting to commercial or fiscal forces. This made me think that if a non-profit entity like public broadcasting can become commercialized, then the limits to this trend of commercialization may not yet be in sight.

Upon some initial exploratory research, I quickly found out how public radio *has* changed over the years. Founded in the wake of the 1960's, NPR was specifically designed to create radio that would be free from market pressures. Both the central network and local affiliates constructed programming based on the ideals of public service and cultural expression. Programming based on attracting the largest possible audience was not the goal. That was thought to be the essential problem with commercial media sources.

Based on my discussion of public radio thus far, it may sound as though I am suggesting that public radio was once an ideal entity, totally free from all the trappings of commercial pressure. This would indeed be a romantic notion and is not actually what I intend to convey to the reader. Public radio had been subject to economic and commercial pressures from the very beginning. However, if we look at the market influence within public radio 28 years ago, and compare it to today, there is a definite difference and a recognizable trend towards increased commercialization. Therefore, the real topic of this dissertation is not how public radio has become

commercialized, but rather *how much more* commercialized it has become over the years. Just as publishing was always influenced by market forces, perhaps so was public radio.

Public radio is the subject of this dissertation; however, public radio can mean different things. For this reason I feel it necessary to define the term *public radio* as it pertains to this study. In the case of this dissertation, public radio includes those local stations that receive federal support through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and are affiliated with NPR. These stations do not seek to make a profit. Instead, they merely try to collect enough revenue to cover operating costs. I will examine three local NPR affiliated stations to illustrate and assess the trend discussed in this section, the increased commercialization of public radio. I felt it important to examine public radio on the local level due to the fact that each local station has an identity all its own. They are more responsive to the surrounding community, and the decision of what is actually to be put on the air is made by local stations who pick and choose which syndicated programs to carry, and develop some of their own local programming as well. They are on the front-line, so to speak, in that they are directly connected to their audience. NPR as a network is not as immediately connected to local communities. This relationship is discussed in the next chapter.

There is not much existing literature on public broadcasting. What does exist usually focuses on public television. There is even less examining public radio, and of that literature, they discuss public radio in terms of NPR and seem to portray it as a monolith that includes all NPR affiliated stations. This is a vastly inadequate picture

of public radio. Proper consideration of local stations is essential if not paramount to studying public radio. Literature focusing on local stations is virtually non-existent. To my knowledge, this text is among the first to examine public radio in terms of local stations and not the network known as NPR. This is why I was unable to include a systematic literature review for this dissertation. What literature I did examine is included and discussed in the course of this study.

A Look Ahead

In this chapter, I have introduced the problems and issues addressed by this study. In the second chapter, called *The Research Design*, I will describe the research design employed for this dissertation. In the first part of that chapter, I will explain the case study approach and the research methods used for this dissertation. I will also go into detail about how those methods were actually implemented for the study. The intent here is to portray some of the context of the research and field study. The second part of that chapter will then introduce the three stations or “cases” included in the study by giving a brief description and background of each station. Chapter III, titled *A Brief History of Public Radio*, will then go into much deeper detail about the development of National Public Radio in general and then discuss some of the current issues concerning local stations. Chapters IV and V will examine and compare the three stations in detail. In Chapter IV, *Public Radio Programming*, I will look at the programming: how it has changed, and how it is influenced by commercial dynamics. In Chapter V, *Fundraising*, I look at each station’s fundraising methods focusing on

on-air fundraising and support from local underwriting. In the final chapter, *What It All Means*, I address the possible effect commercialization has had on local public stations and review some theoretical and empirical literature related to this research and the commercialization of culture in general.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH DESIGN

With respect to the problems discussed in the previous chapter: cultural elements becoming increasingly defined and influenced by commercial dynamics, I will now discuss exactly what exactly this dissertation is examining. The over arching questions that are addressed by the research are as follows:

1. Are public radio stations being influenced by commercial dynamics?
2. If there is a commercial presence, how is it manifested in public radio's organizational practices?
3. What effect has this commercial presence had on the programming of public radio stations?

When I use the term *commercial* or *commercialization* of public radio stations, I am using it to indicate the process of a station taking on characteristics that are similar to commercial radio or media. This includes receiving support from advertisers who want their message to reach the audience. Though not an entity seeking to make a profit itself (like commercial radio), the commercialized station becomes a vehicle from which other interests can profit. Also, ensuring incoming revenue is a primary factor when making decisions regarding programming and program content. In general, the commercialized public radio station will have a more business minded approach to their pursuits.

This state of commercialism is problematic in that the founders of public radio stations and National Public Radio saw these dynamics as being contradictory to what they wanted to do with radio. They felt the influence of these dynamics would prevent stations from producing programs that otherwise were not supported by the commercial radio market. If commercialism as I have operationalized it above finds a home at public stations, then the ability to produce shows not supported by a commercial market may be threatened, and the development and evolution of public radio becomes defined on commercial terms rather than cultural ones. A more detailed depiction of the founding and history of public radio is presented in the next chapter.

The method used for this dissertation was a *comparative case study*. A comparative case study means that multiple cases were examined. Three cases were selected for this study, each station included in the study representing one case. I decided on this approach based solely on what I felt would best provide the data needed in order to appropriately address the research questions presented by this dissertation. What I set out to do in this project was to provide a detailed and in-depth portrait of local NPR stations. I also wanted to demonstrate how they have evolved over time to become the stations they are today. By including this historical element, I could more confidently make claims about the extent to which public radio has become increasingly colonized and commercialized since the birth of NPR nearly 30 years ago. This type of detailed description and analysis commanded by the research questions could not be adequately obtained by any single method, therefore a

multi-methodological approach was needed. The case study provides a depth of knowledge and understanding that no other method provides.

Before I proceed, I feel I should first discuss case study in some detail as it is largely a method with which many sociologists are not familiar. Case study was once a very popular method, but waned in popularity. A brief description of the case study method is will help the reader better understand the motivation and reasoning behind the data collection for this dissertation.

The Case Study's Fall From Grace

In their reader, A Case for the Case Study (1991) Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg point out that use of the case study is something that is largely ignored or criticized by social researchers today. Most researchers are caught up in the practice of studying as many cases as possible, maximizing sample size. The rationale behind this is that the larger the sample, the easier it is to generalize results to the larger population. This emphasis on large samples lies in direct opposition to the case study, which focuses on only one case, or a handful of cases. Despite the current standing (or lack thereof) of case study methods in social science, Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg argue that this was not always the case. In fact, they make the claim that much of sociology's landmark studies used the case study approach. They cite studies by Burgess, Tilly, Wallerstein, Margaret Mead, and others that have influenced subsequent inquiries and still have an influence today. They illustrate how the case study approach was once much more popular, but had become increasingly ignored...

Immediately after World War II, the case study approach produced major contributions to the understanding of sociological issues, particularly those relating to complex organizations and bureaucracies. One source of this intellectual development was the department of sociology at Columbia University, whose graduate students in the late 1940's and early 1950's, building on their dissertations based on field work and documentary data, wrote books that are still the fundamental source of sociological principals (e.g., Lipset 1950; Blau 1955; Gouldner 1954). But the role of case studies began to decline at Columbia and elsewhere. Although this approach employing in-depth analysis of particular organizational units, has not disappeared, it has become increasingly marginalized (p. 44).

Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991) link the decline of the case study to the rise in popularity of the natural science model of social research. They state that quantitative tools such as surveys and statistical analysis became popular due to the demands for research placed by government, commercial, and academic interests. Quantitative research was the type of research that received funding, so the popularity grew out of economic concerns (a phenomenon not unrelated to the topic of this dissertation). Those entities funding research such as the National Science Foundation believed that surveys and experiments best approximated the objective standards set by natural science. Consequently, social researchers' commitment to natural science grew, vaulting it to the position of dominance it enjoys today.

Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991) argue in favor of bringing the case study approach back to popularity. Their reasons for bringing it back is two fold. First, case study should be used to support or augment scientific study that often lacks the in-depth analysis provided by case study methods. Secondly, they argue that...

...the case study approach based on in-depth field work or documentary data, has an integrity of it's own. By employing this method, we can entertain those assumptions or presuppositions about

the nature of human nature and of social reality that are inadmissible within the framework of natural science inquiry. We can thus examine a major set of problem areas relating to social interaction, historical processes, and organizational structures, doing much to advance our knowledge about significant social issues in the modern world (p. 68).

The Case Study Approach Defined

A common statement made throughout literature on case study is that it can not be associated with any specific research tool. It is more of a style of research rather than a specific tool. In the most general terms, case study can be defined as an... “in-depth, multi-faceted investigation, using qualitative research methods, of a single phenomenon” (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). It is usually done in greater detail, and utilizes multiple data sources. With this in mind, it is apparent that there can be great diversity amongst various studies, and still all be considered a case study.

Placing it in simple terms, the researcher is to analyze as many different types of data as possible in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the case under study. This means there is no one specific research tool that is inherently linked to the case study method, the case itself dictates the ways in which the actual data is collected. The case study researcher is to use whatever information is available regarding the particular case being studied. The only criterion is that the case being analyzed is relevant to the topic at hand.

The unit of analysis for the case study can also vary. The term “case” can be used to describe a variety of things readily examined by the researcher. A case study can analyze something as small as an individual, a social role, or a family. It can also

have a larger scope and study such things as larger groups of people, a city, corporation, or an entire country. The case study can focus on any “unit of social life” (Reinharz, 1992).

The researcher focuses on a single case because he or she feels that it is a strong empirical example of some larger social phenomenon, therefore the case is used to support larger claims being made by the social scientist.

This approach rests on the assumption that the case being studied is typical of cases of a certain type, so that through intensive analysis generalizations may be made which will be applicable to other cases of the same type (Theodorson and Theodorson *cited in Reinhartz* p. 164).

This previous statement is also supported by others who have analyzed the case study approach. In their book, Case Study Methods (1993), Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin assert that the goal of the case study approach is to locate the “global in the local”. This means that by taking an in-depth look at one case, researchers can make assumptions about other, similar, cases.

Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg explain the advantages of the case study approach. They assert that case studies, “...provide a richness and depth to the description and analysis of the micro events and the larger social structures that constitute social life” (p. 6). First, it allows the researcher to study people or phenomenon in more natural settings. Second, it allows for a holistic understanding of how people and things interact with each other. This gives a better understanding of the entire social world under study. Third, a case study can provide a “sense of time and history”. This means the researcher can get a sense of how the case under study has developed and

evolved over time. Lastly, case study lends itself to theory generation and generalization. Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg also indicate a practical advantage to the case study approach in that it allows the researcher to conduct studies at a small price. Only one or a handful of people are required to carry out such a study. Conversely, they argue that survey research can become expensive.

Case Studies and Generalizability

Aside from the criticism that case studies, like other qualitative research, lack the scientific rigor and objectivity that quantitative methods strive to obtain, there lies the issue of sample size. Qualitative research usually encompasses smaller samples than survey methods, but this issue seems to be magnified by the case study approach. Many critics of this perspective find it nearly impossible to make generalizations about other cases, or “finding the global in the local”, since the sample is hardly what many would call representative. Case study can only assume generality if it assumes similarity across cases, for many critics, this is a precarious assumption at best.

This is a strong point of criticism within the world of social science. On the other hand, many proponents of the case study method argue that within the singularity of one case lies the microscopic elements present in the larger social structure. Therefore, “a well constructed single case,” as Bourdieu has suggested, can locate the “global in the local” (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin 1993).

Philosophical and epistemological arguments aside, another way to address the issue of representativeness lies within the comparative approach to case study.

This means conducting analyses of more than one case in order to put the study into perspective. Anthony Giddens (1984) noted the great potential in such an approach...

Pieces of ethnographic research like... the traditional small-scale community research fieldwork anthropology—are not themselves generalizing studies. But they can easily become such if carried out in some numbers, so that judgements of their typicality can justifiably be made (p. 328).

Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin also recognize the value in incorporating more than one case, but are at a loss when determining just how many cases would be adequate. They suggest that a study may possibly become what they call “macroscopic” with the addition of just one case. Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991) point out that some of the best case study research was done on a comparative framework.

The Research at Hand

Having explained the case study and comparative case study methods to some length, I would now like to illustrate the specific methods used within the case study employed for this dissertation. In light of the above arguments concerning the comparative approach to case study, the decision to incorporate three cases in order to gain an understanding of the public radio experience seems to be well founded. No other methodological approach would have provided as complete a picture as this case study did. Three was also a manageable sample size for the case study approach, which is not suited to large numbers of cases.

There are roughly 500 local stations across the United States. I decided upon these three cases because they were a good representation of the types of stations that

are in existence. Each case or station studied represents a different station format. This way, I did not merely study three stations that are very similar to each other in programming. There is a range of existing public radio formats included in this research. The three stations chosen for this study are all located in the Mid-west and reach both urban and rural populations. This provides a good demographic cross-section of audience. All three stations are affiliated with state universities, like the overwhelming number of existing NPR stations across the U.S. The characteristics of these stations that account for both the similarities and differences amongst NPR affiliates makes the findings of this dissertation quite generalizeable. With respect to this study, the global is indeed found in the local.

Permission to gain access to these stations was requested by a letter sent to the station managers before the actual field study began. This letter included a brief synopsis of the study and the specifics of what I planned to be doing while at those stations.

The public radio community is rather small, and people often know people at other stations. I wanted to ensure as much anonymity as possible for those individuals involved with the stations under study, this is why stations are not identified by their call letters or specific location. In light of this, I assigned each station a “nickname” for the purposes of referring to them within this study. This concern for confidentiality was handled in other ways which will be explained as they come up.

Specific Methods Employed

The research for this comparative case study took place in two parts. The first part examines at the National Public Radio network as a whole. It is primarily an analysis of existing literature. This allowed me to develop a history of public radio in general, and discuss some of the current issues concerning it today. A better understanding of the larger network will provide some necessary context for understanding local stations. The result of this research will be present throughout the dissertation, but is primarily discussed in the chapter titled *A Brief History of Public Radio*.

The sources used in compiling this history of NPR and its affiliates were all secondary. Instead of compiling the historical data myself by using primary sources, I used existing histories on the subject. Skocpol (1984) says that many historical researchers regard this type of data to be largely inferior. On the other hand, she states that redoing primary research could be “disastrous”. The work involved in doing primary research alone “would rule out most comparative research” (p. 382). In light of this, she justifies the use of secondary sources in this dissertation. Based on Skocpol’s statements, other histories of public radio will be used as the data for the dissertation. Furthermore, it is also important to recognize that professional historians did not write these accounts. The authors of these books were people who have been associated with NPR or public broadcasting, and are not professional historians. This has possible implications regarding the rigor and validity with which their information was collected.

The second part of the research addresses the study of the individual stations included in the sample. I wanted to collect data through all means possible. However, the exact methods were not totally clear to me when I started this study. Although I had reviewed literature on case study methods, I found little technical instruction on how to carry out such a research design. In fact, most of the literature I have reviewed on qualitative methods in general seem to lack a “how to” section. Most of the time the authors discuss qualitative methods as a concept and philosophy but fail to actually provide instruction on how to carry out this type of research. It is for this reason that the actual methods were not clear at first. I came to feel that true knowledge of how to conduct case studies or other qualitative research can only be gained experientially, and that was exactly what happened.

Indeed, it *was* difficult for me to be specific and accurate about how I would collect the data. My intentions concerning the design of this case study were finalized in the course of the actual field work. Any expectations regarding the types of data to be collected were largely based on anticipation of the field experience; I had never actually visited a local public radio station and knew relatively little about them. My background research focused mainly on the central network; there was very little literature regarding local NPR affiliates. Therefore, I was not totally sure what I would find out once visiting these stations.

As it turned out, things were a bit different once I was actually in the field collecting data. I will address these differences in the remainder of this chapter. I did not view this as a problem though. Keeping in mind that any piece of good

qualitative research allows room for emergence (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), I remained open and flexible regarding my field experience. The specific types of data that were to be collected and analyzed became more certain as time in the field went on. I will discuss the methods and data used in the following pages. Basically, there were three methods of data collection employed for the case studies including *active interviews*, *document analysis*, and *observation*. These three methods will be discussed in that order.

The Active Interview

The bulk of the data collected for the case studies of each station came in the form of interviews. This also requires the most explanation. Given that any organization is made up of individual actors, I found it important to learn about these stations through the eyes of some of the stations' participants. As it turned out, these interviews started to serve two functions. The first function was largely an exploratory one. Having never really experienced the radio profession first-hand, these interviews served to educate me on the day-to-day concerns and workings of each station. From this, I learned public radio jargon and some of the issues surrounding these stations that I might not have been aware of. In short, it helped to add focus and direction to the data collection. The second function was that of eliciting from the subjects responses that were relevant to the study. Generally, this amounted to any conversation or remarks regarding the commercialization of public radio, the topic of the dissertation.

The interviews I conducted were modeled after what Holstein and Gubrium call the “active interview”(1995). They illustrated the tenets of this approach in their book of the same title. In general terms, this interview style can be understood as unstructured interviewing (Denzin, 1989). However, Holstein and Gubrium go into greater detail about how they feel the interview process should be approached. Their interview philosophy is heavily influenced by the Symbolic Interactionist tradition. At times it is quite reminiscent of Herbert Blumer’s essay, The Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism (1969).

The main theme of the book is that the interviewer should not view the subject as a passive respondent. The authors assert that questions should be formulated in such a way as to allow for natural and smooth flow of information. This means the researcher should abandon the rigid interview schedule that only allows for certain types of uniform responses from the interviewee. By allowing the smooth flow of information, the interviewer is recognizing the fact that both researcher and subject are active participants in the construction of the data. Each interview is emergent. Each one a collaboration that results in every interview being unique.

Issues of reliability and validity are accounted for in The Active Interview. Holstein and Gubrium argue that the uniqueness facilitated by the emergence of the interview experience renders issues of reliability irrelevant. Interviewing can never be an objective and replicable tool, therefore the researcher should acknowledge this. This will reduce any bias. Holstein and Gubrium also state that being attentive to the interview participant, granting them competence and allowing for shifts in opinions

and perspectives within the interview process. Taken along with the other prescribed procedures of the active interview, this attentiveness will result in validity of the data.

Despite the flexibility afforded by the active interview process, the interview is not without organization. The researcher should construct an interview schedule, but should not rely on it. The schedule can be used to varying degrees, but it should not become intrusive to the conversational style of the interview. Some respondents are open and informed enough to speak on a topic to the point where reading a question off a schedule is a complete attack on the natural flow of information... "Interview schedules should be guides at best, not scripts, for the give and take of the interview process" (p. 56).

The active interview was the style I tried to approximate during the interview process. This often proved to be advantageous as many of the respondents in the interviews did not need much prodding to speak at length. Trying to stick to the interview schedule would have been intrusive, and inconsiderate of the interview participant. The result was often a pleasant conversation. Several respondents even expressed their enjoyment of the experience at the conclusion of the interview.

All told, 21 interviews were conducted. Seven people from each station under study were interviewed. I wanted to get representatives from all different aspects of the station operation: this included management, production, programming, news, and development/marketing. This notion acted as a template for which people I tried to interview at each station. The selection of subjects was also to some extent a "sample of convenience" process. The first person interviewed at each station was the station

manager. I felt this was a good way to get my foot in the door at each station. The managers informed the station staff that I would be coming to the station to conduct my research. This way, when I contacted a staff member, it was not a total surprise. From there, people would sometimes suggest someone else to interview (usually based on if they thought they would be helpful to my study). I also would just contact other people over the phone, and if I got a hold of them (often not an easy task), I would request an interview. The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 90 minutes in length. I included many direct quotes and passages from these interviews in the body of this dissertation. Some of the actual language from these passages has been minimally altered in order to conceal the specific identity of the stations under study, or any of the individuals involved with those stations.

Document Analysis

This portion of the research was an attempt to get some hard or objective empirical evidence concerning the stations and their development over time. Asking individuals about how public radio has become increasingly commercial is valid in its own right, but I also wanted to get a more objective view of that process. In order to do this I examined various types of documents including program schedules, fundraising information, and any other miscellaneous items that were given to me along the way.

The program schedules were looked at in order to illustrate how the programming at these stations has changed (as funding sources have changed) over

the years. This would perhaps suggest how increased economic focus is influencing the on-air programming at public radio stations. I also had initially intended to conduct a detailed analysis of how the funding has evolved at each station, but this information was not available. The stations did not seem to have organized access to this type of information going back over the years. For me to find this information myself would have been a dissertation in its own right. I was given *some* information and had to make do with what I had. Lastly, during the course of the fieldwork, different people had given me various documents pertaining to their particular station or public radio in general. These documents were also used as a data source. Some of the more general documents are the basis for the section concerning current issues in public radio in the next chapter.

As a point of clarification, this document analysis is not to be confused with what is commonly known as content analysis where articles and images are often coded, counted, and analyzed statistically, giving it a quantitative feel (Babbie, 1989). The document analysis in this study will have a decidedly qualitative personality to it. The information in the documents will be treated more like unobtrusive interviews and observations rather than a series of singular items to be counted and plugged into a statistical formula.

Observation

The third facet of the case studies is what I loosely refer to as observation. There were two aspects to the observation of the stations. The first part entailed

observing each station's actual on-air broadcasts. I spent countless hours listening to each station during the course of my research. This allowed me to become very familiar with each station's on-air style, and I was able to see the differences from one station to the next. I feel that the time spent listening to these stations was an integral part of the study since the themes and arguments of this dissertation ultimately deal with the actual content of public radio programming- what is actually reaching the listener.

The second type of observations used in this study have to do with my experiences while visiting the three stations. These experiences took place in different contexts. First, I was able to observe certain station operations in the course of my interviews. Good examples of this were when interviews took place in the studio while a person was on air, or while a person was performing production tasks. A second type of observation had to do with pledge drives. I volunteered, to answer phones at all three stations during pledge drives. I sat in on meetings, both formal and informal during that time. I found these pledge drive experiences to be informative and useful to this study.

The Stations

The main source of data for this dissertation comes from case studies of three public radio affiliates. Subsequent chapters will focus on these stations and how they may or may not have become subject to commercial pressures. These stations are all different, they have distinct programming formats and have different philosophies

regarding public radio broadcasting. Before going into the specific methods used and the analysis of the data, I will first introduce the three stations included in the research.

The Urban/Eclectic Station

The first station is what will be called the Urban/Eclectic station. This station is affiliated with a large urban university in a large metropolitan area. This station has a format that some may not necessarily associate with an NPR affiliate. They vaguely refer to their format as “music variety”, the generic radio industry term for this format is called “Adult Album Alternative” or simply “AAA”. What this means is that this station plays a mixture of non-commercial rock, folk, jazz, blues, country, and electronic music. Aside from Morning Edition and All Things Considered, the majority of the station’s broadcast schedule is locally produced music programming. Much of the weekend is made up of various nationally syndicated programs mixed in with local programs. Examples of complete broadcast schedules are represented in Appendix A. The current format at the Urban/Eclectic station was put in place in the early 80’s as a reaction to a financial crisis. Before that, the station had a considerable amount of classical music and special interest programming. The station was running a deficit and the station manager at the time decided to make a programming change. This marked a big change in the broadcast day. The following is a passage from an interview I conducted at this station...

The first professional broadcaster-manager that we had... ...came on board in 1982. He took it to a pretty narrow format compared to what

it used to be. We broadcast the local jazz festival live on Labor Day weekend and we came out of that broadcast as a jazz and news station. And pretty much just main-stream jazz, not too much variation in the jazz. And he got rid of almost all of the community access producers and really gave the station a cohesive format for the first time.

The amount of classical music was also reduced considerably. At the time, some listeners did not agree with the change. Letters of protest were written to the station, and a couple of them were reprinted in a subsequent program guide. Since then, the station had broadened its musical content, but still does not play much classical music or carry the community access shows.

This station has a staff of about 30 people. They have distinct departments consisting primarily of development, news, and music programming. As a point of clarification, development refers to those activities that focus on securing finances, and maintaining a good fiscal standing for the station. The development staff are the people who take care of underwriting and individual donations.

The Urban/Eclectic station has recently moved into a brand new studio in a new building built by the university. Their broadcast facility is state of the art and I suspect that it is better than what many commercial stations have to work with. This station's "weekly come" is about 200,000 which means that 200,000 people tune into this station on a weekly basis. This station draws funding from 4 basic sources: Individual donations, local underwriting, appropriation from the university budget, and grants from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).

The News/Talk Station

This radio station is affiliated with a large state university in the Mid-west, based in a town with a population of 100,000. Unlike most stations, this station not only broadcasts from its hometown, but also broadcasts from towers in other areas of the state. Each tower has a separate set of call letters as per FCC regulations, but the same programming comes from all three towers. This gives the station a rather large geographic presence. The News/Talk station has a “weekly cume” of 180,000. The staff at this station is about 24 people including management, production, news, and development personnel. Similar to the Urban/Eclectic station, this station receives revenue from individual donations, local underwriting, appropriation from the university budget, and grants from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).

This station is perhaps the best example for the topic of this dissertation. The programming of this station is primarily dedicated to what some at the station refer to as “News and Information.” The weekday broadcast is made up of news or talk programming from 5:00am to 8:00pm. It includes the obligatory Morning Edition and All Things Considered, but it also carries other NPR syndicated news/talk programs such as The Diane Rheme Show and Talk of the Nation. The station also produces its own daily talk show in the early afternoon that has recently gone in to syndication, but the bulk of its programming is not locally produced. This type of station represents an emerging trend in public radio programming. The current format has only been in place for a couple years, and it is vastly different from the

station's previous program schedule. Refer to Appendix A for the complete broadcast schedule.

Prior to the format change, this station had a classical music format, a tradition in public radio. It carried Morning Edition and All Things Considered, but the majority of the broadcast week was dedicated to classical music programming. By the early 1990's, this station was running an annual deficit that put the station hundreds of thousands of dollars into the red. This situation prompted the university's board of regents to fire the standing station manager and hire a new person from outside the station. The new manager ("Director of Broadcasting" is the actual title at this station) was given a mandate by the board of regents to do two things: Keep the station in the black and increase the station's audience size.

Management at the station looked at how other struggling public stations made a change to News/Talk that proved to be successful. Realizing that none of the other public stations in the region had gone to this format, they saw an opening. Initially, they predicted that audience and revenue would drop off immediately following the change, but would eventually come back strong. They explained this to the university and underwriters, and the format change was made on July 6th, 1996 at 5:00pm. Much of the staff dedicated to the music programming either left or were fired, including the program director (many of the people I spoke to weren't very clear about what actually happened). The following interview passage explains the reasoning behind the change...

What we began noticing very soon after I joined is that we had a similar audience to the classical music audience, for those attending

performances. And we had a graying of the audience. And we were not particularly attractive to younger people coming in and tuning in. They weren't even tuning in for some of the news programs, and maybe it's because I believe we were perceived as being a very old fashioned classical music station...

...Now the format change did take place for us in July of 1996. It was not an easy change to make, and it was one that we knew was going to be controversial with our listeners, and it was. But it was not changed *only* because we believed, and the figures were showing that, we had declining audience and we had declining membership. At one point, I think the lowest our annual membership had been dollar-wise was maybe about \$463,000 for our individual membership and it was going down.

The format change brought about some dissension from some of the station's listeners who relied on this station for classical music programming. The protest was quite fervent, letters and phone calls poured into the station and university. An organization of listeners formed that dedicated to countering the recent changes, wanting to "take back" the station suggesting that since the station was public, it belonged to the listeners. The organization asked the state attorney general to investigate the station feeling that pledge money from the previous spring should be returned to listeners since they donated the money based on the idea that they were supporting classical music programming. Negative sentiment regarding the station's change still exists today. While answering phones during the Spring 1998 fund drive, I received calls where people would say that they were *not* going to contribute in protest of the change.

Given the initial negative reaction to the format change, people at this station were nervous about the following fund drive in the fall of 1996. As it turned out, the drive proved to be the most successful in the station's history, and every subsequent

drive has done better than the last. The decision to go to News/Talk was justified in the numbers, but they did not expect such an immediate turn-around after the change. The station is now out of debt, its audience is rising, and there seems to be a focus on becoming a better and better station, particularly in its news coverage. In fact, some had remarked that they would like to become the foremost news and information station in the region. On the whole, there seemed to be a strong sense of mission and accomplishment amongst all the staff. It was a recurring theme in the interviews...

There's a progressive thought now about where this station should be and about the future of the station that certainly in the first 6 years I was here was not present. We have a director of broadcasting who has a vision, who has had a vision all along of what this station could be, and that is so phenomenal in an organization like this. It may seem very basic. You know, you might think, "Well Duh, that's what you're supposed to have, and that's what any organization should have." But in fact for us this was a major, major shift in thinking, saying "This is a public radio station that can do tremendous things." And there's a sense of progress. A sense, not that we're there already, but that, you know, "Maybe we've reached a plateau, maybe we've reached a certain stage, and now we just need to continue to keep that vision in mind and move towards it."

The Traditional/Classical Station

The Traditional/Classical station is associated with a regional state university with an enrollment of approximately 26,000. The surrounding community is a medium sized city with a relatively large neighboring "suburb". There are also several small surrounding communities. The population of the county is roughly 200,000 people. This station's weekly come is about 45,000 which is considerably smaller than the other stations in the study. There is a staff of about 12 full time

people. It is a station that many might refer to as a more “traditional” station, in both its format and its organization.

This station, like most all NPR affiliates, broadcasts Morning Edition and All Things Considered. The majority of the broadcast schedule during the week is devoted to classical music during the day and in the evenings. Late nights and Friday evenings are focused on jazz. Weekends contain an eclectic collection of programs. This type of programming is traditionally associated with public radio. However, aside from some noticeable diversity in its programming, this station is decidedly classical in its format. News is present both on the local and national level, but on the whole, this station favors musical programming as opposed to a large presence of news and public affairs programming that has appeared at other stations. The current broadcast schedule can be found in Appendix A.

Unlike the other stations in this study the Traditional/ Classical station doesn't have clear-cut divisions of labor existing in the form of different departments. There is no development department and no development or membership director, facets common to the other two stations included in this study. The program director organizes pledge drives, the news director handles some pledge drive organization as well, and the general manager handles the finances of the station. These responsibilities are held by separate people at the other, larger stations in this study.

Historically this station has undergone no significant or groundbreaking changes since the 1970's. Programming has changed, but it has been more of an evolution over time. It has not experienced any significant financial crises, or a

sweeping format change that the other two stations have seen. This stability and continuity is present in the station's broadcast schedule. Some staff members have been around the station for a long time, and there are locally produced programs that have been in existence with the same on-air hosts for over 25 years. This station is one of the few remaining local stations that have not reverted to using local underwriting. Any presence of underwriting in its broadcast comes from the underwriting associated with NPR and other syndicated programming it picks up. This means that their budget consists of CPB grants, funding from the university budget, and listener support.

This station has made a conscious effort to avoid local underwriting. There are varying opinions regarding underwriting amongst the staff, but most seem to agree that it is better to not have underwriting if it can be avoided.

We have shied away from that. I think economic realities may push us to it. Like economic realities did push us to *(on air)* fundraising. But only if we have to, only if we have to. And I think if it became that underwriting started to dictate the programming. If the need for a buck meant we had to cheapen up what we had to do, or to make it more commercial, go to a lower common denominator, or something, I think a lot of people would just leave (parenthetical text added).

It seems as though the avoidance of underwriting may be both an ideological decision as well as one based in rationality. They have not faced the need to develop new revenue sources, yet.

People at this station seem to feel a strong sense of anti-commercial sentiment. There is a sense that a moral stance is being taken there. One telling episode of this station's non-commercial morality lies in the fact that this station had

a development director at one time. The official title for this person was “assistant general manager”, but focused on the station’s finances. Conflicting philosophies regarding programming and fund raising surfaced...

We used to have an assistant general manager who...when he was here I remember being most concerned with pleasing him rather than the program director or the general manager...

...I really don’t know what happened because when he left there was just a lot of, I know they were in big discussions over the direction of the station. I know he liked the news programming, and wanted to go more NPR news, probably because it garnered a larger audience, brought in more money. My impression was the program director and manager vetoed him, and he eventually left.

Apparently, this development director believed strongly in the audience research and programming philosophies espoused by public radio consultants that were unfriendly to challenging or less popular programming...

There was a period of about, of I don’t even know how many years it was, late 80’s, ‘87 to ‘91 or so. The ideals especially in regard to music programming were occasionally sacrificed to the expediency what was then called “building audience.” There was a certain conflict of philosophies... We had a development director here who was a powerful kind of person. Who used a lot of influence to try to shape the music programming especially in what the audience guru’s told him would satisfy our news audience. As a result, we went through a period of time when vocal music was not played. It wasn’t banned, but it was kind-of under the table wasn’t played. This guy, if you were playing something contemporary or challenging would huff in to the studio while the announcer was on board and make ugly faces and things like that.

This station does lie at odds with the other two stations regarding their attitudes toward fund raising and programming. However, the fact that this station has been able to avoid local underwriting is because it has not been placed in an economic position where such a practice may become necessary. They are able to get

the money they need to operate from the CPB, the University, and most importantly, its listeners. People at this station seem to feel that they have a strong relationship with the station's audience that ensures that they will get the pledge money they need. As long as there is no financial crisis, a station will not be forced to change its practices, both in format and in revenue sources. On the other hand, this station may not be able to hold its ideological position for long. The prospect of bringing in local underwriting has been considered by the station, and many feel that it is just an eventuality. If they do start to take on underwriting, it would be done in such a way so that underwriting is not sold for specific programs, a practice used at the other stations in the study. Underwriting spots would not be attached to specific programs. Some feel that if underwriting is attached to any specific program, then underwriters may take a proprietary attitude towards the program that they support. Additionally, underwriters may only be attracted to the most popular shows, leaving other shows without support, thus threatening their survival. Wanting to avoid this dynamic, underwriters would have to support the station on the whole, not any particular program.

CHAPTER III

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PUBLIC RADIO

Public Radio and the Birth of NPR

In his book The Sound and the Story (1995) Tom Looker, a freelance writer, reporter, and producer at National Public Radio from 1975 to 1983, writes that the history of National Public Radio (NPR) and its local affiliates has been intertwined since the 1960's. Before the birth of NPR, public radio basically consisted of small, low powered, "educational" FM stations that were usually affiliated with colleges and universities. The vast majority of these stations were at small, public institutions in the Midwest. According to Looker, this meant that these stations had a somewhat diverse audience consisting of "students, teachers, farmers, and small-town professionals."

In National Public Radio: The Cast of Characters (1993), Mary Collins provides a background on educational radio and its origins. Her account of public radio begins in 1918. During World War I the Navy had controlled radio for ship to shore communications, and petitioned Congress to maintain its hold on radio, but Congress turned the Navy down. This decision placed the airwaves in the hands of whoever wanted to broadcast, leaving radio largely unregulated. The popularity of radio had also started to grow considerably...

At the time, fewer than 60,000 Americans owned radio sets, but the government's hands-off policy opened the floodgates. By 1928, approximately, 7.5 million households had a radio. By the 1930's it clearly arrived as a mass media (P. 13)

In this period, stations of all varieties appeared. These included both commercial and non-commercial stations, including the genesis of Educational Radio. According to Collins, the first of such stations was WHA at the University of Wisconsin. Other stations were founded at Land Grant Universities in Illinois, Ohio, and Michigan.

Collins writes that the lack of government regulation was reflected in what people were hearing on their radios...

The airwaves became cluttered with overlapping signals. A woman spreading the Gospel from her basement in California could have just as strong a signal as a variety show outside of New York (Collins p. 130).

In response to the state of the airwaves, then secretary of commerce, Herbert Hoover tried to bring some order to radio broadcasting, but stations took him to court and won. Congress finally accomplished what Hoover had set out to do by passing the Dill-White Act of 1927. This bill gave radio licensing power to the government which created the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The legislation also prohibited government influence in radio programming.

In the wake of the Dill-White Act, commercial networks started to appear with the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) in 1927 and the Columbia Broadcasting Company (CBS) a year later. According to Collins, these commercial networks started producing shows like "Amos and Andy" which were immensely popular. This popularity gave stations an indication of the potential profitability for

radio, and the FCC saw a great increase in commercial stations. Because of the increasing importance of money, many non-commercial and educational stations came into trouble, and many went off the air or were sold off. By 1938, 164 of the 202 were defunct. The National Association of Educational Broadcasters kept lobbying Congress to ensure the existence of public radio, and in 1945 got the FCC to reserve 20 FM stations (from 88 to 92 megahertz) for educational use (Collins, 1993).

These educational stations survived off university budgets, grants from foundations, and some individual donations. At this time, individual donations were not aggressively solicited through pledge drives, many in the educational radio community felt they were above this activity. Pledge drives were largely the activity of the much politicized Pacifica Radio which was and remains critical of any kind of capitalist influence (Looker, 1995). Pacifica Radio's origins date back to 1946. It went on the air in 1949 in Berkeley, California on KPFA. Pacifica has a long-standing tradition of activism. This was reflected in broadcasting the viewpoints of opponents to the Korean War in 1950, in the midst of McCarthyism. Pacifica is still on the air today and has 57 affiliates nationwide (Pacifica Radio, 1998).

Educational stations were also created with the intent of running a radio station that was free from the forces of commercialism. This would allow them to broadcast alternative programming that would otherwise not stand a chance of making it on the airwaves in a commercial market (Looker 1995). Some of the programming included such things as lectures and panel discussions. Collins says that programming included social commentary and covered community events. She

also describes the large educational role these stations filled. Many rural schools would tune into these stations for art, science, music, and social studies. Stations even provided teachers manuals to be used along with the programming (Collins, 1993). Looker suggests that the educational radio movement was quite populist. He argues that the people who listened to these stations had a rural sense of self-improvement and self-reliance, likening it to the Chautauqua movement of the turn of the century (1995).

National Public Radio was born out of these educational stations and was made possible by the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. According to Looker, Congress originally created the bill for public television based on a Carnegie Commission Report encouraging the creation and federal funding of non-commercial television. A strong lobbying effort by the National Association of Educational Broadcasters brought radio into the fold. By the nature of its inception, public radio was intended to be qualitatively different from commercial broadcasting.

With the Public Broadcasting Act in place, NPR started to take form. Despite public radio's populist origins, some of the people who came to work at NPR did not fit the profile of educational radio's rural Midwestern roots. Many were graduates of prestigious East Coast institutions, and others came from Pacifica Radio. Despite this influence of what Looker calls "urban intelligentsia", the majority of NPR employees did come from smaller stations and towns. These people were not necessarily radicals or members of the counter-culture, but did have alternative views concerning broadcast media, and were critical of commercial television at the time.

The Era of Creativity

NPR went on the air in 1971, taking place in the midst of an ever-increasing emphasis on television. Soundbites were growing shorter and shorter. Commercial radio had taken on a different role in order to survive in the era of television, largely serving as an audio background to people's lives. Looker argues that people did not want radio to be engaging; radio was to be something that people had on while they did other things. Because of this, the radio techniques that were developed before the advent of television were now obsolete. Editing and production of pieces longer than two minutes disappeared during the 50's. NPR was created to *not* be like what mainstream radio had become, it was to be creative, engaging, and informative. This meant that NPR producers had to rediscover the lost art of radio. They observed the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC) and European radio, which were still engaged in more elaborate radio production and programming, in order to learn.

Some producers at NPR turned to Canada and Europe for instruction and inspiration – programs on the CBC like *Sunday Morning* and *As It Happens*, and in Europe legendary “feature” producers like Peter Leonhard Braun at *Sender Freies Berlin*. Many NPR producers and engineers came back from visits to these countries inspired to the point of fanaticism with the aural possibilities that had opened up to them.

The early years of NPR were what Looker refers to as the “era of creativity”. All Things Considered (ATC) was one of the first shows to go on the air in 1971. The format of ATC was to be free-form. It was a news show, but not in the traditional sense. The show was produced with a sense of quirkiness and playfulness about it. Many stories were on obscure, or more cultural things rather than just hard

news. Many of the other shows were also just as creative. Pieces were longer in length, and reporters and producers often used sound (as opposed to just dialogue) to report a story. In many ways this was a throw-back to the golden age of radio. Looker states that the young people working at NPR were really developing a new potential for radio. The prevailing attitude at the time was that if they were creative, listenership would follow.

News programs were not the only thing being developed at NPR. Those at NPR also produced cultural and arts programs also with the same spirit of creativity (Collins, 1993). Two of the more notable programs that went on the air in the early 70's were Folk Festival U.S.A., a weekly program featuring live performances of American music, and Voices in the Wind a magazine show reporting on the creative arts. In 1977, a program featuring live jazz performance, aptly titled Jazz Alive was introduced. Before this time, local stations were committed to classical music. Jazz, Blues, and Folk were broadcast, but were minor portions of the entire programming schedule. Jazz Alive was quite popular and, according to Collins, helped pave the way for jazz and other music on local public radio stations.

Local stations were not enthusiastic about NPR's experimental style. They wanted the news programming to be more structured and traditional, and were even less enthusiastic about the arts programming which had small audiences compared to the news programming.

The station managers just couldn't adjust to this new animal. Clearly it wasn't commercial radio. It certainly wasn't land-grant educational radio. NPR had become some kind of unrecognizable hybrid. They didn't know what to do with it (Collins, p. 31).

Despite the small audiences for the cultural programs, NPR continued to produce them, many felt they were truly what made NPR different. Collins states that the cultural programming has always played a secondary role to the news department, and has often found its backers having to justify its existence to the critics of such programming.

NPR never quite pieced together a full-fledged arts and performance division that could send out a considerable volume of high quality programs. The critics oohed and aahed at practically everything the network did in drama, music, and specials, because the American airwaves had almost nothing like it. A simple comparison between England's BBC, which often aired a thousand hours of radio drama a year, and NPR, which rarely produced more than fifty, underscores just how far American radio lagged behind its European counterparts in the field of arts and entertainment (p. 49).

Morning News

The era of creativity lasted throughout the 70's. Radio that was free from the pressures of the capitalist market was able to produce quality programming, both at the local and network level. Back then, NPR was not very dependent on ratings, and relatively free from the influences of the broadcast market. However, there was increasing pressure from local affiliates to curb the extent of their experimentation and produce shows that would maintain and build listenership at the local level.

Local stations have always been more susceptible to marketplace pressures than people in Washington since they come in daily contact with their listeners and their payroll expense sheets (Looker, p. 178-8).

The local station managers felt a need to compete for a morning audience, and they had been asking NPR to produce a morning news show for several years. In response

to this pressure, Morning Edition went on the air in 1979. This is a significant event in the history of NPR according to Looker.

The local affiliates wanted Morning Edition to have a greater focus on hard news (unlike ATC). They also wanted it to have a more structured format consisting of shorter segments. The more rigid format allowed stations to “drop out” of broadcasts. This gave them greater freedom to include more local news to fit their listeners. Looker suggests that, in this sense, Morning Edition became more of a news service for the member stations. The shorter segments were designed to be less engaging, allowing the listener to easily tune in or out of the program throughout the morning without having the feeling of missing out on information. He also says that this more rigid format seemed to more closely resemble the style of commercial radio, thus NPR was becoming less like an alternative media and more like commercial media.

The birth of Morning Edition also meant that other, more creative or cultural shows at NPR like Voices in the Wind, were dropped in order to make room in the budget for the morning news program. This contributed to the move away from the era of creativity and experimentation. The trend of more uniformity and shorter segments had also been taking place on other shows at NPR, even before 1979. The people at local stations felt they were losing potential listeners and wanted to modify NPR in order to increase their audience.

The shift toward hard news continued into the 1980's. This was most apparent with the influx of new staffers who came from a print media background as

opposed to radio, a decision made by the management of NPR at the time. These people placed a stronger emphasis on journalistic practice. As a result, there were two factions developing at NPR: those who were there in the beginning and believed in creative radio production, and those who came later and felt that good journalism took precedence over production. There was a great deal of conflict between these people. Looker points out that this was not necessarily bad and that many believed it led to a great deal of creative development.

...the struggles between print and radio people remained in a kind of balance, and it could be argued that during this period the tensions between the groups remained creative – leading to the expansion and improvement of NPR news coverage, the growth of audiences for both *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*; and the development of creative aural approaches to the radio magazine format. Had NPR been able to evolve smoothly throughout the 1980's, who knows what kinds of diverse and varied programs the network might now be offering to who knows how large an audience (Looker, p. 129)?

Despite the new focus on journalism, NPR was still developing Cultural and arts programming (Collins, 1993). Some of the more notable shows were A Question of Place, 13 part series on the great intellectuals of the 20th century aired in 1980, and The Sunday Show, a five hour weekly arts magazine show which went on the air in 1982. NPR had also been producing radio plays based on classics such as Tolstoy's Anna Karenina and Melville's Moby Dick. One particularly successful drama was the production of Star Wars in 1981. George Lucas, the creator of the movie, gave the broadcast rights to KUSC at University of Southern California, which lacked the resources required for such a production, so they employed the help of NPR. NPR still was in need of financial support, so the British Broadcasting Company backed

the project. The series proved to be very popular. According to Collins, over a million people listened to at least one episode. Based on the popularity of Star Wars, NPR followed up with The Empire Strikes Back in 1982. There were plans to complete the trilogy with Return of the Jedi, but the continued existence of NPR was very much in question.

The Financial Crisis

The growth of the early 1980's did not continue. In 1983 NPR fell into a financial crisis. This was during the Reagan presidency when public broadcasting was finding that government money was not in abundance. The network found itself seven million dollars in debt, and according to Collins this was primarily due to poor book keeping.

Sloppy accounting records made it impossible to determine the full extent of the network's debt. Bills for coffee for the office were found in the long distance telephone file. A grant for historical reporting got counted twice- once in the special projects division and again under general programming. Somewhere between 110 and 125 American Express cards had been issued, and staffers charged something like \$450,000 to \$800,000 for travel and entertainment. Every department seemed to operate on ballpark figure rather than real numbers (Collins, p. 65).

This crisis resulted in the resignation of NPR president Frank Mankiewicz, and the network was forced to focus on its survival. The board of directors began cutting budgets. Cultural programming received the largest cuts with its budget being reduced by 80%. Shows like The Sunday Show and Jazz Alive were taken off the air. The news department experienced the smallest cuts because the board believed

the large audiences for these shows could be the means for the survival of NPR. As a result, the rational efficiency of hard news people took control of the organization, and as Looker states "...the decade of creative expansion was now over" (p. 133).

When NPR's arts programming trailed off, Minnesota Public Radio, along with cooperation of a couple other stations, started American Public Radio (APR). APR (now known as Public Radio International, or PRI) decided to focus on arts programming which was no longer being produced to a great extent at NPR. APR mainly acted as a central distributor of arts programming by buying shows produced at local stations and then selling them to interested stations across the country. One of the more popular shows coming from APR was Garrison Keillor's A Prairie Home Companion.

At the same time, There was also a major change in the way NPR was being funded. Initially, NPR got 10% of the total funds available from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The rest went to public television. During the Carter Administration, Frank Mankiewicz successfully lobbied the CPB to increase their share to 25% in order to expand programming and news coverage (Looker, 1995). When Reagan took office the money for all public broadcasting was cut by a third. Collins states that in 1977 tax dollars provided 90% of the money needed for public radio, and by the 1980's it dropped to below 50% (1993). NPR tried to increase its independence from the government by generating more revenue from underwriters (corporate support for programming), local stations, and the public.

In the midst of this financial crisis, NPR hired a new president, Doug Bennett. He truly reflected the new era in public radio in the fact that he was not a radio broadcaster, or a journalist, and had no background in either field. According to Looker, Bennett was an experienced manager having built a career as a “public servant” in the “Washington bureaucracy”. He focused on improving financial standing of NPR. To do this he concentrated on increasing listenership. This meant more individual contributions and corporate funding, increasing the dependency on market dynamics. Looker states that Bennett focused on ratings and wanted to serve the greatest number of people. Media surveys and pollsters were brought in. The results of the market research showed that the audience wanted harder news, in quicker segments, and more of it. Also, since they needed a stable source of revenue, they aired programs that people liked and were familiar with. The network would only carry programs that could generate enough revenue to pay their own way. The new focus at NPR was a fiscal success.

Finances were also becoming a problem for the local stations. The grants from foundations and government were no longer enough to keep them on the air. This resulted in stations being even more sensitive to the audience, which further altered programming decisions. Also, local stations had to start actively soliciting donations from listeners by conducting pledge drives, an activity they disliked. Like the network, corporate underwriting also became a source of funding for local stations. They introduced a form of restricted commercials, known as underwriting announcements, on these stations. Many of these stations were previously free from

this commercial influence for decades, dating back to the early days of educational radio (Looker, 1995).

NPR's New Direction

NPR paid off its debt in 1985. At this time the CPB had some extra funding for radio, but did not necessarily want to give it to NPR. They wanted other radio entities to compete for it. As a compromise, NPR wanted to give all the money to local affiliates who then could purchase only the shows they wanted (instead of paying a flat rate for all NPR programs). They could also apply for funding for their own projects. Collins argues that this also helped usher in a larger influence of the market. Shows had to pay for themselves because they were purchased individually; this compromised experimental programming. This idea was initiated by Mankiewicz at the time he was still president, and was designed to develop a greater independence from the federal government (Looker, 1995). No money was coming to NPR directly from Washington. Local affiliates now had an even greater influence over the network, giving them an even larger say in the programming. NPR was not as independent as it once was in the 1970's.

Even after the budget cuts in cultural programming, NPR was still trying to produce cultural shows (Collins, 1993). One way they did this was to allow these programs to be produced locally and distributed by NPR (not unlike APR). Many stations wanted to produce their own shows, so NPR gave them whatever support they could, including use of satellite space and what ever money they could spare.

This allowed stations to produce shows like Afropop Worldwide, an African music show, and Car Talk, a half car repair, half comedy call-in show produced in Boston. Car Talk was (and is) very popular and receives the most money from NPR for production costs of all the shows being produced locally. Fresh Air, produced in Philadelphia was picked up by NPR in 1987. Most of these arts and cultural programs are purchased by less than half of all of NPR member stations. However, Bennett's strategy behind this was to diversify NPR's audience with these "specialty programs" in order to bring more people to the news shows like ATC and Morning Edition.

In the mid 1980's the Corporation for Public Broadcasting put pressure on NPR to cut all of what remained of cultural programming. As a response to this, Bennett launched a fund raising campaign for cultural programming. Eight million dollars were raised in this effort, enough to sustain the cultural programming department and develop a new music show: Performance Today.

Despite the new influence of member stations, NPR had tried to maintain some degree of self determination, and has to some extent. Local stations do not totally dictate what goes on. For example, many stations wanted the network to go to an "all news, all the time" service, but NPR refused. Nevertheless, local stations have changed what people are hearing from NPR. The increasing presence of corporate underwriting has also continued to the point of words like "sponsorship" being used. Messages of corporate support are also aired more often. Looker says that people refer to this as "creeping commercialization",

Many people in public radio – at the local as well as at the national level articulate their fears of all this “creeping commercialization”, this movement toward a lowest common denominator in programming form and content... to over simplify a complex picture, it could be argued that once Doug Bennett and others announced the goal of doubling NPR’s audience within five years, and thereby affirmed the goal of increasing listenership as a valid and noble purpose for public radio, the genie that some have called “creeping commercialization” popped out of it’s bottle and made a home for itself in public radio’s air. This genie is subtle and friendly and seems to be able to grant more than just three wishes (p. 137).

Creeping commercialization has also had its toll on the programming at local affiliates. Many stations have tried to maintain some quirkiness and diversity, believing to be true to the spirit of public radio. Other stations, at the advice of media experts, have adopted a single format, most notably a news/talk format which is very viable in the commercial market. As a result of this, some of these stations are faring quite well financially and are even surpassing commercial stations in ratings. WBUR in Boston is an example of a station that is effectively competing for ratings (Looker, 1995).

Looker states that many believe the initiative taken by Bennett set the creeping commercialization in motion. He also suggests that it might have been a “... logical extension of forces that were set in motion by the creation of Morning Edition” (P. 138). On the other hand, many still assert that despite these developments, NPR and its affiliates still maintain some semblance of what it once was and set out to do, which was to be different from commercial radio. There is still not the same amount or the same kind of corporate presence, and the programming is still noticeably different.

Placing It in a Social Context

In his book Public Television for Sale (1994) sociologist William Hoynes addresses how public broadcasting has become commercialized since the founding of the CPB. He places it in a more socio-political context than Looker or Collins. Though he focuses on public television, I feel much of what he says in the book applies to the fate of public radio since the 1980's. Hoynes argues that although public broadcasting was set up to be free from market pressures, it has been falling prey to this force since the early 70's, shortly after the enactment of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. However, he also recognizes the impact the political climate of the 1980's had on public broadcasting, citing the funding cuts enacted by the Reagan administration in 1981 that came in the form of the Public Broadcasting Amendments Act. Like others, he alludes to the fact that commercial broadcasting had also become less regulated at the time.

Hoynes argues that the steady privatization of public television is not the result of spontaneous social dynamics. He states that the trend towards privatization is the result of specific human agency that came in the form of political attacks on public broadcasting. Furthermore, Hoynes suggests that these actions are only part of a larger debate concerning how society should be organized. Many people find very little use for the public sector and see a great need to turn all aspects of society over to the forces of free enterprise.

The philosophy of a completely privatized media rests on two assumptions based on the findings of Lawrence Jarvik of the Heritage Foundation and David

Horowitz of the committee for Media Integrity. Jarvik was the principal author of a 1992 report titled Making Public Television which argued for the total privatization of public television. Horowitz authored a report claiming that public broadcasting had a left-wing bias, and therefore should be controlled by congress to ensure objectivity. These findings were further developed and espoused by George Will in his syndicated columns 1992. Hoynes summarizes the assumptions of the conservative critique of public television in his book:

1. Forces of the marketplace will provide mass-media with a respectable marketplace of ideas.
2. The TV market has been bust open by the development of cable (p.8).

These statements claim that a privatized media will be able to offer the diversity and quality of programming that is offered through a government subsidized public television system, therefore rendering public broadcasting obsolete, and not worthy of preservation.

Despite the claim of the proponents of the free-enterprise system, Hoynes asserts that commercial broadcasting is failing miserably at providing the programming that public broadcasting was created to offer. He states that rational, profit-driven system that operates by appealing to the “least common denominator” will only produce more of the same programming that we are used to seeing on commercial television, regardless of the amount of channels offered on cable TV.

Public Radio Since the 1980's

By looking at public radio's development into the 1980's, one can get a good sense of what has changed at NPR since the years of its inception. There is now a heightened sense of fiscal responsibility resulting from previous mismanagement and an unfriendly climate in Washington. Though the network and many local stations survived financial crises in the 80's, tax dollars continue to be a dwindling source of revenue. Federal appropriation of money to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting has decreased, and continues to do so. Stations that receive money from university budgets also see those funds shrinking. Underwriting and on-air fund raisers are now a significant portion of the revenue collected by most local stations. This has spawned the need to focus on audience size more than in the past. Trying to gain the largest audience possible was a commercial strategy that led to what many critics considered pandering to the least common denominator.

The Research Revolution

One indicator of the commercial influence in public radio is what has been called the "research revolution" in public radio. What this refers to is the increased prevalence of audience research in public radio. In the past, audience research was largely considered a commercial radio tool. Stavitsky (1995) illustrates how audience research, once a taboo in public broadcasting, is now commonplace at local stations.

For many years, however, public radio managers resisted the conduct and application of audience research as marking the ascendance of market considerations over public broadcasting's social and cultural

imperatives...Today audience research is extensively utilized by public radio managers, both network and station based, when making decisions about programming and fundraising, and a cottage industry of consultants has emerged (p. 177).

Audience '98

One of the more popular of these audience research firms is called *Audience Research Analysis (ARA)*. ARA has issued plans for fiscal well-being to stations. One of the most recent of these projects released by ARA is a series of reports titled Audience '98. Audience '98 is a follow-up on an initial report released in 1988, appropriately titled Audience '88. Both reports suggest strategies that local stations may use in securing revenue.

The first report from audience Audience '98, *The Value of Programming* is based on "Major Concepts" or assumptions about public radio programming. Here are a few of these concepts...

1. The financial value that listeners place on public radio's programming directly reflects the personal value they place on it, it's importance in their lives, it's significance to them, its reflection of their own social and cultural values.
2. The financial value that underwriters place on programming reflects their desire to reach the people in the audience.
3. The gross return that stations realize on programming directly reflects the public service it provides.
4. The net return that stations realize on programming is the difference between the income derived from listeners and underwriters minus its cost (Giovannoni, 1997: p. 1).

Notice in the first concept there is an importance placed on reflecting the social and cultural values of the listener. This statement seems as if they do not want to offend listeners' values or viewpoints other than their own. By doing this, a diversity of voices and tastes may be excluded. This doesn't help to serve diversity. The third concept seems to equate the generation of revenue with public service. I fail to see how this differs from commercial dynamics. Commercial media is very good at producing revenue, but it fails at serving the public interest. This is why the Public Broadcasting Act was passed in the first place. These commercial-like strategies and assumptions are readily apparent throughout ARA reports.

Public Service Economy

Audience '98 introduces what is called *The Business of Public Service* (Giovannoni, 1997). What is meant by this is that public radio no longer exists in a vacuum and is now subject to economic issues, much like a business.

Since its inception as a totally subsidized entity, public radio matured into a "public service economy"—one that still relies on subsidies, but one that increasingly relies on payment from those who benefit from its service.

Public radio has entered into the serious business of public service. Without valued programming, it goes out of business. Without good business sense, it won't have the money to provide the programming worth valuing... To preserve and enhance its service, public radio must *convert listening to programming into payment for the programming* (no page number; italics added).

What this last sentence essentially means is that programming must generate revenue, regardless of any other qualities the programs may possess.

One of the major themes of Audience '98 is that stations need to adjust their programming to increase audience size, thus increasing listener donations and underwriting. The money generated by donations and underwriting is what is called "*Listener Sensitive Income*" because the amount of money received from this source is dependent upon how many people are listening to the station. An increased dependence upon Listener Sensitive Income means that there is now a financial aspect to programming at public radio stations, making it more commercial-like.

In the end, ARA suggests that stations need to monitor the financial return any particular program produces. They suggest that the NPR news programs, and local News/Talk seem to bring in the greatest returns. They assert that local music programming does not provide a very big return on the station's investment. However, the reports do recognize that rating programs based solely on financial standing is not true to public radio (Grehn, 1998). They suggest drawing the line there and recognize that all shows do not need to pay for themselves if they stand up to the other measures of quality programming. ARA suggests that a station can continue to carry a program that does not pay for itself if other programs can create enough surplus to make up for the loss (Giovannoni, 1997).

Ultimately, ARA claims that the new climate has forced stations to take a more business-like stance. In the absence of tax dollars, stations need to make up the difference with listener sensitive income. This has stripped away some of the insulation that public radio once enjoyed, but ARA claims that going off the air was no way to serve the public (Grehn, 1998). Consequently, they try to introduce the

idea of a happy medium when discussing programming decisions. The only question that may remain is to what extent have stations been conscious of the happy medium?

The Core Audience

The reliance upon listener sensitive income *has* fostered a need to maximize audience size within public radio. However, it is not just enough to have the largest audience possible. What radio stations, both public and commercial, try to do is increase the amount of loyalty amongst listeners. The loyalty of an individual listener is gauged by the amount of time one spends listening to one station in relation to the time they spend tuned into other stations. If a person spends 8 out of 10 hours a week listening to one particular station, then that individual is viewed as being a loyal listener. What this means is that this station is their first choice, and they will spend more time tuned into that station than any other. The total portion of a station's audience that falls into this category of loyal listener is what is called a "core audience". The core audience is loyal, and can be counted on to be there day in and day out. The concept of the core audience is one that came up numerous times during the field research for this dissertation. It was referred to in one form or another in most of the interviews, and it was discussed in some of the articles in public radio related trade papers I examined.

In October of 1997, the *Public Radio Program Directors Association* (PRPD) published an article on the front page of its newsletter announcing a new effort they called "The Core Project" (PRPD, 1997). In the article the PRDP challenged stations

to commit to increasing their core audience “by 4% per year during the next three years: 1998 through 2000.”

...The point is to focus your programming appeal, work on your air sound, and generally improve your service through planning and goal setting... It is those listeners who drive station loyalty, and the level of loyalty drives listener revenue (p. 1).

According to the Audience '98 report, The Value of Programming, those individuals who belong to the core audience value the programming being offered, and as a result are more likely to give money to the station regardless of their financial standing (Giovannoni, 1997). This report also suggests that a core audience will more effectively attract underwriters, similar to how it attracts advertisers to commercial stations.

Building the core audience apparently *is* a goal shared by many public stations. By November of '97 more than 40 stations had committed to “The Core Project” (Current, 1997). Public radio is now building their core audience, but how exactly is this accomplished? Programming modification is suggested as a means to develop the core audience. In order to have individuals tuning in more often and for longer blocks of time, a greater portion of the programming has to be aimed at appealing to the same type of person. This means narrowing the station's appeal by unifying or homogenizing its format (Current, 1997).

In the future, we will need to develop program material that is highly stylized. We'll have to craft a product sufficiently unique to stand out from every one else, not merely achieve an inoffensive average (Burns, 1997:7).

Developing a highly stylized format that appeals to a certain type of core listener does seem to be taking place in radio, both commercial and public. Public radio originally set out to provide a diversity of voices, and serve a diversity of people. Unifying the programming at a particular station may not allow for the ideal of diversity. They now try to appeal to the same type of listener so they will spend more time listening. The “type” of listener they usually target are those of a certain economic standing, and are no representation of the larger population. Public radio programming has become more homogenous over the years (something I will address later), and as a result certain types of programs may not be able to survive in the new era of listener sensitive income.

Recent Criticisms of Public Radio

In this chapter I have illustrated how public radio must now focus more on raising money in order to survive. Stations no longer enjoy the funding they once received from tax payer supported sources such as the CPB and university budgets. The lack of a stable public funding source has now left public radio to be influenced by the forces of the market. This has affected programming and the days of ignoring audience numbers in favor of pure public service are now a distant memory. This new era of public radio has left some people critical of the course public radio has taken.

Independent radio producer Rachel Anne Goodman studied the path that NPR and its affiliates has taken in the 1990's. She argues that public radio has not

remained true to its mission and as a result, has threatened the “public” part of public radio (1993). She suggests that since stations are dependent upon listener donations and underwriting, they now are making programming and organizational decisions based on garnering a large audience with an affluent standing. She says that the result is that stations are now failing to reflect the needs, values, and tastes of the community they are serving.

Just take a look at the audience descriptions in last year’s *Broadcasting Yearbook*. For every one that says “ethnic/cultural” or “diverse,” there are three whose target audience is “upwardly mobile, educated youth,” “upscale, affluent societally conscious,” “25-50 urban professionals,” “educated adults.” (p. 105)

The motive behind targeting such audiences is to attract listeners who can donate money to the station come pledge time.

Goodman illustrates that this trend has affected public radio in several ways. First of all, formats have become more homogenized or singular over time. This homogenization reduces the likelihood of offending any of their affluent listeners. A diversity of viewpoints or tastes is lost in the process, thus failing to serve a diverse audience, or the local community. Second, Goodman states that local programming is being threatened. This is important because local programming allows for greater responsiveness to the local community—if local programming is lost, so is local service. More and more stations are relying on nationally syndicated programs to fill their broadcast days. Public radio may now become homogenized across stations. A station in Boston may sound a lot like a station in San Diego.

Goodman says an example of the loss of local programming lies in a growing trend where stations are switching to a news/talk format. Programming in this format is heavily filled with syndicated programs coming from NPR and other distributors such as American Public Radio. The broadcast schedule from Morning Edition to All Things Considered in the evening may be almost identical from one station to the next.

In addition to the loss of local programming, Goodman suggests that dependence on syndicated programs may increase a station's dependence on fundraising. These programs are purchased from the distributor. Often they are quite expensive. A good example of this is Car Talk. This popular call-in program is very expensive to carry, yet it is difficult to find a station that does not carry it since it receives such great audience support. What seems to be happening is a "Catch 22" that finds stations caught up in an inescapable loop of ensuring a stable flow of revenue: To have money coming in, stations need listeners, to have listeners they need shows like Car Talk, to have shows like Car Talk, they need money coming in... and so it goes.

A third critique posited by Goodman is that public participation at these stations is being phased out. In 1986 a document entitled the Audience Building Task Force Report set a goal of doubling public radio's audience by 1990. To do this, the report advised professionalizing stations. This has reduced the amount of volunteer participation at the station. In the past, it was not uncommon to have many producers and on-air personalities that were volunteers. This meant that public

stations served a significant community access function. There was also a larger presence of community advisory boards at stations to have input in station decisions. This has also faded. Public participation in production and decision making has all but been eliminated today. The issue of professionalization will be addressed again in this dissertation.

Conclusion

The reality is that public radio is *not* as insulated from commercial dynamics as it once was, like it or not. Public Radio is now having to consider issues that previously were thought to be only the concerns of commercial broadcasters. The belief was that this would dilute the programming content, compromising the mission of public broadcasting. With this new commercial presence, the public radio movement has carried on.

One very important question that now remains is: What effect has this new economic presence had on the programming in public radio? This ultimately is what this dissertation is about. Based on my time studying this subject, I can safely say those still involved with public radio feel that they have treaded the fine line between commercial and public radio by accepting the presence of market dynamics, and are still putting out programs that remain true to the ideals of public radio. Nevertheless, the new presence has had an impact on the programming made available by public radio.

CHAPTER IV

PUBLIC RADIO PROGRAMMING

A Programming Alternative

The programming, what actually is put on the air, is what separates public radio from commercial. Ideally, it should provide an alternative to commercial radio by providing programs that would not be supported by the commercial environment. In Chapter III, I illustrated how local stations now have characteristics that are similar to commercial radio in that they are financially driven to increase audience size and loyalty which generates listener sensitive income. Developing programs, schedules, and content is an activity known in the radio industry as programming. Programming can be as broad as deciding the station format, or as specific as deciding what pieces of music to play on any given day within a particular music show. This chapter will examine the programming at the three specific stations included in the case study and address how it is specifically influenced by commercial dynamics.

Commercial Radio Programming

To better understand public radio programming, it helps to get a view of commercial radio programming. Within commercial radio, the motives and strategies for programming are based on the overarching goal of turning a profit. This is

accomplished by what is known as “format radio” (Campbell, 1998). Originally, commercial radio stations had a tendency to be more diverse in their program content. This was partially because each individual disc jockey or on-air host had free reign over what he or she decided to put on the air. This trend did not last. On-air personnel started to lose their autonomy as station management took stronger control over what was to go on the air. Disc Jockeys were now told exactly what to play on the air and exactly when to play it. Campbell suggests that part of the reason for this was the “payola scandal” of the 1950’s where DJ’s were paid by record companies to play certain songs, ensuring a hit record. The other reason for stronger managerial control was based on fine tuning programming in order to increase the size of the audience being delivered to advertisers. Radio was becoming an increasingly profitable business, and station ownership wanted to maximize that potential.

The result of format radio was that stations started to develop a more singular sound. On musically oriented stations, this meant playing “hits” and avoiding more challenging, or less commercially viable music. It also meant that stations now only played one type of music, be it rock, country or whatever. On stations with a non-musical format, this meant including programs that were less controversial and appealed to a large number of people. Today formatting is not only done to ensure a large audience, but also to provide a certain type of audience with common demographic characteristics, further catering to the marketing interests of potential advertisers (Campbell, 1998). Station formats may be so specific that they strive to be the number one station for a very distinct group of people. For example, a station

may want to be first with white male listeners between the ages of 18-35, or females between the ages of 30 to 55.

Programming at commercial stations is based entirely on business dynamics. This is what public radio wanted to avoid by providing a meaningful alternative to it with programming that otherwise would not be heard on commercial stations. The result was that public radio programming tended to be very eclectic and experimental. This was the state of public radio in the early 70's just after the formation of the CPB and NPR, but programming has steadily changed over time. Today programming is more unified and perhaps more financially driven.

The Evolution of Public Radio Programming

One way to see how public radio stations have become commercialized over time may rest in an examination of the each station's program schedules over time. For this dissertation, I examined program guides from each station dating back to 1971, largely deemed a significant milestone in public radio. 1971 was the year in which NPR first started to produce and distribute programs such as All Things Considered, and stations were now receiving federal money in the form of CPB grants. This is the period referred to as the "era of creativity" by Looker. Upon examining these schedules, it is easy to see that the programming was much different than it is today. Programming has become more singular and standardized over time. At the same time, they are less experimental or controversial as well. If one looks at a station's programming back in the 70's, there is a strong chance that you will find

what is a more disjointed and diverse weekly schedule. It is my contention that this standardization of programming is the result of a heightened dependence upon “listener sensitive income”.

Looking at a program guide from the Urban/Eclectic station (Appendix A) reveals how the programming was once more freeform than it is today. The weekday evening programs usually appear only one or two nights a week rather than every night, allowing for much more variety. The daytime programs at this time were much more open and flexible. The 3:00PM program called Afternoon Rap is simply described in the guide as, “Open ended, followed at *about* 4 p.m. by The Alternative Service,” which, in turn, is described as “Music, news, weather, and more.” Today it is unheard of in (NPR affiliated) public radio to say a program would start at “around 4 p.m.”, things are much more solidified. Another program indicative of public radio programming in the early 1970’s was the show titled Whatever, which is described as “Whatever... produced on a rotating basis by whomever...”

Other aspects of the broadcast week also seem to suggest that the station tried to include audience input concerning the operation of the station. For example, there were several times during the week where 5 to 15 minutes is set aside for a slot called Off The Cuff. This is described as “A report to the members of the W--- family of listeners concerning their public radio station.” Another item that suggests the inclusion of listeners at the time is a passage at the bottom of the guide that states...

If, among the hundreds of works listed in this issue of the Program Guide, you don’t find just what you want to hear, call or write us and we’ll do our best to play your selection on one of our several “by request” programs.

It is important to note that this station is not completely cut off from its listeners today. They currently maintain a 24-hour comment line where people can leave comments regarding the station. The line is well publicized in the form of regular announcements about it during the broadcast day.

A similar style of diverse programming was also apparent in the program guides from the other two stations. The News/Talk Station at the time was very much a classical music oriented station (Appendix A). In 1971, the Traditional/Classical station had the same classical music focus as it does today. It is the only station included in the sample that has not undergone a significant format change over the years (Appendix A), but despite the fact that the format focus has not changed, there was still more variance in the programming when compared with what exists today. The same can be said for the News/Talk station. Broadcast times at all three stations were less uniform. There did not seem to be any regularity with the time slots in which the shows were placed. The News/Talk station regularly started programs at 15 and 45 minutes after the hour.

All the stations included topics now long disappeared from these stations. There are several examples of the difference in subject matter. In the program guide from the Traditional/Classical station, there is a show titled Birth Control Today. The guide was not very specific in describing what this program was about, but one can hazard a guess. The Urban/Eclectic station aired a program in 1974 titled Gaily Speaking. At the Traditional/Classical station the day-time schedule had grown more uniform by 1975, but there were still programs representing content not heard today.

Two particular programs stood out. There was a program titled Women and another special series of shows titled Sexist Songs which was hosted by a professor from the affiliated university. Programs focusing on such topics were common to all three stations, but have disappeared from the public airwaves today.

There was also a difference regarding the news programming. The stations carried news programs focusing on both local and international affairs. The News/Talk station carried a program that reported on the local school board. They also had a news program focusing on the local community. The other stations had programs that included local news and public affairs as well. It seems now that most all the local news comes in the form of inserts during the NPR news shows. These local inserts are often very good and informative, but there is no exclusively local news program at any of these stations.

International news was also more prevalent. The Traditional/Classical station carried programs focusing on German, British, and Soviet affairs. They also carried news from the BBC. The News/Talk station carried international news as well. The News/Talk station still provides international news in the form of the daily BBC Newshour, but the amount of international news has dropped off at both stations. One may think that international news may come from NPR in the form of *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition*. This is true, but these programs do not focus on that type of news like a specific show might have.

There was also more educational programming at the stations at the time. All three stations broadcast lectures from the university at the time, a remnant left over

from the old-days of educational radio, NPR's forerunner. People viewed this practice as a valuable connection between the university and the surrounding community. Such educational programming is no longer produced by these three stations, and I have heard of no other station that still does this.

Checkerboard Programming

Having less of a focus on a singular sound that appeals to one type of listener allowed for a greater variety amongst programs. In these earlier program guides, programs that have little in common with each other may be adjacent to one another during the broadcast day. Stations now have a greater tendency to keep programming uniform on weekdays. For example, if a station broadcasts jazz in the evening on Monday, it will be the same every evening Monday through Friday. In the past, a station may have had a different program on each night of the week: Jazz on Monday, Talk on Tuesday, Celtic Music on Wednesday... and so forth. I once heard this referred to as "Checkerboard" programming because of the way the weekly schedule would look with such segmented formats. These days, checkerboard programming has all but disappeared being largely relegated to weekends, and low-power student run stations.

The change in programming style over time may be the result of other factors, but there definitely is a strong economic element to this trend. By developing a more distinct format, a station is more likely to draw in more listeners for greater lengths of time, which can result in much needed revenue for the station. When stations were

less dependent upon “listener sensitive income” they had the freedom to be more experimental and heterogeneous in their broadcast schedules. The following passage is from an interview at the Urban/Eclectic station.

...There used to be a lot of “niche” programming, one hour shows devoted to this type of music or that issue. Especially in about the early 80’s the musical programming started to become a lot less niche oriented, and there started to become more programs that appealed to a *broader group of people*. More music variety shows that would mix say, rock and jazz and alternative music, and world music. So it wasn’t so focused on one individual type of music and then another hour later another type of individual music (emphasis added)...

...Well I think that the main reason behind that, again was to appeal to, to cast the net out to a larger group of people. When you have really “narrowcasting” shows that only appeal to people who are interested in Native American music or just jazz music from the 1920’s you’re gonna have a devoted but really small audience that will listen to that show but will turn the radio off because they don’t want to hear the next program which is about a totally different type of music. So there’s not a real attempt to have a lot of flow between shows before.

This statement refers to the format change at the station in 1982 that gave the station a more standard, less diverse broadcast schedule.

Conclusion

We have seen that the programming at all three stations has become homogenized and singular. Time slots are more standard with programs usually starting at the top of the hour instead of on the half-hour or quarter-hour. Special interest or controversial topics are no longer present, and most programs are carried every day throughout the week, reducing the variety that was once heard from one day to the next.

It was my inclination to state that the change in programming is a negative occurrence, but I simply cannot make that statement. The programming at these stations is not necessarily worse than it was before. In fact, it may be much better, and more interesting. This unification and standardization may make for better radio that more adequately serves the public. Many have suggested to me that many of these more diverse and experimental programs were just not well produced and executed. With this in mind, I will not make claims about the quality or the appeal of programs past and present. I have not actually listened to the older programs, so I can not make any comparison.

My main assertion regarding the evolution of the programming is that for better or for worse, the evolution of programming was influenced by financial issues, indicating that public radio is becoming increasingly subject to market pressures. Being subject to market dynamics could threaten the very ideals and mission of public radio if it hasn't already. Having illustrated how the programming has changed, I want to address the motives and rationale behind the approach to programming at local stations. The following section will demonstrate that these changes have largely been motivated by economic factors.

Programming Motives and Strategies

Avoiding commercial dynamics when making programming decisions sometimes meant producing shows that appealed to a small and very specific audience, a fact made apparent in the program guides. This approach to

programming has drastically changed. Stations now have to be more concerned with the bottom line. I wanted to address this issue with regard to each particular station in the study. This section will examine each station's approach to programming and demonstrates that all three stations have incorporated this new programming strategy to some extent.

Urban Renewal

Since the format change in 1982, the programming at the Urban/Eclectic station has gradually evolved with no major changes since then. They no longer focus exclusively on jazz, but the programming is still quite singular. The new focus on developing audience loyalty is present at the urban station. It was addressed quite well in the following interview passage...

...the basic chemistry of the station has needed to become more unified for the sake of as we said, to *compete out on the open market*, and to not be so niche driven that only a few people are listening to this one show and then they forget about the station for the rest of the day. They don't want to listen to anything else. They only want to hear a very select type of programming. I know a lot of people like that and a lot of other people don't. They feel like it may have made the station seem more homogenized than they would like to see it, but there are good reasons for that, *competing in the business that we're in*. And it's been working so far. Our pledge drives and membership has been on the increase. Our Arbitron ratings have continued to grow so it indicates to the people who make these decisions that we must be doing the right thing, for those things to be working(Emphasis added).

This remark clearly demonstrates that the station is committed to developing the core audience by making its programming more conducive to greater audiences throughout

the day. The references to being in “the open market” and “competing” strongly suggest that this station has made changes due to market dynamics...

...But what we try to do is have variety that has congruent appeal. We can have a lot of different things *as long as it appeals to the same type of listener because building audience loyalty, getting the time spent listening in hours per week up as high as you can that really is a predictor of fundraising success.* Also just service, you know why have a radio station if you aren't garnering the maximum number of people that you can listening as long as you are maintaining your integrity as a non-commercial station.

The importance of finances and how they influence programming decisions is also alluded to here. It suggests that perhaps they are not concerned with serving a diverse group of people, but the same type of people in order to get them to listen for longer periods of time, transferring into fundraising success. This rationale is perhaps a good explanation of why such programs focusing on minority issues or special interests have been scrapped. These programs do not appeal to many people thus inhibiting larger amounts of time spent listening for each individual.

It is important to note that in this passage this person does suggest that it is important to differentiate public from commercial programming despite the focus on audience size. The statement suggests that there may be line of distinction. This line of distinction was touched upon in other interviews and in the Audience '98 reports, but no one offered a very specific or unified idea as to where that line should be drawn.

“Talk”ing Public Service

The News/Talk station seems to view their programming in much the same light as the Urban/Eclectic station though they have very a different format. People at this station express a distinct concern for audience loyalty and the core audience. There is a belief at this station that if “nobody” is listening, then they are not providing a public service. They feel they try to put things on the air that people will want to hear and to which they will respond.

Well, the new mantra in public broadcasting is “Significant programming for significant audience”. You may have heard that already. So it isn’t so much anymore that you just do a great show that nobody hears, or that you only pander to the lowest common denominator. The trick is to find the balance. So yeah, audience size is important. I’m not gonna say that it’s not, because increasingly as you know, we have to rely on membership to pay for these programs that we are bringing in. And increasingly we need to maintain a certain level of audience size to qualify for federal funding.

Despite the concern for choosing popular programs, people at this station, like people at the Urban station, also recognize that there is a line to be drawn between public programming and commercially driven programming. These individuals feel that the line should not be crossed if the integrity of public radio is to be preserved. It was still unclear as to where that line is drawn. This question was addressed in an interview at the News/Talk station: When asked how important it was for each show to produce enough of a following to pay for itself, an individual responded as such...

...you might get a different answer from different people at his station because we’ve been talking about this. “How important is that financial support?” I view it as all the programming kind of goes into a melting pot. Some programs, whether it’s the time of day that they’re aired, and there’s just higher listenership. Whether it has a

particular appeal to a very specific small audience, but that audience is loyal, that audience comes forward each time we have a fund drive... So what is the balance? Some shows are going to receive greater support for it. And some from both the individual listener, and also from companies. It's then the blend and the mix.

So there has to be some response, and they recognize the trend or potential of becoming more financially driven. People at the News/Talk station appear to be concerned enough to see this as problematic and want to draw a line. This notion is reminiscent of the previous comment from the Urban/Eclectic station. It was also addressed in the ARA reports. In the above passage the participant suggests where that line of distinction between public and commercial radio should be drawn suggesting that if the majority of the programming is producing financially, then other, less popular shows may be carried if it is deemed to be important enough to remain on the air. If this concern for "drawing the line" was not present, then perhaps there may be no difference from commercial radio programming styles. The fact still remains that the majority of the shows do need to generate revenue.

Changing Traditions

In addition to the fact that the Traditional/Classical station shuns local underwriting, this station also has a different philosophy regarding programming. People at this station seem to possess a more ideological view of public radio, and audience size is much less of an issue. They have a different outlook on ratings, and there is less of a focus on listenership and revenue as a means to justify any particular programming choice. This station does follow ratings and audience research, but on a

more limited basis. This was made apparent in a conversation I had concerning audience research and demographics and how it influences programming at the station...

...You can see what programs have strengths, what programs are the most popular. And you can see where there are weak programs that we may feel are worth-while things to offer and maybe there are some things we can do to the program to make it more attractive. So you can find out if what you did is having any effect. There is also a danger of placing too much reliance on these things. And that is a very important thing to us, *our main goal in life is not to make the most money*. The main goal in life is try to best serve the community we broadcast to. And so, even though in some respects we may not attract huge numbers of listeners for certain programs, we still feel we have some moral obligation to the community to broadcast them (emphasis added).

This passage expresses a duty or “moral obligation” that transcends the rationale of attracting a large audience. A good example of how this philosophy is actually reflected in this station’s locally produced bilingual Latino program. This show has a small audience, but since it does serve the interest of a distinct group of people in the community, it is kept on the air. This group would definitely not be served by local commercial stations...

...well an example would be our Spanish language music program we produce here and it’s a thing we have done for about 15 years. That doesn’t have a huge audience, but it has a significant audience. There are people who listen, because there is a fairly large and growing Hispanic population in the community.

For the same reason, this station carries the NPR distributed *Latino USA*. These ideas were expressed to me several times while I was at this station. There very much seems to be a very conscious collective philosophy regarding the programming choices of a public radio station...

We try to program with the audience in mind, not just our own personal tastes. Of course, it's going to affect it to some extent. Now some public stations are getting more and more driven by audience research and you have managers out there who don't care what they program as long as they drag in the big bucks, you know. Just like commercial stations. So they'll look at the demographics and try the preferences of what they imagine this demographic wants. And they'll try to program it. You've got noncommercial stations sounding more and more like commercial stations. Going for the biggest number of listeners, you'll have to down-grade your programming to the lower common denominator. Maybe not the lowest one, but a lower one.

The programming policies at this station stand in contrast to the notion that larger audience means large public service, an idea suggested by the ARA reports, and suggested to me by individuals at the other stations during my research.

Regardless of any moral stances taken by the Traditional/Classical station regarding their programming decisions, this station is not be totally exempt from the same dynamics facing other stations. One cannot overlook the fact this station's programming has also evolved in a manner similar to the other stations that are more concerned with audience dynamics. This was apparent in the program guides for this station. Though they have been fairly successful in their attempt to maintain the integrity of their endeavors, the fact still remains that the programming has become more homogenous, uniform, and less diverse, much like the programming at other stations...

Now we've compromised somewhat in that we have formatted certain parts of the day, I hesitate using the word format because it's almost becoming a dirty word to me. For the sake of convenience, rather than having an hour long program on Wagner, or an hour long program on jazz followed by a National Press Club, it was just put together in a kind-of checkerboard way. We have things arranged in strips through the week, Monday through Friday for the most part. Even our night programs are all concert oriented programs organized

in a strip. So the schedule has changed in that respect and I think that has been a real benefit to listeners because we have been told by research that people don't tune into radio programs, they turn a radio station on and they expect to hear certain kinds of things.

The programming *has* changed, though I was not given any clear explanation for it other than the convenience of the listeners. Regardless of any kind of moral philosophy this station expresses, similar things have happened to their programming over the years when compared to other stations. Perhaps on some level there *is* a need to get more people listening to the station throughout the day, which converts to membership dollars come fund drive time. Nevertheless, the people at this station do seem to have a significantly different philosophy regarding programming.

Defining Public Service

The driving argument of this section, and ultimately this dissertation, is that economic or commercial dynamics have influenced the direction public radio has taken over the years. The need to secure funds means increasing audience size in order to bring in membership dollars and underwriting. This is *my* assertion; however, I would like to point out that some people I spoke to at the stations would be at odds with this perspective. As I conducted this study, I struggled with the possibility that the main argument of this work would lie in odds with the perceptions of the public radio community. Some seem to have a different explanation of why programming has changed. Perhaps this different view stems from a different definition of public service.

Some people at the News/Talk station feel that the changes experienced at their station and public radio in general are *not* the result of financial concerns. They feel that it is a matter of “public service”. If only a few people are listening, then they are failing in the prime directive of public service. They feel that the old ideals of public radio programming are just that, old and obsolete. They believe that public radio needs to reach larger numbers of people in order to be fulfilling the mission of “public service”. One person suggested that the old programming practices often reflected the personal interests and tastes of those working at the stations rather than the interests and tastes of the public or potential audience.

The people at the News/Talk station may be correct in stating that public service means producing programs which people actually want to listen to, resulting in larger audiences. This perhaps is an issue of personal philosophy and not easily resolved. However, to completely deny the role that the market has played in public radio may be naïve on the part of those refuting my position. In the case of the News/Talk station, the simple fact of the matter is that the station was in financial trouble when the format change took place. The university gave the station a “mandate” to “stay in the black”. I wonder if such a drastic format change would have taken place had the station been doing well financially. A larger audience may mean that the station is serving a larger public, but one cannot deny the fact that it also means more underwriting and membership dollars, an advantageous coincidence. Before the format change, the News/Talk station was able to only sell weekday

underwriting during the popular NPR news shows, and not during the classical music programming. This station now has underwriting spots throughout the day.

I do not mean to single out only one station here. A similar philosophy is present at the Urban/Eclectic station as well. As illustrated, the Traditional/Classical station is not totally beyond these dynamics as well, though they are very outspoken about the pitfalls of the “audience size equals public service” philosophy.

The position that more audience means more public service is similar to a statement in the Audience '98 report that equated the level of public service with how large the audience is. This may be an indication of a larger ideological trend within the public radio community. One question that may arise would be how these stations have arrived at these new assumptions regarding public service. Have they developed them on their own, or are they just repeating what they are reading in the reports from ARA? This question is beyond the scope of the dissertation; however, the amount of influence a single consulting firm like ARA might have on local stations is not something to be taken lightly. The independence and individuality of each station may be compromised if they all start to follow without question the recommendations of a single consulting firm.

What lies at the heart of all this is exactly how we define public service in terms of public radio's programming choices? Initially it was not defined as serving a large audience, but putting quality shows on the air. However, if stations are now concerned with the size of the audience, then what is the fundamental difference between commercial and public radio? Public radio programming is still very

different from what we hear on commercial radio, but where does one draw the line between commercial radio rationality and public radio philosophy? We may be in the midst of a process of public radio becoming more commercial-like that is so gradual that we may not even notice the change that is taking place. What I am suggesting is that the consequences resulting from the direction public radio has taken may be unintentional. They have reacted to larger political, economic, and, cultural factors in order to ensure the survival of public radio. I do not believe that anybody consciously wanted to compromise the ideals of public radio. This notion will be addressed later in the dissertation.

Music Programming

As noted in the chapter focusing on the history of NPR, cultural programming within public radio may be taking a backseat to the more popular news programs. Both NPR as a network as well as many local stations have placed an emphasis on it at the recommendation of research and consulting firms such as ARA (Looker; 1993). This situation may cause people to discount the importance of music programming on public radio. Like news programming, musical programming on public radio stations is also intended to provide a meaningful alternative to commercial radio. Ideally, people should be able to hear music on public radio that is not heard within the range of commercial radio stations.

Of the three stations discussed here, the News/Talk station has only a small amount of musical programming compared to the Urban/Eclectic and the

Traditional/Classical stations. This is why I will focus mainly on those two stations in this section. The Traditional/Classical and the Urban/Eclectic both focus on playing music throughout the week, but the Traditional station focuses mainly on classical music programming while the Urban has a format they call “music variety”. Though playing very different types of music, both stations are similar in the way they differ from commercial music stations. Both focus on playing music not heard on commercial radio. Secondly, the on-air DJ’s are quite knowledgeable about the music they play, and they have a great deal of autonomy while performing their job. I will deal with each of those issues individually.

Providing alternative musical programming primarily is reflected two ways. Both stations play a much wider selection of songs. Unlike many commercial stations determined to play “Hits” in a heavy rotation (playing them two, three, or four times a day) these public stations have a wider rotation. One would be hard pressed to hear the same musical track twice in the same day, on consecutive days, or more than once in a week. This type of music programming allows for a much greater range of music. Commercial stations, which are determined to play only the most popular selections in order to keep people listening, are incapable of incorporating such diversity. They have very specific and predetermined “play-lists” that DJ’s must follow (Campbell, 1998). The result is that the actual range of musical pieces played on the air is limited and less challenging. This gives the audience a very limited exposure to music, even within the particular genre of music in which a station may be specializing.

The Urban/Eclectic station plays forms of music that are “popular” in its classification only. They play rock, and country and other forms of popular music, but what they play is not heard on commercial stations. They play lesser-known artists, or songs by more well known artists that don’t fit within the commercial radio format...

We’re hoping to be involved usually on the ground floor of an artist as they’re becoming well known. And that’s, I think, another role of the station, of public radio, is to help filter through all the music that’s out there and let people kind of get in... at the beginning of an artist’s career as they’re starting to take off. As well as being generally respectful of the traditions of all types of music. So you’ll get like Miles Davis, and many of the older jazz and blues and folk artists along with some of the up and coming jazz and blues and folk and rock artists...

Based on my personal experience of listening to this station, this seems to be exactly what this station is doing. They play artists initially unheard of on commercial radio, which later come to be standard fare on commercial airwaves. They are exposing the listener to music they would not ordinarily be aware of, perhaps even helping launch an artist to greater commercial success.

The Traditional/Classical station also provides their audience with “alternative music”. Though many people may not think of classical music as alternative, it is becoming this way. Once not hard to find within the commercial realm, classical music is getting increasingly scarce due to its inability to turn an adequate profit. Those stations that may play classical music may only focus on the more well-known pieces and composers avoiding the more obscure, or challenging for the ear. The Traditional/Classical station not only plays mostly classical music, but they pride

themselves in playing more obscure and challenging pieces, particularly vocal music and contemporary composers. This came up in an interview at this station.

The program director said 'Don't try to keep it all, you know, 'Muzak' here. We're not going for ear candy, we're going for serious classical listeners who do want to hear dissonance once in a while and aren't afraid to listen to new things', and that was very exciting. The parameters are: 'Keep the variety going'.

Perhaps an element that helps bolster the existence of musical diversity on the public stations is the fact the on-air disc jockeys are provided a large amount of freedom regarding what they are able to play on the air. Disc Jockeys at these stations are allowed to program their own shows, playing whatever they feel is appropriate. Commercial DJ's do not have such freedom and are often provided very specific play lists that indicate every song to play in and in what order. A good example of this was when a former college roommate of mine landed a job as a DJ at a commercial station. I called him while he was on the air, and he told me that he could not play a song I requested because he had to stick to the play list, and it was not a designated request hour.

Such constraints do not exist in public radio. This was made apparent in the following comment where an individual was discussing their programming techniques...

...I have different methods of programming. I need kicks and boosts to program sometimes. My favorite one is to walk along the aisles and pull out CD's that are either new or one that has not been played in a long time and spread them all over the desk start picking and putting them together like a game... It's quite fun. Lately I've been pulling out a bunch of discs and then stacking them into days I want to hear them, like today I have a sort of Friday program of things to get you off into the weekend.

This freedom fosters much greater diversity. Each person's particular program tends to take on an identity, or any particular hour of music may take on a certain tone or mood. Both stations *do* have loose parameters for what people are supposed to play, but within that there is a lot of flexibility and space. The disc jockey is not merely a machine playing things dictated by a list. Their job is much more involved, and can even be a creative endeavor.

Music programming is an important facet of public radio. At both of the musically oriented stations, it appears as though they are successful at providing the audience with an alternative to commercial radio. They are both exposing and challenging their listeners with new music and are also dedicated to preserving certain types of music and artists that are now being pushed off the airwaves due to the drive for turning a profit. In the next section I will examine the "other" major part of public radio programming, the news programming. I will examine how these stations are able to provide the audience with a meaningful alternative to commercial news media.

News Programming

The ability of commercial media to properly perform its journalistic function may often be impeded by its commercial nature. Richard Campbell (1998) suggests that being a business may interfere with traditional journalistic ideals and ethics. Two such journalistic ideals are those of "journalistic neutrality", and avoiding any "conflict of interest". Campbell points out that the idea of the neutral journalist is a

thing of the past. This is especially true since many media entities are now large-scale corporate conglomerates with diverse and far-reaching interests, economic, political, or otherwise. There is also some debate over the ideal of neutrality. Many argue that not only is it impossible for a journalist to be neutral, but it is also not advisable and often leads to second rate news coverage. However, if neutrality is an ideal that we can try to approximate, commercial media with its ever-growing interests, may not be able approximate it.

Campbell also illustrates the threat that advertising plays to journalistic ethics. It is now nearly common knowledge that commercial news organizations have a tendency to not cover stories, or omit certain information if it reflects poorly upon advertisers. With news organizations, especially broadcast news, becoming more and more business-like, the need to turn a profit has an unprecedented influence in journalistic practices at these commercial organizations (Emery & Smythe 1989). News organizations were once viewed as “loss leaders” and were not expected to turn a profit, but today both local and network news broadcasts are seen as very lucrative endeavors that attract advertising dollars.

To make news a profit making venture, a large audience needs to be attracted to sell advertising spots. The drive to increase ratings in order to attract advertising is believed to be a reason why commercial news has grown to be sensationalistic, focusing on stories that are exciting, or out of the ordinary, rather than things that are actually informative to the viewer or listener. The profit motive may also have

brought about the increased reliance on shorter, and shorter *sound bites**. Daniel C. Hallin (1992) conducted a study of news coverage 1968 to 1988 and found that the average sound bite shrunk from 43 seconds in 1968 to 9 seconds in 1988. Hallin argues that one of the reasons for this is the new competitive and commercial nature of broadcast news that has evolved since the 1960's.

Considering the shortcomings of commercial media, the argument could be made that news programming is the most important component of public radio. By remaining a public, non-profit, media organization, public radio may be able to better serve the ideals of journalism than commercial media entities. They may better approximate the ideal of the neutral journalism, and may also be able to avoid the negative influences of advertising. This was the beauty of public broadcast news. However, considering the presence of market pressures that have evolved within public radio, one may be concerned with public radio's ability to provide the quality news that commercial news is not. This section will examine news programming at local stations, and illustrate how journalistic integrity may or may not have been compromised.

Avoiding the Pitfalls of Commercial News

My examination of the news departments at these stations seemed to reveal one common thread between the stations. The news staff at the stations all seem to feel that they are avoiding the sensationalism of commercial broadcast journalism.

* Hallin defines sound bite as "... a film or tape segment that within a news story,

They feel strongly about the need to provide a public service. Based on my observations, this is accurate, though this was not a revelation to me since the non-sensationalistic nature of public radio news was one of the reasons I started to listen to public radio in the first place. Many feel that NPR provides the best broadcast news available. The following are some comments regarding how NPR news people view their profession compared to commercial news media...

I'll be brutally honest. Those stations don't cover news real well. They cover fires, they cover murders, which are horrible things, but for the most part don't affect the community. If there's a fire and somebody gets burned out of their house, it's horrible and it affects that family, but it's not something that affects the community as a whole... ...your average fire, they love that because it brings ratings. People want to see fires on TV. They want to hear about it on the radio, but it doesn't affect their day-to-day life.

Similarly, they have these cute little segments both on commercial radio and TV about "little health tips", and the information contained in it is not really all that helpful or useful to, you know, the average person of the community.

Similar remarks were made at the News/Talk Station and the Traditional/Classical stations...

I think that a lot of the times, just the visceral reaction, is that there is a lot less shouting on public radio, whether it's in the news, whether it's hyped. When I'm choosing news in the morning I don't tend to read a lot of who died in the traffic accident over the weekend... You know those stories are there every Monday morning, who's died. We don't do a lot of the crime stories.

Unlike a lot of commercial stations we're pretty heavy into political coverage from all levels from local on up, particularly local. Big on education and the environment. Those are probably the three areas we have major emphasis on. Governmental coverage, environmental, education.

showing someone speaking" (p.6).

Many news staffers pride themselves in not being like commercial news, and try to accentuate the usefulness of the news they are providing to their listeners.

Selection of News Coverage

The above interview passages alluded to the types of stories public radio selects to cover and how it differs from commercial news. This is a good way of gauging how public radio news differs from its commercial counterpart. As suggested above, a commercial media source may choose stories based on financial interests, compromising journalistic integrity. How a news department decides what stories to cover reveals a lot about their intentions and motivations for presenting the news. The object of this section is to see how this takes place within public radio. Some of the news people I spoke with seemed to have a sense of journalistic idealism, particularly with regard to serving their audience.

In an interview at the News/Talk station, a person who had previously worked with a commercial news organization also noted a difference in the selections of stories when asked to discuss the main difference between the two stations.

I think I can illustrate my point best by telling you that when I put a news package together for the on-air person at the commercial station, he would always rearrange it and make sure the “slash and gore” stories were up front. He said that’s how he wanted the news packages put together because that’s what’s most important. You don’t do that in public radio, and I grew tired of doing that...

So the selection of news stories is based on a different criteria than at commercial stations.

Another way of serving the audience may be to recognize alternative voices and viewpoints that are often left out of commercial news coverage. This was an issue brought by a couple of news staffers. The following is a passage from an interview at the Urban/Eclectic station...

I think we like to be a little more in your face than a lot of people do... I have always admired the Jessica Bittfords, the H.L. Menkins, and the Edward R. Murrows... who said, "there's something wrong here. I don't care whether you're GM or UAW. It's wrong and here's the problem..." ...And I like iconoclastic voices on the air, so I'll have the communist party come in and talk about... "C.P.? You still exist?". I mean, you know, I like that. I've always battled with my bosses. I've battled with my news director, "I want this story on, I want to take on the Church of Scientology because I think they're wrong. I think you can see there's something wrong here that needs to be exposed and let our listeners decide whether it's right or wrong."

When I was at different places I'd be questioned, "Why your obsession with labor?" I said, "Well, correct me if I'm wrong, but aren't most Americans workers? They're not executives. Do most of your listeners own stock? So why do we spend all this fucking time on stock reports? Why not on health and safety issues?"

Local News Coverage

Perhaps the trademark of any NPR affiliate is its broadcasts of Morning Edition or All Things Considered. They are without fail the most popular programs at all local stations. In one interview an individual once referred to the listening pattern of any local station as "tent poles", indicating that listenership during any broadcast day is at its peak during the morning and afternoon news programs. These programs are essential to any station's survival. They are usually the main reason why people are initially attracted to a station. However, aside from the nationally produced news

programming, local stations also have news departments in order to adequately cover local affairs. Their local news reporting is usually inserted into the aforementioned national shows. This is what sets one station apart from the other during these popular programs. A person at the Urban/Eclectic station stressed the importance of local coverage...

...I think it's probably the most important thing any public radio station can do in that every public station has PRI, NPR, or some national, or international news service that they can tap into to get a consistency of what's going on in Washington and around the rest of the world. But what sets each station apart is what's going on in their own back yard... ...Public radio stations can look at their local events in a way that other organizations don't. They can look at stories that commercial TV and radio stations won't look at because they are not sexy enough, that they don't want to spend the resources on looking at it because they are not going to bring in high ratings and they can give an urgency and liveliness to them that news paper can't.

One of the initial goals of public radio as suggested in the Carnegie Commission report is that it should serve the local community. Part of serving the local community means providing quality, locally produced news programming that provide in-depth coverage of community events. This is an issue that some feel is becoming a problem at local stations in the 90's. Aside from the local inserts, none of the stations included in this study have a locally produced news or public affairs program separate from the inserts in the NPR shows. The Traditional/Classical station does some local news in the hour preceding All Things Considered, and the News/Talk station now has an afternoon talk show that (that has recently gone into NPR syndication) focuses on public affairs topics occasionally, but that is the extent

of it. Locally produced news programming is often expensive to produce and is not financially possible at many stations.

The Urban/Eclectic station has no entirely locally produced news program though most of their broadcast day is locally produced. They feel that they provide quality local news inserts. This seems to be a reigning philosophy regarding local news coverage, to invest all of a news department's resources into doing the highest quality local inserts during the NPR news shows. The other stations in this study also focus on the inserts for their news. This is common at most stations.

It seems as though the two larger stations, the News/Talk and the Urban/Eclectic, are somewhat successful at providing quality in-depth local news during the inserts. They drop out of the national NPR feed quite often and provide a fair amount of local news and public affairs. The smaller Traditional/Classical station seems to provide less local news during the NPR shows, particularly during All Things Considered. Their local news is usually done during Morning Edition. They do, however, cover local issues well, if not as often. The costly nature of local coverage often keeps smaller stations from doing local news as well as a bigger station. This may be the case at the Traditional/Classical station.

Another variation in local coverage between these stations lies in the types of stories covered. The stories at the Urban/Eclectic and the Traditional/Classical station are more local-oriented than the ones done at the News/Talk station. Since the News/talk station actually broadcasts from three towers in separate locations within the state, their news stories tend to be more "state" or "regional" than other stations.

They feel that since they need to serve a larger audience, the stories shouldn't be too specific to any one locality. Coverage of something like local city councils, which is common at the other stations, is not regularly provided.

Despite the small amount of local news programming at these stations, it was suggested to me during the interviews that perhaps the future may require a more local focus due to a couple factors. Technology has now developed to the point that people will have the ability to have satellite radio in their cars, allowing them to get NPR news directly from the network, bypassing the local station...

I believe satellite radio is coming for the car. You then could subscribe directly to NPR. Bypass the local station all together. And then you wouldn't get any local news. You just get a direct feed from NPR, but it also would be a monthly charge like your cable. You also could get an all blues station. You know. Cable Radio, essentially, for your car. That's gonna happen and I think it's gonna be...I don't think it's going to take all our audience, but it's going to take some of it.

Another issue that may bring about the importance of local coverage has to do with the conglomeration trend in commercial media. Placing media entities in the hands of fewer and fewer companies...

Pretty soon you're going to have three companies here in town. You're gonna have an NBC, ABC, whatever. Cause they own all the other stations. But a whole lot of other people out there are not going to know what the hell is going on in their local environment. And therefore it's almost as if we go backward in time to radio as an immediate local thing. ...so local becomes more important I think in the future. And for us to survive then, I really think we need to be putting in place some local programming... That it becomes "must hear" radio, you know, for the future. Therefore we cement in our listeners' minds how important we are. We make ourselves important.

...There're tons of voices that are going to be cut out of that scenario. Those voices will come and live with us. And I think then what you'll

have is the uniqueness, the idea that you can get it here and no place else, and also that it's local.

If this forecast is accurate, then local programming will become paramount, and the trend towards decreased local programming will be reversed.

News and Management

Despite the idealism and an acute sense of journalistic ethics, one might raise the question as to whether the news departments are influenced by station management. Station management often has concerns that go beyond idealism and journalistic ethics. The concerns of each manager might be to keep the station's finances in the black, or keep listenership up. Such issues may lead to the temptation of shaping the news programming or content so as to meet those management-related goals. The influence of management on commercial news departments is clearly illustrated by W. Lance Bennett in his book, News: The Politics of Illusion (1995). With this in mind, I inquired about the presence of such a dynamic during interviews. What I found was that though there is communication, there may be little or no direct control...

Our general manager is a news person. Started out in news. Was one of my predecessors here, was news director. Now is the GM. He/She values that firewall.

What will happen occasionally is the Manager will get, you know, some friend... or a listener, somebody calls up and says "Hey you know, there's this thing," and he/she will email me, "This will be a good story," -Hint, hint, hint. If I think it's a good story, I'll go after it. If I don't, I'll ignore it. And I've never taken any heat for that. It's always been left up to us.

At all the stations it was made clear that management left the news coverage up to the news staff and did not try to influence the coverage, though (as stated in the above passage) they may make suggestions or give “tips” from time to time.

News and Underwriting

When considering the presence of underwriting within public radio, perhaps the most important concern is the effect it has on news the coverage at any given station. There is always the suspicion from critics on the left that news departments may adjust the types of stories they cover for fear of stepping on the toes of underwriters. What is suggested by these critics is not a direct demand from underwriters about stories, but rather what Ledbetter (1997) refers to as “self censorship”. Self censorship is when the public broadcasting staff itself modifies the news reports, consciously or otherwise, so they avoid issues or stories that may offend any underwriters.

I was sensitized to the notion of underwriter directed censorship when examining news programming for this project, but once out in the field I started to find little direct evidence of this happening at the stations under study. In fact, it seems as though underwriters know enough not to meddle in these affairs, and the radio staff seem to feel that they are doing the stories they choose regardless of underwriting. The following is from a person at the News/Talk station.

There's a big raging debate always in public radio about whether newscasters should read underwriting announcements, or whether they should ever, ever do an event or show up at a place that has given us money for whatever reason. I'm trying to think of a case where an

underwriter has stopped me from doing a story and I can't think of one here. In addition, there have been occasions when the sales staff has come and said, 'You know, this underwriter would really like you to do a story on their new hospice opening.' We haven't done those either. We're pretty clear about what we can do and can't do for an underwriter. And I can't think of a time when it's influenced us journalistically. This is not to say that it couldn't happen with an underwriter...

Apparently, the News/Talk station actually tries to avoid such situations from arising by actively monitoring who they are accepting support from. This was brought up in the following passage when discussing a potential underwriter who had a questionable environmental track-record and was the subject of some news stories...

...The station turned down their underwriting for fear they wouldn't be able to report what was going on with the environmental problems at the time. So I think that they might turn down some underwriting. My general sense is that the news department builds its credibility by doing its job day in and day out.

One reason why these local stations may not have difficulty with underwriters is because the majority of their underwriters are not controversial business entities like Exxon or Texaco...

I'll tell you the real honest to God truth here. Most of our underwriters are small businesses. They're not likely to be throwing their weight around. We have coffee shops, bookstores, realtors, an occasional car dealership. ...And like I said, the most interference I have had is that somebody wants us to cover the opening of a new store or something like that. But would we do something on "It's national reading month" because we have a bookstore on the air? I don't think so.

This topic was also discussed at the Urban/Eclectic station. Little direct influence was acknowledged. However, the potential for underwriter influence was recognized.

You know what, when you go out, this is where underwriting comes into it. If our sales person can go out and say, 'Hey, we have the daily business report on. Roney and Company comes in and does the stock report.' They can sell the shit out of that. If they go out and say, 'Oh we do a daily Labor looks at America,' the underwriting is less. You know. I think that at other places I've been I've felt like it's been 'Hey, tone it down.' Well, I've toned it down myself now... Now I've interfaced directly with listeners who have a gripe and I'm like 'O.K., I'll tone it down,' but I still believe you bring those debates to those who least hear them and those who most need to hear them. I see that as our role and I would say we have an edge that a lot of other NPR stations don't.

Despite the fact that many of the people I interviewed were confident in the fact that underwriting or other financial influences do not influence their news coverage, the above statement hints at the potential for such a relationship.

Even though there might not be much censorship, direct or otherwise, with regards to underwriting there is the dynamic of covering a story that may please certain underwriters. This generally happens when certain underwriters donate money for specific types of reporting. A topic that came up in an interview at the News/Talk station...

I wish I could say 'Gosh, No! The funders of this project never have any influence at all on the content.' While I've never had them call up and say 'If you want this funding to continue you've got to do 'X'...' It *never* happens. But I think there's something that's a little bit more subtle going on, which is the feeling that because this project is funded by certain organizations they have to be kept happy if this project's going to continue. At some level does that translate into my giving a little bit more consideration to certain stories? Yeah, It probably does. I can't say that's something I'm glad to say, You know? That makes me a little, as I've explained it before, itchy. And there are times I've asked the editor, 'I'm doing this story. Is this a conflict of interest?' And it's something we look at real carefully, but I think there is a subtle influence there, I do.

This person obviously had some reservations about the subtle influence mentioned above. I was intrigued by the use of the word “itchy” and asked that person to explain what exactly they meant by that...

Well you know. I wish there wasn't that feeling at a certain level that, 'If this project's going to continue, If I'm gonna still have a job.' You know, all these 'ifs', that these people have to be kept happy about their money going toward us. Which I think makes me sometimes look twice at something I might not have otherwise considered doing a story on.

Though this person was speaking of a very specific type of funding in which money is received for reporting on a certain subject (such as coverage of the arts or aging), the above remark does make me think twice. The passage seems to reflect the notion of self censorship. I wonder if this is contained to just the specific case mentioned above, or if it is more pervasive within news coverage. I also wonder how much self censorship could go on without reporters even being conscious of what they are doing. Ultimately this could be even an even more dangerous situation. In the presence of self censorship, underwriters would not have to actively flex their financial muscle in order to influence the news. The stations would be doing it themselves with little or no direct confrontation.

An individual at the Traditional/Classical station also suggested the presence or potential of a sort of indirect censorship due to presence of underwriting...

...good people can certainly have their judgement clouded by something like this. We're all human beings and if we're getting 40% of our budget, and I hope that someone would be smart enough not to ever let it get to that, but if you're getting 40% of your budget from one underwriter, can you really in good conscience say that it's not affecting your judgement? ...most people in public radio try hard, they do their best and they try to ignore it. But I was told by someone who

worked at a public radio station on the other side of the state that their bosses turned the other way on a couple of stories. And their rationale was that it was a 'conflict of interest' to cover stories involving their underwriters.

A certain amount of influence from underwriters may be present. However, it was difficult to find anyone who was willing to make such a clear statement concerning this issue. Personally, I felt this was an issue, at some level, but in the course of my interviews, I found the news people to be more verbal about the integrity of their job than any other staff member at these stations. This is either an indication of how they have been successful at maintaining journalistic standards, or they are just trying to deny an influence that is really there, maintaining an image both for themselves and in the eyes of others.

Of course, underwriting dynamics and the news are not a factor at the Traditional/Classical station. The news staff and others at the station seem to be very cognizant of that issue. Though they concede that underwriting may have little or no actual effect on news content, both at the network and local level, there is still a feeling that such a practice just doesn't contribute to a good journalistic environment.

...Now I will tell you that I think most people in public radio do their best, and they ignore these things, but first of all you create a perception. Someone hears an underwriting credit right after you hear a story about Archer Daniels Midland. And people are always looking, people are always looking for something to say "That's biased", or "That's unfair". You're really opening the door for them when you do that. Now you can't always worry about what critics say, but you shouldn't give them ammunition.

Conclusion

After examining the news programming and coverage at local stations, a few things became apparent. I wanted to assess how underwriting and other fiscal dynamics may undermine the integrity of journalism within public radio. What seems to be happening is that the news programming is relatively free from these influences, at least directly. Reporters seem to enjoy a certain amount of freedom from management issues. They also claim to not be experiencing any kind of censorship based on economic issues. There may, however, be a sort of self censorship in the attempt to keep certain interests happy. Underwriting may also play an indirect role in deciding which stories get covered. The lack of money also seems to be prohibiting any increased local news or public affairs programming other than the inserts during the NPR news magazines.

The news staff at the stations seem to feel strongly about their jobs, and to a large extent they feel they are living up to the journalistic standards that were present in the early days of public radio, but they do see some weak points. This is illustrated in the following excerpt from an interview at the Urban/Eclectic station...

...my view is that it's unfettered, if that's the right word, with respect to the market. In other words it is insulated to some degree from market pressures. And that's by virtue of us going out and making our direct contact with listeners. It also is a voice to the voiceless. I firmly believe that. And that under-served audiences find service. And to some extent that's what is in everybody's mission statement. I think that's been tweaked over the years, and streamlined perhaps. But I think basically that remains what it is.

...but I think we could do better... But you can trust us to think a little bit more about the story. To bring you the complete story and ask the

questions that aren't being asked, rather than being first. We like to be first obviously and when we are we jump up and down, but being first is not always our goal. I think being right and being complete is our goal.

Public radio news is not completely "unfettered" from market based pressures. Though it may not be experiencing any kind of direct influence from the market, it is living within the market and has been influenced indirectly. These indirect influences may be an early warning of things to come, and perhaps should not be taken lightly. Perhaps the integrity of public radio journalism will be significantly decreased as the station's dependence on listener sensitive income is increased. People should be aware of this potential. In relation to the commercial broadcast news, public radio stations still are doing a good job at maintaining the firewall between themselves and the market. However, if they want to stay that way they need to consider these issues in advance.

CHAPTER V

FUNDRAISING

Aside from the money received by local stations from the CPB, university budgets, and other tax subsidized sources, stations also must secure revenue from other sources. This money is usually raised by on-air fund drives, and underwriting. As explained previously, the combination of these two financial sources is what is collectively known as listener sensitive income. The amount of money raised by these sources is largely dependent upon the size of a station's audience.

It is important to remember that both of these methods of fundraising are relatively new to public radio. Originally, many stations were fully funded by government money and university budgets. The actual point at which stations adopted these practices varies, but generally both gained prominence in the 1980's. Previously, many people associated with public radio frowned upon on-air fund raising and underwriting. Some felt that dependence upon these sources threatens the integrity of public radio. If stations need to keep audiences high in order to keep money flowing in, then money and audience automatically becomes at least a partial concern when making production and programming decisions, a point illustrated in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I will examine on-air fund raising and underwriting at the three stations in the study, illustrate their attitudes towards it, and describe their specific fund raising practices.

On-Air Fundraising

Today the largest portion of any public station's income comes from individual donations made by listeners. Listener donations are solicited during on-air fund drives that take place twice a year, once in the spring and again in the fall. Fund drives usually last about a week. Generally, all stations are conducting fund drives simultaneously. On-Air fundraisers are not taken lightly. This is practically the only chance to get listeners to contribute. Therefore, the stations have to make these events as effective as possible. Though all three stations conduct fund drives, they seem to have different strategies when trying to make drives as effective and successful as possible. During the field research, I observed each station during their fund drive. I volunteered to answer phones, and spent time listening to the stations, noting their practices. Many people in public radio do not particularly like having to go on the air and ask for money. It interrupts programming, and it is a busy and demanding time for all involved at the station.

While listening to and participating in each station's fund drive, I noticed there were common aspects between all three fundraisers. There also were some very interesting and distinct differences in each station's approach to fundraising. The two stations that seem to be more concerned with audience size, and use local underwriting, had similar fundraising characteristics while the Traditional/Classical station seemed to approach it differently. Much like other aspects of the station's philosophy and practices, they take a very non-commercial attitude towards fund drives.

“Fundraising for Dummies”: The Fund Drive Explained

Simply stated, the object of a fund drive is to get those individuals who listen to public radio to donate money in support of it. In order to accomplish this, the regular broadcast schedule is altered in that the regular programming is often accompanied by periodic pledge breaks. Unlike public television, the regular programming on public radio is not abandoned in favor of more popular “specials” that attract not only the PBS faithful, but those who normally wouldn’t watch public television. Prime examples of this are the now famous “Riverdance”, and a Rolling Stones concert. Such spectacles are not standard fare on PBS, they appear only during fundraisers. It almost seems as though the public television community fears they can’t raise the necessary money with the regular programming and viewers. Therefore, they completely abandon regular programming in favor of more costly and more popular special broadcasts. Conversely, public radio sticks to normal broadcasts and works on the regulars for donations.

While answering phones at each station, it was obvious that people do not call during regular programming segments, people usually call when being encouraged by pledge breaks. In light of this, it became apparent that frequent pledge breaks are necessary if a station is to meet its goal. During pledge breaks, the regular on-air host for that time slot is accompanied by another staff member from the station, and they “pitch” the station in hopes of coaxing listeners to call in with a donation. During these pledge breaks, the on-air hosts update pledge totals, read the names of those

individuals who recently called in to pledge, and most importantly, pitch the station. convincing people to call.

It occurred to me how similar fund raising is to salesmanship. Any effective sales person uses techniques to try to get the potential buyer to make the purchase. Many times, the product itself is not enough. Many sales would not be transacted if not for the encouragement of salespeople. At times these practices may seem a bit deceptive. Everyone at some point in their life has had at least one negative experience with a sales person. This is why we have so many jokes about used car salesman. If the sales person is to survive, they must complete sales at nearly all costs. There is a similar dynamic going on at public radio stations come fund drive time.

Obviously, the Public Radio product (like all products) does not always sell itself. Only about 10% of all listeners of public radio actually donate money to the stations. This is a lot of potential revenue not being realized. Stations recognize this, and it is why the pitch becomes so important, and salesmanship becomes necessary. At a pre-fundraiser meeting at the Urban/Eclectic station, an individual described the pitch as being similar to closing a sale or business deal. Those giving the pitch were the “closers”. Obviously, the listener was already interested in the product based on the fact that they are listening to the station. The pitch is viewed as that last push to get them to sign the papers and close the deal.

If there is a general theme to these pitches it is that those doing the pitch portray the station as a service or resource that is used and valued by the listener.

Since it is valued by the listener, then they need to pay for the service that they are using. The service and quality of the programming is stressed. Most importantly, they reiterate that the type of programming they provide can only be found on public radio.

Different Strings

In the previous section, I illustrated the general similarities in fund raising across the three stations. However, there are some different themes and strategies used at each station. I will illustrate those differences in this section. The variances in fundraising techniques centered around several issues: suggested donation amounts, use of mini-goals, pledge premiums, immediacy of call, frequency of pledge breaks, celebrity guests, and appeals to a social conscience.

Suggested Donation Amounts

The first issue deals with suggesting an amount to pledge. Obviously the larger the donation, the greater the station benefits. Sometimes during a pitch, the on-air person may suggest an amount to pledge. Generally these suggested amounts were no less than "A dollar a week", or 52 dollars. It was not uncommon for a suggested donation amount to be hundreds of dollars. I was both pleased and surprised to learn how many people actually do pledge more than \$100. I had personally taken calls from people pledging \$500. I have no real criticism of this since many people seemingly can afford such generosity. However, on the other side

of the token, I had attended to callers who seemed embarrassed and apologetic to pledge \$20 or \$25. Once a caller felt it necessary to give me an account for why her pledge was just \$20 (she was a student). It made me wonder how many \$20 donations were lost because people are just too embarrassed to call. Both the Urban/Eclectic and the News/Talk station used this technique regularly. It was also used at the Traditional/Classical station, but not as often, and they were more likely than the other stations to tell people to pledge whatever they could afford.

Use of Mini-goals

Every station has an overall monetary goal for each fundraiser. It is the amount of money, not covered by other revenue sources, needed to keep the station on the air for the next 6 months or so. Aside from the overall goal for the entire fundraiser, stations may also set smaller goals for a day or even a particular program. They can be set by number of calls, or the total money raised. These mini-goals can serve two functions. First, being able to mention a goal and progress towards it during breaks gives listeners a sense of progress and immediacy. For example, if they say, "We only need 10 calls or \$1,000 by the end of the hour" it may seem to be a more surmountable task. One caller's \$100, or one call, may create the impression of making a significant difference when compared to a smaller goal. If it is compared to the over all goal of \$300,000, the listener may feel as though their one donation will not make a significant difference.

Another use for setting mini-goals is that it gives station management an idea of how popular a program is and what type of following it has. It is for this same reason that phone volunteers are instructed to ask callers what other programs they like or dislike. Pledge time is an opportunity for a show to display its worth to both the station and the listeners. These things can then be taken into account when making programming decisions. The rationale behind this was revealed to me at both the Urban/Eclectic and the News/Talk stations: People call to donate during the programs they like and support. If there are 20 calls during a program, then they can assume that all those people like and listen to that particular show. Almost the exact opposite belief was expressed at the Traditional/Classical station. This station sets no mini-goals, and they keep no official records of how well each program is at producing calls. In fact, in interviews it was expressed that people do *not* necessarily call during the show they most value. They argue that people call when it is convenient, and that may be hours after their favorite show has concluded.

Immediacy of Call

It seems that one tactic of pitching is to get people to call right away. They want to get people to the phone before they have time to change their mind or forget about contributing. Using mini goals is one way to increase the importance of calling right away. Another way they accomplish this is quite simple, the people giving the pitch just repeat things like “call now”, “pick up the phone” over and over. The

following is a portion of a pitch that displays not only the immediacy of call technique, but also the use of the mini-goal as well...

...Check in with a pledge right now. We're closing in on our goal for the second hour, but don't leave us a little bit short. Let's push over the top. I want to have Three hundred thousand dollars in the door here at W--- before we close out this show at 3PM. That would be a really important psychological point for all of us at W--- and for you. We've been fundraising for about 4 days now, and gosh and we pass over three hundred grand, it's all gravy from there, all down hill from there. So let's do it. Make the call. Light up the phones...

Pledge Premiums

Premiums are "gifts" that individuals receive for donating a certain amount of money. Many people may most commonly associate these with PBS fund raising, but they are used in radio as well. The minimum pledge to receive a premium is usually about 50 to 60 dollars. Officially, they are billed as merely a "thank you" to callers, but stations view these as an investment that encourages people to call. In a pledge drive manual distributed to station staff, premiums are addressed as "investments." They also discuss the return on that investment in how it directly converts to pledge money. Both the Urban/Eclectic and the News/Talk stations use premiums. They are regularly incorporated into the pitch at the Urban/Eclectic station, discussing the premium and its attributes. Any mention of premiums is much less frequent at the News/Talk station. The Traditional/Classical station uses no premiums.

Frequency of Pledge Breaks

As previously mentioned, stations do not receive many calls except during pledge breaks. It might stand to reason, then, that the more pledge breaks, the more calls received. With this in mind, I was interested in how often stations interrupted programming with breaks. To do this, I reviewed a recording of two hours of broadcast from each station: one hour from 1-2pm and another hour from 5-6pm during All Things Considered (one of the busiest times during the fund drive day). They were taped on the same day, so the recordings from the three stations were actually taking place simultaneously.

I found no major differences during the ATC broadcast since they still had to cover the news. Each station broke about 4 times during the hour. The major difference came in the 1-2pm period. The News/Talk station only broke twice since they were carrying a live NPR simulcast; they used the time allotted by NPR. The Urban/Eclectic and the Traditional/Classical stations both featured music programming from 1-2pm. The Traditional station broke four times for about 4 minutes each time. In between, they would play whole pieces of classical music without interruption. They were still providing the music service they pride themselves on. The Urban station still played music but talked over it nearly the entire time. The music was in the background, but it was there. At times, they would just play music, but rarely did a whole song play through without interruption. They seem to use the time featuring regular music programming to really try to get people to call. There were no constraints from NPR syndication, and they used the time they

had. This seemed to be reflected in the calls received. The early afternoon is a slow pledge time, but the Urban/Eclectic station still was able to log many calls. Calls were seldom during music programming at the Traditional/Classical station.

Celebrity Guests

Aside from the regular on-air staff conducting pledge breaks, the Urban/Eclectic station gets local or national celebrities to come in for an hour or two to help pitch. Representatives from local TV news, local radio, and other commercial media sources have participated. Community leaders, business people, and musicians have also lent their time to the station. This practice is similar to local public television stations. As far as I know, the other two stations do not normally bring celebrities or other outsiders in to pitch. Once at the Traditional/Classical station, I was offered the opportunity to go on-air and pitch, but declined in fear. Though an outsider, I hardly qualified as a celebrity.

Appeals to a Social Conscience

A technique that is often used in public radio fund drives is what I refer to as an “appeal to a social conscience”. This is when during a pitch, the on-air host may discuss public radio and the station as a social good that actually goes beyond any one listener’s particular enjoyment of the programming. They may discuss how the station is able to do things that are simply not provided by the commercial spectrum.

They may also allude to the fact that public broadcasting's existence is under threat due to rising costs of operation and dwindling government dollars.

All three stations used this technique during breaks to varying extents, but the Traditional/Classical station seemed to accentuate it the most. In the absence of some of the other fundraising tools mentioned in this section, this was a staple in their fundraising activities...

We consider ourselves more fortunate than most other stations. We know that we have listeners who care about W---. They believe in the public radio concept and more important, they are willing to provide the financial tools that we need to keep the station running. But the fact is, we do need more of these kinds of people because public radio broadcasting isn't cheap. Multi-million dollar communications empires are grabbing up commercial stations like crazy and they're making big money through advertising. This station is radically different. We're small, noncommercial, and we're here to provide you something quite different than those commercial giants can. And after all, that is why you tune in. You listen, you enjoy our music, our in-depth news, the stuff we have on the weekend, and so please pick up your phone, dial #-----, and start your renewal of support, and give us the resources we need. You can be certain that your contribution will provide us with the operating power that lasts longer than just one day.

People at this station seemed to be cognizant of public radio's current social context. They are aware of the forces that are affecting change in the public radio community, and they are consciously resisting them. Not only do they see public radio in general as an important alternative to the market, they also extend that argument to the preservation of classical music.

We really are living in a time when classical music is struggling to survive. Classical music has disappeared from many school curricula, or we hear that orchestras are struggling financially. And many young people have not yet discovered the wonders of classical music. That's why our daily broadcast of this music is so important. It's another social good your pledge accomplishes. It helps us to continue bringing

this great music to you and keeps it available to others who will discover it in the future. Maybe you want to give something back to the art form that has brought you so much pleasure and meaning. Perhaps you can't write a symphony or perform a duet, but you can still advance the cause by making sure the music is heard. You can be one of the people who will preserve its availability for those who will discover riches in the days and years ahead. Especially when it's being neglected by public education and corporate philanthropy...

...But Is it Commercialism?

Many of these fundraising practices are very similar to commercial salesmanship. Of the three stations, there are variances as to what extent they embrace these sales techniques. These sales practices may not directly reflect upon the programming or the service provided by the stations, but it does indicate that a type of business rationality has found a home at these stations. It is also interesting that they have a larger presence at the same stations that practice more commercial-like programming techniques, and accept local underwriting. These specific fund raising attributes may not mean that a particular station is commercial or market driven, but in the case of this research, it seems to come along as a total package with other aforementioned station policies.

The Traditional/Classical station has resisted or avoided most of these practices, but this does not necessarily suggest that it is not affected by commercial dynamics. The previous chapter on programming illustrates that this station is more akin to its contemporary counterparts included in the research sample than to itself, 25 years ago. They too have evolved in a similar fashion. Nevertheless, their resistance is a noble stance, but perhaps they take a stance because they can. As it is

now, they raise the money they need to operate in the black. Perhaps if they needed a larger amount of money (like the other stations), or if donations dropped off they might be forced to incorporate some of the same practices as the other stations. The obvious reason why these stations use these practices is that without them, they probably would not raise the necessary money.

Underwriting

Underwriting dollars make up the other half of listener sensitive income. Underwriting spots are sold and broadcast by NPR on the network level. These spots are usually aired during broadcasts of Morning Edition and All Things Considered; they are heard on all stations carrying those programs. In addition to the network underwriting spots, most stations also sell underwriting on the local level in order to support the station's budget.

When considering the commercialization of public radio, underwriting is perhaps the most overt threat to the ideals of public radio. Public broadcasting was founded on the idea of not having to rely on commercial support. By avoiding the use of advertising spots or commercials, public radio is able to produce uninterrupted programming. It also negates the need for a station to deliver an audience to the commercial sponsor. The concept of underwriting is similar to commercials, and underwriting spots are becoming more similar to them over time. In fact, both stations and underwriters may now be viewing underwriting more than ever before in terms of advertising. The following comment from an interview at the

Urban/Eclectic station illustrates how underwriting is now viewed as a type of commercial advertising...

...Today, it's very, very interesting. And it's been this way for probably the last 10 years at least. You often get underwriting grants from their advertising budget, so that tells you how they view underwriting. We also get it from their community money. They have an account that they do good works with. Quite often we get money out of their ad budget. And that tells you a big story right there.

Underwriting is an aspect within public radio where I most expected to find the proverbial smoking gun. This is where public radio treads close to becoming a commercial station in the sense that they are selling on-air spots to commercial interests who hope to reach an audience of potential customers. In commercial media, the ability to sell advertising has a direct influence on programming. If a show does not attract enough of an audience to bring in advertising revenue, then programs, or even entire station formats, are changed. This is the essence of commercial broadcasting. In the case of public radio, if underwriters view underwriting as a form of advertising, then they expect to have an audience for their message. The true concern here is the effect this might have on public radio programming. The simple presence of underwriting spots may upset public broadcasting purists, but if it does not have an effect on programming then the impact may largely be an aesthetic one.

Both the Urban/Eclectic and the News/Talk stations use local underwriting. In this section, I will examine underwriting within public broadcasting. I will look at how it has evolved over time, how it has been used by business interests, and

specifically how each station employs underwriting. I will examine how they view it, and what effect it may have had on the programming.

People I spoke with at the Traditional/Classical station all seemed to view underwriting as advertising, and agreed that it may affect the integrity of the programming. When I spoke to those at the other two stations, they seemed to be a little more careful in the way they discussed it. They did not actually acknowledge its commercial aspect. Some recognized that it is a form of advertising for the underwriters, but no one would suggest that it had an influence on programming or programming content. In the examination of the News/Talk station, I already illustrated how the format was entirely overhauled in order to generate revenue. Generating revenue includes the sale of underwriting spots; in this respect, underwriting did have a profound impact on the programming at that station. Here we have a case of an entire format change brought about by the need to generate revenue.

The Evolution of Underwriting

Unlike in public television, underwriting is relatively new to much of public radio. Originally, underwriting was seen as money donated by outside interests, commercial or otherwise, as a form of philanthropy or community service. It could be just a good faith donation made out of a sense of social responsibility, a charitable investment in the institution of public broadcasting. A more critical view of underwriting that developed in the 1970's was that it was not just philanthropy, but

that it is used as a public relations tool, cleaning up the image of a corporation or any other organization donating money. A prime example of this would be Mobil's, Exxon's, or other oil companies' support of the Public Broadcasting Service dating back to the early days of PBS in the 1970's. This relationship lead to the satirical labeling of PBS as the "Petroleum Broadcasting Service" (Ledbetter, 1997).

In a study of corporate donations made to PBS from 1972-1976, David Ermann (1976) suggests that there is a distinct difference between a corporation's public statements and their underlying goals, which he calls "operative goals". "Operative goals indicate what the organization is doing, despite official claims" (p.504). Ermann argues that the altruism of underwriting is merely the official public statement. What underwriting is in actuality is a public relations effort intended to create a social environment that is favorable to the corporation's interests, perhaps swaying public opinion in its favor. This is what he calls "milieu control". By exercising milieu control, an organization may avoid social sanctions by establishing a favorable public identity before any ill sentiment is developed. Building a sense of good will between the corporation and the public will allow the corporation to continue to "pursue its business and withstand attempts to label it deviant" (p.509). PBS used this attribute as a selling point to potential supporters in the 1970's.

The public image element of underwriting may still be alive and well, but one issue that is absent from Ermann's study is the potential for underwriting to be used as a direct advertising tool. Ledbetter also did not discuss any advertising dynamics in detail. Nevertheless, business interests may now use underwriting to directly

increase sales, much like a commercial. This notion is supported when examining how underwriting spots have changed over the time. Recently, underwriting spots have become more commercial-like in their look, sound, and content. This is because the FCC restrictions on underwriting have been loosened over the years in response to decreasing CPB funds. Previously, regulations allowed very simple underwriting credits that amounted to just acknowledging support from the underwriter. This is what was known as “gravestone underwriting”. With the loosening of regulations, underwriting spots are now longer, and can include a mention of a product line, the location of a store, or a phone number. This style of underwriting announcement is what’s called “enhanced underwriting.” One need only to tune in to PBS on any given day to view the most recent trend: “super enhanced underwriting.” In these spots, one can see a Chevy Blazer climbing a mountain. Super Enhanced spots are practically indistinguishable from an advertisement on commercial television.

Underwriting on public radio may not be as commercial as the spots on public television, but they also have evolved beyond the simplicity of gravestone underwriting. Network-wide spots by Green Giant during All Things Considered and Morning Edition discuss and describe a specific product (Green Giant “Harvest Burgers”) and tell the listener where to find it. Another announcement often heard is paid for by a record company in order to announce the release of a particular CD recently placed on the market.

Local Underwriting

Regardless of the motives (philanthropy, milieu control, or advertising) underwriting is now firmly embedded in public radio as a source of revenue. The literature had little mention of underwriting at the local level. The remainder of this section will examine underwriting at local stations. On the local level, both television and radio underwriting are less “enhanced”, but an advertising element is present. Products and store locations are often mentioned. Most local underwriters are not large corporate entities. They are smaller, local businesses that may not need to influence public opinion. Many times, they just want to increase the visibility of their business and let people know about it in the hopes of increasing sales.

In my fieldwork, I also found that there may actually be a non-advertising element to local underwriting. Some underwriters are local business people who personally value public radio and simply want to support it. During an interview at the News/Talk station an individual indicated that local underwriters may expect different things when buying underwriting spots...

...First you asked the question “What are they looking for?” And I think that very much varies from company to company, and business to business. ...We don’t say that we’re going to increase the number of people that are coming through their door. Or we’re going to ask them “If you want increased exposure, and you believe that the type of individual listening to us is your target customer base, then yes it should result in more people coming through your door.”

This person suggests that businesses may have other reasons for underwriting, but is hesitant to acknowledge a direct advertising relationship. They don’t promise

increased business to the underwriter, but they do acknowledge that the possibility is present.

Many individuals did not overtly and distinctly recognize the advertising element in underwriting. This may have been a conscious or non-conscious decision on their part. However, the advertising is present, and some of those involved at the local stations must realize it, and even promote it. During the course of my fieldwork, a person at the Urban/Eclectic station gave me a copy of an underwriting booklet provided to potential underwriters of that station. This document distinctly addressed underwriting as advertising. Included in the booklet were demographics of the stations' listeners, the number of people tuning in, and the geographic range of the broadcast signal. This type of information informs the underwriter of the potential audience their message would be reaching. Perhaps the most interesting item in this booklet was a list of reasons why it would be good to purchase underwriting. Some of these selling points are listed below...

Discriminating Listeners With Discretionary Dollars: We have more listeners with money to spend on quality products and services.

An Audience of Decision Makers: Our audience contains a higher percentage of senior executives who make the buying decisions for area businesses.

An Audience of Qualified Buying Prospects: Our total audience numbers may be smaller, but the number of "qualified" buying prospects within that audience is higher. Your dollars go farther, and faster with greater effectiveness and efficiency.

Double Target Audience: Not only do you get an upscale audience, but one that has specific interest in your product or service.

The Ultimate Affinity Marketing Opportunity: Your association with public radio give an implied “quality message” about your company or organization.

In addition to these advertising related benefits of underwriting, the station also suggests some other, more image-related benefits to underwriting...

You Send the Message That “You Care About your Community”: When your message is heard on public radio, it automatically says that you are a company that doesn’t just talk about doing good deeds, you actually do them. In the cynical world of the 90’s where people are tired of words without actions, your active participation in the support of public radio says more than words could ever say.

A Public Relations Tool: Public radio programming is regularly the subject of positive news stories, often mentioning the underwriter. Also, your company can create your own public relations opportunities around your underwriting activity.

It is apparent that underwriting is a form of advertising. Stations are delivering an audience of potential customers to those businesses who purchase underwriting spots. It is used as a public relations tool as well. The notion of underwriting as philanthropy may be an antiquated one, but it seems as though stations acknowledge this as well. Underwriting at local stations is, indeed, a form of advertising. Though some underwriters may still have charitable intentions, the advertising and public image dynamics of underwriting may be unavoidable benefits enjoyed by public radio’s underwriters.

Event Underwriting

Aside from the usual underwriting spots aired on public radio stations, there is also a type of underwriting known as “Event Underwriting”. Event Underwriting is

when the station runs underwriting spots that publicize an up-coming event, usually a concert. What happens is that a local concert promoter contributes money to the station in exchange for on-air spots. There is a large presence of this type of underwriting at the Urban/Eclectic station.

In my listening, I found these types of spots to sound even more like regular commercials than other underwriting announcements. They sound *very* similar to concert advertisements heard on commercial stations. These spots are longer in duration than other underwriting announcements. They are highly produced, often including the music of the particular act that is coming to town. A good explanation of this type of fundraising is contained in this following interview passage...

...What we do is work with area promoters. Everything from small galleries, art galleries and coffee houses, to big larger venues like theatres and arenas in working out ways to promote their events, get them on the air. It's a way that the station brings in money to sustain itself... ...they're making what's considered a donation, or underwriting. You know, in the commercial world it would be considered selling airtime.

Selling airtime in order to promote a concert has been a common practice at commercial stations for years. This may be one case of where public radio stations come in direct competition with other stations. In an interview, it was described that at times multiple stations may be seeking an agreement to promote an event. When this happens, the public station is competing with commercial stations for the concert promoters' dollars.

The spots do sound much like regular commercial ads. This was recognized in an interview where an individual addressed the possibility of compromising the

integrity of public radio, and perhaps alienating a portion of its listeners. On the other hand, this person feels that the commercial style of event underwriting is perhaps a necessary evil, and maintains that there is a distinction between public radio and commercial radio concert promoting.

And so it's a fine balance, you know, to not anger our long time listeners who don't want us to sound like we're getting too commercial. But at the same time, in order to stay afloat, we've got to have these announcements that are sounding more and more like commercials, I guess you might say, because they're fully produced with music. I mean we follow very strict FCC guidelines, though, that let certain language allowed (*sic*), and other things you can't say. They're basically announcements, but they're produced in such a way that they're catchy to the ear in the way that a commercial would be without being over bearing or full of hyperbole, lies basically.

Effect on Programming

In the chapter on programming, I illustrated how underwriting has an influence on programming in the fact that stations are more prone to stick with shows that draw a larger audience. Doing this helps the station secure adequate listener sensitive income. I was also concerned with the direct relationship between the station and the underwriter. In commercial radio, advertisers may directly try to influence programming or programming content. I wanted to find out if attempts to control programming were taking place in public radio. The field research suggests that underwriting has had little direct influence over programming. Everyone I spoke with at the local stations made it clear that underwriters have no direct influence over the station. In fact, most of the time, they respect the integrity of public radio and

don't even attempt to have an influence. The following is part of a conversation with a person at the Urban/Eclectic station...

I have to tell you in my years, I haven't experienced that... I think perhaps they understand what public broadcasting is and they respect that... I've never had an underwriter even subtly attempt to do that.

The News/Talk station also has not had such a problem with underwriters. They make the boundaries of the relationship clear to the underwriter. In one interview, a person illustrated this...

They certainly know that they can call us and say, "I was really disappointed in the coverage of such and such," or "I was really upset when I heard on ATC, such and such," because access is important to them. But I would never lead them to believe we would change that. We have had a couple of underwriters make suggestions for programs or make suggestions for whom we should contact because they would like to have a particular program. We've been in the fortunate position that most of the underwriters with whom we are working are not in the press themselves with a great deal of negative print. But we're always aware of the fact that that could happen. And how would we handle it, and what should we do. A lot of it would depend on what negative thing is occurring.

Though underwriters may not have a significant influence over station programming, the influence is still present in other ways. There are strings attached to the money received from underwriters. The following is from an individual at the Urban/Eclectic station...

I think in any station and maybe some still today, there's been an attitude from just about every one except the development department of "Can't the donor, can't the businesses just give us their money and go away and let us do what we want with it?," so to speak. I actually had a programming director, not here, say that to me. We had a large underwriting grant from a large corporation and they had signed a contract to underwrite a specific program at a specific time that the program ran. And the programmer wanted to change that particular program's time or take it out completely and I said, "You can't do that,

we have an agreement. We had received 25,000 dollars from this company to underwrite the cost of that programming. You can't do this." And his remark was, "Why can't they just give us money and go away, and let us do what we think we need to?" That does not exist here, the programming department and everyone understands that we're here because of the individual support and the corporations, businesses, organizations, and foundations.

This statement suggests that underwriters do have a certain influence over stations. Once the money is donated, there is an agreement between the stations and the underwriter. This means that the specific underwriter does have to be accounted for when making stations decisions.

The Last of the Mohicans

Like their programming philosophy, and on-air fundraising, the Traditional/Classical station differs from the other stations examined in this dissertation in that they have no local underwriting. Once again, they seem to be taking a moral stance by trying to preserve the original ideals of public radio. However, as I have stated previously, I am not making a value judgment about one station over the other. I am suggesting that stations' use of underwriting is an indicator of a larger societal issue, not the integrity of any individuals at the stations. These stations use underwriting out of necessity.

Perhaps a large reason why the Traditional/Classical has not yet reverted to local underwriting is because they have not been forced to do so. Though the station presently has no local underwriting, this station may not be able to hold its ideological position for long. The prospect of bringing in local underwriting has been

considered by station management, and some feel that it is just an eventuality. In fact, a proposal for such a change has already been developed in case the need arises.

However, if this station does go to underwriting, it may take on a different character than the underwriting at other local stations. Underwriting would be done in such a way so that underwriting is not sold for specific programs, a practice used at the other stations in the study.

Well say you decided to change your programming. Say you didn't want to have bluegrass music anymore. Then those people that are contributing to that fund, you'd have to figure out some way of, you know, you give them the money back, or something. Also, people then, you know, you get around the problem of people beginning to take proprietary interest in individual programs rather than the radio station. And that has happened at some stations where they decide to do this very thing I'm talking about. Say, eliminating certain kinds of music. Then the underwriting will get together and say well, you know, they'll make a bunch of phone calls around to other underwriters and talk to a bunch of other people who want to give underwriting support to this station. It almost becomes an offer, then, that you can't refuse. So I think it's a way around a lot of those potential problems. And I think misunderstandings that can develop in the community, because these are all community people. We want to be serving the community, not causing bad feelings out there.

Underwriting may eventually be an unavoidable fact for the Traditional/Classical station, but this passage suggests that they will still take certain precautions when selling underwriting spots.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed fundraising practices at local public radio stations. On-air fundraising and local underwriting are now very common and regular practices at stations in order to stay afloat financially. These revenue sources now

account for the majority of the budget at local stations. However, both of these fundraising practices have had an impact on the way stations go about the practice of public broadcasting. Since this income is related to the amount of listeners or the popularity of the programming, there is now an increased economic influence that public radio has historically resisted. Stations now operate with a sense of business rationality, both with underwriting and with pitching the station during fund drives.

Whatever arguments are made regarding the negative effect the dependence on listener sensitive income has had on public radio, it is difficult to hold the public radio community responsible for this turn of events. Tax-based revenue is waning, and stations need to fill the gap in their budget. These changes came about out of necessity, not by choice. To critique public radio without examining society at large is not grasping the total breadth of the problem.

In previous chapters, I examined how stations behave in a manner that is more financially driven than in the past, but is this necessarily a bad thing? In the following chapter, I will examine the effect that commercialization has had on public radio, discuss how these changes are indeed detrimental, and not true to the original ideals of public radio. I will also explain and discuss how the changes within public radio within the last 20 years are simply a single symptom of a larger societal dynamics that are affecting all aspects of our culture.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT IT ALL MEANS

After examining the three public radio stations for this dissertation, the presence of commercial rationality seems unquestionable. Public radio has changed since the early days of the CPB and NPR. The evolution of programming indicates that they have become less experimental, less controversial, and less community oriented. Compared to the early 1970's, they are now more concerned with appealing to a broader audience that will listen to the station for longer periods of time. This is contradictory to the initial ideology of public broadcasting that championed the production of quality programming regardless of commercial dynamics. Doing this sometimes meant producing shows that would only appeal to a small audience or very specialized interest. I feel this may have been the very essence of public radio at that time; it is exactly that type of programming that commercial radio could not provide and that public radio set out to produce. Nevertheless, public radio still managed to produce shows that were enormously popular back in those days, most notably All Things Considered and Morning Edition on the network level.

Those working in public radio acknowledge the changes that have taken place. Most seem to feel that the changes in programming have been for the better. Some may have reservations about corporate funding sources, but overtly maintain that programming has not been affected by it. Generally, those within the public radio

community that I spoke with feel that the evolution of programming has largely been motivated by increasing the production quality and serving a larger audience. To them, such practices are not synonymous with commercial radio. Some believe that being dependent upon listener sensitive income ensures that stations will be held more accountable to the listening public. Programmers can no longer just air shows that please themselves, audience be damned. There also seems to be a drive towards professionalism that many feel was not there in the past. I've been told that many of the old programs were poorly produced, and uninteresting. They feel that many of the changes in programming were ones regarding execution and becoming more professional—in short, producing shows that people will want to listen to.

These perspectives regarding the evolution of programming sound plausible and valid. However, after conducting the research for this dissertation and presenting it in the preceding chapters, it became obvious that economics or commercialism are indeed playing an increasingly significant role in the recent history of public radio. The data clearly demonstrates that stations now possess characteristics that are very similar to commercial radio. The decision to carry or produce any particular program or format is based largely on the potential return in revenue gained by having a large and devoted audience. In general, there is a business rationality that was not as prevalent in public radio's past.

Over the years, public radio has had to increasingly rely on financial sources other than university and government budgets. Many stations have now taken on local underwriting, and all conduct on-air pledge drives, seeking donations from

listeners. The U.S. Government set up the CPB in 1967 as an independent funding source for public television and radio hoping to ensure its freedom, not only from market pressure but also from political pressure. This is why Congress appropriated CPB money in three-year blocks: It would be insulated from congressional dynamics. However, given periodical congressional attacks on public broadcasting, there have been leaks in that three-year insulation. When the CPB was being created, a more fool proof way of ensuring public broadcasting was discussed at the time of the CPB's inception: to set up a permanent trust or foundation that would fund public broadcasting indefinitely. Another proposal would have put a sales tax on radios and television sets that would finance the CPB. This proposal was put to bed by the Nixon Administration, and never seriously considered since (Hoynes, 1996).

The Ramifications of Commercialization

The primary goal of this dissertation was to examine three public radio stations and assess how these local stations may have been affected by an increased presence of commercialism. I found out that each station has changed in its programming, becoming less diverse in its subject matter and more homogenous in its programming. This is something that all three stations held in common. However, when looking deeper, I discovered many variances in each station's policy, practices, and philosophy regarding their work. Two of the three stations under study, the Urban/Eclectic station and the News/Talk station, seem to have taken on the new commercial rationality illustrated in the literature on public broadcasting. They are

more comfortable with and accepting of the newer practices such as focusing on the core audience, paying close attention to ratings when making programming decisions, using local underwriting, and in their style of on-air fundraising. The Traditional/Classical station seems to be resisting most of these newer, more commercial, practices.

I feel this new philosophy regarding public radio has taken hold, not necessarily by choice, but out of necessity despite what some of my informants have expressed. Public radio stations are now out in the commercial market, and have developed the appropriate survival skills. The advent of this more commercial existence of public radio has had an effect on what is heard on public radio. In this section, I will illustrate specifically how the growth of commercial rationality has changed public radio.

Classical Gas

In an article published in Harper's (1998) pianist Charles Rosen discusses the possible demise of classical music. Classical music seems to have fallen on hard times recently. The audience for classical music is believed to be shrinking: record sales are down and some orchestras are having trouble selling tickets to performances. Rosen reveals that only about 36 commercial radio stations in the U.S. still feature classical music, and public stations are starting to abandon it in favor of programming that will ensure funding. In the article, he cites various possible reasons for the crisis in classical music placing blame on business people, conductors,

musicians, composers, popular music, and the audience. Whatever the cause or causes, the article ultimately asserts that classical music is not as economically viable as it once was due to dwindling public interest.

The simple fact is that classical music *is* not commercially profitable. This is the reason why it is disappearing from commercial stations. When a commercial station decides what type of music to put on the air, it is totally based on the ability to sell advertising and turn a profit. Initially, this was not viewed to be a problem for those concerned with classical music because it had a stable outlet on public radio. Public stations did not have to rely on audience numbers to the extent that commercial entities did. Rosen states that the commercial market's inability to support classical music has led to classical music's dependence on support from non-profit organizations such as universities, and cultural foundations. Public radio fits well into this argument. They are a non-profit organization that has performed the role of preserving classical music for many years. However, classical music seems to be losing the safety net it once found in public radio.

This issue was particularly relevant within the fieldwork for this dissertation. Two of the three stations in the case study sample, the Urban/Eclectic and the News/Talk stations, have signals that overlap and, to a certain extent, serve the same geographic region. The Urban/Eclectic station phased out classical music programming in the early 1980's, and the news station dropped their classical music format in 1996. Both changes were motivated by economic realities. Although listeners protested both stations when their respective changes were made, they

always had other places to find classical music on the dial. Within that same general region was a commercially owned classical station to which people could listen in the absence of classical music on the local public stations. This is particularly interesting because the dynamic in effect was a mirror image to what is suggested in the Rosen article: instead of finding asylum in public radio, classical music in this area found a safety net in a local commercial station. However, this safety net was not to remain intact.

In the fall of 1997, the local commercial station changed format to one that focused on what is commonly referred to as “Modern Rock” and has even more recently changed to a “Classic Soul” format. This station had been the purveyor of classical music since 1960. According to a series of articles in the local newspaper, this station had changed ownership five times since 1995 when the federal government loosened the restrictions on radio ownership. This station had a small, but affluent and loyal audience. Another news article stated that people looked at it as a “provider of culture” and not a business. Despite listener loyalty, the current owner, a national media conglomerate, decided to change the format after the first year of ownership when it was believed to have turned a two-million dollar profit. Though the station did make money, it was not enough by today’s standards and the change was made. The reasoning behind this is illustrated in the following quotes from two news articles...

...the ad community just won’t support stations with older listeners. Broadcasters don’t run the media, ad people do. And their fixation with the age 18-34 audience is forcing programmers to make changes away from radio that appeals to older listeners.

...It's impossible for a niche format like classics to "succeed" where radio stations are often expected by their new group owners to increase cash flow 20 percent a year for the next five years.

As a result of the change, the surrounding geographic area, a major metropolitan area, currently has very little classical music on the air. A similar chain of events has taken place in other U.S. cities, leaving them with no classical music programming.

In the absence of classical music, people have organized an effort to put classical music back on the air. One of their strategies was to petition the local public stations to program classical music. They found little response from these stations in serving their musical interests. Both stations were unwilling to make major changes in their programming. The following interview passage reflects the rationality of the Urban/Eclectic station when considering classical music. I inquired about the amount of classical music on their station (The station has one classical program on Sunday mornings).

I think it's 1%. And even that, It's recognizable as a classical show, but it's a classical mix. It's not straight up, long-form classical. That's for a couple of reasons. Up until recently we had a commercial classical competitor...

...the classical niche is only so big, and to try to subdivide that even more wasn't very wise. But now even with the loss of that station, we researched the idea of switching, but it would be a horrendous wrenching change for us and it would probably be about the same market position as we have. I mean that station, in the 25-49 year old demographic group, the last Arbitron rating, we had a bigger share of that group which is a real critical group for fundraising. We had a slightly larger share than them, so why go through that and end up basically in the same spot...

...There's just not too many compelling predictors out there that make changing to classical seem like a good idea. Even with the demise of the commercial classical station.

The above statement is an excellent example of how programming decisions are very much influenced, if not dominated by, financial concerns as opposed to more cultural, artistic, or educational ones. Classical music had a definite, but small audience in the region, and one station may have adequately served those people. Therefore, that public station saw that they had the freedom to change knowing that it was available elsewhere.

The existence of that commercial station was also a factor in the recent major change at the News/Talk station...

At the time that we made the change, there were still a number of other stations that offered classical music. So we weren't going to not have classical music and then just leave the listener high and dry. If that was going to be the case, I think we would have made a different decision, *or* maybe we wouldn't have had the declining audience because we would have been the only game in town. But that was not the case.

Since then, the News/Talk station has picked up some classical music programming. Aside from the over night classical music service, they now carry Performance Today from NPR, and recently picked up the weekly syndicated broadcasts of the local professional symphony which lost its local broadcaster when the commercial station changed format. It seems as though this decision was based on a sense of mission in public broadcasting.

...I think that these are sort of community outreach functions that public radio stations should provide if it makes sense within the format. And it's a great thing to promote to let the community know that you are interested in promoting the arts.

This comment suggests there may still be an underlying philosophy at the News/Talk station that transcends economic rationality and the need to ensure a stable flow of incoming revenue. It suggests that they are making the distinction between commercial public rationality.

Whatever the reasoning behind the programming choices at these public stations, the result seems to be that, much like commercial radio, musical expressions now have to be economically viable to make it on the air, regardless of its educational or cultural value. It is very clear that the declining presence of classical music is based purely on finances. These decisions are not based on any personal displeasure with classical music. This phenomenon stands in direct opposition to what people felt public radio should be about at the time NPR was founded. When looking at the history of public radio, it is readily apparent that programming was not to be based on economics. Today it is an unmistakable reality.

This dynamic may have its effect on other types of music. Listening to public radio, one can hear music that is not offered by commercial sources. Things like Bluegrass, Folk, ("real") Jazz, and ethnic music may also disappear if they do not result in revenue for a particular station. The ultimate result will be that all musical forms may be dictated or threatened by market rationality. It is no longer enough to just make money, but it has to make as much money as possible. Music has been related to the market for centuries, but the influence the market has on music today is unprecedented. As recently as 30 years ago (when NPR was taking shape), even popular music (which has always been considered to be more commercially driven by

the market than classical) seemed to evolve on more artistic terms rather than profitability.

De Paul Philosopher and Critical Theorist, Bill Martin, recognizes the increased commercialization of cultural elements. In his book, Music of Yes: Structure and Vision in Progressive Rock (1996), he discusses how the larger socio-economic context is reflected in cultural and artistic expression. The book is a social-historical analysis of British “Progressive Rock” band *Yes*. Though the subject matter is rather specific, I feel that the book can be viewed as a case study that illuminates much larger issues. Indeed, Martin does not limit his analysis to *Yes*, but other musical groups, artists, and events when developing his arguments.

What made *Yes* relevant to Martin’s discussion was that their music shunned the idea of what would be perceived as commercially viable. Founded in the late 1960’s, *Yes* recorded songs that were influenced by classical and jazz music. Their compositions were much longer in length, structurally complex, and featured lyrics that expressed communal and feminist ideals. This type of music was not generally heard on rock radio up to that point. It was not profitable. Martin points out that *Yes* were not the only experimental band recording albums in those days. Many other musicians in Rock, Jazz, or Classical were embarking on more experimental ventures.

Martin’s argument is that this era of experimentation was not merely the result of the individual actors involved, but the reflection of a time when Western culture in general was in a time of experimentation and protest: the late 1960’s and early 1970’s. The late 60’s and early 70’s were a time when the capitalist system was in a

state of retreat, or at least regrouping, because of the social and political climate at the time of the Vietnam War. This created an atmosphere where capitalist interests like record companies were less likely to try to control the cultural product. Music and other cultural expression were largely unhindered by today's standards.

Martin reinforces his argument that history and economics influence cultural expression by examining *Yes*' development into the late 70's and 1980's, the point at which the capitalist system started to regain its prominence and influence in the world. Martin suggests this trend was perhaps accentuated by the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. He says all culture was influenced by the new climate. By that point *Yes* was producing shorter, more radio friendly songs. Concurrently, commercial radio was (and still is) unwilling to play songs longer than 3-4 minutes in length, perhaps forcing musicians to shape their music to commercial standards or face abandonment by the radio community. Since the 1980's Martin argues that our culture has been almost totally commercialized and co-opted by the market. He says that today, cultural expression is a clear representation of Horkheimer and Adorno's notion of "Culture Industry", an issue to be discussed later in this chapter.

There is an interesting parallel between Martin's story and the development of public radio that warrants some attention. When considering the timeline of Martin's case study, one could see a distinctly similar path of events taking place in the development of public radio. The CPB and NPR were founded in the late 1960's and early 1970's respectively. Immediately following that was a period of experimentation and creativity in public radio that lasted for several years. By the

time the 1980's arrived, NPR found itself having to change its programming due to financial troubles and the waning of public funding in the wake of the Reagan Administration. One could argue that much like musical expression, public radio, and other cultural entities were also pulled into line by strengthening capitalist sentiment.

Though this section illustrates Classical Music's struggle for survival, Rosen (1998) suggests that it may survive indefinitely, as long as there are individuals who want to play such music. It can be given a life by future generations. He illustrates how classical music was perpetuated in the earlier 20th century by the children of Jewish immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe, and today Japanese and Korean children are being exposed to classical music. He is not sure, however, where the next generation will come from, but stresses the importance of making it available to young people...

If music is made available to the young, either through records or in the schools, enough eccentrics will turn up. The music will live, as it always has, in the musicians, and they will somehow preserve until they find an audience for it (p. 58).

So, classical music can survive the crisis it is currently experiencing as long as it finds a way to be exposed to new people. This is where the importance of hearing such music on the radio becomes apparent: exposing people and finding Rosen's "eccentrics". In light of this, the role of radio, public or otherwise, becomes even more important since music and art education are so often being cut in the public schools. Children may not be exposed to music there like Rosen suggests. Also, Rosen indicates the importance of recordings in finding new interest in classical

music. Exposure by radio stations is important for recordings to survive. Radio airplay creates an interest, and in turn, a market for the recording industry, regardless of genre. If radio is not playing classical music, then interest will shrink, making classical recordings more difficult to find on store shelves. Public radio is the most likely chance for classical music to be played over the airwaves.

Issues of Diversity

Within public radio, women and ethnic minorities are well represented on the staff, both at the local and national level. These people not only were employed at these stations, but they held very important or high ranking positions at the stations. The Public Radio community should be commended for this. I found this to be quite noticeable, and have not experienced such diversity in most other organizations. In fact, NPR was once recognized by Ms. magazine for the women who perform very significant functions in public radio (Wilson, 1984). The article noted that, at the time, the staff of All Things Considered was over 50% female.

Culturally diverse hiring practices notwithstanding, perhaps a more important issue is whether these stations are actually giving a voice to or servicing these diverse groups, both culturally and journalistically. This applies to women, ethnic minorities and people of lower economic classes. To an extent, these stations are being forced to abandon public broadcasting's original ideals concerning diversity so that they may guarantee a stable audience. This issue was addressed in an interview with a person at the News/Talk station...

It's an important issue to address. I don't think any one station is going to be able to do that. I think there needs to be separate programming streams and separate stations, public stations, serving separate audiences, in the way that in the commercial spectrum you have different stations serving different audiences. Now you got your spectrum problems and limitations, but a station can't be all things to all people, and do its job well. Any successful public station has to pick its target audience in the same way commercial stations have to pick a target audience. Because what I like and what people in our demographic group like is going to be very different from what certain other ethnic and socioeconomic groups are going to want to hear. It's really the reality I think. Now it's too bad there aren't five different public radio stations.

This is an interesting remark. When one speaks of targeting a particular audience in public radio, they are basically referring to the practice of building the core audience: a group of loyal listeners who listen to one station more than any other. The development experts in public radio assert that this converts into listener sensitive income. When a station becomes dependent upon this practice, it seems as though the people they are only reaching (if not actively targeting) are those of a certain economic standing. They are active consumers, and have the extra money to make a membership contribution to the station. Therefore, trying to reach a diverse body of people may threaten a station's fiscal health. If a station needs to develop a core audience in order to bring in adequate revenue, then diversity is incompatible with the survival of public stations. The core audience consists of people who listen throughout the day and week, not just to one or two specific programs. To maintain a core audience, programming is developed to have more continuity; more continuity means a loss in diversity in the programming.

If stations are serious about serving a diverse audience, then they must provide programs or program content that appeals to other types of listeners. This would mean a heterogeneous broadcast schedule, once commonplace at public stations. However, a core audience does not facilitate programs that are sensitive to diversity. This dynamic was played out at the Urban/Eclectic station...

...our last wrenching change was, oh God how many years ago did we eliminate the bilingual programming? The *Hispanic Collective* had been the best of the community producers and so they stayed on the longest, but there came a point where the roadblock that that programming was posing in our continuity of listening. We finally had to eliminate that programming and that was a painfully terrible, I mean it took 8 months of wrangling to resolve that. After a point, they were bypassing us going right to the University's governing board, and there were some very ugly confrontations at the public meeting.

In another interview at the News/Talk station this issue was addressed in more detail...

I don't think you can really change your audience very much without basically doing a significant change in your culture. And I think that the whole trend in radio, in broadcasting today is narrowcasting, that you need to know who is supporting you and serve them well, especially in public radio. A lot is working against greater diversification of the audience because we are so reliant on member contributions. A huge percentage of our budget and every other public radio's budget comes from people who are willing to give us money for something they can get free. And the only way we can get people to give money for something they can get free is by being their favorite station. That's the rationale behind getting people to contribute. And I just don't see that you can veer too far from serving that core audience, by diversifying your programming to reach audiences that are likely to be fringe or not find you at all.

Despite the absence of any attempt to serve or represent a diverse audience, some feel that public radio stations can still do an adequate job of representing the

perspectives of those people. Educating the existing core audience of issues concerning that portion of the population...

I'd say it's possible to do a better job of educating your core audience about non-majority populations or interests or things like that if you present it in a way that you understand who you are talking to. But for us to do an hour or so here or there targeted at a completely different audience from who listens to us most of the time will alienate the people who do listen to us most of the time, and will not attract people who don't listen to us most of the time. They are already being served by other media. It's really difficult to attract people who are quite unlike your core. The best way that you build your audience is find more people who are like the people who listen to you all the time and get them to tune in to you on occasion, and hope that they tune into you more.

The fact that public radio is a very white educated audience I think is no accident. And I also think it is very unlikely to change given the realities of radio programming. The only thing that they can really do is say, "OK, we don't want this audience any more, we're going to go after another one." In the same way really that we did when we changed format.

The possibility of a public radio station changing formats to serve a different core audience is there, but has not happened. Now format changes, like the one alluded to in the above statement, has usually led to a change in serving one well-educated white audience, to another. This provides another well founded reason why local affiliates might be able to better serve the public interest by being provided a stable and independent funding source both at the state and national level. Despite this lack of diversity, programs like Latino USA and Afropop Worldwide as well as some pieces done on Morning Edition and All Things Considered provide some representation of cultural diversity.

Professionalization

The need for each station to be competitive in the pursuit of income has brought about a higher level of professionalism at local stations. An individual brought this up in the following passage...

We don't have the luxury of sounding less good than the other stations that our listeners are listening to, and our listeners, at least the majority of them... have access to the top ten market. So we aren't going to get cut any slack for having sloppy board operators or whatever. Now does that mean we can't do things that you wouldn't hear on commercial stations? Well, of course, we can, but it's going to require a certain level of competence and ability which is something that maybe in the olden days that wasn't a necessity.

This professionalism has led to the reduction or elimination of participation or involvement by volunteers from the local community. The need to maintain and build an audience has led to the elimination of most of the programs that were produced by community volunteers. This was reflected in earlier interview passage that addressed how the Urban/Eclectic station eliminated its community programs, and homogenized its format in the face of a financial crisis in the 1980's.

In the past, the public station was an outlet for community volunteers to come in and produce programs, or for young people to learn the world of broadcasting that would evolve into a career while in college. Many, if not most of the people I interviewed initially got involved with public radio as students, which turned into a professional vocation. These types of opportunities no longer exist at these stations...

This has also led to another trend in public radio... ...which is the increasing professionalization of staffs. It used to be students could come and get on the air here. They can't any more. And I think that's true in most stations now that rely on listener contributions. It's not to

say there couldn't be a role for students, but the days of coming in and sitting down and doing your own show, or the days of even working weekend shifts are gone. That's really sort of too bad because I started at a small station in a college town.

The elimination of community or volunteer participation may have an impact on the future of public radio. Despite the expressed need to sound as professional as possible, this individual expressed concern for where public radio will find its next generation of staffers if there is no longer any opportunity for new people to get involved...

...And you got to start somewhere. We don't know where the next generation of people to do this kind of work is coming from. There's a great dearth of talent, of people who are interested in working in public radio. And I think partly because we've choked off the training system. It's partly because relatively speaking, salaries are low. There used to be just a group of people who just would do anything just to work in public radio because it offered such creative freedom and it offered a real sense of journalistic integrity that you didn't see in other places. I still think there's that quality cut above that public radio has, but whether it's a passion like it used to be I'm not so sure. It's becoming increasingly bureaucratized and corporatized.

Aside from cutting off public radio's farm system, increased professionalism may have an impact on a larger trend taking place. In his book Television and the Crisis of Democracy (1990), Critical Theorist Douglas Kellner explains that increasing corporate control of media sources has led to a decline in the public's access to media sources. As a result, the majority of the viewpoints that are expressed over the airwaves are those of the capitalist elite, in turn preventing an open exchange of ideas and perspectives, an essential element of democracy. In light of this dynamic, Kellner stresses the importance of community involvement in the

media. He views the public access channels on local cable systems as a good outlet for individuals to express their opinions.

C. Wright Mills also addressed the importance of mass media to the existence of democracy. In Power Elite (1956) Mills described the difference between “mass” and “public”. Mills said a public would resemble a true democracy with an active and open exchange of ideas. In order for this to happen, the media would need to facilitate a two-way flow of communication and practice the art of keeping the public informed. With a corporate controlled media, communication is not as open, and is more directed at individuals without any chance of reply or rebuttal. In a situation like this, the public is informed and the existence of democracy is threatened, leading to the existence of what Mills refers to as *mass*.

When public radio was able to include a community access element to the programming, it was contributing to Kellner’s democratic media or Mills’ definition public. Now that public radio has been forced to eliminate community involvement, it too has contributed to the decline of democratic process.

Factors Leading to Commercialization

I have illustrated the evolution of public radio, how it has taken on a more business-minded rationality. I have also addressed some of the negative consequences of this development. However, for better or worse, it may well be that the course public radio has taken may have been unavoidable to some extent. The changes public radio made that lead to commercialization were perhaps a rational

organizational response in order to ensure the survival of public radio in a changing social environment.

Rational Organizational Responses

Marvin Olsen (1991) illustrates how organizational change is often an attempt to adapt in a changing social context. Public Radio stations, much like any other organization in an industrial (or post-industrial) society, come into existence in order to meet a specific goal. In the case of public radio, the goal is to provide radio programming that is an alternative to commercial broadcasting. The organization of a public radio station, or the network in general, is centered around meeting this goal. For the goal to be realized, the organization needs to continue to exist. Therefore, Olsen asserts that perhaps another, more basic, goal of any organization is to "...survive and function in its social and natural environments. Organizations must therefore consistently deal with or adapt to environmental conditions or pressures" (p. 359).

Olsen discusses organizations in terms of "input flow" and "output flow". For an organization to meet its goal, or output flow, it must also ensure its input flow. The input flow consists of all the resources needed to conduct the activity of the organization. In the case of the steel industry, they need the input of "iron ore" in order to have finished steel at the output end of the organization. Public radio, then, needs money in order to meet the operating costs of the station, and produce the alternative programming being produced at the output side. Being able to adequately

secure input flow will ensure proper output flow, and thus meet the organizational goal.

Organizations always exist within a larger environment or social context, this environment has an influence on any organization's ability to function effectively. Changes in the environment may have an impact on an organization's input source. This is when it becomes necessary to adapt. In the case of public radio, when CPB, university contributions, and other tax-based contributions started to decline, then stations needed to adapt in order to survive and continue meeting their goal. The adaptation took the form of seeking private or business based revenue sources in the form of underwriting and listener donations. The introduction of these new sources of revenue secured the continuation of input, and the very existence of public radio and its programming alternatives.

Commercialization as an Unintended Consequence

It may be easy to look at these developments in public radio and come to criticize the public radio community for "selling out". Though, as I suggested in the preceding section, decisions made by public radio may have been necessary to ensure its continued existence, these changes have had a noticeable impact on public radio programming since the inception of NPR. One can make the argument that the original goal of providing a meaningful alternative to market driven radio is no longer being met, or at least not being met to the same degree it once was. It was my first inclination to accuse public radio of knowingly "selling out". These changes came

about due to very specific and intentional organizational decisions which fostered the new era of commercial rationality. On the other hand, perhaps the changes that came about at local stations and the network over the last 25 years were not made with the intent of compromising the integrity of public radio or its mission. These consequences may not have been intended or even recognized at the time such changes were being implemented. In short, what I am suggesting is that the commercialization of public radio and the effect it has had on programming may be an unintended consequence. Public radio was just trying to stay afloat in an increasingly unfriendly social and political environment. The result of their actions may have been unforeseen by those actors involved.

British sociologist Anthony Giddens addressed the notion of the unintended consequences of human agency in his Theory of Structuration, which is laid out in his book The Constitution of Society (1984). In this book, Giddens tries to reconcile the dichotomy of human agency and social structure within the social sciences. Traditionally, social theorists chose to focus on social structure as the determining and driving factor of human action while others asserted that the course of social structure was the result of individual and intentional human agency and choice. Giddens suggested that society and individuals are equally determining of each other across time. Taking a cue from Marx's "Men make history" notion, Giddens suggested that social structure was the result of recurrent social patterns across time (Ritzer, 1996). Social structure emerges from human agency, however across time and space, the structure resulting from individual human action then seems to have a

life of its own and, in turn, has a determining influence on individual behavior and choice. This is what Giddens referred to as the “duality of social structure”.

Though Giddens places an importance upon human agency as a determining factor of social structure, he is careful to point out that human agency does not necessarily mean intention or choice. He says our actions often bring about unintended consequences. Giddens illustrates his point with the following example...

Let me mention an example taken from a theory of ethnic segregation. A pattern of ethnic segregation might develop without any of those involved intending this to happen, in the following way, which can be illustrated by analogy. Imagine a chessboard which has a set of 5-pence pieces and a set of 10-pence pieces. These are distributed randomly on the board, as individuals might be in an urban area. It is presumed that while they feel no hostility toward the other group, the members of each group do not want to live in a neighbourhood where they are ethnically in a minority. On the chessboard, each piece is moved around until it is in such a position that at least 50 per cent of the adjoining pieces are of the same type. The result is a pattern of extreme segregation. The 10-cent pieces end up as a sort of ghetto in the midst of the 5-cent ones. The ‘composition effect’ is an outcome of an aggregate of acts—whether those of moving pieces on the board or those of agents in a housing market—each of which is unintentionally carried out. But the eventual is neither intended nor desired by anyone. It is as it were, everyone’s doing and no one’s (p. 10).

These unintended consequences in turn may influence further human action, thus reproducing and even reinforcing itself. Actions carried out today will influence future acts, unintended or not...

...unintended consequences may systematically feed back to be unacknowledged conditions of further acts. Thus one of the consequences of my speaking or writing English in a correct way is the reproduction of the English language as a whole. My speaking English correctly is intentional; the contribution I make to the reproduction of the language is not (p. 8).

Over time, it becomes harder or more difficult to make a significant change in our social structure. Past actions are influencing our current and future ones. The social structure that has emerged from our individual actions now becomes more constraining and coercive.

In the case of public radio, this concept applies. Intentional decisions were made in order to ensure a steady source of revenue. However, the intention of these decisions was not to compromise public radio by taking on commercial characteristics. The intention was to maintain its existence, to save it. Once these changes were made, it may have opened the door to further changes, all introducing an increased commercial presence within public radio.

The Bigger Picture

Whatever the factors leading to the commercialization of public radio may be, we must remember that public broadcasting is not alone in its fate. An increased market rationality has been taking a hold in all aspects of our lives. This phenomenon has been recognized and discussed by a number of scholars over the years. Their ideas not only help to explain my research in public radio, but this research also can stand as a grounded example of the concepts discussed in this section.

Herbert Schiller

Communications scholar Herbert Schiller addresses the topic of commercialization at some length in his book Culture Inc. (1989). Schiller's basic

argument is that corporate rationality is controlling more and more aspects of what he calls the *public sphere*. Cultural and public places are now becoming completely dominated and controlled by the interests of corporations on both a national and international level. Such cultural endeavors like publishing, the press, film, radio, television, music, art, sports, museums, and educational pursuits are now determined by economic concerns rather than cultural ones. Schiller asserts that though some of these things have always been supported and motivated by commerce, they once were able to operate on less commercially dominated terms. The business portion of such activities as publishing companies or record companies did not have the total control over the cultural product that they have today.

Schiller links the commercialization of cultural elements with the rise of capitalism, particularly in the 20th century. Schiller recognizes that a community's economic life cannot be separated from its *symbolic content*. He says that together they represent the *totality of culture*, but in the 1900's they have been increasingly taken out of the community of group activity and turned into a business pursuit. In previous societies, there was a greater separation between cultural and economic elements.

Market control of creativity and symbolic production has developed unevenly since the beginning of capitalism, some creative fields possessing special features or offering greater resistance to their commercial appropriation than others. The amount of money (capital) required to enter a specific cultural industry has worked either as a constraint- if the amount is considerable — or as an encouragement—if the investment was minimal. Still by the close of the twentieth century, in highly developed market economies at least, most symbolic production and human creativity have been captured by and subjected to market relations. Private ownership of the cultural means of

production and the sale of the outputs for profit have been the customary characteristics. The exceptions—publicly supported libraries, museums, music—are few, and they are rapidly disappearing. The last fifty years have seen an acceleration in the decline of non-market controlled creative work and symbolic output. At the same time, there has been a huge growth in its commercial production (p. 32).

Though Schiller links this trend to the advent of Capitalism and the twentieth century, he illustrates how this trend has particularly taken hold since World War II. The post-war era left the U.S. in the role of superpower. This international standing worked well for U.S. corporations who also gained a larger international presence. Because of the strong anti-Communist climate in those years, the political climate fell in line with business interests. At the time, organized labor was as strong as ever in the U.S., but if corporations were going to globalize they needed a stable workforce at home, and anti-Communist sentiment started to chip away at labor's standing. What was previously viewed as right-wing political philosophy had shifted to the center, pushing pro-labor political philosophy to the fringe of the mainstream political spectrum. Though the American public may not have been whole-heartedly in favor of corporations at the time, corporate capitalism was seen as the only viable alternative to the perceived communist threat.

Schiller illustrates that in the years to follow, corporate interests increased their desire to maximize profits in all circumstances—this meant controlling all key levels of power including less market driven endeavors in the U.S., particularly the media and entertainment. These industries were not only viewed as a great source of profit, but also as a means of controlling information. Films were now seen as a

target for investment, regardless of artistic content. Corporatization also gave publishers and large book retailers unprecedented control over what authors wrote.

Schiller suggests that the subjugation of culture by market dynamics is so pervasive that it has gone so far as to literally shape the physical development of our communities and neighborhoods. The drive for economic control and profit led to the rise of what Schiller calls *outer cities*, areas on the fringes of urban areas that are based on automobile transportation. The prominence of downtown areas has declined in favor of shopping malls as the center of our social and economic interaction. The new shopping malls are different from the old down-towns in that they are built entirely on private land. Not only are shops private, but the parking lot, walkways, and benches are also privately held. Malls are far removed from publicly owned city streets. These privately controlled malls hinder the circulation of ideas. The older, more public, commerce hubs in cities were often the primary location for public expression. These public places are now on the decline. When public events do take place, they are often seen as commercial opportunities and are treated as such. A recent example of this is Ballatore Champagne, which advertised itself as the “official champagne” for the New Years 1999 “national toast” at Times Square. Corporations are visible at such events and often contribute support money. With corporate support of public events, people start to view the corporation as a public benefactor. Schiller states that the result of this favorable public image is that corporations do not come under the scrutiny they may well deserve.

Jurgen Habermas

Herbert Schiller is not alone in his observations regarding the domination of the cultural world by market dynamics. This notion is also addressed by the theoretical ideas of the German Sociologist Jurgen Habermas. Habermas stated that society develops along two different lines of knowledge: *technical-instrumental* rationality and *moral-practical* rationality (Ritzer, 1996). The technical-instrumental rationality is based in the mode of production, or economics. On the other hand, moral-practical rationality is based in the more cultural and communicative side of society found in human interaction. Habermas theorized that in late-capitalist society, moral reasoning becomes dominated by technical reasoning to the point that most aspects of society come to be viewed in terms of instrumental rationality.

Habermas' discussion of the dynamics of instrumental and moral reasoning is not the only issue he addressed that is relevant to this dissertation. He went further in discussing the process of instrumental domination when he addressed the dualism of *system* and *lifeworld*. The system is the more instrumental side of society that organizes complex institutions like the economy and polity. According to Seidman (1994), as the system evolves, differentiated institutions and roles develop, and there is an increasing amount of organizational predictability. Coexisting with the system, and just as essential to the survival of society, is the lifeworld. The lifeworld is the more personal side of society based in mutual understanding, social solidarity, and cultural traditions.

Over time, Habermas theorized that the system would grow to dominate the lifeworld...

He imagined a scientific-technical-administrative rationality and elite seizing control of daily life, translating moral issues into cost/benefit decisions... As the “system”, with technological and administrative ways of thinking, penetrates the lifeworld, it disrupts identities, traditional forms of life, forms of social solidarity, and cultural traditions (Seidman, p. 186).

This process, known as “the colonization of the lifeworld”, seems to be an extension of Habermas’ ideas concerning the relationship between instrumental and practical rationality.

This domination of society by the technical reasoning of the system may be readily apparent in the crises facing public radio, which has been forced to focus more on finances and less on the aesthetics or quality of their programming. One can make the argument that NPR is based in the practical rationality of the lifeworld. It was founded with the idea that news and cultural programming could be produced without concern for the economics of instrumental rationality (Hoynes, 1994; Looker, 1995). It was founded as a cultural venture rather than an economic or political one.

Douglas Kellner

In Television and the Crisis of Democracy (1990), Kellner discusses the issue of the colonization of culture with respect to our broadcasting systems (though he does not actually address public broadcasting) stating that, “Entertainment and information... are predominantly ideological and serve the interests of maintaining a capitalist system.” He refers to Habermas when addressing this issue, citing his

theory of the “decline of the public sphere”, but goes even further by stating that the problem is even worse than Habermas had suggested.

Kellner indicates that the 1980’s were a pivotal period in which corporate conglomerates and business rationality took a strong hold on broadcasting. Keeping in mind that he is referring to commercial television, he says that...

As a result, the amount of advertising has increased, commercial pressures have greatly diminished the number of documentaries and public affairs broadcasts, and the amount of innovative, challenging programming had declined. At present, therefore, commercial imperatives determine the nature, format, and structure of television, and the commercial networks are more obviously serving the interests of the transnational conglomerates that own and control them (p. 181).

Although these comments are not addressing the subject of public radio, they still address the same basic dynamic that is the focus of this dissertation. With respect to the above passage, there is one important difference between commercial and public broadcasting. Commercial broadcasting is *supposed* to respond to market pressures (although maybe not to the extent that Kellner describes), whereas Public Broadcasting was created with the intent that it would not be subject to those same dynamics. The phenomenon of the commercialization of public broadcasting may even further demonstrate the erosion of the public sphere.

Though the theoretical observations reviewed in this section do not actually address the subject of public radio, they explain the same or very similar dynamics that are at work in public radio. The fact that they do not discuss radio is not a problem since ultimately I am placing public radio in the larger cultural and economic context. The case presented in this dissertation is as an indicator of general trends

with which we are faced as a society: The ever-increasing commercialization of all aspects of our culture.

Horkheimer and Adorno

The theoretical ideas discussed in this dissertation present a critical analysis of cultural dynamics within a market-driven society. In one way or another most all the works cited (Habermas, Kellner, Schiller, Martin, Hoynes, Crispin Miller, Ermann, etc.) view media, or culture as a whole, as being profoundly influenced and directed by the economic system. Kellner (1990) gives credit for this perspective to the “first generation critical theorists” who initially started to develop a critical analysis of modern culture and media.

This critical analysis of culture is perhaps best represented in Horkheimer and Adorno’s book The Dialectic of Enlightenment (1972). Originally published in 1944, the authors introduce and develop the notion of *culture industry* in this book. Refuting the post-modernist notion that the evolution of culture is basically chaotic and non-directed, Horkheimer and Adorno argue that culture is anything but chaotic...

...for culture now impresses the same stamp on everything. Films, radio, and magazines make up a system which is uniform as a whole and in every part. Even the aesthetic activities of political opposites are one in their enthusiastic obedience to the iron system (p. 120).

In the book, they assert that culture is controlled by the capitalist interests in order to further both the ideological and economic goals of that system. The result is that all

cultural products become rationalized and homogenized, robbing them of any true artistic attribute and undermining the quality of the work.

The development and production of cultural elements are guided by a very calculated and rational process that leads to an increasing amount of homogenization within the culture. All movies, books, art, buildings, and music are essentially the same. Proponents of culture industry defend this “assembly line” style of culture as a necessity due to the size of society. Things need to be carefully planned and organized if any cultural products are going to reach such a large population.

How culture industry became subservient to the economic system is explained by Horkheimer and Adorno. In modern society, the traditional industrial elements such as petroleum, electricity, and financial institutions are “the real holders of power” and need to be appeased by the culture industry which is dependent upon them for material resources, energy, and financing. Today, in the case of General Electric, A traditional power holding industry directly owns a piece of the culture industry (NBC). Without the existences of these industries, the culture industry could not carry out its mass production of cultural goods.

The result of this subservience is that the culture industry is hesitant to alienate the real power industries. They have the power to select what items of cultural expression are to be distributed to the masses. In this selection process they are usually unwilling to choose things that are too conflictual with the system. This further contributes to the lack of difference within cultural elements. The ideological content of our culture is streamlined and controlled. There is little actual choice

available to the masses, but the illusion of choice is maintained through demographically targeted marketing efforts. A movie that appeals to an 18 year-old male is essentially the same as one geared towards the middle-aged woman.

Marked differentiations such as those of A and B films, or of stories in magazines in different price ranges, depend not so much on subject matter as on classifying, organizing and labeling consumers. Something is provided for all so that none may escape; the distinctions are emphasized and extended... ...Everybody must behave (as if spontaneously) in accordance with his previously determined and indexed level, and choose the category of mass product turned out for his type (p. 123).

The illusion choice is further bolstered by the choice of brand-names, but Horkheimer and Adorno suggest that there is no meaningful difference between Chrysler and General Motors. The same could be said for Coke and Pepsi, Nike and Reebok, or K-mart and Wal-Mart. The culture industry has the ability to set the limits of variation and freedom in cultural expression. Because of the need to ensure a return on their investment, cultural products are formulaic and the culture industry often is not willing to take a chance on something that may be too deviant from the standard. Things that have little potential to produce "exchange value" are not supported by the industry.

There is, however, a tendency for true innovations and real differences to exist within a society driven by culture industry, but Horkheimer and Adorno indicate two ways in which these cultural derivations are brought into conformity. First, from time to time, innovations develop that prove to be quite popular and therefore possess significant exchange value. This may come in the form of the independent filmmaker, a small publishing house, or some other purveyor of cultural expression.

These successful deviants are brought into the industry almost immediately, giving the parties involved a stake in the system, and thus co-opting them...

It is still possible to make one's way in entertainment, if one is not too obstinate about one's own concerns, and prove appropriately pliable. Anyone who resists can only survive by fitting in. Once his particular brand of deviation from the norm has been noted by the industry, he belongs to it as does the land-reformer to capitalism (p. 132).

One could think of countless examples supporting this passage. Previously deemed a threat to society by many, the songs of the Rolling Stones are now used to sell countless corporate products. Another example is found in the appearance of novelist Kurt Vonnegut in a commercial for the Discover Card. I found this particularly shocking considering Vonnegut's early writings were so overtly anti-corporation if not anti-capitalist. Perhaps the same dynamic of co-optation could also be applied to public broadcasting. Once deemed subversive and leftist in its content, it is now seen as respectable and trendy. In fact, PBS is practically a brand name with the Sesame Street store and The Store of Knowledge now seen in many shopping malls which benefit the local PBS station.

Horkheimer and Adorno indicate another mode of ensuring conformity. Those who are deviant in their endeavors, but are not deemed appropriate or useful to the culture industry are brought into line not by co-optation, but by starvation. Those non-conformists will not be "selected" by the industry as is, if one is to succeed in the culture industry, he or she must alter their efforts to fit within the system. Otherwise, the non-conformist has a difficult time being sufficiently compensated for his or her pursuits.

According to Horkheimer and Adorno, the commercialization of culture need not be concealed. The fact that it now develops with a business rationality is turned into an ideology that is accepted among the masses... "Movies and radio need no longer pretend to be art. The truth that they are just business is made into an ideology in order to justify the rubbish they produce." (p. 121) People accept this system as is and do not question it, thus limiting social protest without physical force.

This limitation of difference eventually leads to the control of individual consciousness since people are rarely exposed to deviant perspectives. In a society that champions the existence of individuality and freedom of choice, Horkheimer and Adorno argue that these things are merely an illusion. Our choice is limited and our individuality is abolished. What we are left with is what the authors call *pseudo individuality*. The apparent differences between people are merely superficial, and only maintain an illusion of choice.

Horkheimer and Adorno's discussion of culture industry is abstract and quite broad in its scope. Though not totally following the theoretical outline of culture industry, the examples given of Kellner, Hoynes, and others lends the ideas of Horkheimer and Adorno an historical and empirical context. Overall, Horkheimer and Adorno seem to come across as being quite cynical and absolute. Their depiction of culture industry would have one believe that all facets of our culture are corrupted and void of any meaningful difference or quality. Personally, I felt as if there is still the potential to resist the system of culture industry. Even more surprising, the culture industry itself can produce things that are significantly different or even lie in

opposition of the corporate cultural system. Though one may say public radio has been co-opted, I still believe that in many ways, public radio can be seen as a true and meaningful alternative. Douglas Kellner recognizes this potential and discussed it at some length.

Cultural Resistance

Despite the criticisms of public radio in this dissertation, it is still fair to recognize the fact that in comparison to commercial radio, public radio may still be a breath of "Fresh Air". In fact, some of those who have criticized the course of public broadcasting point out that public radio has done a much better job at remaining true to the values of public broadcasting than public television has. James Ledbetter (1997) suggests that NPR's ability to include local news inserts during ATC and Morning Edition, its practice of reading listener feedback over the air, and the use of regular call-in segments during some shows make it quite interactive and true to the populist ideals of public broadcasting. Kellner also speaks rather approvingly of public radio. He says that while PBS television programming has become elitist and non-controversial due to the presence of underwriting...

NPR in the United States provides some excellent alternative programming. Localism in public radio also seems to be far superior to local initiatives in public television, given that many local National Public Radio stations are producing worthwhile programming. Such programming should be encouraged, and more federal interest and support should be directed to the system of public radio (p. 206).

Things are relative. Keeping this in mind, one can make the argument that public radio has not lost sight of its organizational goal and should perhaps be praised.

To illustrate this point concerning relativity, imagine our culture as a whole. Within a particular culture, there is always variance. Some things may be more commercially driven and others less responsive to these issues. If the whole of our culture starts to drift toward market rationality, there *still* can be variance within it. Public radio may have become more commercialized, but so has commercial radio, and every other cultural element for that matter. So by the entire culture shifting, local affiliates can be more commercialized and still provide an alternative to commercial stations. The same can be said with respect to public television: though it has become more commercial, it may still be very non-commercial when comparing it to commercial television. Conversely, when public television is compared to public radio, it may seem quite market driven.

Keeping in mind that there are no absolutes in the social world, we can draw a cultural continuum with the two ideal-types of commercial and non-commercial at each end. One could place all elements of our culture on that continuum, some being closer to the commercial side, and others approaching the non-commercial ideal. Once a number of elements are placed on that scale, one could then perhaps judge the state of public radio in comparison to other media sources. In this case, public radio would fall closer to the non-commercial ideal than commercial radio or television, most print media and perhaps even public television.

Kellner (1990) recognizes the variance within a capitalist culture, especially when it comes to the media. Unlike the original Critical Theorists and the proponents of the Instrumentalist perspective, Kellner believes that there are sources of cultural

resistance within the media. This dissension is based in the fact that the media is constituted by what he refers to as *twin forces*: Capitalism and Democracy. The capitalist force within the media views the media first and foremost as a means of maximizing profit. Secondly, capitalist forces also see the media as a means of legitimating the economic system. On the other hand, the Democratic force within the media takes a different view, placing the media in the public sector and viewing it as a channel for free speech. These two forces are both present within the media, though they are quite contradictory.

Though media sources are most often controlled by business interests looking for a return on an investment, many of the people employed in the media such as journalists, actors, writers, and directors are minimally concerned with capitalists motives in media and are more concerned with democratic or artistic ones. Kellner believes this is why the media occasionally produces news stories and television programs that are seemingly at odds with the capitalist social order. Capitalist interests often have tendency to let such things happen as long as it proves lucrative for them. The result is that sometimes elements that resist commercial rationality surface in our media and our culture at large.

...And in the End

One can view public broadcasting, and specifically public radio, as a source for this cultural resistance. In a time when most media sources seem to be increasingly driven by profit, perhaps public broadcasting sources are a place where

the democratic elements and ideals regarding the media have not yet been overcome by Kellner's *capitalist forces*. Quite simply, no public radio station is trying to turn a profit, they are merely trying to break even and stay on the air. The very core of the station is still not driven by profit or the market. However, commercial elements *are* present, and are gaining a larger stake in public radio. Though no particular station is trying to turn a profit, their activity and endeavors are becoming a source of profit for underwriters, both directly by advertising, and indirectly through milieu control. This has and does have an effect on public radio programming. These factors render public radio a commercial entity to some extent. Once it becomes an element of commerce then its evolution and development cannot take place without being influenced by commercial dynamics.

This is why it is so important to look at larger trends when considering the state of public radio. What is happening in public radio and public television is happening in all aspects of our lives. It seems that an ever increasing amount of our activities are being subject to the ability to make money. When we walk through our halls of our public universities, we are bombarded with advertisements. The bulletin boards in college classrooms are literally covered with credit card applications, and ploys to sell Spring Break vacation packages. College bulletin boards, once a way for the educational community to communicate with each other, now just another billboard almost impossible to ignore. Places of public gathering (and public ownership) like stadiums and amphitheaters now bear the name of a business interest. Instead of the Metropolitan Center, Minneapolis now has the Target Center. Phoenix

has Bank One Ball Park, and the new home of the Detroit Tigers will be Comerica Park, bearing the name of a bank that actually refused to finance the construction of that stadium. Public restrooms now have advertisements within. Even in the very personal act of urination, people want to expose their goods or services to us. The existence of any element of our society may continue only if it is granted legitimation by the capitalist market.

As a community we need to be conscious and aware of these elements. As Schiller (1989) suggested, corporate sponsorship of public events often facilitates positive feelings from individuals. They see these efforts as philanthropic, and fail to recognize the potential danger involved. Once we become aware of this phenomenon, and discuss its consequences, or potential consequences, we can discuss the prospect of setting this process in reverse and reclaim our public space, and our personal space.

If left unchecked, this process could lead to (and has led to) the elimination of cultural elements that have no use for or lie in odds with the market. School curricula, books, movies, music, and perhaps even family activities will only be granted existence if they prove advantageous for economic interests. As a capitalist society, we have a tendency to think that all things are indeed supported and driven by commerce, and that this is right and just. We feel that this is just the way it is and has always been. People may be correct to feel that this is just the way it is, but it has not always been like this. This research or an informal look at the past will reveal that the world's cultural events and activities were not always driven and supported

by economic interests; there was once a greater separation. We need to regain that separation between the commercial activities and cultural expression. This will ensure free artistic and political expression, allowing for real differences in culture and thought. These are essential to any democracy.

Public radio still maintains a noticeable wall between itself and commercial radio. This is apparent in its programming. It still is different and it remains an alternative. It has resisted and it has served us well, but commercial elements have been steadily chipping away at it over the years. The wall is shrinking, and does not stand as tall as it did in the days prior to underwriting, membership drives, and audience research. Whether or not the process of creeping commercialization will come to a halt remains to be seen. Perhaps public radio has reached a point of stability, and this is as far as the commercialization will get. Perhaps the public radio community will recognize this trend and do whatever is possible to stop it. Maybe as a community we will recognize the problem and help public radio and other forms of cultural expression to maintain the remaining insulation from the market. This is seeing the glass half-full. On the other hand, perhaps the process of commercialization is so subtle that public radio will continue to evolve along commercial lines along with the rest of our culture without us even recognizing it, let alone trying to stop it. The glass is now half-empty (and leaking). The answers to these questions will be revealed in time. A follow-up study of these stations five or ten years down the road would be very interesting and would add perspective to the

findings of this dissertation, but we should not wait that long to consider the problem at hand. Now is the time to be concerned.

Appendix A
Program Schedules for Sample Stations

Program Schedule for the Urban/Eclectic Station:

Spring, 1998

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
5:00AM	Mom. Ed.	Mom. Ed.	Mom. Ed.	Mom. Ed.	Mom. Ed.	Fresh Air	LOE
6:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	Pmts Jml.	Am. Life
7:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	Car Talk	Local Health
8:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	Wknd. Ed.	Wknd. Ed.
9:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
10:00AM	Music Variety	Music Variety	Music Variety	Music Variety	Music Variety	Local Blues	Local Clsscl.
11:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
12:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	Local Folk	Car Talk
1:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	T and S
2:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	Music Variety
3:00PM	Fresh Air	Fresh Air	Fresh Air	Fresh Air	Fresh Air	Local Blgrss	"
4:00PM	ATC	ATC	ATC	ATC	ATC	"	"
5:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	Mtn. Stage	Cyprus Ave.
6:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	Afropop WW
7:00PM	Local Jazz	Local Jazz	Local Jazz	Local Jazz	Local Jazz	Local Jazz	Local Jazz
8:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
9:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
10:00PM	Music Variety	Music Variety	Music Variety	Music Variety	Music Variety	Local World	Music Variety
11:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
12:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	Music Variety	"
1:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
2:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
3:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
4:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"

Program Schedule for the News/Talk Station:

Spring, 1998

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
5:00AM	Mom. Ed.	Mom. Ed.	Mom. Ed.	Mom. Ed.	Mom. Ed.		
6:00AM	"	"	"	"	"		
7:00AM	"	"	"	"	"		
8:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	Wknd. Ed.	Wknd. Ed.
9:00AM	BBC	BBC	BBC	BBC	BBC	"	"
10:00AM	D.Rehm	D.Rehm	D.Rehm	D.Rehm	D.Rehm	Car Talk	THBOK
11:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	WDYK	"
12:00PM	Fresh Air	Fresh Air	Fresh Air	Fresh Air	Fresh Air	Am.Life	Sound Mry
1:00PM	Local Talk	Local Talk	Local Talk	Local Talk	Local Talk	Fresh Air	PHC
2:00PM	Talk of Natn.	Talk of Natn.	Talk of Natn.	Talk of Natn.	Talk of Natn.	"	"
3:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	Savvy Travlr.	Am. Life
4:00PM	ATC	ATC	ATC	ATC	ATC	S.L.Science	Local Music
5:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	Wknd. ATC	"
6:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	PHC	Wknd. ATC
7:30PM	Market Place	Market Place	Market Place	Market Place	Market Place	"	"
7:00PM	The World	The World	The World	The World	The World	"	T and S
8:00PM	Perf. Today	Sym. Bdcst.	Perf. Today	Perf. Today	Perf. Today	Local Music	New Dmns.
9:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	MFHS
10:00PM	Music Through The Night (classical-syndicated) till 5:00AM					MFHS	
11:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	MTTN	MTTN
12:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
1:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
2:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
3:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
4:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"

Program Schedule for the Traditional/Classical Station:

Spring, 1998

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
12:00PM	C. Ctiron	C. Ctiron	C. Ctiron	C. Ctiron	C. Ctiron	—	Aud Organ
12:30PM	News	News	News	News	News	—	News
12:45PM	Soviet Press	Mich. Opn.	Molecules	London Echo	German Press	—	Gmny Tdy
1:00PM	Showtime	Firing Line	Showtime	Lecture Hr.	Showtime	Keyboard	B. Gabriel
1:30PM	News-MofM	News-MofM	News-MofM	News-MofM	News-MofM	"	LA Philmnc
2:00PM	MofM	MofM	MofM	MofM	MofM	Opera	"
2:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
3:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
3:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	Songbag
3:45PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	Metaphor
4:00PM	Bookbeat	McD on Film	Spectator	Massey Lctrs	Mge. Money	"	U. Recitals
4:30PM	Chldn's Book	Chldn's Book	Chldn's Book	Chldn's Book	Chldn's Book	"	"
4:45PM	Scnce. Jnl.	Environment	French in Air	UN Scope	Adv. of Leo	"	"
5:00PM	ATC	ATC	ATC	ATC	ATC	"	"
5:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	BBC Rpt
6:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	Una Raza	LCCM
6:30PM	Musica	Musica	Musica	Musica	Musica	"	"
7:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	Mge. Money	"
7:30PM	Bookshelf	Bookshelf	Bookshelf	Bookshelf	Bookshelf	McD on Film	Bookshelf
8:00PM	The Drum	Msc. B. 1800	Brth Cntrl Tdy	S. Cnrt Rqts.	Art of Orgn	Crankcase	Firing Line
8:30PM	"	"	Dtch Crpsrs	"	"	"	"
9:00PM	Smmr Cnrt	Smmr Cnrt	Smmr Cnrt	"	Smmr Cnrt	"	Boston Sym.
9:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
10:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
10:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
11:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
11:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	Keyboard
12:00AM	News&SO	News&SO	News&SO	News&SO	News&SO	"	News&SO

Program Schedule for the Urban/Eclectic Station:

June, 1971

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
6:30AM	Aubade	Aubade	Aubade	Aubade	Aubade	-----	-----
7:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	-----	-----
7:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	-----	-----
8:00AM	"	"	"	"	"	-----	-----
8:30AM	"	"	"	"	"	-----	-----
9:00AM	Audition	Cncrt. in Morn.	Cncrt. in Morn.	Request	Cncrt. in Morn.	Cncrt. in Morn.	Sun. Cncrt.
9:30AM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
10:00AM	"	Filmusic II	"	"	"	"	"
10:30AM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
11:00AM	Musicale	Musicale	Musicale	Musicale	Musicale	"	"
11:30AM	"	"	"	"	"	TPTT	"
12:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	Musc. Gmnny.
12:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	Fmch. Mstrks.
1:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	King of Inst.
1:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	B.O.Aftn. Rap	"
2:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	Opera House
2:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
3:00PM	Aftn. Rap	Aftn. Rap	Aftn. Rap	Aftn. Rap	Aftn. Rap	Folk Music	"
3:30PM	"	"	"	"	Like It Is	"	"
4:00PM	Alt. Service	Alt. Service	Alt. Service	Alt. Service	Alt. Service	"	"
4:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
5:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	Kaleidophone	"
5:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
6:00PM	LA Philmnc.	Cncrt. in Eve.	Cncrt. in Eve.	Cncrt. in Eve.	Cncrt. in Eve.	"	Euro. Fest.
6:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
7:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	Indian Music
7:30PM	"	"	Koussevitzky	"	"	"	"
8:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	20th Cent.	Request
8:30PM	Goon Show	Civnd. Orch.	Boston Sym.	"	TPTT	"	"
9:00PM	Jazz Today	"	"	Vox Ex	"	Audition	"
9:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
10:00PM	"	"	"	Like It Is	"	"	"
10:30PM	"	Whatever	Umoja Media	Jazz Yestdy.	Filmusic	"	"
11:00PM	"	"	ABS Speaks	"	No Small Sng.	"	"
11:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
12:00AM						Jazz today	

Program Schedule for the News/Talk Station:

October, 1971

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
10:00AM	Singer's	Background	Cham. Rctl.	Song Rctl.	Jazz Revstd.	———	———
10:30AM	Bks Radio	Bks Radio	Bks Radio	Bks Radio	Bks Radio	———	———
10:45AM	Music Box	Local Report	Jrnl. of Air.	School Brd	Commentary	———	———
11:00AM	Koussevitzky	Cntmpty Music	Asia Society	Wrld. Affrs.	Book Beat	No School	———
11:15AM	"	"	"	Wrld. of Sci.	"	"	———
11:30AM	"	"	Power Ctr	Frnch. Mus.	Kybrd. Clsscs.	"	———
12:00PM	Noon Show	Noon Show	Noon Show	Noon Show	Noon Show	Noon Show	Sndy. Music.
1:00PM	Lecture Hr	Lecture Hr	Lecture Hr	Music Scene	Lecture Hr	Pigskin Preview	"
1:30PM	"	"	"	CBC Forum	"	Football	"
2:00PM	News	News	News	News	Musicale	"	"
2:05PM	Musicale	Musicale	Musicale	Musicale	"	"	"
3:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	Organ. Rctl.
3:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	Poets Tdy.
3:45PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
4:00PM	ATC	ATC	ATC	ATC	ATC	"	Sun. Supmnt.
4:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	
4:45PM	"	"	"	"	"	Scores & Music	
5:00PM	"	"	"	"	"		
5:15PM	"	"	"	"	"	Jazz Revstd.	
5:30PM	Info Special	Info Special	Info Special	Info Special	Info Special	"	
5:45PM	"	"	"	"	"	News	
6:00PM	Dinner Music	Dinner Music	Dinner Music	Dinner Music	Dinner Music	Dinner Music	
6:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
7:00PM	Conv. @ Chi.	Studio Shcse.	Power Ctr.	Studio Shcse.	Koussevitzky	Musc. Gmny.	
7:30PM	Intl. Call	Antiqua	Hist. Opertta.	It's Up To You	"		
8:00PM	News	News	News	"	News	News	
8:05PM	MofM	MofM	MofM	"	MofM	MofM	
8:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	
9:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	
9:45PM	Eve. Lecture	"	"	"	"	"	
10:00PM	"	Background	"	Special	Wrld. Affrs.	News/Music	
10:15PM	"	"	"	"	Px for Health	"	
10:30PM	Bks. Radio	Bks. Radio	Bks. Radio	Bks. Radio	Bks. Radio	Attitude	
11:45PM	News Final	News Final	News Final	News Final	News Final	News Final	

Program Schedule for the Traditional/Classical Station:

June, 1971

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
12:00PM	C. Ctiron	C. Ctiron	C. Ctiron	C. Ctiron	C. Ctiron	———	Aud Organ
12:30PM	News	News	News	News	News	———	News
12:45PM	Soviet Press	Mich. Opn.	Molecules	London Echo	German Press	———	Gmny Tdy
1:00PM	Showtime	Firing Line	Showtime	Lecture Hr.	Showtime	Keyboard	B. Gabriel
1:30PM	News-MofM.	News-MofM	News-MofM	News-MofM	News-MofM	"	LA Philmnc
2:00PM	MofM	MofM	MofM	MofM	MofM	Opera	"
2:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
3:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
3:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	Songbag
3:45PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	Metaphor
4:00PM	Bookbeat	McD on Film	Spectator	Massey Lctrs	Mge. Money	"	U. Recitals
4:30PM	Chldn's Book	Chldn's Book	Chldn's Book	Chldn's Book	Chldn's Book	"	"
4:45PM	Scnce. Jnl.	Environment	French in Air	UN Scope	Adv. of Leo	"	"
5:00PM	ATC	ATC	ATC	ATC	ATC	"	"
5:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	BBC Rpt
6:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	Una Raza	LCCM
6:30PM	Musica	Musica	Musica	Musica	Musica	"	"
7:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	Mge. Money	"
7:30PM	Bookshelf	Bookshelf	Bookshelf	Bookshelf	Bookshelf	McD on Film	Bookshelf
8:00PM	The Drum	Msc. B. 1800	Brth Cntrl Tdy	S. Cnrt Rqts.	Art of Orgn	Crankcase	Firing Line
8:30PM	"	"	Dtch Cmpsr	"	"	"	"
9:00PM	Smmr Cnrt	Smmr Cnrt	Smmr Cnrt	"	Smmr Cnrt	"	Boston Sym.
9:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
10:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
10:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
11:00PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
11:30PM	"	"	"	"	"	"	Keyboard
12:00AM	News&SO	News&SO	News&SO	News&SO	News&SO	"	News&SO

Appendix B
**Glossary of Program Schedule Abbreviations,
and Program Descriptions**

Below is an alphabetical list of all the program abbreviations in the program guide tables. The underlined term is the show as it appears in the tables. The full name of the show is in parentheses. An asterisk (*) before a listing indicates a current show that has had its title changed to ensure anonymity of the station.

20th Cent (*Music of 20th Century*)
ABS Speaks (*Same*)
Afropop WW (*Afropop World Wide*)- African Music, NPR.
Aftn Rap (*Afternoon Rap*)- "Open ended"
Alt Service (*Alternative Service*)- Music, news, and weather.
Am Life (*This American Life*)- NPR
Antiqua (*Musica Antiqua*)
Art of Orgn (*Art of Organ*)
Asia Society (*Asia Society Presents*)
ATC (*All Things Considered*)- News Magazine, NPR
Aubade- (*Same*) Morning news, music, and weather.
Aud Organ (*Auditorium Organ*)-
Audition (*Same*)
B. Gabriel (*Bernard Gabriel Views the Music*)-
B.O. Aftn Rap (*Best of Afternoon Rap*)-
Background (*Same*)
BBC Rpt (*BBC World Report*)-
BBC- *World News*.
Bks. Radio (*Books by Radio*)
*Book Rding (*Book reading*)- Reading of various literary works.
Boston Symp (*Boston Symphony*)- Syndicated Broadcast.
BrthCntrl Tdy (*Birth Control Today*)
CBC Forum (*Same*)
C. Citron (*Casper Citron Program*)- Daily interviews with people in the arts.
Car Talk- NPR
Cham. Rectl (*Chamber Recital*)
Clvnd Orch (*Cleveland Orchestra*)- Syndicated Broadcast
*Clsscl Concert (*Classical Concert*)- Locally recorded and produced concerts.
CnctIn Morn (*Concert in the Morning*)
Commentary (*Same*)
Concert in Eve (*Concert in the Evening*)
Conv. @ Chi. (*Conversation at Chicago*)
Cntmpry Music (*Contemporary Music*)
Crankcase (*Same*) Progressive rock and new jazz.
Cyprus Ave. (*Cypress Avenue*) History of rock and roll. Syndicated
D. Rehm- (*Diane Rehm Show*) -Talk, NPR.
Dinner Music (*Same*)
Drum, The (*Same*)
Dtch Cmpsr (*Dutch Composers*)
Euro Fest (*European Music Festival*)
Eve. Lecture (*Evening Lecture*)
Filmusic II (*Same*)
Firing Line (*Same*) Public affairs with William F. Buckley
Folk Music (*Sound of Folk Music*)
Football (*Same*)- Broadcast of University's football game.
Fresh Air- (*Same*) Daily arts and public affairs interviews.

Frnch Mstrks (*French Masterworks*)
Frnch. Mus. (*French Music*)
Gmny Tdy (*Germany Today*)
Goon Show
Hist. Operetta. (*History of Operetta*)
Indian Music (*Same*)
Indnpls Sym (*Indianapolis Symphony*)- Syndicated Broadcast.
***Info Special** (*Information Special*)
Intl. Call (*International Call*)
It's Up To You (*Same*)
Jazz @ LC (*Jazz From Lincoln Center*)- Ed Bradley hosts, NPR
Jazz Revstd. (*Jazz Revisited*)- Local jazz music programming
Jazz Set- Branford Marsalis hosts, NPR.
Jazz Today
Jazz Yestdy (*Jazz Yesterday*)
Jrnl. of Air. (*Journal of the Air*)
Kaleidophone
Keyboard (*Keyboard Immortals*)
Kybrd. Clsscs. (*Keyboard Classics*)- Classical music programming
Kinetic City (*Same*)- Science for Kids, NPR
King of Inst (*King of Instruments*)
Koussevitzky (*Koussevitzky Legacy*)
LA Philmnc (*Los Angeles Philharmonic*)- Syndicated Broadcast.
Latino USA (*Same*)- NPR
LCCM (*Library of Congress Chamber Music*)-
Lecture Hr (*Lecture Hour*)- Recorded lecture from university.
Like It Is
***Local Blgrss** (*Local Bluegrass*)- Locally produced Bluegrass program.
***Local Blues** (*Same*)-Locally produced blues music programming.
***Local Brdway** (*Local Broadway*)- Locally produced Broadway music.
***Local Clsscl** (*Local Classical*)-
***Local Folk** (*Same*)- Locally produced folk music programming.
***Local Health** (*Same*)- Locally produced health and medicine program.
***Local Jazz** (*Same*)- Locally produced jazz programming.
***Local Latin** (*Same*)- Locally produced bilingual Latin music and news program.
***Local Mgz** (*Local News Magazine*)- Locally produced news, interviews, and syndicated programs.
***Local Music** (*Same*)- Locally produced music programming.
***Local Talk** (*Same*)-Locally Produced talk and interview program.
***Local Report** (*Same*)
Market Place (*Same*)- Business News, PRI
McD on Film (*McDonald on Film*)
Met Opera (*Metropolitan Opera*)
MFHS (*Music From the Hearts of Space*)
Mge Money (*Managing Your Money*)
MofM (*Music of the Masters*)
Morn Ed (*Morning Edition*)- News Magazine, NPR
Msc B 1800 (*Music Before 1800*)
Mtn Stage (*Mountain Stage*)- Live music, PRI
MTTM (*Music Through The Night*)- Syndicated Classical Music.
Musc Grmny (*Music From Germany*)
Music Scene (*The Music Scene*)
***Music Variety-** Locally produced Rock, Folk, Jazz, Country, etc....
Musica (*Musica de Camera*)

Musicale- Classical Music
Music Box (*The Music Box*)
New Dmns (*New Dimensions*)
News Final (*Same*)
News&SO (*News and Sign-off*)
News/MofM (*News, followed by Music of the Masters*)
Noon Show (*Same*)
No School (*No School Today*)- Children's programming.
No Small Sng (*No Small Song*)
NYPH-PSO (*New York Philharmonic or Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra*) -Syndicated Broadcasts
***Opera House**- Opera Music
Opera- Opera Music
Organ. Rctl. (*Organ Recital*)
Perf Today (*Performance Today*)- Classical music and interviews, NPR.
PHC (*Prairie Home Companion*)- Garrison Keillor, PRI.
Pigskin Preview (*Same*)- Football Pre-game show
Poets Tdy. (*Poets Today*)
Power Ctr- (*Power Center*)
Prnts Jnl (*Parents Journal*)
Prts in Blue (*Portraits in Blue*)- Blues Music.
Px for Health (*Same*)
Request (*Music By Request*)
S Cncrt Rqts (*Summer Concert Requests*)
Scores & Music (*Same*)- Sports scores followed by music.
Savvy Travlr (*Savvy Traveler*)
Selected Shorts (*Same*)- Short story readings, NPR.
Showtime (*Same*)
Singer's (*Singer's World*)
SL Science (*Sounds Like Science*)
Smmr Cncrt (*Summer Concert*)
Song Rctl. (*Song Recital*)
Special (*Special of the Week*)
Songbag (*Same*)
Sound Mny (*Sound Money*)
Soviet Press (*Same*)
Studio Shcse. (*Studio Showcase*)
Sun Cncrt (*Sunday Concert*)
Sndy. Music. (*Sunday Music*)
Sunday Rnds (*Sunday Rounds*)- Medical Call-in show, NPR.
Sun. Supmnt. (*Sunday Supplement*)
Latenight Jazz (*Same*)- Syndicated, Bob Parlocha hosts.
T and S (*Thistle and Shamrock*)- Celtic Music, NPR
Talk of Natn (*Talk of the Nation*)- Talk and public affairs, NPR.
THBOK (*To the Best of Our Knowledge*)- Syndicated quiz show, PRI.
The World (*Same*)
TPTT (*The Play's The Thing*)
U. Recitals (*University Recitals*)
Umoja Media (*Same*)
Una Raza (*El despertar de una raza*)
Vox Ex (*Vox Ex Machina*)
WDYK (*Whad'ya Know*)- Quiz Show and Midwestern Humor, PRI.
Whatever (*Same*)- Revolving hosts and topics.
Wknd ATC (*Weekend All Things Considered*)- News magazine, NPR

Wknd Ed (*Weekend Edition*)-News Magazine NPR

Wrld. Affrs. (*Press/World Affairs*)

Wrld. of Sci. (*World of Science*)

Appendix C

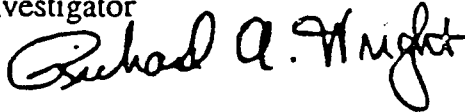
Notification of Exemption Approval From the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Date: 19 February 1998

To: Gerald Markle, Principal Investigator
Peter Nieckarz, Student Investigator

From: Richard Wright, Chair



Re: HSIRB Project Number 98-02-03

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "National Public Radio Today: The Survival of Local Stations in the Midst of Increased Commercial Pressure" has been **approved** under the **exempt** category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application. *Please note that data must be anonymous after transcription.*

Please note that you may **only** conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: 10 February 1999

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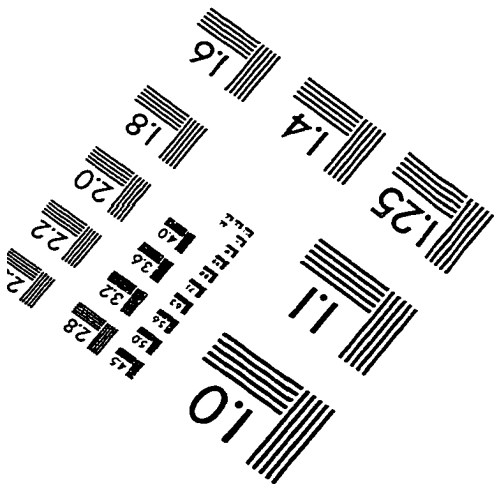
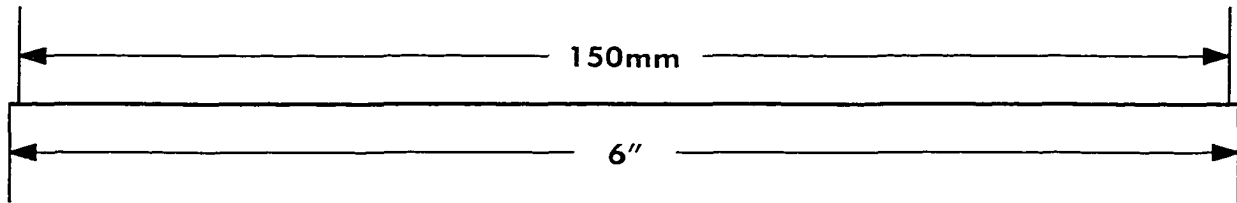
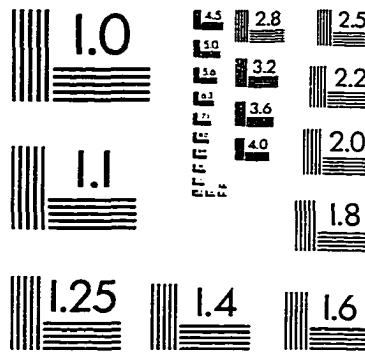
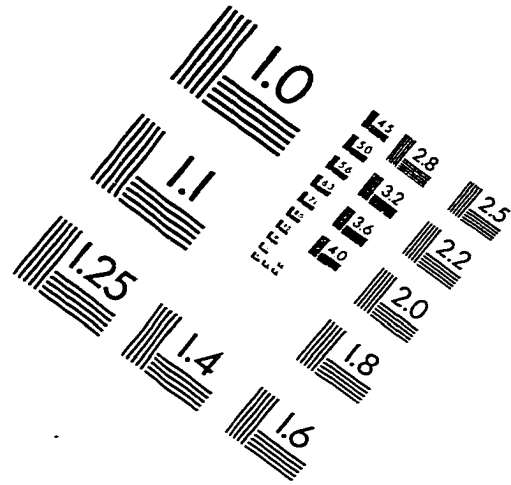
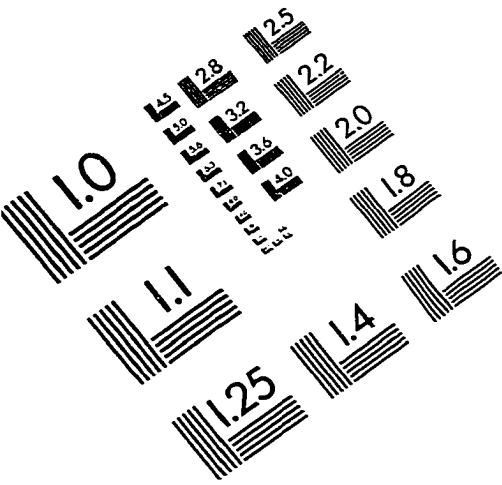
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