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From pedagogic to public: The development of U.S. public radio’s audience-centered strategies—WOSU, WHA, and WNYC, 1930–1987

Stavitsky, Alan Gordon, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1990

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FROM PEDAGOGIC TO PUBLIC:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF U.S. PUBLIC RADIO'S AUDIENCE-CENTERED
STRATEGIES -- WOSU, WHA, AND WNYC, 1930-1987

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

Alan Gordon Stavitsky, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1990

Dissertation Committee: Approved by
T.A. McCain
S.R. Acker
J.M. Foley

Adviser
Department of Communication
To Terri and Ariel
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VITA

August 11, 1956 ............... Born - Newark, New Jersey

1978 ......................... B.A., University of Wisconsin

1979-1982 ..................... Investigative Reporter/News Reporter, WAOW-TV, Wausau, Wisconsin

1983 ......................... M.A., School of Journalism, Ohio State University

1984-1985 ..................... Producer, WOSU-AM/FM/TV, Columbus, Ohio

1985-1987 ..................... Editor of Broadcast Services, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Communication

Studies in Regulatory Economics (Dr. Douglas N. Jones)
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK

Introduction

After more than six decades of operation, public broadcasting in the United States remained "a relatively minor auxiliary to the dominant private system" as the 1980s drew to a close (Rowland, 1986, p. 271). Underfunded in comparison with their foreign counterparts, many American public broadcasters responded with "quasi-commercial" competitive strategies that strayed from their educational and non-commercial origins (Rowland and Tracey, 1988; 1990). Exemplifying this conundrum were two controversies that simmered at the end of 1989. First, media magnate Christopher Whittle tempted public television stations with an offer of costly, state-of-the-art telecommunication equipment in exchange for producing material for a 12-minute daily newscast, that included commercials, to be broadcast to high schools nationwide ("A Golden Boy's Toughest Sell," 1990; Barry, 1989; Robertiello, 1989). Second, the Federal Communications Commission admonished a Cincinnati public radio station for broadcasting so-called "enhanced underwriting" credits that the commission considered "promotional and qualitative" (Barbieri, 1989c, p. 35). The ruling was prompted by a listener's complaint that such credits constituted advertising. Though the FCC ruling was later overturned (Klein, 1990),
the incidents nonetheless reflected the eternal dilemma for public broadcasters: the need to secure adequate funding and attract audiences, while remaining true to public broadcasting's educational roots and distinctive purpose. Given this seemingly divergent mission in the face of the dominant commercial system, Katz (1989) wrote of the U.S. public broadcasting system that "one is amazed that it has in fact survived at all" (p. 203).

The history of public broadcasting in the United States provides a valuable case study of how mass communication systems and organizations operate within a crucible of constraints: economic, technological, sociocultural, political. The nexus of these constraints defines the range of policy choice available to media institutions. Mass communication theorists differ as to what drives change within that range. For example, technological determinists emphasize telecommunication technology itself as the primary force for change. Cultural relativists stress the influence of societal forces upon media. A middle-ground argument, to be offered below, involves the impact of a mix of the constraining factors noted above as a catalyst for change in mass communication. This argument was examined in the context of the changing conception of audience in U.S. public radio. A structural model was posited as a framework with which to analyze the structural forces (or inputs) at play upon public radio stations. This framework was applied to three stations at various historical periods to allow comparisons of outcomes, both between and within historical periods.

Certain historical episodes may play a disproportionately significant role in the shaping of policy decisions. Put another way, serendipitous factors may influence
events in ways other than would be deduced by technological or social forces. The concept as used here is adapted from McCain (1990), in which "serendipity" refers to an accidental, chance sequence of events; the implication of fortuitousness is not necessarily intended. An exemplar is found in the organization of German radio in the wake of World War II. Allied officials were mindful of Hitler's wartime use of the national radio system for propaganda purposes. Fearful of a postwar recurrence of fascism, the Allies structured German broadcasting on the state (Lander) level, to render difficult the issuance of centralized propaganda. Obviously, technology for national broadcasting from a central facility was available and efficient; this was the dominant paradigm of the time in Western Europe. However, the serendipitous influence of historical forces overrode technological and social realities.

Similarly, in the present study, this researcher sought to examine the influence of historical serendipity upon the changing conception of audience in U.S. public radio. The central questions in this area include: What have been the important historical episodes? How have these episodes impacted upon the changing conception of audience? Especially salient are those events that occur at critical times in a station's history, such as when it began broadcasting.

Ivers and Clift (1989) argue that the academic community in the United States largely neglected public broadcasting research during the 1980s. Their literature search turned up 60 scholarly works on public broadcasting during the period 1980 to 1988; only 14 of these dealt with public radio specifically. It is hoped that the present study will offer new insights to the limited corpus of research dealing with U.S. public radio and its historical development.
Overview

The historical evolution of public radio provides a fresh exemplar of fundamental human issues being played out in the realm of communication. McCain and Lowe (1990) noted three essential issues in the design of broadcasting systems: questions of control, purview, and content. These fundamental debates are as old as broadcasting itself. Further, they are broadcasting's versions of age-old conflicts that have been pervasive in human histories. Discussion of these issues follows.

Control

This issue refers to who should own and control broadcasting institutions, and is generally seen as a public vs. private conflict. It is broadcasting's version of the eternal debate over what ought to be the appropriate domain of government. Smith (1989, pp. 22-23) described the 1980s resurgence of faith in telecommunication market forces as another swing of the pendulum that has swung constantly since seminal political theorists in the 17th and 18th centuries offered juxtaposed views of human rights and public interest. Locke and Bentham saw property as a natural right, and thus private ownership as the bedrock of freedom. In contrast, Paine, Mill and the drafters of the U.S. Constitution emphasized the aggregated benefit of the citizenry above the natural rights of the individual citizen. Smith argued that traditional parameters for telecommunication decision-making are rooted in these historical debates: "The United States has been investment-led in its policy-making, Europe has been production- and politics-led" (p. 23). A parallel argument was offered by McQuail (1986), who noted that Western European nations could be classified as pursuing "industrial" or "cultural" policies relative to broadcasting.
Industrial policy reflected support for free play of market forces, while cultural policy involved protecting and promoting national culture as well as fulfilling social goals.

Broadcasting history, as in other domains of human experience, was marked by clashes between government officials and private interests. In the U.S. Barnouw (1966, pp. 52-55) described the Navy's unsuccessful attempts to gain monopoly control over radio in the wake of World War I and the impassioned arguments in opposition. Efforts to establish a municipally financed station in New York City, WNYC, met similarly strong opposition in the early 1920s (Barnouw, 1966; Keenan, 1986; Pool, 1983). The American paradigm contrasts with that of most other nations, in which governments took the nascent radio technology and established national broadcasting systems. For example, the Sykes Committee, charged with considering the development of radio in Britain, concluded in 1923 that "the control of such a potential power over public opinion and the life of the nation ought to remain with the state, and that the operation of so important a national service ought not be allowed to become an unrestricted commercial monopoly" (quoted in Wilson, 1961, pp. 19-20). Supporters of the monopoly posited three principal arguments during later debates over the introduction of commercial broadcasting: that British broadcasting was the world's finest as a result of its monopoly status; that the only possible alternative was the American commercial system, which they contended was marked by advertising excesses and low program standards; and that spectrum limitations rendered competing broadcasting systems technically impossible (Coase, 1950, pp. 127-128). The "backbenchers" in the House of Commons who ultimately prevailed in introducing commercial broadcasting stressed the right of
listeners/viewers to enjoy freedom of program choice and the dangers of political bias under a monopoly system (Wilson, 1961, p. 85). Indeed, when a BBC official wrote to congratulate Edward R. Murrow on the CBS journalist's "See It Now" program attacking Senator Joseph McCarthy in 1954, the British broadcaster acknowledged that such a politically sensitive program, criticizing a government official, could only have appeared on a privately controlled channel (Kendrick, 1969).

The long-debated question of the degree of succor the government should provide public broadcasters falls within the control category. Mander (1984) argued that because the authority to regulate broadcasting rests in the commerce clause, the over-arching model in public discourse prior to passage of the Radio Act of 1927 was a market model. In that climate therefore, unlike in most industrialized democracies, public service broadcasting never assumed a central place in U.S. communications policymaking. The political ethos during the period of radio's emergence was a belief in business and individualism, unbridled by government intervention (Rowland, 1986). This was exemplified by the series of four National Radio Conferences called by Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover to relieve the aural chaos resulting from the proliferation of stations clogging the airwaves. Radio industry representatives worked closely with government officials seeking a plan for industry self-regulation, and eventually agreed to submit to legislation providing for "public interest" regulation. At the same time, commercial broadcasters frequently sought to take over the frequency assignments and time allocations of educational stations, often succeeding in driving the educational broadcasters off the air (Severin, 1978).
It is hardly surprising that no preferential policy treatment was afforded educational broadcasting until 1938, when the FCC allocated AM channels for "noncommercial educational" broadcasting; even then, the allocation fell between 41 and 42 mHz, which would have required experimental receivers, and few stations took advantage (Avery and Pepper, 1979). Even President Roosevelt's New Deal administration showed little interest in reforming the broadcast policy structure. The administration secured passage of the Communications Act of 1934, which did little more than reiterate the Radio Act of 1927's provisions of private ownership in the public interest (Kahn, 1984). Further, the administration offered scant support to the Wagner-Hatfield Amendment to the 1934 Act.

The Wagner-Hatfield Amendment would have directed the FCC to set aside 25 percent of the broadcast spectrum for educational, non-profit radio use. In addition, it would have permitted educational broadcasters to sell airtime to make their stations self-supporting. Commercial broadcasters vigorously opposed the amendment, and its proponents were disorganized. The Roosevelt administration was impatient because the debate slowed the movement of the act through Congress. A compromise was reached directing the FCC to study the question of spectrum allocation to educational institutions, and the Wagner-Hatfield Amendment was defeated (Brown, 1989). The following year the FCC recommended against spectrum allocation, instead calling for the good faith cooperation of commercial broadcasters in providing airtime for educational purposes. Attempts at commercial-educational [private-public] cooperation "produced much rhetoric and lofty ideals but little, if any, substance" (Avery and Pepper, 1979, p. 22).
Educational broadcasters were successful in getting the first 20 of the 100 FM channels reserved for non-commercial use in 1945. However, some leaders of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters who participated in the allocation proceedings were convinced that the FCC reserved these FM channels only because they were unwanted by commercial interests (Nord, 1978). Similarly, educational broadcasters' delight over the 1952 reservation of channels for educational television was tempered by the fact that 162 of the 242 allocations were on the UHF band, for which few receivers existed (Blakely, 1979).

Public broadcasting through the late 1980s operated in a U.S. milieu in which private interests predominated. This shaped many of the decisions made both by government officials and by the public broadcasters themselves. At the government level, despite persistent criticisms of private, commercial broadcasters, little reform was undertaken. Perhaps the harshest indictment was the FCC's 1946 report on "Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees," widely known as the "Blue Book," which criticized the lack of local and public issue programming and excessive advertising (FCC, 1946). But Kahn (1984) noted that the FCC failed to enforce the "Blue Book" with any degree of vigor, and suggested that the very potency of the document rendered it ineffectual. As for the public broadcasters, prior to passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, they often relied upon private foundations for the type of program-funding support that their foreign counterparts received from public monies (Smith, 1989). After the 1967 Act, Rowland and Tracey (1988) argue that public broadcasting's response to the private-dominated environment was adoption of a "quasi-commercial status that threatens the clarity of its distinctive
Among the programs available to public radio listeners in 1989 were "Car Talk," in which two auto mechanics dispensed repair advice amidst wisecracks, and "What D'Ya Know?," a call-in quiz show that offered pink lawn flamingos, among other oddities, as prizes (Ward, 1989).

Purview

This category refers to the drawing of boundaries of service and to the balance of power between authorities. It may be seen as analogous to the debates throughout U.S. history over the appropriate level of power granted the Federal government relative to the states, and to the states relative to local authorities. Such conflicts date to the drafting and ratification process of the U.S. Constitution itself, in which Federalists and Anti-Federalists clashed over the extent of central government power, and remained evident in 1980s policy debates such as surrounded Ronald Reagan's "New Federalism." In the realm of broadcasting this purview debate is manifest in the following issue: Should radio and television be a service of the Nation-State or of local communities, serving the interests of nationalism or of regionalism and localism? Broadcasters are confronted with finding a balance between local control and programming that serves their communities, and the advantages of joining a network. This is a factor not only in making programming and operating policy choices at the local station level, but in the design of broadcasting systems. National broadcasting systems dominated the development of European radio and television, with most programming originating from a central facility. That paradigm began to change, however, as more local stations began
broadcasts in that region's 1980's mediascape of competition and privatization (Jakubowicz, 1988; McCain and Lowe, 1990).

In Europe the historical existence of national Post, Telephone and Telegraph monopolies resulted in telecommunications markets divided along national lines (Ni Shuilleabhain and McCain, 1986). Ferguson described the "comforting fable" that developed when broadcasting arrived in which each nation believed it could establish a system reflecting "its political and economic priorities, cultural traditions and current technologies" (1987, p. 41). This "strain toward national control and protectionism has dominated communication policy formulation at the expense of local or regional access and control opportunities" (McCain and Lowe, 1989, p. 6). Jakubowicz (1988) claimed that European officials responded to social forces that gained momentum in the 1950s and 1960s, notably decentralization and democratization, with the establishment of local radio stations. But he cautioned that many of these stations were local simply in terms of location, and did not broadcast local service programming. It should be noted that other locally based European radio stations, especially those referred to as "Community Local Radio" by McCain and Lowe (1989), do provide service tailored specifically for a municipality or other community of shared interests. Similarly, community radio stations in the United States, which are non-commercial, stress local service, usually eschewing national networks such as National Public Radio in favor of community involvement in their programming and broad citizen participation in station operation and governance (Barlow, 1988).
The U.S. situation is mixed, with the official imprimatur given local service while in practice many stations offer programming produced and distributed from a central source. American radio began with independent local stations drawing upon local talent (Siepmann, 1946). When networks became a potent force, the FCC in 1938 launched a "chain broadcasting" investigation which determined that stations affiliated with networks utilized more than 97 percent of the total evening broadcasting power of all U.S. stations (FCC, 1941). In issuing regulations governing network business practices relative to local station affiliates, the commission emphasized the centrality of localism: "Local program service is a vital part of community life. A station should be ready, able and willing to serve the needs of the local community" (FCC, 1941, p. 57).

The FCC again stressed the significance of localism in its 1960 Programming Policy Statement:

the principal ingredient of the licensee’s obligation to operate his station in the public interest is the diligent, positive and continuing effort by the licensee to discover and fulfill the tastes, needs, and desires of his community or service area for broadcast service (1960, p. 7294).

This statement broadened the concept of local public service to encompass actual broadcaster ascertainment of community needs. Though later deregulation eliminated formal community ascertainment requirements, local service remained part of the broadcaster’s formal public interest obligation in the late 1980s (LeDuc, 1987). Nonetheless, American television stations delegated the bulk of their programming responsibilities to networks and syndicators, with local, community service production as an adjunct.
Similarly, U.S. radio stations in the late 1980s were increasingly turning to program services provided by out-of-town syndicators ("Network radio," 1989). As LeDuc (1987) argued, the FCC was incapable of formulating regulatory policies to transform radio and television stations into the "locally programmed entities that public law favored" (p. 13).

The national/local issue consistently plagued U.S. public broadcasters. American public broadcasting germinated in the bedrock of localism. The public radio system of the late 1980s traced its ancestry to educational radio stations that developed ad hoc, primarily at colleges and universities interested in the nascent technology for its educational uses (Avery and Pepper, 1979; Brown, 1989; Eshelman, 1967; Frost, 1937; Severin, 1978; WHA Radio, 1969; Witherspoon and Kovitz, 1986). Meanwhile, many commercial radio stations affiliated with national networks that developed in the 1920s and 1930s (Barnouw, 1966; Kahn, 1984). That established the precedent of a strong centralizing influence in commercial broadcasting, still evident today in the three major television networks. In contrast, public stations remained decentralized, locally autonomous entities as non-commercial broadcasting developed, despite attempts at exchanging programs through "bicycled" tapes (See Blakely, 1979, and Wood and Wylie, 1977, for discussion of educational broadcasting's early bicycle networks). The Carnegie Commission on Educational Television acknowledged this structural reality in its seminal report that led to the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967; the commission recommended creation of a locally controlled system of public television stations to foster community service broadcasting (Carnegie Commission, 1967).
The tension between local and national interest was evident in American public television in the late 1980s. The decentralized and highly circumscribed nature of U.S. public television, which is the legacy of localism, was blamed by some station officials for their weak standing in the increasingly competitive media environment (Stavitsky, 1988). PBS stands for Public Broadcasting Service, not System. It is a membership organization owned by the stations that distributes, but does not produce, programming. Nonetheless, as a national organization it often clashes with local stations over issues of centralization (Mulcahy and Widoff, 1986). An example at this writing was PBS' decision to establish a "program executive" position with broad authority to make programming decisions (Barbieri, 1989a). Most national programming decisions at the time resulted from the Station Program Cooperative, a convoluted and arcane mechanism in which local stations cast ballots on a proportional basis (PBS, 1987).

In public radio, local/national tension was evident in such episodes as the long-simmering debate over "unbundling," in which local affiliated stations won the option to purchase "bundles" of National Public Radio programs (e.g. music, or morning and afternoon news) as opposed to paying for the entire range of NPR productions. Another episode was the restructuring of NPR's funding arrangement in the wake of the system's financial crisis in the early 1980s. Angered by what they perceived as irresponsible fiscal policies of NPR management, member stations created a funding mechanism that provided them increased influence over the budget of the national organization (Zuckerman, 1987). Further, Minnesota Public Radio's agreement to assist an Idaho citizens group with the establishment of a translator
station (to rebroadcast MPR's signal to an area not served by public radio) was denounced by other public radio officials as "empire building" and straying from "local roots" (Singer, 1989, p. 17).

Katz (1989) suggested that viewers/listeners identified more with their local public broadcast stations, which they considered to be community services, than with local commercial stations, which they considered appendages of the national networks. With localism such a strongly held value, the conflict between local station prerogatives and the need for coordination of national service was a major factor in the 1970s dispute between the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and PBS (Avery and Pepper, 1978, 1979; Pepper, 1976), and remained evident in the late 1980s.

Programming-Perspective

This category refers to the philosophy that guides programming decisions. In dynamic tension are the desires of producers versus those of audience members. Who ought to determine the content of broadcast programming? Two fundamental orientations exist -- speaker- and audience-centered approaches -- which are manifest in strategic programming decisions.

At the heart of the speaker-centered programming perspective is the broadcaster's sense of what constitutes high quality programming and the commonweal. Programming is driven by the broadcaster's values of creativity, taste and social significance, not necessarily by audience desires. A metaphor of "broadcasting-as-museum" has been offered for this programming perspective (McCain, Stavitsky, and Patterson, 1989). Like museums, speaker-centered
broadcasters measure quality not merely by audience response, but rather by the excellence of their "collections" -- or programs, in the case of broadcast stations.

The BBC is the exemplar of the speaker-centered orientation, which guided as well early educational broadcasting in the United States. The BBC's orientation was shaped in large measure by its first general manager, John C.W. Reith (later Lord Reith), who later wrote in his diary that he believed he was called by God to the BBC. Given such a view, it was hardly surprising that Reith set himself up as arbiter of what the British people should hear. Reith's philosophy was grounded in the notion that radio was too spectacular an invention to be utilized simply for entertainment and profit. He regarded education as a major part of the BBC's mission, including cultural enrichment. As a deeply religious man, Reith paid close attention to provision of religious programming, and limited Sunday broadcasts to religious and "serious" programs. Reith wrote in 1924 that the BBC was charged with transmitting

everything that is best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour, or achievement....It is indicated to us that we are apparently setting out to give the public what we think they need -- and not what they want, but few know what they want and very few what they need....In any case it is better to overestimate the mentality of the public than to underestimate it (quoted in Briggs, 1985, p. 55).

A later BBC director-general, Sir William Haley, spoke of BBC program policy as resting upon a "conception of the community as a broadly based cultural pyramid slowly aspiring upwards" (quoted in Siepmann, 1950, pp. 127-128). The three BBC program services were designed to introduce listeners gradually to increasingly sophisticated fare. Thus, over time the BBC hoped to bring British listeners to appreciate programs that the corporation deemed to have the highest cultural value.
The strength of Reith's legacy remained evident more than 60 years later when the chairman of the BBC said the network's mission in the newly competitive mediascape was still to establish benchmarks of quality against which competitors were to be tested (Hussey, 1988). Though such speaker-centered approaches were criticized as representing "cultural paternalism," the BBC's programming perspective proved influential in the development of public service broadcasting throughout the world, including the United States (Burgelman, 1986).

In sharp contrast, audience-centered broadcasters are closely attuned to the audience: their actual and potential listeners and viewers. This programming orientation is guided by the marketplace. It was fostered by the deregulatory climate promoted by the Reagan administration's FCC, which contended that the public interest was largely determined by what interested the public (Brenner, 1988). Accordingly, audience-centered programmers invest considerable effort and expense into audience research. They seek to understand the desires and behaviors of audience members, their uses of media, and their demographic classifications. Considerations of audience guide programming decisions here. The influential values are those of audience members. As Britain's Lord Foley argued during the debate, noted earlier, over the introduction of commercial broadcasting in the U.K.: "...the success of a play or a film can easily be judged by noting the number of people in the theatre. If the theatre is full, you know immediately that the play is a success; if the house is empty you know it is not" (quoted in Wilson, 1961, p. 114).
The audience-centered orientation is predominant in U.S. broadcasting, where public stations are widely viewed as ancillary. In this climate, audience research has become central to decision making in broadcasting. As Barnouw (1978) wrote: "Many executives say their personal preferences would move them in other directions but that their duty is to mass preferences as evidenced by quantifiable trends" (p. 113). While this was the case in commercial broadcasting for decades (see Beville, 1985), public broadcasters in the 1980s became increasingly sensitive to the value of audience research (Cheney, 1980; Eastman, 1984; Keegan, 1980; LeRoy, 1980; Wheeler, 1987; Williams and Krugman, 1981; Woal, 1986). Beginning in the late 1970s the Corporation for Public Broadcasting funded audience research in public radio (Barbieri, 1989b); the public telecommunication trade newspaper Current published a research column in each issue; research consulting firms for public broadcasters developed and some public stations added research staffers. Public radio's "research guru," George Bailey, applied research methodologies, such as focus groups, developed for his work in commercial radio (Mahler, 1989, p. 24). As the general manager of a Denver public radio station wrote in Current: "Why do we do it? With radio and other media changing so rapidly, public radio also must change. To do this we need an accurate assessment of how our stations and the rest of the media world are perceived and heard" (Giovannoni and Wycisk, 1989, p. 10).

In public television, the speaker/audience tension was manifest in the simmering debate over the mission and goals of the industry. On one side were speaker-centered "traditionalists" who wished to serve specialized audiences, albeit small ones, with programs that could not be found on commercial television. On the other
side were audience-centered station leaders "who believe that if public television is to survive it must change to accommodate the times; they would give television audiences more of what they want to see, rather than what they 'need' to see" (Boyer, 1987, p. 1).

Burgelman (1986) noted the universal conundrum for public broadcasters: if program standards were directed toward high standards (read speaker-centered), then the public broadcaster is condemned for not reflecting popular tastes for which tax dollars are paying; if the broadcaster competes aggressively with the commercial sector for audience, then there is criticism for using tax dollars yet failing to provide an alternative. The Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting, generally known as Carnegie II, acknowledged that American public broadcasting represented "a truly radical idea": an attempt to respect the artistry of the producer plus the needs and wishes of the audience, as well as satisfying the political forces that provided the resources (Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting, 1979, p. 11). Carnegie II conceded at the time that the U.S. system did not work well. Perhaps the continual ferment in U.S. public broadcasting is a result of the struggle to pursue both speaker- and audience-centered strategies. Indicators such as the increased interest in audience research and development, and the shift to audience-centered programming/operating strategies, point to a shift along a continuum to increasingly audience-centered programming strategies. The challenge of this study is to document this changing nature, and to relate it to external forces.
Key Concepts: Conception of Audience

Questions of audience are at the heart of mass communication research in the United States (Allor, 1988). More specifically, conception of audience is a fundamental issue for broadcasters. Siepmann (1950) wrote of the need for the radio broadcaster "to envisage the circumstances and aptitude of those whom he addresses" (p. 271). Charles Curran, former director-general of the BBC, was describing the centrality of conception of audience when he wrote that no public broadcaster "could be expected to set out on (their) task without having some idea of (their) attitude to the society in which (they) are to operate" (Curran, 1979, p. 89). The central questions in this area for this study are: How do public broadcasters view their audiences? How is this conception of audience manifest in sources of data? How does this conception of audience translate into programming and operating philosophies and strategies? Public broadcasters are subject to tension between speaker- and audience-centered philosophies. That is, as described above, should broadcasters present what listeners "need," in the broadcasters' view, or what listeners "want"?

The literature dealing with the relationship between medium and audience offers a variety of approaches, but, as McQuail (1987, pp. 215-216) noted, no consensus conception of audience has arisen. Consideration of the audience was a concern of early rhetoricians such as Plato and Aristotle, who held divergent views. Plato believed a true rhetorician could adapt his discourse to each member of the audience, while Aristotle argued that speakers should concern themselves with characteristics of audiences in general (Golden, Berquist, and Coleman, 1983). The
later epistemological rhetoricians, from Bacon to Whately, were called "audience-centered" for their emphasis upon relating communication to the nature of the human mind. Blair (1861) urged clergymen to sit in an imaginary pew and reflect upon a hypothetical sermon to appreciate the reaction of a typical congregation. Such work provided one of the foundations of the British period of rhetoric, that the audience should provide the starting point in preparing for discourse (Golden, Berquist, and Coleman, 1983).

Modern-era communication theorists expanded the conception of audience. Mead's (1934) concept of the "significant symbol" posited the idea that communicators could be influenced themselves by their messages, in effect becoming part of their own audiences. Weaver (1970) included radio appeals and audiences in his discussion of how speeches are directed to special audiences in unique situations. Booth (1963) introduced the concept of "rhetorical stance" in referring to the communicator's position relative to the listener, the occasion, and the desired response. This essay was relevant for students of mass communication as Booth included discussion of the rhetorical stance of advertisers and entertainers.

With the developing ubiquity of mass media in this century, conception of audience became central to "locating the site of the impact of the media" (Allor, 1988, p. 217). Allor (1988) argued that mass communication theory "oscillates" between assigning power and effects to producers or audience members. Early research assigned the major locus of power to message producers, affording little initiative to audiences. Bauer (1964, p. 127) argued, however, that audiences "proved intractable," making decisions about whether to attend to specific messages
and possibly disregarding them. Dexter and White (1964) stressed that communicators composed messages based upon notions of their audiences. For example, White's (1950) "Gatekeeper Study" of a newspaper wire editor revealed how the gatekeeper held in mind a conception of readers when selecting stories.

Early audience researchers and broadcasters also wrestled with the conception of audience issue. Lazarsfeld and Stanton, in the introduction to a volume on radio research, raise

the question of what relationship should exist between the wants of the audience and the cultural function of the industry. In order to keep financially alive, the industry must serve the largest possible number of people. But in order to best serve the whole community, the industry should be the voice of its intellectually and morally most advanced sector (1949, p. xiv).

As noted earlier, Lord Reith, who headed the British Broadcasting Corporation for its first two decades, believed the BBC had a responsibility to educate and advance culture. His conception of audience, then, was of a citizenry in need of uplift.

Contemporary critical scholars offered a further variety of approaches to the conception of audience. Political-economic analysis, as exemplified by Smythe (1977), conceptualized the audience as a commodity, the potential attention of which is sold to advertisers. Post-structuralist film theory examined the relationship of audience members to the text (see Kaplan, 1986). Cultural studies scholars attempted to link audience interpretations (decoding) to social relations, as in Morley's (1986) analysis of television viewing within the family system. Postmodernism viewed the audience as essentially inert, a metaphor for the "mass" in society: "The audience is constituted on the basis of 'its relation to the object and its reaction to it'; the [television] audience is nothing more than a 'serial unity'
('beings outside themselves in the passive unity of the object')" (Kroker, 1985, p. 40).

Gans (1974, pp. 69-94) identified five levels of taste in American society and described "taste publics," groupings of people who preferred different types of popular culture content, based in large part upon their educational and socioeconomic status.

It is the mass audience -- or "audience as aggregate" of listeners and viewers -- that is the conception employed in most research conducted by and for media organizations (McQuail, 1987, p. 218). Their methodology includes electronic metering of sets, use of viewer and listener diaries, and "coincidental" telephone surveys (Beville, 1985). Such research yields audience descriptions referred to as ratings. Some representative nomenclature and definitions that follow are drawn from Beville (1985, pp. 294-299) and are expressed in radio terms (television terms are similar, except that the measurement base is households, rather than individuals):

A rating is the estimated percentage of persons, within the survey area sample, who listen to a specific program or station. A share is the percentage of individuals listening to radio who are tuned to a specific program or station for a particular time period. Cumulative ratings ("cumes") indicate the number of different people who tune to a specific program or station during a given time period. Audience ratings may also be figured for specific demographic or geographic groups.

**Tensions within Public Broadcasting**

McCain, Stavitsky, and Patterson (1989) identified two fundamental issues existing in dynamic tension which helped to account for change in public broadcasting. These are the program perspective tension, with polar speaker- and
audience-centered orientations, and the purview tension, in which there is conflict
between local and national orientations. McCain, Stavitsky, and Patterson (1989)
argued that these tensions encompass much of the conflict inherent in public
broadcasting today. They contended that change results from the impact of external
forces upon internal tensions, such as the speaker/audience and local/national
tensions. One such theory of change was Mao Tse Tung’s notion of dialectic
materialism, which held “that in order to understand the development of a thing we
should study it internally and in its relations with other things” (1977, p. 26). Central
to this method is the idea of dialectical tension, of forces opposed to one another
(internal contradictions, in Mao’s parlance) that provide a basis for change; external
factors then provide the condition for change.

Accordingly, the program and purview issues in public radio were viewed as
existing in dialectical tension, and were examined in the context of external forces
at each of the relevant historical periods as a means of analyzing change. Although
the study focussed on speaker/audience change, the local/national tension was
tracked as well to provide further evidence of the changing nature of public radio.
Because the nexus of these tensions is the cauldron of change, a grid (Figure 1) was
presented as a schema to describe this interaction graphically.

Public Radio Grid

The public radio grid (Figure 1) was adapted from a similar grid devised to
describe public television stations (McCain, Stavitsky, and Patterson, 1989). The
continua intersect, creating quadrants useful for categorizing orientations of
broadcasting systems and stations. The speaker/local quadrant describes speaker-
centered broadcasting with a local purview, which was the original conceptualization of U.S. public television, as articulated by the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television (1967). The speaker/national quadrant represents speaker-centered systems with a national purview, such as the traditional European public-service model. Audience/local systems are those driven by audience concerns, yet maintaining a local purview; critics have characterized U.S. public television stations in this way. This contrasts with audience/national systems, as typified by U.S. commercial television (McCain, Stavitsky, and Patterson, 1989).

As used in the present study, the public radio grid provided a means of displaying patterns of change that emerged from the historical analysis. The selected stations were placed along each of the continua based upon their speaker/audience and local/national orientations at each of the key historical episodes. The intersection of those placements within the quadrant was used to describe the station's basic orientation at a given period. In addition, the movement of grid placements over time was tracked to indicate shifts in orientation relative to the key dialectics. This graphic representation of change over time provided a tool for comparison within and between stations.

Grid placements were determined by the researcher based upon the data as presented in the case study chapters. Station orientations were assessed through actions, statements and documents of station officials; as well as through programming decisions. The public radio industry in 1990 was employed as an external referent to provide a reliable, consistent benchmark. That is, comparison was made to industry norms in 1990 when deciding what value to assign an
individual station at a given time. The subjective nature of this method was acknowledged and accepted on the grounds that the accuracy of a specific grid placement was not as important as developing a reliable means to display patterns of change. By that measure, the researcher believes the public radio grid served a useful purpose in the present study.

**Structural Model**

McCain, Stavitsky, and Patterson (1989) noted the common view among local public broadcasters that the idiosyncrasies of individual stations render evaluation and comparison extremely difficult. This rampant idiosyncrasy is in sharp contrast to commercial stations. For example, network-affiliated commercial television stations carry virtually every program on the network feed, augmented by newscasts, syndicated fare and movies. Relative differences -- such as staff size and number of locally produced programs -- are often proportionate to market size, though within-market differences do exist. More variety exists in the commercial radio marketplace because of the myriad of available formats. But the paradigm remains: stations may often be categorized by format with variation attributable to market size. Further, in addition to structural similarities, profits and ratings may be used as bases for comparing commercial broadcast operations.

However, in public broadcasting the divergence begins with differences in licensee type, and the diversity continues through varying formats and programming philosophies. These are only the endogenous factors, those shaping the station from within the operation. In addition, public broadcasters are acutely sensitive to exogenous forces, those which develop externally, such as economic shifts and
political vagary, which may occur at local, state or national levels. It is a challenge for the student of public broadcasting to compare such broadly disparate entities in the absence of established, consensual comparative criteria. Accordingly, the author sought to identify several important factors that shape public broadcasting organizations from within and influence them from without.

A dynamic, integrative model was developed (Figure 2) as an organizing scheme to identify the structural forces affecting public broadcasters. These forces were grouped into three categories: endogenous factors; exogenous factors that are station-specific, varying across public broadcasting stations in their impact; and exogenous factors that are station-general, impacting upon all public broadcasting stations. Some factors may be treated empirically, such as budgets and staff size; other forces must be analyzed subjectively, such as political environments and social trends.

**Endogenous Factors**

This category encompasses the immediate broadcasting situation -- the station and its audience. Issues of station Operation are divided into technical, economic and planning considerations. Discussion of factors related to Operation should begin with *licensee type*. The multifarious nature of the public broadcasting system has its roots in the variety of licensees operating non-commercial radio and television stations. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting identifies four licensee types: colleges and universities; independent community organizations; local school districts and governments (also referred to as local authorities); and state governments and broadcasting authorities. In public radio, among 309 stations qualified by CPB in 1989 to receive grant assistance, colleges and universities operated 180 stations,
independent community organizations 96, local authorities 20, state governments and broadcasting authorities 13 (CPB, 1989c, p. 10). Blakely (1979) suggests differences among public broadcast stations result from

differences in institutional ownership and support. The school station tends to neglect broadcasting for general audiences; the state-agency station tends to shun controversy; the university station tends to broadcast for an elite audience; and the community corporation station tends to let the budget answer questions about audience and purpose (p. 118).

CPB statistics indicate the broad fiscal differences among stations of the various licensee types. In public radio, gross expenditures for fiscal year 1984 ranged from $571,000 for the average university licensee, to $654,000 for the average community licensee, to $855,000 for the average local authority licensee (Witherspoon and Kovitz, 1986, pp. 223-224).

Some licensees operate more than one broadcast station. An example is Ohio State, which holds five licenses, three radio and two television. (Public broadcasters are exempt from the FCC's duopoly rule, which prevents commercial broadcasters from operating two stations of the same type in the same market [Avery, 1977].) This impacts Programming in that multiple licenses afford format flexibility: WOSU is able to offer separate classical music and news/talk radio services.

Licensee type is foremost among the Operation factors herein labelled economic. These are interrelated. For instance, licensee type affects the source of government or institutional support, the level of which has a bearing on size of budget, which begets number of employees. Sources of support include the community, with individual memberships, corporate underwriting and foundation grants; the federal government, through CPB and programs in the departments of
Commerce and Education; state and local governments; and universities. Again, the numbers vary wildly across public broadcasting stations, even within the same licensee type. The University of Houston provides virtually no support to its KUHT-TV, while the University of Iowa provides nearly all the funding for its radio stations (Dale K. Ouzts, WOSU general manager and NPR director, personal communication, January 29, 1988). While more than half of public television stations have annual budgets below $3 million, the community licensed public television stations in New York City, WNET, had a $30 million budget for national programming alone in FY 1987 (Yore, 1987; Dempsey, 1987). WNET received more than $8.4 million in FY 1988 program production grants from CPB; Auburn University received $5,945 (CPB, 1989a, pp. F-10-11).

Another economic factor is a station's involvement in ancillary services as additional sources of income. These may include program guides that include paid advertisements, leasing subcarriers for radio reading services or "Muzak," producing non-broadcast productions for outside businesses or agencies, and selling paraphernalia emblazoned with station logos. Minnesota Public Radio developed an entire catalog of items related to the popular "Prairie Home Companion" radio program (Larson and Oravec, 1987; Minnesota Public Radio, 1989).

The predominant technical factors are frequency, effective radiated power (ERP) and primary coverage area. In general, the lower the frequency, the better, because a given amount of ERP becomes progressively less effective as frequency increases, covering a smaller area (Head and Sterling, 1987, pp. 42-46). Most public stations broadcast on frequencies set aside by the FCC for non-commercial,
educational use. In radio, the FM frequencies set aside in 1945, by virtue of their spectrum location adjacent to television channel six, are more subject to interference than are FM stations with higher frequencies.

Primary coverage area is a function of frequency, ERP and influences such as antenna height, topography and soil conductivity. A station might cover just a metropolitan area, in the case of some radio signals, or might include parts of three states in its primary coverage area, as does KNME-TV, Albuquerque (CPB, 1989b, p. 116).

The planning category is comprised of strategic administrative matters that impact on the station's operation. Audience research is included in this category; as noted earlier, research results often drive programming decisions in public as well as commercial broadcasting. The station's objectives and mission, as espoused in planning documents and mission statements, may influence station decisions. (Some critics charged that public broadcasting's lack of an articulated vision is responsible for poor decision-making [see Rowland, 1990; Stavitsky, 1988].) External relations, comprising public relations and government lobbying, is also included in the planning category. This is necessitated by the dependence of public broadcasters upon government funds, viewer/listener support, corporate underwriting, and foundation grants.

The interplay of economic, technical and planning factors facilitates the transmittal of program content. But, while separated for parsimony in this model, Operation and Programming cannot be considered independent entities. The
efficacy of the Operation and the adequacy of a station's funding affect what it programs.

**Programming**

The essential Programming factor is **format**, which is a function of program sources and local production. Public radio formats include: classical music; jazz; a classical/jazz mix; news and public affairs, either alone or coupled with music; and eclectic or free-form (CPB, 1989c, pp. 7-8). Programming may be provided by national and regional networks and syndicated services as well as produced locally or obtained from independent producers. The growth in syndicated program sources means public broadcasters are no longer beholden to National Public Radio or the Public Broadcasting Service. As WOSU noted, in addition to NPR and PBS "we are CEN, IPS, APR, SECA, EEN, COETV, NBPC, and PMN stations as well" ("The WOSU Stations," 1988, p. 21). With this alphabet soup of acronyms to choose from, divergent programming philosophies have become manifest in program schedules. Evaluation and comparison among stations could be made on the basis of programming factors such as the mix of program sources.

**Audience Characteristics**

Audience factors include considerations of **size, composition and fundraising**, which comprises viewer/listener subscriptions, corporate underwriting and foundation support. Public broadcasting's "institutionalized mendicant status," to quote one critic (James, 1987, p. 84), makes stations sensitive to not only the number of viewer/listeners, but the type of people tuning in. James (1987) argued that "the hands that sign the checks guide the programming" (p. 86). Accordingly, audience
composition, real or desired, would prove a significant factor related to the program schedule.

Whether the hands signing the checks were attached to viewer/listeners or corporate underwriters would not change the basic interdependency between Audience and Programming. There are, however, subtle differences in the impact upon programming of station sensitivity to subscribers as opposed to underwriters. Concern for potential subscribers is manifest in the "give them what they need or what they want" debate. For example, Bill Moyers was unable to persuade some television station managers to run his series of the bicentennial of the Constitution during prime time; one station official, saying the public was tired of "castor-oil television," ran a more visually appealing Jacques Cousteau undersea program ("Castor oil or Camelot?" 1987, p. 102). Critics charge, however, that the influence of corporate underwriting leads to programming timorousness. They suggest that because the underwriter's concern is corporate image rather than cultural diversity or incisive public affairs commentary, underwritten programs avoid the controversial (Aufderheide, 1988). Consideration of audience factors as influences upon programming, therefore, should go beyond size to encompass composition and the station's dependence upon both viewer/listeners and corporations/foundations for fundraising.

**Exogenous Factors: Station-Specific**

Station-specific exogenous factors are those originating outside the immediate broadcasting situation that affect individual public broadcasting stations in unique ways. These factors include *market size; competition*, which also refers to cable
pentration and the history of competition in the given market; regulatory decisions; the status of local and state economies; and the vagaries of local and state political environments.

Market size is a significant factor in public broadcasting, as it is in the commercial sector. The larger the market, the larger the potential audience, the larger the pool of potential fundraising and underwriting dollars, and there is a larger number of competing stations, perhaps even competing public broadcasters. The large market stations are generally the most prestigious in the system and produce much of the national programming in public television. Large station representatives often dominate the various national and regional organization boards of directors and are highly influential in public television's Station Program Cooperative, which selects what national program proposals will be funded by the stations (Gellman-Nuzin, 1986).

An examination of a public broadcasting station's competitive environment must go beyond number of competitors to study the history of competition and the type of competing stations. In addition, in those markets with competition among public broadcasters, those stations that went on the air first generally have the advantage of established audience loyalties. Another relevant consideration is whether the public television UHF station is the lone UHF in the market, or whether all or most of the other stations are also on the UHF band.

High cable penetration in the market may prove beneficial to public television stations burdened with UHF allocations by providing cable viewers a clean signal and wide coverage. But there is a flip side to the cable/public television symbiosis.
After a U.S. Court of Appeals struck down in 1987 the FCC's modified must carry rules, which required cable systems to carry at least one public television station (Century Communications Corp. v. FCC, 1987; also see Quincy Cable TV, Inc. v. FCC, 1985), public stations have reported numerous cases of channel switches and outright drops from cable systems ("Real-world data," 1988; Stavitsky, 1989).

Must carry is an example of how vagary in the exogenous political environment impacts public broadcasting. While this is a station-general controversy, station-specific cases of vagary exist at local and state levels. A university station may find itself under pressure for change from its licensee, as occurred when Ohio State University administrators switched reporting lines for their stations in 1989 in an attempt to bring them under increased institutional control (Gerstner, 1989).

Regulatory and legal decisions handed down by the FCC or the courts represent another station-specific impact. Political crisis, such as a budget shortfall, may be a catalyst for change, prompting reduced funding support for public stations. Louisiana Public Broadcasting had its fiscal 1990 budget cut in half by state legislators after a steep drop in oil prices caused a fiscal crisis; the funds were later restored after lobbying by LPB officials (Singer, 1989, p. 34). The status of the local and state economies also influence fundraising prospects for local stations.

Forces related to market size and competition, coupled with the local/state political and economic environment, comprise a powerful exogenous sector that animates the immediate broadcasting situation in various ways. However, this layer is susceptible to the influence of still another layer, the exogenous station-general forces.
**Exogenous Factors: Station-General**

Station-general exogenous factors are those originating outside the immediate broadcasting situation that affect all public broadcasting stations in similar fashion. These include **vagaries of federal government policies**, the **status of the national economy** and **social trends**. It is this set of factors that offers the greatest potential value for an analysis of public broadcasting at the system-wide level.

Broadcasting in the United States developed as a commercial medium and "a public-service element was later added, in the margin or as a palliative" (Williams, p. 37). Accordingly, as Rowland noted, "public broadcasting has frequently appeared to be a principal orphan of U.S. communications policy-marking during recent years" (1986, p. 251). Despite Washington's lukewarm policy support, federal government activity is crucial to the public broadcasting community (Nord, 1978; Rowland, 1980).

There are numerous examples of how public broadcasting system action is often a reaction to government activity. One significant illustration occurred when President Nixon, angered by what he perceived as leftist commentary on public television, sought to undercut CPB and vetoed its 1972 authorization bill (Stone, 1985). PBS responded with two moves intended to forestall further political interference: creation of a lay Board of Governors, comprised of prominent Americans, to supplement its existing board of station managers; and establishment of the Station Program Cooperative as a mechanism for stations to select PBS programs (Gunn, 1972; Witherspoon and Kovitz, 1986).
Another instance of system reaction was NPR and CPB's restructuring of the system by which federal funds are distributed in public radio, which appeased Congressmen angered by waste and misuse during NPR's fiscal crisis of the early 1980s (Blau, 1989; Zuckerman, 1987). The FCC ruling challenging "enhanced underwriting" forced changes in how stations aired underwriting credits in 1990 before it was overturned by the commission (Klein, 1990). Another FCC decision, which banned "indecent broadcasts," even during time periods when children were not likely to be in the audience, prompted NPR, PBS and the Pacifica Foundation (which operates community radio stations) to join a media coalition that challenged the ban in federal district court (Singer, 1989, p. 33). In sum, the development of numerous national and regional organizations to represent the interests of public broadcasting is evidence of the system's sensitivity to the role of federal policy (Avery and Pepper, 1980; Krasnow and Longley, 1973).

The status of the national economy plays a part in federal policy-making. When the budget deficit is a priority, domestic spending programs such as support for public broadcasting come under close scrutiny. Illustrative was a Newsweek column which claimed that "government support for public television...subsidized mainly upper-middle-class audiences. A $3.5 million grant to the MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour does not serve an important national priority" (Samuelson, 1988, p. 78).

Another exogenous factor affecting all public stations is categorized as social trends. An example is the rise of the so-called "Young Urban Professional," or "Yuppie" class ("The year of the Yuppie," 1984), which created both an opportunity and a challenge for subscriber-seeking public broadcasters. The opportunity was to
tap this vein of consumers with considerable disposable income; the challenge was appealing to a group popularly perceived as acquisitive and lacking social consciousness (Miller, 1988).

The uncertainties of federal government policy, the national economy and social trends thus combine to influence the immediate broadcasting situation for all public stations. This commonality in theory would allow the public broadcasting community to unite in support of its interests. In practice, however, the history of public broadcasting is fraught with schisms that prevented development of a unified front (Avery and Pepper, 1980).

Research Questions

This study was driven by the following research questions: What exogenous forces impacted significantly upon the selected stations during the period under study? What was the perceived impact of those forces as they related to the speaker/audience and local/national tensions? How was change in the stations' strategies and perspectives manifest in their operations and programming?

Several assumptions undergirded the study. It was assumed that the two fundamental dialectics represented important issues that pulled broadcasters in divergent directions, and thus required that they be dealt with in tangible policy terms, which could be assessed. Therefore it was assumed that an examination of the changing conception of audience in public radio over time would reveal shifts in program philosophy and policy over time along the speaker/audience and local/national continua. In sum, this researcher sought to determine both evidence of the dialectical tension and the ways in which that tension was resolved.
CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Implications of Structural Model

Unlike their commercial brethren, the differences among public broadcasters, both in matters of Operation and Programming, are more apparent than their similarities. Divergence among public broadcasting stations begins with a host of endogenous factors, notably licensee type. Thus in the immediate broadcasting situation there is already a multiplicity of stations with differing structures and philosophies before the external factors are brought into play. Once in the exogenous sector, public broadcasting's dependence upon government and institutional funding renders the industry acutely sensitive to the uncertainties of political environments and political conditions on the local, state and national levels (Rowland, 1980).

Any one of the factors described above would not be sufficient to explain the differences among public broadcasters. But acting in concert, these endogenous and exogenous forces produce the diversity of public broadcasting in the United States. This parallels DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach's (1982) comments regarding their integrated model of media effects:

The established interdependencies of social systems and the media, as well as the culture and social structure of a society, set important limitations and
boundaries on the media system and have considerable impact on its characteristics... (p. 251).

They note that this requires an "almost overwhelmingly complex" model, as is Figure 2. The complexity reflects the participation of numerous players and the "feedback" nature of mass communication, in which audience reactions to media messages set in motion additional speaker actions. For instance, the popularity of "A Prairie Home Companion" hastened a revival of live variety programming on public radio (Larson and Oravec, 1987).

Despite its complexity, however, this structural model offers a framework for assessing the environment in which public broadcasters must operate at a given period in time. In addition, the endogenous/exogenous structure is internally consistent with the concept of dynamic tension employed in this study. That is, the endogenous sector is the site of the internal tension (e.g. speaker/audience, local/national) while the exogenous sectors contain the external forces that drive change within the endogenous sector.

Unit of Analysis

Using the model, evaluation could be made at the level of an individual station or market, or system-wide. However, "the ability to engage in research on a system and explain its behavior is negatively related to the system's complexity" (Dimmick and Coit, 1982, p. 4). Accordingly, they suggest organizing the complexity by employing a hierarchic taxonomy of influences upon a system. The layered approach in the present structural model was an attempt to parallel Dimmick and Coit's taxonomy of mass media decision making. While a system-wide analysis of public radio would utilize primarily the exogenous station-general factors, a study of
individual stations would utilize all three layers. The case study approach employed herein is in keeping with their recommendation that the research design allow for several different levels of analysis, including between-level influences.

Method

For purposes of this study, the structural model (Figure 2) was used as an "overlay" with which to examine the status of three selected public radio stations at given time periods. By applying a consistent framework, it was hoped that valid comparisons over time, as well as within each period, could be made as to the forces affecting public broadcasters. The factors contained in the model were viewed as "inputs," the forces acting upon public broadcasters. Actions resulting from resolution of the two fundamental tensions were considered the "outcomes," the results of the forces. Change in outcomes over time was reflected graphically in the public radio grid (Figure 1).

The difficulty in discerning a consensus conception of audience was noted above. Because no clear operationalization exists, this study approached the speaker/audience relationship from several angles. Multiple sources were examined at any one period in an attempt to make observations as to the two tensions under consideration. A good example of this "triangulation" approach was the classic Middletown study, an attempt to understand how the "average" American community lived (Lynd and Lynd, 1929). The Lynds' method was to group all human activities into six "main trunk activities," which were examined through a mix of statistical data and field observation. In the present study the forces impacting upon public radio
stations were also grouped in a parsimonious fashion, as clusters of factors, and conclusions were drawn from a similarly eclectic body of data.

This researcher initially planned to focus the analysis upon three historical episodes, discussed below, that were significant on a national level for the development of U.S. educational radio. These episodes were centered around major events that resulted in the coalescence, however brief, of educational/public radio stations into a bloc for consideration of significant issues. This is not to say there necessarily was consensus, just to note that these periods generated debate which provided an opportunity to assess the prevailing moods. Therefore, an opportunity was presented to examine the status of the two key dialectics. However, during the first site visit to examine archival materials at WNYC, New York, the researcher noted the lack of an adequate body of data for the chosen historical episodes to conduct a sufficient analysis. Further, he discovered station-specific historical episodes that appeared to impact significantly upon the station. Accordingly, the researcher modified the original plan and decided to extend the analysis over the stations' entire histories. The key historical episodes were then employed as the periods in which the status of the two key dialectics was assessed. The implications and limitations of this change are discussed in Chapter VI. "Outcomes Summaries," in which the stations are assessed using the public radio grid, are presented following the description of each station for the years 1930, 1949, 1969 and 1987, which correspond to the historical episodes.
Historical Episodes

Three seminal historical episodes in the development of U.S. public radio were originally selected for analysis, as well as a more contemporary period. The three historical episodes were centered around (1) the first Institute for Education by Radio, held in 1930 at The Ohio State University; (2) the first Allerton House seminar, held in 1949 at the University of Illinois; and (3) the establishment of National Public Radio during 1969 and 1970. In addition, the status of the selected stations was examined in 1987, the 20th anniversary of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, to provide a contemporary benchmark. Data beyond 1987 through this writing in 1990 were included when available and appropriate. Description of each of the episodes follows.

The 1930 Institute for Education by Radio

The Institute for Education by Radio was an annual conference, sponsored by The Ohio State University, that between 1930 and 1953 (excluding 1945) provided a forum for educators, commercial broadcasters, and others to discuss issues and problems of educational broadcasting. The IER was created through a grant to Ohio State's Bureau of Educational Research by the Payne Fund in 1929. W.W. Charters, bureau director, decided the money should go toward establishment of a national forum to promote education by radio (Blakely, 1979). Conference proceedings were published annually by The Ohio State University Press, providing "probably the most comprehensive record of the early development of educational radio" (Witherspoon and Kovitz, 1986, p. 17).
The IER provided educational broadcasters a forum for sharing research findings, programming ideas, and competitive strategies. Perhaps most important in the early years was IER’s role in the coalescence of educational radio stations as an industry. Representatives from college- and university-owned radio stations had formed a national organization, the Association of College and University Broadcasting Stations (ACUBS), in 1925. However, ACUBS suffered from low membership and economic difficulties, and its impact was limited until 1934 when it modified its constitution to broaden its membership and changed its name to the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (NAEB) (Wood and Wylie, 1977, pp. 23-24). In contrast the IER was conferred with a degree of prestige through its Payne Fund sponsorship and its affiliation with Ohio State’s Bureau of Educational Research, and was able to attract major national and international figures. The latter included Federal Radio Commissioner Ira E. Robinson; John W. Ellwood, vice president of NBC; William S. Hedges, president of the National Association of Broadcasters; Armstrong Perry of the U.S. Office of Education; and foreign broadcasters from Britain, Canada, Mexico and Ireland (IER, 1930, pp. vii-ix).

The objectives for the inaugural IER in 1930 were presented as follows: (1) to acquaint the leaders in educational broadcasting with one another; (2) to pool information about issues and problems; (3) to disseminate this information through publication of conference proceedings; (4) to develop a research program (IER, 1930). In addition to papers and panels on radio education, the institute featured discussion of the overall mission of educational radio. Their talks offered early evidence of the speaker/audience tension experienced by educational broadcasters,
as when P.O. Davis, manager of educational station WAPI in Birmingham, Ala., issued a caution to educators: "They must remember that they are broadcasting to serve the listener, and if they do not catch and hold his attention, they are cluttering up the air and giving nothing in return" (Davis, 1930, p. 70). Commercial broadcasters offered suggestions relating to production values, such as training announcers and editing scripts (Sutton, 1930, p. 314; Philput, 1930, p. 301).

As the first such gathering, the 1930 IER provided a special opportunity to examine the mood of educational broadcasters at an early phase of development. The 1949 Allerton House Seminar

Educational broadcasters from throughout the country were joined by scholars, government officials, and foreign educational broadcasters for a two-week seminar in 1949 at the Allerton House Conference Center of the University of Illinois. Sponsored by the university's Institute of Communications Research and the Rockefeller Foundation, the session was intended to consider the philosophy and purpose of educational broadcasting (Blakely, 1979). Though most of the participants had met many times before, the sole emphasis upon mission proved catalytic. As participant Robert B. Hudson reported:

It seemed that suddenly a great truth had been revealed which had long haunted every man present...— the truth that educational radio not only had a job to do, but it was capable of doing it. The sheer relief of getting at this matter was electrifying: the wall of repression, buttressed by years of rationalizations and expediencies, came tumbling down and educational radio, for the first time in its turbulent history, was on the move (1951, pp. 238-239).

Infused with this spirit, seminar participants in 1949 created a "bicycle" radio tape network, so called because tapes were distributed from station to station, to
share programming. The following year at the National Association of Educational Broadcasters convention it was proposed that a permanent headquarters for the radio tape network be established at the University of Illinois. A grant was later obtained from the Kellogg Foundation to operate the network for five years (Wood and Wylie, 1977). Providing access to a wider variety of programs enabled educational radio stations to broaden their broadcast schedules beyond formal education and recorded music offerings. For example, many of the NAEB network programs were public affairs forums produced by WNYC and WOSU; such programs contributed to the acceptance of news and information as a feasible and appropriate component of educational radio, which later influenced NPR's founders in developing "All Things Considered" as the network's first regular program. Another Allerton House seminar was held in 1950 dealing with programming matters, which in addition laid the groundwork for the move into educational television (Hudson, 1970). However, the discussion of mission and the nationalizing efforts of the 1949 participants made the first Allerton House seminar a valuable episode in which to examine the dialectical status of the selected stations.

Establishment of National Public Radio: 1969-70

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, created as a result of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, was charged with assisting in the establishment and development of a system of educational radio stations (U.S. Congress, 1967). CPB officials were guided by a series of studies that pointed to the financing and management problems of educational radio stations (Avery and Pepper, 1979; Haney, 1981). In 1969 the NAEB proposed that CPB create an independent
national production and distribution agency to be known as National Public Radio. Later that year a group of educational radio station managers began, under CPB auspices, a series of meetings that led to the establishment of NPR. In February 1970 NPR was incorporated, and its directors held their organizational meeting in March. In May 1971 NPR's news magazine "All Things Considered" began its run, marking the first regular service of the fledgling network (Avery and Pepper, 1979; Blakely, 1977; Fisher, 1989; Haney, 1981; Kirkish, 1980; Witherspoon and Kovitz, 1986; Zuckerman, 1987).

The start of broadcasting was preceded by a period of speaker/audience-dialectical soul-searching in which station leaders had to decide upon the fledgling network's philosophy and mission. For example, one member of NPR's Planning Board, Bernard Mayes of KQED, San Francisco, a Briton by birth, warned that NPR should learn from "BBC elitism" and seek out a larger audience (Kirkish, 1980, p. 18). William Siemering, a respected Buffalo station official, was chosen to be "Thomas Jefferson...for NPR's Congress" in drafting a mission statement (Kirkish, 1980, p. 17). Siemering's "NPR Purposes" document described a network that would emphasize investigative and interpretive journalism, reflect the regional diversity of the nation, and encourage local station participation (Siemering, 1970, reprinted in Haney, 1981, pp. 248-263).

The creation of NPR meant public radio stations were finally assured of a consistent source of high-quality national programming after their erratic experiences with previous ad hoc networks (Lawrence J. Orfaly, WNYC program director, personal interview, March 23, 1990). In addition, NPR programming began to
attract relatively larger audiences to public radio stations, giving station leaders the idea and the incentive for later audience-building initiatives (Jack Mitchell, director of WHA radio, personal interview, April 10, 1990). This historical period was another episode marked by discussion and debate throughout the public radio system. Further, the process leading to creation of NPR was another episode of nationalization in the history of public radio. Therefore this provides a more contemporary opportunity to assess the status of the two fundamental tensions at a time of national ferment in the industry.

1987: 20th anniversary of the Public Broadcasting Act

The 20th anniversary of the landmark Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 resulted in a spate of retrospective analyses of public broadcasting as well as Congressional oversight hearings during 1987. Most of the assessments were far from being the usual anniversary panegyrics. From the author of the original Carnegie Commission report came the conclusion that public broadcasting "is going nowhere in particular" (White, 1987, p. 80). The Congressman chairing the House 20-year oversight hearing compared public broadcasting to a "'bright child' who has not lived up to his potential" (quoted in Glick, 1987, p. 12). NPR was taken to task by a columnist for "palpably slanted" news coverage in which "the left-wing agenda dominates" (Barnes, 1986, p. 17). The year 1987 thus provided a reasonably current opportunity to assess the speaker/audience and local/national tensions at a time of controversy and debate over the progress and status of U.S. public broadcasting.
Selected Public Radio Stations

The public radio stations selected for inclusion in this study met three criteria. First was the criterion of longevity; the stations must have been in operation during each of the historical episodes: 1930, 1949, and 1969. Second was the criterion of significance. That is, the stations must have been influential within the public radio system. While a degree of influence is conferred by longevity, this also means that the stations' managers should have been among the system's leaders. Leadership was manifest in such ways as having been invited to speak at IER, having participated in the Allerton House seminars, and holding office in NAEB. This criterion was based upon the premise that it would be easier to generalize the study's findings if the selected stations were models viewed favorably and perhaps emulated by other public radio stations. A final criterion for inclusion in this study was the availability of a comprehensive corpus of data relating to station history.

Stations WOSU-AM in Columbus, WHA-AM in Madison, and WNYC-AM in New York City met all criteria. Regarding longevity, WOSU-AM has broadcast since 1922, WHA-AM has broadcast since 1919, and WNYC-AM has been on the air since 1924 (CPB, 1987). As for significance in public radio circles, WOSU's influence derived from such sources as the fact that the IER was held in Columbus and sponsored by its licensee, The Ohio State University; from Ohio State faculty member I. Keith Tyler's role as a major force in early educational radio and television (including his presence at Allerton House); and from station manager Richard Hull's leadership in NAEB (Hudson, 1970; Tyler, 1987). The influence of WHA, licensed to the University of Wisconsin, transcended its widely recognized
status as the oldest radio station in the nation. WHA's Wisconsin School of the Air became a model of its type (Johnson, 1989); early station manager Harold B. McCarty was NAEB president, testified before Congress on noncommercial frequency allocations, served on the Federal Radio Education Committee, and participated in the First National Conference on Educational Broadcasting in 1936 as well as the Allerton House seminars; and the Wisconsin State Broadcasting Service that evolved from WHA was the first statewide educational radio network in the United States (Blakely, 1979; WHA, 1969).

WNYC, licensed to the City of New York, became influential in public radio through its history of community service and its program directors, Morris S. Novik and Seymour N. Siegel (Keenan, 1986). Novik made WNYC a member of NAEB and "brought experiences in urban ethnic, economic, political, and intellectual life to the NAEB that were strikingly different from the relatively insulated experiences of the state university station directors" who were largely Midwestern (Blakely, 1979, pp. 6-7). Siegel led the NAEB effort to establish a "bicycle" radio tape network, served as association president, and participated in the Allerton House seminars (Barnouw, 1966; Hudson, 1970; Wood and Wylie, 1977).

Significant bodies of data existed for each of the selected stations. The University Archives at Ohio State contained collections of IER documents, I. Keith Tyler's personal papers, and records pertaining to WOSU history. The Mass Communications Research Center of the Wisconsin Historical Society contained the records of the NAEB as well as WHA. WNYC collected station documents at New York's Municipal Archives and Reference Center. In addition, each of the stations
maintained a limited file of recent documents at their offices. Additional sources on the selected stations include their annual reports; the trade press; scholarly journals; newspapers and the popular press; FCC and other government documents, and interviews with present and former station officials.

Dissertation Outline

This dissertation was organized around the three selected stations. It was hoped that this organization emphasized change over time related to the structural factors reflected in the model. Chapter III covers the development of WNYC-AM. Chapter IV covers the development of WHA-AM. Chapter V encompasses WOSU-AM. Chapter VI includes discussion of the study's conclusions; implications and limitations of the research findings; and the author's recommendations for government policy regarding U.S. public broadcasting in the 1990s and beyond.
Figure 1: The Public Radio Grid
Figure 2: A dynamic integrative model of factors affecting public broadcasting stations
CHAPTER III
WNYC RADIO

Introduction

This chapter covers the development of WNYC-AM, licensed to the City of New York. This researcher spent the week of March 19-23, 1990, in New York examining historical documents relating to the station. Documents were housed in the Municipal Archives and Reference Library of the City of New York. These repositories of city government records dating to colonial days are located in the civic center complex in Manhattan, adjacent to City Hall and the Municipal Building, where WNYC's studios and offices are located. Most documents utilized for this study were found in the Reference Library, essentially the city government library, which contained several file folders of WNYC material; annual reports; mayor's task force reports; and program guides. The archives held the original papers of the Depression-era Works Progress Administration writers, who studied early New York radio for an abortive book project; and an extensive collection of WNYC radio and television discs and tapes, but few station documents.

Considering the records-retention requirements of government agencies and bureaucrats' dependence upon paperwork, this researcher expected to find a well-inventoried and thorough collection of relevant documents. Instead, serial
collections at the Reference Library such as annual reports and program guides were invariably incomplete, and the archives' collection of WNYC documents was unprocessed, leaving researchers with little idea of what was included in boxes. Then, when this researcher expressed interest in seeing particular boxes of material, he was told to wait several days until a driver was available to pick up the boxes at the archive's warehouse in Brooklyn. The document collection at WNYC's offices lacked even copies of the station's annual reports, sending the researcher to the offices of the station's administrative agency. Further, despite New York's well-publicized campaign to encourage politeness toward visitors, it was difficult, with a few exceptions, to obtain cooperation from library and archive personnel.

The 1920s

WNYC's origins were linked historically to the Progressive Movement, a political philosophy that sought to expand the functions of government to relieve social and economic distress. This rooted the station in a service-driven and paternalistic speaker-centered orientation. The strength of the Progressive movement in New York City represented an instance of station-specific historical serendipity. Without such a base it was unlikely a municipal station would have developed; few such stations were established elsewhere, and even fewer survived (Barnouw, 1966, p. 155). However, in New York City Progressive politicians were "eager to apply the possibilities of radio to the needs of their constituents" (Luscombe, 1968, p. 9).

One such politician was Grover Whalen, commissioner of New York's Department of Plant and Structures, who suggested the idea of a city-owned and operated radio station to Queens Borough President Maurice Connolly in 1922
Connolly put forth a resolution to the city's Board of Estimate and Apportionment, which was adopted on March 17, 1922, calling for appointment of a committee to study the feasibility of such a station. The committee reported back on May 2, 1922, that "the importance of municipal broadcasting was so far reaching, and its possibilities so limitless, that it felt the city would be derelict in its duty were it not to establish a Municipal Broadcasting Station" (Department of Plant and Structure, 1922, p. 142). On June 2, 1922, the Board of Estimate and Apportionment appropriated $50,000 for the purchase and installation of a broadcasting station to be located in the Manhattan Municipal Building; the Bureau of Municipal Broadcasting was situated within the Department of Plant and Structure (Department of Plant and Structure, 1922, p. 142).

The start of broadcasting was delayed on several fronts, first by the reluctance of the U.S. Department of Commerce to license a municipal station out of concern that city financing for radio would be socialistic. Whalen discussed the need for the station with Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, who "had to be convinced" (Whalen, 1950, p. 11). Accordingly, Whalen stressed that the station would provide the city a means to inform its citizens of the activities of city agencies, for emergency police and fire information, and for educational uses. Once Hoover relented, AT&T declined to sell transmitter equipment nor provide telephone lines for remote broadcasts, instead urging the city to patronize WEAF, AT&T's "toll-broadcasting" station in New York. Municipal pressure and persistence ultimately won out, and WNYC began broadcasting on July 8, 1924, with a program in which city agency department heads spoke about the role and budget of their agencies. That opening
broadcast epitomized the speaker-centered approach. However, listeners were invited to write letters with suggestions about broadcasts and city services. The new station broadcast on the 570 kHz frequency, shared with commercial station WMCA (Whalen, 1950). It was common in radio's early days for the Department of Commerce to license stations in the same region to the same frequency and order them to share airtime (Barnouw, 1966).

Much of WNYC's early programming was similar to that found on most commercial stations, with an abundance of what Barnouw (1966, p. 128) labelled "potted palm music" (Luscombe, 1968). Station officials, however, recognized that a municipal station must justify its existence by offering programs not available elsewhere. What distinguished WNYC from commercial stations was its presentation of three kinds of programs: civic education, health information, and "police alarms," which were requests for information on missing persons, criminal suspects and stolen cars. Luscombe's analysis of station logs (which are no longer available in the Municipal Archives) for the week of October 5-11, 1924, found that the three types of programs comprised about six hours of the 24 hours broadcast by WNYC (1968, p. 62). Nonetheless, a series of newspaper reports the following year criticized the station for providing too much entertainment programming (New York Herald Tribune, May 13-16, 1925).

An early attempt to determine audience reaction occurred in 1925 when Albert Goldman, who had succeeded Whalen as commissioner of WNYC's parent agency, solicited public comment regarding continuation of the station. The Municipal Archives contains only seven letters in response to Goldman's request, of which two
favored continuance (Papers of Mayor Jimmy Walker, 1925). Regardless, the Department of Plant and Structures reported in 1926 that WNYC programs "met with a hearty response from the listening public" (p. 125). No support for the claim was given.

During this period the station suffered from charges of political abuse of the airwaves, bearing out the concerns of some critics who initially objected to a municipal station on grounds that it could become a mayor's soapbox. In their view this represented the danger of municipal (read speaker-centered) broadcasting, in which only the speaker's point of view would be presented. Mayor John Hylan, believing that most of the city's 10 newspapers were biased against him, began the practice of reaching the public directly by making speeches over WNYC that railed against his enemies. The Citizens Union challenged the mayor in court and won an injunction stopping all political speeches by the mayor and members of his administration. The judge's ruling banned such "private" use of the station (Fletcher v. Hylan, 1925; Noble, 1953).

Another challenge to the station during its formative years came from commercial competitor WMCA, with which WNYC was sharing airtime. WMCA officials, with close ties to New York's Tammany Hall politicians, persuaded those politicians to cede many of WNYC's assigned evening hours so that WMCA could broadcast Democratic political events (Keenan, 1985). In 1928 WNYC asked the Federal Radio Commission for exclusive use of the 570 kHz frequency, seeking preferential treatment as a municipal enterprise. The FRC, however, held that WMCA had "superior programs" and forced WNYC to continue the time-sharing
agreement. WNYC appealed to the Court of Appeals, which upheld the FRC as acting within its powers, and the Supreme Court refused to hear the case (City of New York v. Federal Radio Commission, 1929).

WMCA offered a possible solution to the stations' dispute. WMCA operated a second station in New York that broadcast on the 810 kHz frequency, a clear-channel assigned to WCCO, Minneapolis, which kept the WMCA station off the air at night. WMCA management offered to cede the 810 kHz frequency to WNYC in exchange for exclusive use of 570 kHz (Wood letter, 1931). WNYC, unwilling to give up evening broadcasting, refused. However, WMCA took the frequency switch proposal before the FRC, which ordered WNYC to move (WNYC and WCCO were both shifted to 830 kHz in 1941 as a result of a treaty with Mexico that caused spectrum reallocation [Keenan, 1985; Luscombe, 1968]). The change, which took place in June, 1933, meant that WNYC was unable to broadcast after local sunset in Minneapolis, and further reduced its broadcast schedule.

**WNYC in 1930**

It should be noted that, because of a lack of primary data sources regarding WNYC, it was not possible to determine the particulars of the time-sharing arrangement with WMCA, nor was it possible to learn much about the nature of WNYC's early broadcasts, such as program descriptions or the percentage of airtime afforded various program types. This researcher was dependent upon secondary sources such as the Luscombe dissertation and Keenan's official station history, which did not include reference notes, in dealing with the station's early years. With that caveat, an attempt was made to assess WNYC in 1930.
According to Luscombe (1968), the nature of the WNYC broadcast schedule began to shift perceptibly in 1929. Early that year a local lawyer brought a stack of his classical music records to the station and asked that they played over WNYC. The station agreed, and initiated a program called the "Masterwork Hour," which the station later promoted as "radio's first program of recorded classical music" (Keenan, 1985, p. 5). In addition, WNYC began to broadcast live classical music, as opposed to its previous emphasis on lighter, popular music; news and public affairs programs; live drama and poetry readings; and the station started a "College of the Air" series of educational programs in conjunction with New York-area colleges and universities. This programming data was compiled by writers commissioned by the Works Progress Administration in the late 1930s to write a book on the history of radio in New York City, which was never completed (Mateyo letter, 1941). The WPA analysis of WNYC programming in October 1929, drawn from program logs no longer available in the Municipal Archives, is presented in Table 3.1. The accuracy of this analysis is impossible to assess. A similar analysis for the period of January 6-11, 1930, employing different categories, showed "lectures" comprised the largest program element (21.2%); followed by instrumental music (18.5%); "College of the Air" (14.5%); and miscellaneous categories that included city agency programs, as well as summaries of the meetings of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, the body which authorized the station's existence (WPA tables reproduced in Luscombe, 1968, appendix). Luscombe (1968) contended that WNYC's shift to increased cultural, educational and news programming reflected that "the directors of the
Table 1
"Breakdown of Programs, October 1929"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speeches by Mayor</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other speeches</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's programs</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City dept. programs</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous (not defined)</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical music</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular music</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture-recitals</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special features (not defined)</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 385 broadcasts for 101 hours, 40 minutes

Source: Luscombe (1968), appendix

The station was learning that it could never surpass or equal the quality of the entertainment offered by commercial stations, and that a municipal station must provide what was not available elsewhere" (p. 133). In effect, the choice was made not to compete.

WNYC continued to be troubled in 1930 by criticism over misuse of the municipal station. After Democratic Mayor Jimmy Walker used the station to
counter Republican allegations of corruption in his administration, public outcry over political abuse of the airwaves forced him to make time available to his opponents (Keenan, 1985). In addition, the head of a local commercial station challenged in court WNYC's broadcasts of the police and fire department's Holy Name Communion breakfasts, claiming they violated the Constitutional separation of church and state. WNYC countered that it was providing a service to city employees who could not attend the breakfasts; a judge dismissed the suit (Ford v. Walker, 1930). A similar suit was brought against the station in 1939 by the head of New York's Free Thinker Society, again challenging broadcasts of the communion breakfasts; again WNYC prevailed in court (Lewis v. LaGuardia, 1939).

Charges of political and religious misuse prompted city officials to seek a sound legal base for municipal broadcasting. Accordingly, the City Council in April, 1930, passed Local Law #5, which authorized WNYC to operate for the instruction, enlightenment, entertainment, recreation and welfare of the inhabitants of the city by broadcasting the following matters which are deemed appropriate and necessary for the public advantage: national, state and municipal celebrations and functions; receptions for distinguished visitors; welcome and entertainment of Armed Forces returning from war; lectures and addresses on education, literary and scientific subjects; addresses on current affairs; entertainment and functions of civic bodies, and of societies of members and employees of any of the city departments (Local Law #5 of the City of New York for 1930 in relation to the establishment, operation, and maintenance of radio broadcasting station WNYC).

Local Law #5 became, in essence, the station's first mission statement. The phrase "the instruction, enlightenment, entertainment, recreation, and welfare of the inhabitants of the city" became a standard part of station documents for years to follow. It reflected the public-service orientation of the station's Progressive origins.
Outcomes Summary: 1930

WNYC in 1930 was characterized as a classic speaker-centered, local-oriented station. Its grid placement (Figure 3) was five on both the speaker and local ends of the continua. This was determined by its program emphasis upon classical music "masterworks," the result of a concerted move away from "popular" music, coupled with broadcasts of city functions and mundane agency reports, and traditional "College of the Air" educational programs. The station's mission statement reflected a classic speaker-centered orientation similar to the BBC model of "uplifting" the citizenry. WNYC's local orientation was a function both of its role as a city department and of its lack of access to programming produced elsewhere.

The 1930s

The pioneering "Masterwork Hour" notwithstanding, WNYC was widely ignored by city residents in the early 1930s (Purnick, 1979). In addition to didactic programming, technical problems were a significant factor. At a time when most New York stations had moved their transmitters to the meadows of New Jersey and Long Island, WNYC's transmitter remained atop the Municipal Building, where about 80% of the 500-watt signal was absorbed by the building's steel structure (Report of the Mayor's Committee to Study the Present Status and Future Possibilities of Broadcasting Station WNYC, 1934, pp. 2-3; hereafter referred to as the Patterson Report). One of Fiorello LaGuardia's promises during his campaign for mayor in 1933 was to sell WNYC to commercial interests. Indeed, following his election, LaGuardia's inaugural address on January 1, 1934, was delivered from the
studio of the National Broadcasting Company, snubbing the city's own station (Hecksher, 1978).

Ironically, LaGuardia rejuvenated WNYC. Soon after taking office he appointed as assistant program director Seymour Siegel, who remained at the station for 37 years and was a central figure in its development (Luscombe, 1968, p. 153). LaGuardia then named a committee of prominent commercial broadcasting executives -- NBC's Richard C. Patterson, Jr., CBS' William S. Paley, and Alfred J. McCosker of the Bamberger Broadcasting System -- "to determine the possibilities of operating station WNYC in a manner worthy of the city, and yet, so as to be self-supporting, and therefore, not a drain upon the city treasury" (Patterson Report, 1934, p. 1). The Patterson Committee, as it came to be known, concluded that WNYC was in a "rundown condition" (p. 9) and was critical of the station on several fronts: the transmitter problems noted above resulted in a weak or unusable signal in many areas of the city; studio facilities were acoustically poor (without a ventilation system, windows were left open in warm weather, sending street noise over the air); the station operated with insufficient and underpaid staff, and relied heavily upon amateur talent (such as city employees with varying degrees of musical ability); and the fire department circuits used for remote broadcasts were deemed inferior to telephone company lines. In addition, the committee noted

(t)he station has no facilities for estimating its coverage, and no way of knowing how many listeners are depending upon it for service. In a city such as New York, with many stations all competing for the attention of the listeners, it is the part of program wisdom to know what following a station has (Patterson Report, 1934, p. 3).
The Patterson Committee pointed out to the mayor that some 30 radio stations were operating within a 30-mile radius of Manhattan in 1934, and that WNYC needed to be competitive in signal and program quality to attract listeners. To do so, the committee recommended: that the transmitter be relocated and an efficient antenna erected; that modern studio equipment be purchased; that additional staff be hired, especially in the program department, including a staff orchestra, as well as a station publicist and a statistician to measure audiences; that the station report directly to the mayor; and that Local Law #5 be amended to allow the station to sell some commercial time to recoup some of its expenses (Patterson Report, 1934, pp. 5-8).

The commercial orientation of the committee members dictated the audience-centered nature of some of the recommendations, and the prestige of the panel required that LaGuardia take seriously their report. Mayor LaGuardia accepted the report knowing that the city could not afford the $275,000 cost of the committee's recommendations. However, many of the recommendations were implemented ultimately, representing another station-specific instance of historical serendipity that changed the nature of WNYC. The availability of New Deal funding from the federal government played a pivotal role. WNYC drew staff from the Civil Works Administration, the National Youth Administration and the Works Progress Administration, including writers and musicians. In 1934 the station began issuing press releases (Luscombe, 1968, pp. 162-167). Having received numerous inquiries regarding the recordings to be played on the "Masterwork Hour," WNYC in 1935 began publishing the Masterwork Bulletin, listing the program's musical selections
for a two-month period; the booklet was eventually broadened to include listings of all WNYC programs. The station in 1935 announced the availability of the guide on-air and received 1,200 requests (Masterwork Bulletin, 1935). An annual subscription to the mimeographed pamphlet cost 20 cents in stamps. The number of subscribers was regularly announced by station officials as an indicator of WNYC's audience and popularity. Further, the Masterwork Bulletin provided the station with another means of contact with its listeners.

Attempts at audience research were initiated during this period, evincing incremental acceptance of the audience-centered orientation recommended by the Patterson Committee as well as recognition that development of a following of listeners would justify the station's existence. In 1936 WNYC announced it would undertake "a scientific analysis" of letters received in an attempt at solving "the problem of adapting WNYC programs to requirements of listeners' psychology" ("Plan Study of WNYC's Fan Mail," 1936). The station's news release hailed the survey as a "significant step forward," and noted that commercial broadcasters conducted similar research (see National Broadcasting Company, 1939). WNYC's study was to analyze the quality of the mail response, rather than simply the quantity. No further mention of the survey was found in the Municipal Archives. Another audience study was conducted in 1939. A questionnaire was distributed to an unspecified number of listeners asking for their "interests in the field of music" ("WNYC Study of Radio and Music," 1939). The survey included questions about listeners' favorite WNYC programs; favorite musical compositions; other frequently listened-to New York stations; and from which city agencies listeners would prefer
to hear programs. The questionnaire also sought demographic data: age, sex, and educational level. Again, no further mention of the survey was available at the Municipal Archives.

The station's signal improved after the transmitter was moved in 1936 across the East River to the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn on a reclaimed ferryboat slip. Its programming became more diverse in 1937 with the start of live broadcasts of City Council and other government meetings (Keenan, 1985). The station's operation benefited from a change in its administrative status within city government. Morris Novik was named director of radio communication in 1938, a new position reporting directly to the mayor, though the station remained nominally (until 1948) under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works (formerly the Department of Plant and Structures). With the change Mayor LaGuardia, by now a strong supporter of the station, authorized more new positions and an increased budget for the station, which was now treated as a separate city department, having a separate listing in the budget -- the Municipal Broadcasting System (Noble, 1953, p. 24). In this regard WNYC took indirect advantage of the city's new political climate in 1938: a new City Charter and the election of several key politicians who were LaGuardia allies resulted in an ascendant mayor (Heckscher, 1978). This provided another example of the impact of historical serendipity upon the station's development.

The year 1938 also brought another programming controversy sparked by critics of the municipal station. A travel show featured a description of a train trip across the Soviet Union, during which, the announcer said, there was no butter but an abundance of caviar. Some listeners, including a city council member, viewed the
remark as extolling the virtues of the Communist system. A City Council investigation was launched into an alleged Communist taint on WNYC programming. Secret hearings went on for more than a year before Novik demanded public hearings, in which prominent educators and broadcasters described the educational and cultural significance of the station. Following the public hearings, the probe waned and no report was issued by the council on the matter (Keegan, 1985; Noble, 1953). Nonetheless, the incident illustrated the speaker/audience tension within which WNYC operated. In presenting programs that station officials believed were educational and informative, they had to fear the consequences of angering certain segments of their audience.

WNYC continued to announce audience measures in the late 1930s. Publicity releases in the Municipal Reference Library claimed that: in May 1939 WNYC ranked fourth among the city's 30 stations based on compilation of "program mentions," a method which was not further defined; WNYC had nearly 1,000,000 listeners for its November 1938 election coverage, based upon the "assumption" that one letter represented about 1,000 listeners; WNYC received 77,074 pieces of mail in the first 11 months of 1939, compared to 27,212 for all of 1937; and that the number of requests for the Masterwork Bulletin totaled 12,000 in the second quarter of 1939, with another 1,000 requests unfilled (WNYC publicity releases, 1939). Meanwhile, the Masterwork Bulletin was upgraded to a printed brochure that included a message from the station director and a feature column on featured programs (Keenan, 1985).
The 1940s

Despite the station's efforts to claim a loyal following, WNYC's existence was regularly questioned through the late 1930s and early 1940s. In addition to council's Communist-influence investigation, threats came from Board of Estimate members who sought to eliminate WNYC's appropriation each year at budget time and from civic groups who questioned the need for a municipal station. In 1943 and 1944 City Council dropped the station's appropriation from the municipal budget; in both cases the money was restored (Noble, 1953, p. 52). Noble (1953) argued that these challenges "led WNYC to adopt a cautious attitude toward public criticism....WNYC is careful not to cause public resentment which may be reflected in the actions of the city legislature" (p. 152). This referred to a long-standing criticism of publicly funded broadcasting, that the need to satisfy political constituencies breeds timorousness in programming, as well as to the dialectical tension between presenting what station leaders believed was significant and what would be acceptable to important constituencies.

With the onset of World War II, WNYC added civil defense information to its broadcast schedule. Though WNYC was required to signoff at Minneapolis sunset to protect WCCO's clear channel, LaGuardia obtained emergency wartime dispensation from the FCC to broadcast until 10 p.m. nightly, so that New Yorkers might receive nighttime civil defense information (Dembart, 1977). The mayor's famous Sunday radio talks over WNYC stemmed from his desire to inform the city about the war effort; the talks became renowned when LaGuardia read the comics on air during a newspaper strike (Keenan, 1985, p. 12). WNYC's "emergency"
nighttime authority lasted until 1985 and enmeshed WNYC in the longest-running case ever before the FCC. WCCO brought suit to protect its clear-channel status, a case it finally won nearly four decades later when the Supreme Court declined to review an FCC decision denying WNYC continued nighttime authority ("Sunset curfew stands," 1985).

In 1948 the Municipal Broadcasting System, which had added WNYC-FM in 1943, was formally moved under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Mayor and began to issue annual reports. The station continued to describe audience response in terms of mail received and subscriptions to the Masterwork Bulletin. The 1947 annual report claimed that 17,981 subscriptions represented "a shining example of public acceptance" (Municipal Broadcasting System, 1947, p. 28), and that a 141% increase in mail response over a two-year period showed "WNYC listeners were listening, enjoying and writing to us about it" (p. 30). The report included a map that showed the cities where mail originated. In addition, the report mentioned that WNYC broadcast programs weekly from the BBC, Norway, France and the Netherlands, noting that "WNYC has pioneered in international radio exchange" (p. 7), evidence of emergent station interest in non-local programming. The 1948 annual report similarly touted increased mail and subscription response as evidence of public acceptance and audience growth (Municipal Broadcasting System, 1948, p. 1).

**WNYC in 1949**

WNYC's programming in 1949 was a blend of classical music, including the "Masterwork Hour" and live concert broadcasts; public affairs, including city
government meetings; news and weather reports; children's shows; public service announcements on behalf of health, welfare and social agencies; and presentations by city departments. The latter included reports on food prices by the Department of Markets, so that homemakers would know what to expect to pay at the grocery stores; a listing by the Municipal Civil Service Commission of positions to be filled in city government; tenant advice from the City Rent Commission; and information on avoiding polio from the Health and Hospitals Department (Report to Mayor O'Dwyer, 1949). The lack of program logs and Masterwork Bulletins precludes a more thorough analysis, such as breakdowns by program types.

The station's annual report cited a 192% increase in mail response and a 182% response in Masterwork Bulletin subscriptions between 1945 and 1949 (Municipal Broadcasting System, 1949, pp. 16-17). Management first reported in 1949 another measure to justify the value of the municipal station: cost per broadcast hour of operating WNYC. WNYC-AM broadcast 5,640 hours and WNYC-FM 6,513 hours; the cost of operation was $17.57 per hour (Municipal Broadcasting System, 1949, p. 2). It was interesting to note how the municipal station made its case in the cost/benefit-analysis jargon favored by government.

By 1949 station leaders had become active in NAEB. As a participant in the 1949 Allerton House seminar, Seymour Siegel, who had become station director in 1946, played a lead role in conceiving a program-exchange service. Following the seminar, Siegel and WNYC staffers inaugurated NAEB's "bicycle network" for sharing programs, which within one year was providing up to four hours of programming per week to 28 educational radio stations across the country (Hudson,
1951, pp. 243-244). Siegel had served with Navy communications during World War II, where he became aware of the possibilities of electromagnetic tape recording, which was developed during the war (Blakely, 1979, p. 7). That piece of historical serendipity played a significant role in driving educational radio toward an increased national orientation in the decades before NPR was created.

At the 1950 convention of the Institute for Education by Radio, Siegel presided over a session on promotion of educational radio programs that vividly reflected the prevalent speaker/audience tension experienced by stations. Siegel compared the level of promotion and audience building activities in educational radio in 1950 to that of program production in 1930, and he called for the use of audience-driven techniques. "All the principles that go into the sales of soap, cigarettes and gasoline must be employed to make people aware of the advantages of listening to what non-commercial stations have to offer," Siegel told the conferees (Siegel, 1950, pp. 309-310).

Also at the 1950 IER convention, Morris Novik, then serving as a radio consultant to the City of New York, took part in a panel discussion on broadcast regulation in which he described his conception of WNYC's mission. Reacting to an NAB official's claim that broadcasters must respond to majority wishes, Novik said that a station:

must try constantly to improve its programming so that it will cater more and more to so-called minority people in the hope that one day they will become the majority. At WNYC...we took the position that we owed an obligation to the minority, that the convenience, necessity and interest of the minority was as important as the right of the majority (Novik, 1950, p. 27).
His view that the minority should be served so that they might "one day...become the majority" was parallel to Sir William Haley's BBC program policy of introducing listeners gradually to more sophisticated, cultural material. The juxtaposition of this paternalistic, speaker-centered view and Siegel's call for audience-centered strategies illustrated the dialectical tension.

Outcomes Summary: 1949

WNYC in 1949 was again characterized as a speaker-centered station with a local orientation. However, gradual change related to the two fundamental tensions resulted in the beginnings of movement along the two continua. As a result, its grid placement (Figure 3) for this period was four on both the speaker and local ends of the continua. WNYC's programming components were essentially the same as in 1930. However, station officials evinced increased concern about WNYC's audience, as manifest in the reporting of audience measures such as mail response and program guide subscriptions. Further evidence was provided by Siegel's 1950 IER speech about the need for promotion of educational radio. On the local/national dimension, Siegel did play a pivotal role at Allerton House in creation of NAEB's "bicycle" network and WNYC did carry several programs produced by foreign broadcasters. Nonetheless, the station remained largely an adjunct of city government, serving as a means of transmitting civic information to New Yorkers.

The 1950s and 1960s

WNYC radio "meandered through the 1950s and 1960s," in the words of the official station history, while management worked to obtain a license for and establish WNYC-TV (Keenan, 1985, p. 13). The AM and FM stations, which were
primarily simulcast, began to refer to themselves as the "Voice of the City" in the early 1950s (Siegel, 1951). The stations carried gavel-to-gavel United Nations sessions as well as city agency programs and glee club concerts from the police, fire and sanitation departments. Increased efficiency was cited for a decreased cost of operation per broadcast hour in 1951 (Municipal Broadcasting System, 1951, p. 2).

Evidence of WNYC's emerging national orientation came in 1952 when the station touted its role as "key station" in NAEB's program exchange, which resulted in a "close liaison" with foreign broadcasters whose programs were both aired and distributed by WNYC (Municipal Broadcasting System, 1952, p. 5). Domestic programs obtained through the program exchange included the "University of Chicago Roundtable" and the "Northwestern University Reviewing Stand."

Through the 1950s WNYC continued to report audience response in terms of mail received and subscriptions to the Masterwork Bulletin; the 1957 annual report noted that "ever-increasing audiences...were best demonstrated by the steadily growing list" of subscribers (Municipal Broadcasting System, 1957, p. 5). In 1953 the station, with the assistance of New York University, conducted "a poll of listeners' tastes" that provided what the annual report termed "valuable results in program planning" (Municipal Broadcasting System, 1953, p. 12). No information on methodology and/or results of the poll was available in the Municipal Archives. WNYC's mission was restated in 1954 as "(a)iming at that literate segment of the listening public which is least satisfied with the programming ordinarily offered elsewhere" (Municipal Broadcasting System, 1954, p. 5). This indicated an early awareness of the strategy of targetting programs to an elite audience, dissatisfied
with mass appeal, commercial broadcasting. Public broadcasters, notably PBS, later denied publicly that they pursued such a strategy in light of charges of "elitism"; however, privately targeting elites became a goal of many public stations (see Chapter Four for discussion of this phenomenon in contemporary public radio). However, in 1957 WNYC announced it had joined the National Association of Broadcasters, clearly a mass audience-driven organization, and was one of the few non-commercial stations to do so (Municipal Broadcasting System, 1957).

Annual reports for the Municipal Broadcasting System for 1964 through 1967 make no mention of audiences for the radio stations, which in 1967 began to broadcast separate programming for much of the broadcast day in conformance with FCC regulations (Municipal Broadcasting System, 1967). Also in 1967, WNYC reflected pressure from the city to generate revenue. That year the station began to report "receipts for services" provided by the stations. These included Masterwork Bulletin subscriptions (which then cost $1 for two years), sales of program tapes, and fees for setting up public-address systems at city functions, which had long been one of the responsibilities of WNYC engineers. Program tapes and public-address work had previously been provided at no charge to city agencies. Receipts for these services totaling $11,432 were returned to the city coffers to offset partially the cost of operating the station, a fact noted prominently in the station director's transmittal letter to the mayor in the annual report, which comprised the first page of the document (Municipal Broadcasting System, 1967, p. 1).

The annual report for 1968 marked a return to the practice of citing mail response as a measure of audience. However, the report combined mail response
for the three stations in claiming "(a)udiences for all three services continue to
grow," without providing additional supporting evidence (Municipal Broadcasting
System, 1968, p. 3). Expressing its interest in non-local program sources, WNYC-
AM in 1968 began to carry newscasts from the commercial Metromedia network
(Keegan, 1985, p. 13).

**WNYC in 1969**

WNYC radio programming in 1969 was dominated by classical music,
interspersed with local newscasts, broadcasts of public hearings and city meetings,
poetry reading, lectures from New York University and Cooper Union, live coverage
of the United Nations, health programs, interviews on foreign affairs sponsored by
the Asia Society, editorial opinions from leading newspapers as well as "significant"
magazine articles, and a series of panel discussions entitled "New York in the 70s."
During the morning drive hours, WNYC broadcast "Travellers’ Time Table," a
program of transit and traffic information for commuters. In addition to these locally
originated programs, WNYC carried dramas produced at WGBH radio in Boston
and documentaries from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Municipal

The station’s 1969 annual report featured the most extensive discussion of
audiences available to that time. While noting that the Municipal Broadcasting
System
do not have any budgetary allocation for the purchase of commercial
audience measurement figures, several of the audience measurement groups
have been kind enough to make available residual figures which are the
product of the normal audience measurement procedure (p. 14).
CPB utilized that data to conduct a study of public radio station audiences in 1969. Further, WNYC employed Urban Corps workers to conduct its own survey with mail questionnaires and coincidental telephone interviews.

As a result of this research, the station reported that: "Generally speaking, it can be said that approximately 72,000 radio homes are tuned in at any particular time" to WNYC-AM (Municipal Broadcasting System, 1969, p. 14). According to the report, this represented the "highest rating" of any U.S. public radio station. It was reported that an additional 72,000 homes were tuned into WNYC-FM. The report concluded:

An audience, therefore, of approximately 350,000 people on each of the City Radio Stations is relatively small by comparison with audiences attracted to the large commercial stations. Nevertheless, this is a respectable constituency and it is expected to grow as increased promotional resource (sic) becomes available from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (p. 14).

Thus, WNYC officials began to realize that audience building, which had always been a desirable end, was indeed possible in public radio. This was a necessary condition for implementing audience-centered strategies. In addition, CPB contributed $15,000 to the WNYC radio stations in 1969 for unspecified "audience-building activities" (p. iii).

Also in 1969, station director Siegel invited audience response in a column in WNYC's program guide: "Your ideas and suggestions are vital to our future programming because it is your expressed needs which we hope to serve" (Masterwork Bulletin, 1969a, p. 3). In another program guide column later in the year, Siegel restated the station's role "to cater to minority audiences and tastes, and
not duplicate the services offered by commercial stations" (Masterwork Bulletin, 1969b, p. 3).

In 1969 the administrative home of the Municipal Broadcasting System was switched from the Office of the Mayor to the Municipal Services Administration (later the Department of General Services, its current name). One implication of this move was that MBS no longer issued its own annual report; a report of MBS activities became part of the Municipal Services Administration annual report. As a result the official report of WNYC activities became brief, often less than one page through the 1970s. Another implication was increased distance from the mayor. New York's flamboyant mayors were often seen as synecdoche for the city, and it was the mayor who was usually the "speaker" when WNYC was engaged in "speaker-centered" political controversies. As the Department of General Services was a low-visibility agency providing city government with support, such as maintaining buildings and purchasing supplies, WNYC would likely come under less political pressure to serve as the mayor's soapbox and would be freer to implement audience-centered strategies.

**Outcomes Summary: 1969**

WNYC in 1969 remained in the speaker/local quadrant, though continued movement was apparent on the two dimensions. Its grid placement (Figure 3) was three on the speaker end and two on the local end of the continua. The incremental shift toward audience-centered strategies was attributable to the availability of CPB-funded ratings figures, which the station augmented with its own survey, and a CPB grant for audience-building activities. In programming, the shift was manifest in the
development of a "user-friendly" morning show of transit and traffic information. Otherwise, the station's traditional mix of classical music, city business, and educational programs continued. Gradual movement away from the local end of the continuum was evident through carriage of UN meetings, WGBH dramas, CBC documentaries, and foreign affairs programs. This movement would accelerate with the availability of NPR programming in the 1970s.

The 1970s

The decade of the 1970s was marked by New York City's fiscal crisis, which had a profound impact upon the municipal station. This provided a vivid example of the impact of a station-specific instance of historical serendipity, in which a local issue contributed to significant change in the nature of WNYC radio. In 1971 Mayor John V. Lindsay ordered the station to dismiss 55 employees and reduce its operating hours; Seymour Siegel resigned in protest after 37 years at WNYC. Mayor LaGuardia's widow and Morris Novik formed a Save WNYC Committee, which helped prompt the Board of Estimate and City Council to approve a $600,000 emergency appropriation to the stations (Keenan, 1985, p. 13).

In 1975 New York's fiscal crisis worsened, forcing city government to the brink of bankruptcy before a bail-out plan was approved. WNYC-AM Program Director Lawrence J. Orfaly, who joined the station in 1968, called the crisis one of the two major events to affect the station in the past two decades (the other was the creation of NPR and "All Things Considered," which provided access to high-quality network programming). As a result of the budgetary emergency, "WNYC became no longer
just another city agency but rather an organization that had to support itself" (Lawrence J. Orfaly, personal interview, March 23, 1990).

As LaGuardia had done some four decades earlier, Mayor Abe Beame appointed a task force, headed by a commercial broadcast executive (CBS President Arthur J. Taylor), in the heart of the fiscal crisis to determine WNYC's future. The task force was to consider the possibility of selling the stations to commercial entities, or to sell airtime to raise money, with MBS remaining responsible for the programming as licensee. Concluding that the city ought not to sell the stations and lose the capacity to communicate with its citizens, the task force called upon the stations to develop individual, corporate and foundation support (Report of the Municipal Broadcasting System Task Force, 1977).

Prior to 1975 WNYC conducted no fundraising other than user fees such as those generated by *Masterwork Bulletin*. (In 1975 a subscription to the program guide was being referred to as a donation with a suggested level of "$3 or more.") A staff member responsible for fundraising was hired in April 1975, whose first act was to call 200 listeners to determine their interests and background, laying a foundation for development efforts to follow and the creation of a membership program. The first membership drive, a 24-hour radio marathon in August, 1975, netted $30,000 (Keenan, 1985, p. 15).

Publication of *Masterwork Bulletin* was suspended in 1975 as a result of the budget crisis. It returned in September 1976 as the *WNYC Program Guide*, provided to members of WNYC who made contributions of $20 or more (*WNYC Program Guide*, 1976, p. 1). In the first issue WNYC Director Arnold Labaton
announced that the stations' goals for fiscal year 1976 were 30,000 new members and $770,000 in outside support. "(A)udience support will determine the future of WNYC," Labaton wrote (p. 1). Regular programming was suspended for three days in September, 1976, for fundraising.

With the new emphasis upon fundraising, Orfaly said WNYC officials after 1975 became "much more responsive to what audiences would be interested in...more focussed on the professionalism of broadcasting" (Orfaly interview, 1990). Though ratings data were available periodically prior to 1975-76, Orfaly noted that such data were not considered seriously until after the fundraising impetus began. The stations obtained a Ford Foundation grant to "review" radio programming and worked through the late 1970s to establish separate identities for AM and FM. FM assumed WNYC's classical music legacy while AM emphasized news and public affairs, including afternoon call-in programming that continued through the 1980s (Keenan, 1985, p. 15).

The serendipity of the local political environment, an exogenous station-specific factor, continued to drive the station in an audience-centered direction. In 1978 Mayor Edward Koch named a supporter, journalist Mary Perot Nichols, director of WNYC and began to predict the station would become "financially self-sufficient" within five years ("WNYC Gets $1 Million," 1979, p. 42). Toward that end Nichols worked to create the WNYC Foundation, a private, non-profit corporation charged with soliciting and managing membership, corporate and foundation dollars (Department of General Services, 1981, p. 32).
Amid this audience-driven movement, a speaker-centered controversy arose in 1979. The close relationship became Koch and Nichols proved a source of controversy when WNYC-AM, at the mayor's request, broadcast the so-called "John Hour" — actually 115 seconds of reading the names of people charged with soliciting prostitutes. Critics charged that the incident underscored anew the municipal station's vulnerability to political pressure. Koch responded that he could control the station if he desired because WNYC, as a city agency, was not independent (Purnick, 1979). Orfaly noted in 1990 that the issue of political interference had not surfaced since the "John Hour" incident. He believed this was because mayors did not want to risk the political fallout from offending WNYC's 50,000 contributing members by interfering in station operations (Orfaly interview, 1990).

When the 1970s began, WNYC was totally funded by the city. By the end of the decade the stations were generating about 25% of their budget through outside sources (Orfaly interview, 1990).

The 1980s

The decade began with two major developments for WNYC. First came the award of a five-year, $1.1 million Station Improvement Grant from CPB, which was used to improve the technical quality of the stations' signals and to produce and acquire programming ("WNYC Gets $1 Million," 1979). In addition, Mayor Koch approved the city's first major capital investment in the stations since WNYC's inception. The funds allowed the upgrading of studios in which 1930s-vintage equipment was still being used. In 1980 WNYC added a satellite uplink (Keenan, 1985, p. 17).
WNYC's relationship with city government was redefined in 1981. The Department of General Services (DGS) was assigned responsibility for station operation and for maintaining WNYC's facility in the Municipal Building. The WNYC Foundation was delegated responsibility for fundraising, marketing and public relations, and soliciting and managing grant funds (Department of General Services, 1981, p. 32). The Foundation's board is a combination of mayoral appointees, and civic and business leaders appointed by other board members. It was chaired at this writing by Billie Tisch, wife of CBS CEO Lawrence Tisch ("WNYC-FM Amasses," 1990). The elevation of the WNYC Foundation, an audience-driven entity, to a major role in station management facilitated the shift to audience-centered strategies.

WNYC's section in the DGS 1981 annual report referred to the year as a "turning point" for the stations in which fundraising took hold, audiences increased and WNYC "established its course of continued growth towards (sic) self-sufficiency" (p. 32). Member contributions increased 80% over 1980; WNYC-AM's "Senior Edition" call-in program, designed for older listeners, attracted foundation support; and WNYC-AM and FM were included for the first time in state legislation providing funds for public broadcasting stations (p. 32). All told, WNYC contributed $800,000 to the city toward its 1981 operating costs, compared with $358,000 for 1980 (p. 32). A pie-chart in the DGS annual report showed listener support comprising 20% of the stations' fiscal 1982 budget of $3.6 million, with grants providing 47%, and the city 33% (p. 32). Increased audience size was reported: "AM saw its cumulative audience rise over 110 percent, from 112,900 in the spring
of 1980 to 240,180 in the spring of 1981" (p. 32). While the information that the station chose to report was clearly self-serving, the choices were nonetheless significant to note. Rather than emphasizing the value of station programs, a speaker-centered consideration, selected for reporting as measures of achievement were fundraising and audience size, clearly audience-centered indicators.

WNYC's interest in non-local programming sources continued. WNYC-AM began carrying Canadian Broadcasting Corporation newscasts in 1981; the station was among the five founding members of the American Public Radio network; and its daily children's show, which began in 1984 as "Small Things Considered," was distributed nationally the following year as "Kids America" by American Public Radio, with the assistance of a $444,000 CPB grant for test-marketing (DGS, 1981, p. 32; DGS, 1984-85, p. 30; Keenan, 1985, p. 17).

In its section of DGS' 1984-85 annual report, WNYC reported its audiences only in terms of station members. Membership in the three stations grew from about 17,000 in fiscal 1981 to more than 35,000 in fiscal 1985 (p. 30). Membership dollars rose from about $500,000 in fiscal 1981 to $1.5 million in fiscal 1985 (p. 31). Audience response to the WNYC radio stations was reported in the 1986 DGS annual report in terms of the 6,000 telephone calls placed daily to the "Kids America" program, as well as membership drive statistics (pp. 65-67).

During fiscal 1986 WNYC enhanced the services offered members. Contributors were provided a discount card for reduced prices at many New York cultural institutions. The station established an internal computer system for faster response to member applications and correspondence. Further, the system included a data
base of members, allowing for improved audience research and marketing initiatives, such as direct mail (DGS, 1986, pp. 67-68).

WNYC-AM had been restricted to daytime broadcasting since June, 1985, after losing its long legal battle with Minneapolis station WCCO over 830 kHz. In February, 1986, the FCC allowed WNYC-AM to move to 820 kHz, where it would be permitted unlimited broadcast hours. The action also permitted an increase in power from 1,000 watts to 10,000 watts/day and 5,000 watts/night (DGS, 1986, p. 65). WNYC-AM began testing its new transmitter for the revised frequency and power in February 1990, prior to receiving FCC approval for the actual switch (Orfaly interview, 1990).

**WNYC: 1987-1990**

The WNYC stations were renamed the WNYC Communications Group during fiscal 1987 (DGS, 1987-88, p. 31). WNYC's program guide, now called *Wavelength*, was redesigned and expanded to accommodate additional features and articles, in addition to program schedules for the three stations (*Wavelength*, 1987a). New features included "Member News," a page stressing the advantages of membership and listing museums and arts organizations that offered discounts to station members. An "Honor Roll of Contributors" was part of the "Funding in Focus" page, announcing major grants and acknowledging station underwriters.

WNYC-AM's schedule in 1987 was dominated by nationally distributed programming. For example, the weekday schedule during May is presented in Table 2.
Table 2

May 1987 Weekday Schedule:

"Morning Edition" (NPR with local cut-ins) -- Sign-on to Noon
"New York & Company" (local call-in) -- Noon to 4 p.m.
"Metropolitan Report" (local news) -- 4 to 4:30 p.m.
"Monitoradio" (American Public Radio) -- 4:30 to 5 p.m.
"All Things Considered" (NPR) -- 5 to 8 p.m.
"As It Happens" (CBC) -- 8 to 8:30 p.m.
"MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour" (audio from PBS) -- 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Source: Wavelength, 1987b, p. 15

During the 1980s the WNYC stations occasionally brought in audience research consultants, though no research department had been established as of mid-1990, and programmers at the three stations looked at ratings data "a great deal" through the period (Orfaly interview, 1990). This new programming environment drew a critical letter from one long-time listener/viewer, who wrote that

it makes me mad that a long-time contributor like me, who has appreciated the down-to-earth and interesting qualities of WNYC, has to be subjected to growing slickness as you try to woo new listeners. What about us old staunch supporters? We became members before you started getting slick (Schreider, 1987, p. 12).

In its section of the 1987-88 DGS annual report, the WNYC Communications Group continued to report achievements in audience-centered terms. Management reported audiences in terms of average weekly cumulative audience, the total number of unduplicated households, for the three stations combined, according to
Nielsen ratings (DGS, 1987-88, p. 33). The number of contributing members for the three stations was also reported, reflecting a steady increase of about 38,000 to 47,000 from fiscal 1986 through 1988 (DGS, 1987-88, p. 32). WNYC-TV became a membership solicitation tool, with daily spots aired inviting viewers to become contributing members; increased use was made of direct mail to make the stations less reliant upon on-air fundraising drives (DGS, 1987-88, p. 33).

It is significant to note that during the audience-centered shift of the late 1980s, WNYC filled the position of vice president of radio in 1989 with a commercial broadcaster, Douglas G. O'Brien. During the summer of 1989 WNYC AM/FM/TV members were mailed a survey asking about viewing/listening habits, program favorites, music preferences, and audience demographics. More than 10,000 people responded, according to the stations, and most fit an upscale profile. The stations reported that 86% had undergraduate degrees and 65% possessed graduate degrees (Wavelength, 1989, p. 15).

The AM station marked its 65th anniversary in 1989 with a series of special fundraising events. These included a boat ride around Manhattan in which station personalities mingled with members; panel discussions on current events featuring NPR journalists; and a Lincoln Center dinner "attended by luminaries from New York's business, legal and cultural communities," which generated more than $75,000 (DGS, 1989, p. 39). In addition, both the AM and FM stations generated revenue by selling paid promotional announcements to non-profit groups ("Station File," 1989).
Early in 1990 the WNYC Communications Group reported receipt of nearly $750,000 in government, foundation and corporate grants during the previous six-month period, a five-fold increase over a similar period three years earlier. Most of the money was earmarked for radio program production, primarily on FM ("WNYC-FM Amasses," 1990). Ironically, the fundraising success coincided with another instance of local historical serendipity that was likely to impact upon WNYC in the 1990s. New York's newly elected mayor, David Dinkins, chose to replace long-time WNYC director Mary Perot Nichols, an appointee of Edward Koch, whom Dinkins defeated in the Democratic primary, with a Dinkins ally, former journalist and press secretary Thomas Morgan (Robertiello, 1990).

As the 1990s began, only about 25% of WNYC's $12 million budget was provided by the City of New York (Robertiello, 1990, pp. 4,17).

**Outcomes Summary: 1987**

WNYC in 1987 was located for the first time outside of the speaker/local quadrant. Its grid placement (Figure 3) of two on the audience end and three on the national end of the continua set the station in the audience-centered/national-orientation category. By 1987 WNYC had developed a sophisticated development operation toward weaning the station from city funding. Orfaly noted the station's emphasis upon broadcast "professionalism," which a long-time listener criticized as "growing slickness." This trend was tempered, however, by modest use of audience research and consultants relative to WHA and WOSU. The national-orientation placement is a function of the station's program schedule, which is dominated by non-local production outside of the afternoon call-in and local news block. WNYC's
shift from local to national orientations was striking for a municipal licensee. There was little about WNYC in the late 1980s that would make anyone assume ties existed to city government. However, Orfaly noted the station's desire in 1990 to increase local production, which he said was constrained by budget problems (interview, 1990).
Figure 3: WNYC
CHAPTER IV

WHA RADIO

Introduction

This chapter covers the historical development of WHA radio, licensed to the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. Because the state of Wisconsin pioneered the concept of statewide educational radio broadcasting, consideration will also by necessity be given to WHA’s affiliated stations in the statewide network, today known as Wisconsin Public Radio. This researcher spent the week of April 9-13, 1990, in Madison studying documents at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and in Vilas Hall on the UW campus, where WHA’s studios and offices are located.

Though documents pertaining to UW departments and adjuncts such as WHA are ordinarily housed in the University Archives, WHA materials were held at the historical society because of the strength of its Mass Communication Research Center collection. This enables researchers to access in one location documents related to WHA as well as relevant materials from the broader collection, which includes the papers of many prominent broadcasters and of several major broadcast networks. Materials for the present study were drawn from disparate sources, including the papers of WHA pioneer Harold Engel; documents collected by John
Stanley Penn for his doctoral dissertation (1959) on WHA's early history; a relatively complete set of annual reports, 1939 to 1969; as well as contemporary audience research reports in the station's files at Vilas Hall, to which this researcher was graciously granted access.

Station Origins

WHA grew out of experiments with wireless telegraphy by University of Wisconsin faculty and students, which began in 1909. Daily weather reports were broadcast beginning in 1915, the same year in which the university was granted an experimental federal license for broadcasting under the call letters 9XM. In 1917 the station broadcast music, reportedly astounding ham radio operators who were listening for code. By February, 1919, the station made regularly scheduled telephonic broadcasts of weather, market and road-condition information (above drawn from Engel, 1936). This fact was used later by WHA to support its claim to being the oldest radio station in the United States, in the face of Pittsburgh station KDKA's claim that its November, 1920, Harding/Cox election coverage constituted the start of continuous radio broadcasting. WHA officials also based their contention on the fact that the station has been maintained and operated by the same licensee since 1917 (University of Wisconsin-Extension, 1965, p. 2). (A file in the Harold Engel papers collection is dedicated solely to supporting WHA's "oldest station" claim.)

University of Wisconsin President Edward Birge appointed the station's first program director, Prof. William Lighty, in 1920 (McCarty, 1937). Lighty, who had worked for the university's Extension service, saw in radio an opportunity to extend
the services of the UW throughout the state, in keeping with the "Wisconsin Idea." This concept was put forth by Governor Robert M. La Follette and his college classmate, Charles R. Van Hise, whom he appointed as president of the UW in 1903. The "Wisconsin Idea," as described by some of the cliches of the period, was summarized as "(T)he expert on tap, not on top; the boundaries of the campus are the boundaries of the state; the service university; (and) the democratization of knowledge" (Nesbit, 1973, p. 426). This view of radio was in contrast to that of some electrical engineering and physics faculty members who were involved in the station’s founding, and were interested primarily in the physical aspects of the technology (Axford, 1960, p. 285).

The pervasiveness of the "Wisconsin Idea" at the UW constituted a case of station-specific historical serendipity that played a significant role throughout WHA’s history to 1990. It resulted in a high level of university support -- both financial and administrative -- relative to that received by other university stations. As a result WHA weathered the difficult early years in which many educational stations were forced to cease broadcasting. (Frost [1937, p. 4] noted that only 38 of the 202 educational institutions granted broadcast licenses between 1921 and 1936 were still operating as of January, 1937.) Later, when fiscal exigencies of the 1970s forced stations such as WNYC and WOSU to rush into fundraising as a way to maintain services, WHA was able to initiate gradually a fundraising program intended not for station survival, but for expansion (Jack Mitchell, director of WHA radio, personal interview, April 10, 1990). Thus the presence of the "Wisconsin Idea" contributed to WHA’s development in a significant way through UW and state support.
The 1920s

Several university and state government departments seized upon the nascent radio technology in the early 1920s as a way to extend their services. In 1921 the state Department of Agriculture and Markets began broadcasting farm market quotations daily over WHA, and the agency established its own station, WLBL in Stevens Point, the following year (McCarty, 1937). WLBL's early history was closely linked with WHA and the station would later become part of Wisconsin Public Radio. Also, in 1921, WHA broadcast concerts and basketball games from the university's fieldhouse (Engel, 1936).

On January 13, 1922, more than four years after the first successful music broadcasts, the UW was granted a license to broadcast on 834 kHz, with 4,000 watts, for unlimited hours of operation; the call letters WHA were assigned (Frost, 1937, p. 464). From the earliest days WHA evinced an interest in its listeners. In 1923 the station published a map of Wisconsin and surrounding states indicating locations from which more than 800 acknowledgements had been received from listeners to UW basketball game broadcasts during February and March, 1923 ("WHA-9XM Typical Range," 1923). Lighty wanted to know more about the potential audience for the station and initiated an early research survey in 1924. He sent questionnaires to students in the UW's radio classes, asking about the number of radio sets in the students' home communities (Lighty letter, 1924). No evidence of the results of the survey was available in Lighty's papers at the Wisconsin Historical Society.
A study of WHA broadcast logs between May, 1922, and August, 1926, provided evidence of the station's early programming ("Radio Broadcast Programs: 1922-1926," 1926). In 1922 the station broadcast a half-hour program on weekdays, and an evening program on Tuesday and Friday nights. A Saturday noonday program was added in 1923, when the evening program shifted to Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights. The week of January 22-27, 1923, is presented in Table 3 as an example of programming of the period. The evening program consisted generally of university course lectures, often music appreciation, replaced on occasion by broadcasts of concerts, basketball games or radio plays. The

Table 3

WHA Weekday Programs: Week of January 22-27, 1923

11:59 a.m. -- time signals
noon -- weather
12:07 p.m. -- agricultural information
12:20 p.m. -- university educational program (consisting of discussions of parent-teacher associations, winter tree and shrub care, indoor winter athletics, and diphtheria prevention)
8 p.m. -- evening program (Tuesday and Friday, subjects not listed)
Saturday noon -- radio communication

Saturday program consisted generally of station engineers discussing the technology of radio communication (above drawn from "Radio Broadcast Programs: 1922-1926"). In 1926 the UW College of Agriculture began a series of daily broadcasts for farmers and rural listeners, and another daily program, aimed at homemakers (Engel, 1936, p. 2).

Some UW professors refused at first to speak over the radio, believing it was "undignified" (Engel, 1936, p. 2). Their early participation was in the form of messages written for station announcers to read over the air. Under Lighty's persistent prodding, many faculty members agreed to appear before the WHA microphone. Lighty asked them to give listeners enough facts to encourage audience members to seek out more information on their own (Peters letter, 1950).

During the late 1920s WHA found itself subject to challenges from commercial broadcasters who coveted the educational station's frequency and operating hours. Station officials traveled to Washington on several occasions to defend WHA before the Secretary of Commerce or the Federal Radio Commission (Penn, 1959, pp. 328-330). While challenges to WNYC's existence resulted from that station's local political environment, WHA's early struggles were indicative of station-general factors, such as the federal government's enthusiasm for private enterprise in general and lack of support for non-commercial broadcasting in particular (see Allen, 1957; Severin, 1978). WOSU also sustained commercial challenges, as will be discussed in Chapter Five.

WHA's license history, as reported by Frost (1937, p. 466) reflects its tenuous status during the 1920s. From January, 1922, through July, 1924, when WHA's first
license expired, the station's power was changed six times. Between 1924 and 1929 WHA was moved to five different frequencies, culminating in a 1929 assignment to 940 kHz with broadcasting permitted only during daylight hours.

WHA was not set up as a separate university agency, but rather was "sponsored" by other academic departments, at first by physics. Accordingly, when physics Professor E.M. Terry, who was instrumental in development of the station and construction of the transmitter, died in 1929, there was concern that the station would be eliminated. UW President Glenn Frank told the Board of Regents that WHA's facilities were "inadequate" and that he was considering making the station's most popular features available to commercial stations (Minutes of the UW Board of Regents, March 6, 1929, p. 101). Eventually, however, Frank elected to continue the operation of WHA, the Department of Electrical Engineering assumed sponsorship, and the station entered a period of growth, especially in the area of programming (Penn, 1959, pp. 323-324).

**WHA in 1930**

The University Radio Committee, a group of faculty appointed in 1928 to advise WHA officials on policy matters, sought to expand the station's programming out of concern that an incomplete broadcast schedule would cause the FRC to eliminate WHA in favor of commercial competitors. As a result, the committee pushed for expanded programming, though some faculty members complained that broadcasting was interfering with teaching and research (Penn, 1959, pp. 338-340). Accordingly, by the fall of 1930, WHA's weekday schedule was expanded, as reflected in Table 4.
Table 4

WHA Schedule, September 1930:

10-10:45 a.m. -- Homemaker's Hour
noon-12:30 p.m. -- music
12:30-1 p.m. -- farm information
1-2 p.m. -- educational lectures

Source: *Daily Cardinal*, September 27, 1930, p. 11.

A block of recorded music and lectures from 4-5:30 p.m. weekdays was added in May, 1931, and by October, 1931, WHA was on the air continuously from 9:15 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Penn, 1959, p. 338).

Professor H.L. Ewbank, chairman of the radio committee, initiated an experimental study in teaching over the radio during the spring of 1930. The Payne Fund contributed $750 toward measurement of the effectiveness of radio in teaching music and current events to sixth through eighth graders in Dane County. The study, Ewbank concluded, showed that radio was effective in "arousing the students' interest," and was especially useful in supplementing the work of classroom teachers (Ewbank, 1930, pp. 285-290).

During the summer of 1930 WHA was a participant in an abortive effort to form a network of educational radio stations. Lacking money for a conventional "chain" using telephone lines, the educational broadcasters made plans for WOSU radio programs to be transmitted via the Crosley Radio Corporation's short-wave station at Cincinnati. The programs would then be picked up over short-wave and
rebroadcast by WHA and five other educational radio stations. The network plan fell through when it was determined that the short-wave signal was not of broadcast quality (Penn, 1959, pp. 331-332). Also in 1930, WHA applied to the FRC for approval to merge with WLBL and seek a clear-channel; the application was denied the following year (WHA Radio, 1969, p. 23).

Outcomes Summary: 1930

WHA in 1930 was characterized as a speaker-centered station with a local orientation, though not as extreme in either case as was WNYC at this time. This is because WHA, while providing standard educational radio fare of the period (e.g. lectures and farm/home programs), conducted an active program of audience research. Further, the station’s role in an early educational radio network via shortwave reflected a national interest, tempered by WHA’s mission to serve the people of Wisconsin through UW outreach. The station’s grid placement (Figure 4) was three on the speaker end of the continuum and three on the local end.

The 1930s

Buoyed by the findings of the 1930 in-school program, WHA on October 5, 1931, inaugurated the "Wisconsin School of the Air." It began with ten weekly programs directed toward students in kindergarten through high school (WHA Radio, 1969, p. 23). Though ostensibly a speaker-centered program, statistics on students enrolled in the "Wisconsin School of the Air" became an important audience measurement indicator for WHA for decades to follow. The "Wisconsin College of the Air," directed toward high school graduates and adults, was started in 1933
Because of the UW's "tradition of outreach" and desire for the radio service to have an impact upon its listeners, station leaders sought to gauge audience response during WHA's early years (Jack Mitchell, Director of WHA Radio, personal interview, April 10, 1990). This interest was evident in a 1932 "State Coverage and Program Evaluation" meeting, among Program Director Harold B. McCarty, his assistant Harold A. Engel, and Prof. Andrew W. Hopkins of the University Radio Committee. The three decided to: write to 500 Wisconsin high school science teachers asking them to check the strength of WHA's signal in their communities; send questionnaires to "regular listeners" of the homemakers, farm and school programs (derived from lists of those who had sent in reception reports) seeking their evaluations; and make spot announcements on the air asking certain questions of listeners from specific counties. Questions were to include: "Is the program coming in so you can hear it distinctly?...Does any other station interfere? Do you prefer advertising-free radio programs? What do you like best about WHA broadcasts?" (Minutes, State Coverage and Program Evaluation Discussion, 1932).

Such initiatives spawned a number of 1930s research projects, the results of which were available in the Wisconsin Historical Society archives. The signal strength reports by Wisconsin science teachers yielded a map in December, 1932, indicating areas in which WHA's signal was "clearly audible," "hard to hear" or "inaudible" ("Science Teachers Survey Reports," 1932). Another signal survey of listeners was conducted in August, 1933, to measure radio reception, both day-
night-time, in Northern Wisconsin ("A Survey of Radio Reception in Northern Wisconsin," 1933). Mail was analyzed to indicate its county of origin for the same 12-day periods in December of 1933 and 1934, as well as an analysis for the first five months of 1936 of the number of letters by program type ("Map Showing Distribution of Amount of Mail Received in Response to Programs," 1935; "Volume of Mail Inquiries," 1936). The newly formed Radio Research Committee proposed sending postcards to people in each Wisconsin county "to determine the kind of radio service which Wisconsin listeners receive"; it could not be determined whether this project was carried out (Minutes of Radio Research Committee, August 17, 1933). Wisconsin school teachers were surveyed in 1935 to determine usage of "Wisconsin School of the Air" broadcasts and the estimated number of student listeners ("Wisconsin School of the Air Survey, Second Semester 1934-35," 1935). Results of the latter study were not available in the archives.

The UW Extension conducted a statewide survey during 1933 and 1934 regarding radio reception and listening interests of 1,760 Wisconsinites. Two-hundred Dane County residents were included, two-thirds of whom reported they were "interested in WHA," though 31.6% reported they could not receive the station's signal ("Statistics on Radio in Wisconsin 1933-34," 1934). Station officials, however, considered the survey findings questionable. Engel, in a letter to McCarty, suggested that the entire survey was of limited value based upon the latter statistic, which he found unreliable in view of WHA's 1,000-watt signal at the time (Engel letter, 1937).
Regulatory problems continued to plague the station. Two powerful commercial competitors, WTMJ in Milwaukee and WIBA in Madison, were seeking independently to obtain a clear-channel, which Wisconsin lacked at the time. Each of their FRC applications called for the elimination of WHA and WLBL. That prompted Ewbank to comment that "(t)he claim of the commercial stations that they are interested in educational broadcasting would be more convincing if they would cease applying for the limited facilities held by educational stations" ("University broadcasting station threatened," 1933). The Milwaukee Journal, which owned WTMJ, employed an audience-centered argument in making its case for eliminating the state-owned stations. The newspaper compared its station's annual budget of $400,000 to the $46,000 that the state spent to operate WHA and WLBL. The educational stations, the Journal editorialized, "give neither the features that most radio listeners want nor the evening programs that are of greatest listener value. How could they on such a budget?" (Conrad, 1933, p. 3). WTMJ offered to carry several of WHA's programs and save the state and the UW the cost of operating the station (WJ Damm, Letter to Glenn Frank, June 30, 1933).

In 1934 WHA reported its audience by claiming that more than 25,000 school children listened to the "Wisconsin School of the Air" weekly and that 4,000 farm households requested bulletins on agricultural programming ("Wisconsin State Broadcasting Station," 1934, p. 1). The station computed "the value of WHA's time to the state" by multiplying a standard commercial station's rate for purchasing an hour of broadcast time ($80) by the number of hours WHA was on the air per year. That yielded a "value" of $224,640, while the state, through the university, operated
WHA for $21,000 in 1933. As a result, WHA boasted an annual per-capita cost, divided among potential listeners in a delineated "station service area" (that included 75% of Wisconsin's population), of less than one cent ("Wisconsin State Broadcasting Station," 1934, p. 1). Because the station was supported by public funds, a 1934 WHA newsletter made the speaker-centered argument that "it is not forced to cater to the whims of advertisers who demand mass audiences. Such support provides opportunities for experimentation and discovery in the uses of radio for educational purposes" ("Wisconsin State Broadcasting Station," 1934, p. 2).

In 1936 the station joined with the National Youth Administration and the Works Progress Administration to sponsor Radio Study Groups. These groups encouraged unemployed people to gather to listen and discuss "Wisconsin College of the Air" broadcasts. NYA and WPA provided the listening sites and the teachers; WHA furnished the programs. About 1,650 people took part at 91 sites ("A Survey and Analysis of Radio Study Groups," 1936, Engel Papers).

The FCC in 1936 allowed WHA to increase its power to 5,000 watts (WHA Radio, 1969, p. 18). The following year, an FCC brief seeking evening broadcast hours for WLRL reflected the state's concern that the stations not be regarded, as the Milwaukee Journal had alleged, as failing to appeal to listeners. Wisconsin state officials claimed in the brief that audience response to WHA and WLRL "has been outstanding" ("Brief of State of Wisconsin," 1937, p. 13). The brief cited enrollments for "Wisconsin School of the Air" and "Wisconsin College of the Air" broadcasts, as well as 6,500 requests for program bulletins for "guidance in regular listening" and 8,300 requests for farm program announcements ("Brief," 1937, pp. 13-14).
The University Radio Committee, which had been appointed by the UW president to set broadcasting policy, was brought under UW faculty governance in 1937 and renamed the Committee on Radio Broadcasting. This administrative shift was significant for this research because the new committee in 1939 began issuing annual reports. The first annual report, issued in 1939 for calendar year 1938, noted WHA’s increase in weekly broadcast hours from 9-1/2 in 1930 to 54 in 1938. It mentioned that WHA applied in September, 1938, for the 670 kHz frequency with 50,000-watts, full-time operation, to allow daytime workers to listen to adult education programs during the evening hours. In addition to the regular educational and farm/home programs, WHA’s schedule included music, health, drama, political, and news broadcasts. Enrollments of 221,918 for the "Wisconsin School of the Air" were listed, along with a map indicating where listener mail originated (Committee on Radio Broadcasting, 1939, pp. 1-3).

Turbulence in the state's political environment in the late 1930s began to affect the station. WHA’s administrative status changed in 1939 when the Wisconsin legislature, after a political squabble, transferred control to the state Department of Agriculture and Markets, WLBL's licensee, though the UW actually operated WHA (Committee on Radio Broadcasting, 1940). It changed again in 1941 when the legislature transferred responsibility for operation of WHA from the faculty committee to the Board of Regents of the UW System. The Regents created a Division of Radio Education, reporting to the university president, though the faculty committee would continue to set policy ("Statement of Policy on Radio & Television Broadcasting," 1950).
In 1939 WHA's application for 670 kHz fell victim to the historical serendipity of Wisconsin's changing political environment. Governor Phillip LaFollette, scion of the state's Progressive tradition and a supporter of the station, was defeated for reelection in November, 1938, by Julius Heil, a Republican industrialist from Milwaukee (Nesbit, 1973, p. 526). When commercial broadcasters put forth strong opposition to a bill in the state senate that provided funding for construction of the larger proposed WHA facility, Heil offered only lukewarm support. The bill died in the senate, causing the UW to request that the FCC application be withdrawn (Committee on Radio Broadcasting, 1940; Penn, 1959, p. 404).

WHA's frustration with its inability to obtain night broadcasting was eventually to lead to Wisconsin's innovative statewide FM network. It is conceivable that, had LaFollette won the gubernatorial election, WHA, with state support, may have obtained the 50,000-watt, full-time frequency. With WHA reaching most of Wisconsin on AM, there would have been little incentive to develop the FM network and the future direction of Wisconsin Public Radio would likely have been quite different. Thus circumstances specific to Wisconsin, another incident of regional historical serendipity, had a significant effect upon the development of WHA.

The 1940s

In 1941, as part of the frequency re-allocation required by a treaty with Mexico, WHA was switched from 940 kHz to 970 kHz, which remained its frequency into the 1990s (WHA Radio, 1969, p. 18). In addition to the administrative transfer to the Board of Regents, the UW president appointed an eight-member Wisconsin
Radio Council, consisting of university, state and teachers group officials, to provide advice on broadcasting matters (University Radio Committee, 1941). This group would evolve into Wisconsin's present-day Educational Communications Board, which coordinates Wisconsin Public Radio. Also in 1941, the state legislature appropriated funds for expanded early morning broadcasts for farmers and for Sunday broadcasts (University Radio Committee, 1941).

With the onset of World War II, WHA "geared its broadcast schedule to the winning of the war and the peace" (University Radio Committee, 1943, p. 2). This prompted development of war news summaries, faculty lectures on war-related topics, patriotic readings and music designed to lift listeners' morale, and public service announcements for war bonds. In addition, women were used as announcers and board operators for the first time, to fill in for staff serving in the war effort. As with WNYC and WOSU, the shift to war-related programming hastened WHA's shift toward an increased national orientation because the war could not be considered simply within a Wisconsin context. Evidence of this broader purview was apparent during 1943 when WHA added programs from the BBC to its schedule, "indicating a trend in program enrichment from outside sources," according to the annual report (University Radio Committee, 1943, pp. 3-5). WHA's news and public affairs policy was stated in 1947 in speaker-centered terms, as "the basically educational approach": "We are not primarily interested in entertaining; we are not interested in the sensational or the trivial, except for occasional relief" (Vogelman, 1947).
Through the 1940s WHA reported audience interest in terms of "Wisconsin School of the Air" enrollments and occasional mail analysis, which showed the number of cities and counties (as well as adjacent states) generating mail. The station’s 1945 annual report included this attempt to go further:

We do not have data for other programs comparable to that for the School of the Air. However, the impressions gained by mail and requests for bulletins, program schedules, etc., lead us to believe that we are serving a large and steadily increasing body of listeners (University Radio Committee, 1945, p. 5).

The 1946 annual report provided a section entitled "Evidence of Listener Interest," which included the following: "'How many people listen to WHA?' There is no accurate answer to that question, but various measurements of audience response indicate a large and loyal body of listeners" (University Radio Committee, 1946, p. 7). Listed were: request mail for recipes from the homemakers program; requests for a brochure mentioned during a public affairs broadcast; and "Wisconsin School of the Air" enrollments. In 1945 WHA initiated a broadcast in which the station manager read listener letters, answered questions and responded to comments, "in recognition of the importance of listener’s [sic] letters in influencing the programs and policies of WHA" (University Radio Committee, 1946, p. 7).

The impact of the 1939 political conflicts became apparent after the war. Having been frustrated in their attempts to obtain night broadcast authorization and a clear-channel, station officials, led by McCarty, began in the mid-1940s to look to the newly available frequency modulation band as a means to expand WHA’s reach. When the FCC allocated space on the FM band for educational broadcasters, Wisconsin was assigned eight channels for such use. UW engineers devised a plan
for a network of FM stations that would cover virtually the entire state. In 1945 the legislature created a State Radio Council, comprised of the governor, university president and other state officials, which was charged with seeking FCC approval and developing the network (Harley, 1959, pp. 187-188; University Radio Committee, 1945, p. 6).

The Wisconsin Legislature appropriated funds in 1945 for the first two stations in the network, WHA-FM in Madison and WHAD in Delafield, to serve the Milwaukee metropolitan area. WHA-FM, the originating station for the network (later WERN), went on the air March 30, 1947; WHAD began broadcasting in May 1948 (WHA Radio, 1969, p. 25). Successive legislatures funded construction of two additional stations each biennium through 1952, when the seventh and eighth stations went on the air, giving Wisconsin the nation's first statewide educational radio network. WHA-AM programs were simulcast throughout the FM network until sundown, when special FM programming began until 10:30 or 11 p.m., usually rebroadcasts of adult educational programs, lectures and music (Harley, 1959, pp. 188-189).

**WHA in 1949**

A sense of WHA programming during this period was provided by the "composite week" of programs for the year 1948, presented in the 1949 annual report. That composite week is presented as Table 5.
Table 5

1948 WHA Composite Week:

Symphonic and chamber music -- 25.4% of programming
Salon and concert music -- 27.4%
News -- 11.9%
Dialogue and discussion -- 13.3%
Drama -- 3.4%
Talks and lectures -- 18.6%


This included foreign programs provided by British, Dutch, Australian, South African and French broadcasters. During 1949 WHA added a daily "Nursery School of the Air" broadcast for pre-schoolers; invited all members of the legislature to participate in a "Legislative Forum" from WHA's State Capitol studio; and provided tapes of the "Wisconsin School of the Air" to commercial stations in Wisconsin and 12 other states (University Radio Committee, 1950, pp. 9-10).

WHA-AM broadcast from 7:30 a.m. until sunset (9 a.m. sign-on Sundays). The station broadcast more than 3,600 hours during 1949, programming that was provided as well to the state FM network, which continued until 11 p.m. Network programs originated from WHA-FM, and were rebroadcast by direct over-the-air pickup from one station to another (only three were operating in 1949). Administratively, the UW was part of the State Radio Council, which received legislative funding to operate the FM network; the UW, through WHA, was
responsible for programming the network (University Radio Committee, 1950, pp. 2-3, 12, 14).

Outcomes Summary: 1949

WHA's characterization as a speaker/local station changed little between 1930 and 1949. The types of programming offered were similar and the interest in research continued. Incremental change toward an increased national orientation was reflected in the carriage of programs produced by foreign broadcasters. WHA's 1949 grid placement (Figure 4) remained three on the speaker end while moving to two on the local end of the continua.

The 1950s

In 1950 WHA joined the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association, a trade group comprised primarily of commercial broadcasters. WHA claimed the invitation marked a "new high in harmony" with commercial broadcasters, based upon the UW's sponsorship of conferences for Wisconsin broadcasters as well as the Athletic Department's policy of making broadcasts of UW football and basketball games available to commercial stations for a nominal charge (University Radio Committee, 1951, p. 2). Also in 1950, WHA became an active participant in the NAEB's "bicycle" network; the station carried several NAEB-distributed programs and offered WHA's "Freshman Forum" lecture series for national distribution (University Radio Committee, 1951, p. 9).

The UW Board of Regents in May of 1950 adopted a "Statement of Policy" governing broadcasting, derived from principles stemming from faculty committee decisions during the previous two decades. Though the policy reiterated "Wisconsin
Idea" notions of extending UW educational services throughout the state, it did acknowledge audience "interests," reflecting continued sensitivity to past allegations of being overly speaker-centered. The policy stated:

The broadcast facilities and resources of the University of Wisconsin shall be so utilized as to advance the educational purposes of the University and serve to the fullest extent the interests and needs of the people of the state. In all broadcasting from the University the highest standards of good taste shall prevail and the reputation of the University be upheld and defended from misuse or misrepresentation in any form. No broadcast shall place the University in the position of endorsing or opposing any candidate for public office, the platform or objectives of any political party, of any religious organizations, or of any special-interest group (UW Board of Regents, 1950, p. 3).

Further, in governing WHA's sharing of broadcasts with commercial stations, the regents' policy held that purely educational events, such as classroom lectures or reports of research findings, could not be used on commercially sponsored programs.

The State Radio Council offered additional clarification of WHA's mission during 1952. In a report to the legislature, the council noted that many of state network's programs were "of particular interest to...minority audiences which are not served by radio otherwise. In other words, the stations do not attempt to serve all of the people all of the time, but rather to serve some of the people especially well all of the time" (State Radio Council, 1952, p. 3). As to the number of people served, that same report claimed "(T)here can be no precise answer" (p. 6). It went on to cite the standard indicators of the period: 600,000 "Wisconsin School of the Air" enrollments; mail response of more than 1,000 pieces in a two-month period; and 1,000 respondents to a broadcast announcement seeking "frank opinions" about the FM network service (p. 6).
WHA's interest in audience research developed further during the 1950s, though the UW's emphasis upon television was apparent. In the 1952 annual report the University Radio Committee acknowledged a need for additional research to answer questions such as: number of listeners; demographic composition of listeners; reasons for not listening; and relative educational effectiveness of various program types (pp. 11-12). Accordingly, during 1952 a special research committee was appointed "for the purpose of stimulating and reviewing proposals for research in the educational uses of radio and television" (University Radio Committee, 1953, p. 13). However, WHA-TV began broadcasting in 1954 and the eight research projects completed or underway by 1956 all dealt with educational television (University Radio-Television Committee, 1956, p. 6). This emphasis upon television research at the expense of radio was evident at the UW through the 1960s, though a 1958 study included demographic and media usage information for Madison-area radio listeners (University Radio-Television Committee, 1959, p. 13).

However, WHA radio's research program benefitted from a bit of local historical serendipity in 1952: the fact that A.C. Nielsen, founder of the ratings concern, was a UW graduate. Nielsen donated to the UW audience information on WHA for 1952. The data included the percentage of households in Southern Wisconsin counties that listened to WHA during a given month, as well as the conclusion that listeners in 62,060 homes "used" WHA (University Radio-Television Committee, 1954, pp. 14-15). In addition, UW's College of Agriculture conducted several surveys of farm families to measure radio listenership, particularly to the morning farm broadcasts; one survey involved a mass postcard mailing, another
asked households to keep diaries (University Radio-Television Committee, 1953, p. 8; 1958, p. 5). This provided station officials with access to more sophisticated audience measures than enrollments and mail response, and constituted an important early step in the movement toward audience-centered strategies. That is, a station needs accurate information about its audience before it can modify its operation to attempt to satisfy that audience.

Through the 1950s WHA's national orientation continued to develop as the station contributed programs to NAEB's tape network. National distribution was an interest of Program Director William Harley, who took a year's leave from WHA in 1951-52 to coordinate production of a series of five programs on public affairs and the humanities. The series was funded through a $300,000 Ford Foundation Fund for Adult Education grant to NAEB, which was to distribute the programs nationally (University Radio Committee, 1952, p. 10). In 1958 WHA received a $19,285 grant from the Educational Television and Radio Center, also Ford-funded, to develop three radio series for NAEB distribution (University Radio-Television Committee, 1959, p. 2).

The interest of Harley, NAEB president at the time, in networking was also manifest in his active participation in a 1959 NAEB conference, "The Feasibility and Role of State and Regional Networks in Educational Broadcasting." Harley served on the conference planning committee, and was a frequent presenter and discussant. In his opening remarks, Harley told the gathering of broadcasters, educators and government officials:

If those of us in educational broadcasting believe in what we are doing, if we feel that the programs we present are truly worthwhile for people in our local communities, it follows that it should be worthwhile to
extend those benefits to people of many surrounding communities (Harley, 1959, p. 9).

The mission-driven nature of Harley's remarks should be noted as evidence of WHA's predominantly speaker-centered characterization as the 1950s ended. Figuratively, he spoke of providing additional listeners what they needed as a rationale for networking in educational radio.

The 1960s

WHA continued to seek improved AM transmission capability as the 1960s began. In February, 1960, the UW applied to the FCC for a clear-channel frequency at 750 kHz, plus a doubling of WHA-AM's power to 10,000 watts (University Radio-Television Committee, 1961, p. 2). The application was denied in July, 1964 (University Radio-Television Committee, 1965, p. 2).

WHA conducted a telephone survey of Madison-area listeners in the fall of 1960. Five-hundred calls were placed to numbers selected at random from the Madison telephone directory to determine WHA listening habits and FM-reception capability. The account of the survey in the 1961 annual report stated that 65% of radio listeners "heard WHA or WHA-FM," and that 31.7% of that group "listened regularly." More precise operationalizations were not presented in the annual report, which reflected the self-serving nature of the data reporting (University Radio-Television Committee, 1961, p. 25).

To expand WHA's research program, a faculty member, Prof. Bruce Westley, was appointed in 1960 to a half-time position on the stations' staff to coordinate educational broadcasting research (University Radio-Television Committee, 1961, p.
21). A second faculty member was added on a 40% appointment to the research unit the following year (University Radio-Television Committee, 1962, p. 22).

The 1960s brought important administrative changes to the WHA stations. In 1963 UW President Harrington proposed to the regents that the university’s extension and adult education activities be reorganized (University Radio-Television Committee, 1964, p. 2). The proposal was implemented in 1967 when the WHA stations were shifted to the UW Extension. This change was a natural move considering that the extension service was the university’s primary vehicle for outreach to the people of Wisconsin, which was WHA’s traditional mission as well. Further, it is argued that this change hastened WHA’s audience-centered shift because the UW Extension, as the UW unit most directly responsive to the state’s citizens, was itself an audience-centered entity.

Within the UW Extension, a Division of Educational Communications was created as a result of the reorganization (later the Division of Telecommunications), comprised of the stations and the UW’s Instructional Media office. The new division had a director, with associate directors responsible for running the radio, television and instructional media operations, all of whom reported to the UW’s chancellor for extension (UW-Extension, 1967). At the same time the State Radio Council was renamed the Educational Communications Board, to manage the state’s radio and television networks.

WHA in 1969

WHA celebrated 50 years of radio broadcasting during 1969. Its program schedule included: "Wisconsin School of the Air," "Wisconsin College of the Air,"
the homemakers program (in 1969 called "Accent on Living"), farm and agriculture broadcasts, literary readings, radio drama, programs about health, news and public affairs, classical music and opera (UW-Extension, 1969, pp. 6-10). WHA carried programs produced by other stations as well as distributing its own programs nationally; during the 1960s, WHA distributed 14 radio series with more than 300 individual programs, according to the 1969 annual report (p. 7). This tradition of national production contributed to CPB's 1969 decision to establish a National Center for Audio Experimentation at the UW, funded with a $50,000 CPB grant (p. 7).

WHA's mission statement was revised in 1969, and reflected the fact that station leaders were not yet cognizant of their ability to build a relatively large audience. According to Jack Mitchell, that realization did not come to many stations until after the creation of NPR, with its popular news programs that began to develop followings in the 1970s. WHA's mission was stated in 1969 as the transmission of programs

which would not build an audience large enough to attract commercial sponsorship, but which nonetheless are of importance and value to substantial numbers of citizens...(and) adds an educational dimension to daily living which could be provided in no other way (UW-Extension, 1969, pp. 19-20).

Though the mission statement included the emphasis upon minority service expressed by all three stations at various times, it is significant to note that the statement also held that each type of program was meant for a "certain kind of audience....Different people with differing needs and interests find different kinds of values in the WHA broadcast schedule" (p. 16). This notion of audience targetting
became fundamental to public radio in the 1980s, as will be discussed in Chapter IV.

The station's annual report, then included with those of the other agencies of the UW-Extension's Division of Educational Communications, noted "evidence of a steadily growing appreciation on the part of the general public" for WHA programming "as a supplement and alternative" to commercial broadcast fare (UW-Extension, 1969, p. 15). Audience response was reported in terms of a survey that found 80% of Wisconsin elementary schools used "Wisconsin School of the Air" broadcasts as well as 12,000 pieces of mail received during 1968 (p. 15). (This researcher was unable to find annual reports for WHA between 1970 and 1984; a representative of the UW-Extension chancellor's office said such reports were discontinued during that period [personal communication, April 13, 1990].)

Outcomes Summary: 1969

WHA in 1969 was located in a different quadrant, as a speaker-centered, nationally oriented station. Its grid placement (Figure 4) was one on the speaker end and one of the national end of the continua. The shift to an increased national orientation was a function of several factors. These included: Program Director Harley's activism in NAEB's networking initiatives and his role in directing the Ford Foundation's national production program; and the establishment of the CPB-funded National Center for Audio Experimentation at the UW, which raised further WHA's national profile. Within the speaker/audience dimension, the gradual shift toward the audience side was manifest in a revised mission statement that conceived of
targeting specific audiences with individual programs, as well as the presence of a research unit on staff.

The 1970s

The late 1970s brought increased movement toward the audience-centered end of the speaker/audience continuum for WHA. A major programming shift occurred in 1976 when WHA-AM added telephone call-in components to its farm, home and faculty-discussion programs. The station's director of radio, Jack Mitchell, had been an advocate, during discussions on the founding of NPR, of national call-ins as a staple of NPR programming. Mitchell believed this would be in keeping with the concept of NPR as "radio for everyone," which was embodied in William Siemering's statement of philosophy for the fledgling network (see Siemering, 1970, reproduced as in Haney, 1980, appendix). Accordingly, under Mitchell's direction WHA became the first public radio station to introduce regular call-in programming. Mitchell described the significance of the move as follows: "When public radio first used phones, it symbolized a change in emphasis. Now we were responding to public concerns. It was probably the most significant change in the dynamics of our relationship with the audience" (Jack Mitchell, director of WHA radio, personal interview, April 10, 1990).

In 1977 WHA ended 30-years of simulcast programming on AM and FM. The AM station emphasized call-in programming, formal education, and news/public affairs, in addition to NPR's "All Things Considered"; the FM station in Madison featured classical music (state network stations outside of Madison received a mix). That same year WHA held its first on-air fund drive seeking listener support. "We
did it at first as a public relations move (toward the UW and the legislature). We didn't really know what we were doing," Mitchell recalled. However, the stations soon developed an efficient fundraising operation. The introduction of fundraising "made a huge difference," according to Mitchell. "When we were getting most of our money from the university, we didn't need to think about listeners" (Mitchell interview, 1990). Further, WHA air personalities became interested in fundraising out of an ego-driven desire "to hear the phones ring" during their shows (Mitchell interview, 1990).

Interestingly, WHA did not begin fundraising out of a fiscal exigency, as did WNYC in 1975 (see Chapter 2). Mitchell noted that UW support for the stations remained relatively constant. Thus the historical serendipity of the "Wisconsin Idea" continued to benefit WHA after more than half a century. However, the stations "soon got dependent" upon the extra money generated through fundraising, which provided for expansion of WHA programming, to be discussed below, and mandated continued growth in listener support (Mitchell interview, 1990). It is difficult to assess WHA's budget because of its complex relationship with the UW, the state Educational Communications Board, and the Wisconsin Public Radio Association, the state network's fundraising arm. All three entities provide money used by WHA and WERN to produce programming for Wisconsin Public Radio, which had grown to 15 stations by 1990. In 1988 about $1 million was raised from listeners through the Wisconsin Public Radio Association, the network's fundraising arm; according to Mitchell, this amount constituted about half of WHA/WERN's program budget.

The 1980s

The 53-year broadcast run of the "Wisconsin School of the Air" ended in 1984, symbolic of the shift toward an audience-centered WHA. After WHA adopted a news and information format, scheduling the school broadcasts became increasingly difficult. In 1979 WHA and Educational Communications Board studied alternative distribution systems, especially subcarrier frequencies (SCA). The legislature appropriated funds to improve the quality and strength of the SCA signal throughout Wisconsin. In the fall of 1984 the "Wisconsin School of the Air" became a subscription service, which it remained as of 1990; schools leased SCA receivers and teacher guides (Johnson, 1989, p. 38). Educational broadcasts remained on WHA in 1990, however, in the form of the "University of the Air" series of faculty lectures, as well as occasional on-air, for-credit courses offered through the UW.

In 1983 a "Goals and Objectives Document" was drafted by the UW-Extension Telecommunications Division and the state Educational Communications Board to guide strategic planning for Wisconsin Public Radio (UW-Extension, 1984-85). The plan was updated annually through the 1980s. It set goals for the categories of programming, remote-broadcast origination (away from Madison), listener/corporate/foundation support, national production, audience research ("Improve research to identify audience needs and goals"), and marketing and promotion. In addition, Wisconsin Public Radio in 1986 established a goal of attaining a weekly cumulative audience of 300,000 by the spring of 1990 (UW-
Extension, 1985-86). The latter goal was set forth given National Public Radio's goal of doubling the national public radio audience between 1986 and 1990 (see NPR, 1986; [the goal was defined as doubling the average quarter hour audience of CPB-qualified stations, to one million, p. 2]). That goal resulted from the deliberations in 1986 of NPR's Audience Building Task Force, which was appointed by WHA's Mitchell, then serving as chairman of the NPR board.

Upon resumption of annual reports in 1985, audience data were reported for WHA and WERN, as well as Wisconsin Public Radio overall. This included Arbitron figures for average quarter hour and cume listenership, and weekly time spent listening. The report noted that WERN ranked fifth in AQH among the 17 Madison market stations in 1985, "a placement that any commercial station would envy" (UW-Extension, 1984-85). The 1985-86 annual report, which noted that ratings were not available at time of publication, claimed a 10% increase in fundraising dollars from listeners as indicative of "higher listenership and satisfaction (UW Extension, 1985-86). Direct mail was increasingly used to reduce the amount of time spent fundraising on air to bring in new subscribers.

During the 1985-86 biennium, Wisconsin Public Radio reconfigured its program service to provide for "localization and complementary service." This resulted in three separate services, distributed from Madison, and described in Table 6. It was hoped that "localization," augmented by increased research and promotion, "will not only increase listenership by a sense of involvement and loyalty...but will also later translate into increased listener and other private support" (UW-Extension, 1985-86 [pages not numbered]). One of WPR's goals became provision of a 24
hour, two-channel (information and music) service throughout as much of Wisconsin as was economically and technically feasible (UW-Extension, 1987-88).

Table 6
Information service (WHA, WLBL, WHAD):

News and talk -- 72.7%
Music -- 23.3%
Formal education -- 4%

Music service (WERN, WHRM-Wausau):
Music -- 83.6%
News and talk -- 12.4%
Formal education -- 4%

"Mixed" service (remaining 8 WPR stations):
Music -- 65%
News and talk -- 31%
Formal education -- 4%

WHA: 1987-1990

WHA's increased audience-centeredness was manifest during this period as several new strategies were driven by research findings. Network programming was modified during 1987 and 1988 to increase the information and education
content on "mixed service" stations in areas of Wisconsin that had other broadcast sources for classical music. This followed audience research into listener preferences in western Wisconsin. The amount of informational/educational programming on WHA was increased from 71% in 1988 to 76% in 1989. New promotion strategies were driven by research that suggested most people found WPR accidentally while moving along the radio dial, and others heard about the network by word of mouth. Accordingly, WPR increased the number of station identifications and instituted an on-air "Tell a friend about (station call-letters)" campaign (UW-Extension, 1987-88).

The 1987-88 annual report claimed a statewide weekly cume audience for WPR of about 180,000. This slower-than-expected growth prompted the network to decide to reevaluate its goal of a weekly cume of 250,000 by 1990, "establish a realistic goal and plan to achieve it" (UW-Extension, 1987-88). After "extensive rethinking," the following revised goal was adopted:

Increase average quarter hour listenership by 50% by Spring 1995 to a program service that continues to be built on a mission of high quality educational/information and cultural/entertainment programming that extends the resources of the University of Wisconsin System and meets the needs and interests of significant audiences (UW-Extension, 1988-89, p. 21).

A strategy presented toward meeting this goal was the utilization of outside consultation to analyze the network's strengths and weaknesses, and suggest an overall strategy for the 1990s (p. 21).

The process began with an "Audigraphic" analysis by Audience Research Analysis, a Maryland-based consulting firm headed by David Giovannoni, a public radio consultant who received his doctorate at the UW. Using Arbitron data for spring and fall of 1989, the firm grouped listeners in terms of core (those who prefer
WHA) and fringe (those who spend most of their listening-time with competitors) classifications. The "Audigraphic" analysis provided the following information: time of day of listening; location of listening; time of turning on, turning off and switching stations (referred to as "radio activity and churn"); extent of listener preference to WHA; time of day of listening to competitors; and differential appeal to core and fringe listeners throughout the day (Audience Research Analysis, 1989).

A comprehensive strategic planning analysis of WPR was conducted by Walrus Research, a research and consulting firm headed by George Bailey, a UW-Milwaukee professor. The report was based upon the "Audigraphic" analysis; Arbitron data processed by the Radio Research Consortium, another research and consulting firm widely used by public broadcasters; and focus groups conducted by Bailey in Madison and Milwaukee. Bailey's report included recommendations for programming change (Walrus Research, 1989).

Bailey noted that WHA was "appreciated as an educational station in the true sense of university extension" and reported that focus group participants had high praise even for faculty lecture programs (Walrus Research, 1989, p. 3). Therefore, Bailey suggested that WHA should be "positioned as an educational station, building on the strong reputation of the UW" and the needs of its listeners for "continuing enrichment," with the notion of education to comprise learning about culture as well as public affairs (p. 3). To do so, he recommended moving "musicological lecturing" programs -- such as "Adventures in Good Music," NPR's "Performance Today" and opera -- onto WHA from WERN. That would free the FM station to be an "emotional, soothing music" service (p. 3). Because AM radio was "heading for
extinction," Bailey also suggested simulcasting WHA on WHAD-FM, because WHAD could be heard in much of WHA's coverage area (p. 2).

Further, Bailey was critical of WHA's call-in programming. He suggested the station should discard its concept of talk radio, which encompassed both the call-ins and NPR news programming. "The quality of call-ins varies minute-to-minute based upon the callers, (which is) the program element under the least control... (while) the quality of NPR news is highly consistent," Bailey wrote (p. 2). In addition, WHA's call-in hosts had widely disparate styles, which Bailey claimed sometimes clashed with the time of day when they were on air; hosts needed to be rescheduled to more appropriate hours. Bailey also called on WHA to produce a "morning show," with news, information and "personality," with NPR's "Morning Edition" moved to WERN (p. 3).

Giovannoni concluded that "it was right for the '70s," but the combination of NPR news and UW talk was "no longer optimal" because the programs appealed to different age groups; the NPR programming appealed to younger listeners than the talk shows (Giovannoni letter, 1989). He suggested that NPR news programs be moved to WPR's FM stations in light of AM's shrinking audiences. Giovannoni seconded Bailey's recommendation for a locally produced morning show, with syndicated public affairs programming with WHA's traditional "educational appeal" rounding out the broadcast day (Giovannoni letter, 1989).

WPR's director of program planning, research and marketing, Monika Petkus, said the network planned to implement many of the recommendations in the fall of 1990 (personal interview, April 13, 1990). It is interesting to note that, given the
UW's tradition of interest in audience research, the two consultants employed as consultants for a possible major station overhaul had UW connections, as alumnus and faculty member.

Outcomes Summary: 1987

WHA had moved into the audience/national quadrant by 1987. Its grid placement (Figure 4) was three on the audience end and two on the national end of the continua. Programming and promotion strategies were driven by research findings. Station goals involved increasing audience cumes and a strategy presented toward meeting this goal was utilization of research consultants. This audience-centered orientation was tempered by the continued presence of faculty lectures and for-credit courses on WHA's schedule, reflecting a continued sense of the "Wisconsin Idea" legacy. For example, WHA's annual reports through the 1980s continued to include a list of faculty members who had appeared on WHA broadcasts.

Movement along the local/national continuum was more incremental. While the station's long-standing interest in national issues continued as plans were made to distribute "What D'Ya Know?" nationally, WHA broadcast local productions between "Morning Edition" and "All Things Considered." Further, as part of Wisconsin Public Radio's "localization" effort, bureaus were created in major cities throughout the state to increase the amount of local news and information, and decrease the amount of programming originating from Madison.
Figure 4: WHA
CHAPTER V
WOSU RADIO

Introduction

This chapter covers the historical development of WOSU radio, licensed to the Board of Trustees of The Ohio State University. This researcher studied Ohio State's holdings related to WOSU periodically between October, 1989, and April, 1990. The University Archives contains a WOSU collection of historical documents dating to the early 1920s, including an incomplete series of program guides. Other relevant documents were found in the archives' collections of I. Keith Tyler's papers and those of Ohio State officials who had dealings with the station, such as university presidents. The university's archivists were most helpful in meeting this researcher's requests. Files at WOSU's offices at the Fawcett Center for Tomorrow included a complete collection of annual reports from 1967 through 1990, other contemporary papers, and master's theses by Madden (1968) and Jensen (1970) on station history; staff provided this researcher access to these materials. The station prepared a capsule history of WOSU in 1970, apparently in preparation for its 50th anniversary celebration in 1972, which proved helpful in determining dates and in directing the researcher to additional data. Some materials from the late 1980s were in the
personal collection of this researcher, who was an employee of the WOSU stations in 1984 and 1985.

Station Origins

The earliest recorded use of radio at Ohio State occurred in 1909 when the Department of Electrical Engineering offered coursework in radio and wireless telegraphy. A transmitter was built to exchange messages with similar stations at other universities. An early instance of station-specific historical serendipity occurred during central Ohio's 1913 flood, which knocked out telephone communication. The university station established its value to the region and attracted much attention by providing communication between Ohio State, Columbus authorities, and the rest of the state. The university received an experimental license in 1920, with call letters 8XL. In 1920 a student operator was hired to send out weather, market, and Ohio State news reports twice a week (Frost, 1937, p. 275; "WOSU Radio History," 1970).

The 1920s

Speaker/audience tension was evident from the start when regular broadcasting began on April 24, 1922. Ohio State President W.O. Thompson, in the inaugural address, gave listeners an idea of the nascent station's mission: "We are starting tonight the first of a series of programs of entertainment and instruction for the citizens of central Ohio. These programs will be of the highest type including music, science and other subjects of popular interest" (Ohio State Lantern, April 25, 1922, p. 1). Though Thompson called for "highest type" programs, he also emphasized the station's entertainment function. Indeed the first broadcast included
baseball scores, a report of a local fire borrowed from a local newspaper, and recorded music.

In June, 1922, the Commerce Department granted Ohio State a broadcast license at 834 kHz, with 650 watts power for unlimited time; call letters WEAO were assigned (Frost, 1937, p. 275). Changes of power and operating frequencies occurred regularly during the decade; frequency changes are described in Table 7.

Circa 1923, President Thompson appointed a faculty Broadcasting Station Committee to direct station operations and develop policy (Frost, 1937, p. 276). Early WEAO programming, as reported in 1925, for the previous year, included frequent university lectures, daily market and weather reports, live concerts by Columbus musicians, and football game broadcasts. WEAO generally broadcast three periods daily and two evenings per week ("Program announcements," 1925).

**Table 7**

WEAO Frequencies during the 1920s:

1922 -- 834 kHz
1924 -- 1,020 kHz
1927 -- 1,060 kHz (shared with WAIU, Columbus)
1928 -- 550 kHz (shared with WKRC, Cincinnati)
1929 -- 570 kHz (shared with WKBN, Youngstown)

The station broadcast 15 hours weekly in 1925, and expanded to 20 hours weekly in 1926. In 1926 46 series of faculty lectures were broadcast, representing 40 academic departments. That fall the College of Agriculture consolidated all farm information into a weekly evening program known as "Farm Night" and the School of Home Economics initiated a program for homemakers; both became long-running fixtures on the station's schedule (Frost, 1937, pp. 280-281).

An early engineer reported that the station received mail from more than 30 states acknowledging reception of its programs (Higgy, 1962, p. 1). Information provided by the station to Frost for his 1937 history of educational radio reflected WEAO's self-reported interest in its audience as early as 1923 and 1924.

(A)n effort was made to broadcast materials desired by the public. Analyses of the large volume of listener mail then received was made in an effort to determine the nature of their desires. Listener surveys have been made every year to determine what those within the area covered by the station desire and need most, and programs have been built around the results so obtained (Frost, 1937, p. 279).

During 1925 a master's candidate in Ohio State's College of Agriculture conducted a study of radio listeners' habits and interests for his thesis (Frost, 1937, pp. 279-280). In 1927 station officials noted the mail response indicated the popularity of lectures and listener interest in string or salon orchestra music over jazz. However, they cautioned that "it is on long-time observations that the program policy must be built" (WEAO Program Bulletin, 1927, p. 2).

In November, 1926, WEAO began distributing a program schedule to listeners who wrote in and requested a copy. The December, 1926, program guide included a statement of station policy: "to present programs which are distinctive of a state university and worthy of an educational institution....The policy...is
'service'" (WEAO Program Bulletin, 1926, p. 1). This was manifest in the creation of the "Ohio School of the Air," which began in January, 1929 supported by the Payne Fund until the Ohio General Assembly assumed the $20,000 biennial cost in 1930. School programs were initially produced at WEAO and sent over phone lines to WLW in Cincinnati, which broadcast them with its 50,000-watt transmitter, better covering the state (Clifton, 1930).

As was the case with WHA, WEAO clashed with commercial broadcasters during the Ohio State station's early years. In 1926 the president of station WAIU in Columbus complained that WEAO accepted programs from local businesses of a "direct advertising nature" at no charge, a claim that was dismissed by Ohio State officials as an attempt to steal WEAO's programs (Lentz letter, 1926; Wright letter, 1926). In July, 1929, the FRC ordered WEAO to share a frequency and air time with WKBN, Youngstown. During the following two years the stations accused one another with failing to abide by the time-sharing agreement, causing interference with signals and incurring frequent complaints from listeners (FRC, 1932a). Eventually the FRC interceded and in 1932 established a schedule of broadcast hours (FRC, 1932a).

The stations' conflict included debate over the speaker-centered nature of university broadcasting stations. The FRC examiner initially sided with WKBN, claiming that WEAO programming was "dictated by the desires and needs of the university itself, rather than of the listening public" (FRC, 1932b, p. 3). Ohio Attorney General Gilbert Bettman, arguing for WEAO in an attempt (ultimately successful) to overturn the examiner's ruling and obtain better broadcast hours, cited
a March 1931 listener survey conducted by WEAO as evidence of the station's interest in its audience. Bettman claimed that the educational station sought to determine

the desires and needs of its listening public and frames its programs in conformity therewith....This entirely erroneous statement of the examiner is apparently predicated upon the theory that the desire and need of the listening public is for still more programs which are purely entertaining and still fewer educational programs. It is submitted that cultural and educational influences are essential to the happiness and welfare of the public, and are also entertaining (FRC, 1932c, p. 21).

This argument represented a fundamental tenet of the educational broadcaster: that the educational and cultural programs favored by speaker-centered broadcasters as being of the highest "quality," in their judgment, were also appreciated and enjoyed by their audiences. In this way, the educational broadcaster in effect expressed the view that one could be both speaker- and audience-centered. This view continued to be voiced by educational and public broadcasters for many years. However, with the rise of audience-centered broadcasting in public radio, some broadcasters stressed the audience appeal of their programs above the intrinsic quality. Some of WNYC's 1980s annual reports reflected this.

WEAO in 1930

Station director R.C. Higgy described WEAO's programming and operations at the 1930 IER. At the time the station broadcast an average of 25 hours per week, with four weekday broadcasts and three evening broadcasts. The evening broadcasts consisted of five or six 15-minute lectures by faculty members, interspersed with live or recorded music and drama from the WEAO Players; occasionally the program was preempted by a basketball or football game broadcast.
Daytime programs generally consisted of information and lectures for homemakers and farmers, along with recorded music. The WEAO staff included six full-time and four part-time employees, with an annual budget of about $17,000 (Higgy, 1930, pp. 257-259). It is interesting to note an early instance of program underwriting. The program guide for January, 1930, indicated that the string orchestra broadcasts at 9 p.m. on Friday nights were "courtesy of Union Building & Savings Co." (WEAO Program Bulletin, 1930a, p. 3).

The January program guide also included evidence of audience-centered strategy, a solicitation of listeners to become "regular reporters" on WEAO programs. Listener impressions of certain programs were to be part of a survey "to determine more accurately the usefulness of the services now being broadcast, as well as to determine what the people prefer to hear from their state university" (p. 6). Interested listeners were invited to write down their reactions to a given program, whether the subject was interesting, and whether the lecturer's presentation was good. The station expressed interest in developing a large group of listeners willing to report regularly on WEAO programs. However, no further mention of this research initiative was available in the OSU Archives.

In the fall of 1930 WEAO launched the "Ohio State University Radio School" to provide college coursework to listeners. The radio school consisted of weekly lectures augmented by outlines and supplemental reading lists mailed to registered listeners, who could obtain credit for courses in parenting, electricity, psychology and commerce (WEAO Program Bulletin, 1930b, p. 6). This began a tradition of adult education programming that continued into the 1980s on WOSU-AM.
WEAO offered its broadcasts of Ohio State football games to commercial stations for carriage. Stations in Cleveland and Cincinnati picked up the broadcasts, thus creating an ad hoc network (WEAO Program Bulletin, 1930b, p. 6).

**Outcomes Summary: 1930**

WEAO in 1930 was characterized as a speaker-centered, locally oriented station. Its grid placement (Figure 5) was three on the speaker end and three on the local end of the continua, which was the same location as WHA in 1930. Education programs and faculty lectures anchored a program schedule that was typical of university stations of the period. However, as with WHA, WEAO evinced interest in its audience through periodic research projects and through its attempt to create a panel of "regular reporters" on station programs. WEAO's interest in expanding its purview was evident in its participation as originating station in the unsuccessful shortwave network, though its lack of access to outside programming resulted in a local orientation.

**The 1930s**

WEAO's conflict with WKBN constituted a long-running case of station-specific historical serendipity that impacted upon the station's development in significant ways during the 1930s and again in the 1940s. The conflict was resolved to the Ohio State station's satisfaction early in 1932 when the FRC overturned the initial examiner's ruling and granted WEAO an increase in operating hours to roughly half of the time shared with the Youngstown station. However, fearing future FRC disapproval, Higgy wrote President Rightmire that "we must plan to make regular and complete use of all hours assigned to avoid further criticism"
(Higgy letter, 1932). The result was a gradual increase in broadcast hours; by 1935 the station reported that it was operating during 84% of its assigned hours (Madden, 1968, p. 61). Other significant occurrences in the early 1930s included the change in call letters to WOSU, which was approved by the FRC effective September 1, 1933 ("WOSU Radio History," 1970, p. 4); and the establishment of the "Ohio Emergency Radio Junior College" in 1934. The latter was formed during the Depression in cooperation with the Ohio Emergency School Administration to provide students with additional opportunities to take college coursework ("WOSU Radio Junior College Courses," 1936).

The close relationship between Ohio State's radio station and the university's Bureau of Educational Research contributed to WEAO/WOSU's active research program through this decade. W.W. Charters, the bureau's director, initiated the IER and maintained a strong interest in radio, especially in the service of education (Tyler, 1987, p. 3). As he told the 1930 IER, research was important for educational broadcasters because

(soon) some time or other the broadcaster will have to prove definitely to the teacher and the superintendent and ultimately to the taxpayer that the student has received something better by the radio than he could have had through the ordinary processes of the classroom (Charters, 1930, p. 274).

Use of research to justify continued support for non-commercial stations was evident at each of the stations in the present study, and constituted a source of dialectical tension for speaker-centered broadcasters who had to demonstrate audience benefits.

The bureau's Radio Division was directed in the early 1930s by Prof. Frederick Hillis Lumley, who worked with Frank Stanton, then a graduate student
who would become president of CBS. One of their projects involved development of a radio ratings meter (Tyler, 1987, p. 3). After Lumley disappeared in 1934 while hiking in Glacier National Park, I. Keith Tyler assumed the position in 1935 ("Hillis Lumley lost," 1934: Tyler, 1987, pp. 3-4). Because WOSU, like most other educational radio stations, grew out of engineering experiments in the new medium, station managers were primarily engineers. Tyler believed these engineers, because they lacked pedagogical backgrounds, needed the benefits of research in devising means for effective instruction by radio (Tyler, 1987, p. 4).

Examples of such research from the 1930s included a March 1931 survey in which questionnaires were mailed out. The survey measured reception, the number of WEAO listeners, and the relative popularity of programs. In all 191 people responded for a 44.8% response rate (R.C. Higgy, letter to G.W. Rightmire, April 24, 1931, OSU Archives). The following year the College of Agriculture measured listenership to the "Farm Night" program by including questions on registration forms for Ohio State's "Farmers' Week" exhibition. Registrants were asked whether they could receive WEAO, whether they listened to "Farm Night," and whether they wanted to receive program bulletins (Sill and Lively, 1932).

The introduction to the "Farm Night" survey report presented Ohio State's radio research agenda. Acknowledging that the survey was "a first attempt to attack a minute portion of the field of education through radio," the authors expressed hope that it would become the first of a series of annual surveys into: program analysis; extent of audience; effectiveness of various educational methods; radio's
value in university extension; and effectiveness of various forms of radio presentation in influencing positive farm and home practices (Sill and Lively, 1932, p. 1).

The station's interest in knowing about its audience was complemented by a desire to improve production values. WEAO/WOSU established a "radio workshop" during the 1930s. A commercial broadcaster, Meredith Page from WOR in New York, was hired to create the workshop "to study methods of 'dressing up' the programs so that educational broadcasting no longer needs to be considered dull" (Frost, 1937, p. 284). Students interested in radio were invited to attend the workshops, which evolved into for-credit university courses in radio in 1936.

Despite these developments, management expressed concern over the status of WOSU in the late 1930s. In a 1938 program bulletin column, station officials claimed that WOSU needed to "come of age" (WOSU Program Bulletin, 1938, pp. 4, 16). They claimed a need for additional study of programs, new equipment, increased funding, and better relations with the community. Listeners were invited to "(w)rite us of your needs" (p. 16). That same year WOSU's administrative home switched from the College of Engineering to the Office of the President, the first of a many changes in the station's status within the university (MacQuigg letter, 1938).

The 1940s

WOSU published an organization manual circa 1940 that failed to include audience interests in restating the station's "principal service objectives" as follows:

An extension of the cultural resources of the Ohio State University to radio listeners of Ohio....Contributions to increased teaching effectiveness in the field of secondary school education....Interpretations of conditions, problems, customs, needs...of various sections of the state to one another....A supply of people trained in radio broadcasting and station management ("WOSU Organization Manual," 1940, p. 1).
WOSU's long-simmering controversy with WKBN reached resolution in 1941. However, in this instance the impact of this station-specific historical serendipity was damaging to WOSU's long-term development. The Youngstown station expressed a desire to broadcast simultaneous hours with WOSU by installing a directional antenna. WOSU, fearing interference problems, filed an objection with the FCC to WKBN's plans. WKBN, in turn, offered to pay for a new transmitter for WOSU if the Ohio State station would agree to move to 820 kHz, ceding 570 kHz to the Youngstown station for unlimited use. After labored negotiations, Ohio State's Board of Trustees agreed to the switch, which included an increase from 1,000 to 5,000 watts of power, but also restricted WOSU to daytime operation to protect a Dallas/Fort Worth-area clear-channel station (FCC, 1941; Madden, 1968, pp. 78-86). WOSU would not regain night broadcast authorization until 1988.

It was not clear from the extant historical record as to why the Board of Trustees consented to the frequency switch, which eliminated WOSU's night broadcasts. The case is especially puzzling given WNYC and WHA's determined efforts over many years to obtain night authorization. It could be speculated that the trustees were governed by a short-sighted financial consideration, obtaining a new transmitter at no cost, in deciding to consign WOSU to daytimer status. Further, the trustees may have believed that daytime operation would not have hampered educational programming, such as the "Ohio School of the Air." However, the station's adult education mission suffered because daytime workers became unable to hear enrichment programs targeted at them.
WOSU programming was modified with the onset of World War II. In addition to the traditional educational programs, the station devoted about 15% of its broadcast time to: defense preparation announcements; enlistment information; faculty lectures related to the war; war-bond sales; and Red Cross information. (WOSU, January 1942, p. 7).

Howard L. Bevis, who assumed the presidency of Ohio State in 1940, became influential as a national spokesperson for educational broadcasting. Bevis testified on behalf of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities and the National Association of State Universities during FCC hearings on reserving channels for educational broadcasters on both FM and television (Blakely, 1979, pp. 16, 78). Many of his position papers were written by I. Keith Tyler, who served during the late 1940s as a special assistant to Bevis, which contributed to the president's interest in educational broadcasting and in turn to an increased national orientation at WOSU (Tyler, 1987, pp. 13-14).

In 1945 Tyler wrote that WOSU "must assume a much larger place in Ohio State's program of service to the people of the state," including playing a role in development of educational FM stations in Ohio (Tyler, 1945, p. 2). The following year Higgy prepared plans for an "Ohio Educational FM Network." The proposal called for WOSU to serve as the principal relay station for a network to include stations at Bowling Green, Kent State, Ohio and Miami universities (Higgy, 1946). No record of further discussion of the idea could be found in the OSU Archives. In 1948 Ohio State's Board of Trustees voted to apply for an FM station, which went on the air in 1949 ("WOSU Radio History," 1970, p. 6).
Extant research reports during this period include an analysis of mail received over six months in 1946-47. The mail count was broken down by city and county of origin; "pieces of mail per 10,000 population" was reported ("WOSU Mail Survey," 1947). A 1947 engineering study of WOSU's coverage area concluded that about 1.9 million people, 27% of Ohio's population, received "adequate service," as defined by FCC technical guidelines ("WOSU Coverage Survey," 1947).

In 1946 Harrison B. Summers left a position with NBC to join the Department of Speech faculty, bringing with him to Ohio State an interest in commercial broadcasting and audience research methods (Tyler, 1987, p. 7). This interest was manifest in numerous research studies during his 18 years on the faculty, and constituted another incident of local historical serendipity that was to influence WOSU. Summers spoke of the need for research beyond mere "nose-counting," the numbers of listeners, into listener demographics, wishes and behaviors. As he told the 1950 IER,

> It is in this area that our colleges and universities have an opportunity to carry on research studies that may have some values for the broadcasting industry as well as making what our academic friends are pleased to term 'a contribution to human knowledge' (Summers, 1950, p. 408).

Summers' presence on the Ohio State faculty provided WOSU with a relative wealth of audience data, which the station claimed was used to guide programming. This contributed to WOSU's categorization as an audience-centered educational radio station in 1949, the only one of the three stations in the present study to be so classified.
WOSU in 1949

The years 1948 and 1949 were a prolific research period for Summers. He planned and directed a December, 1948, survey of radio listening in the Columbus area to obtain data on WOSU’s audience. The standard Hooper method utilized by many commercial broadcasters for a coincidental telephone survey was employed, with data reported in terms of audience shares and ratings. Summers concluded WOSU’s weekday audience was "rather small," with an average rating in Columbus of 0.5. The Sunday audience rating was 1.6 (Summers, 1949, p. 2).

During 1949 Summers conducted four research studies in concert with Department of Speech graduate students. Using the coincidental telephone survey method, they studied daytime activities of Columbus housewives, which measured radio use as "leisure-time" or "secondary" (read background) activities; and the use of radio or television as an evening household activity. Using the diary method, they measured extent of radio use in homes where television was also available. In addition, Summers collaborated with five other universities in a study of program selection by children, between the ages of 8 and 18 (Summers, 1950, pp. 409-412). The following year he conducted a coincidental telephone survey to determine the effect of television diffusion upon radio listening ("Evening Listening to Radio and Television in a city in which half of all homes have television sets," 1950, OSU Archives).

In March of 1949 WOSU reported in a program guide column that changes had been made in the program schedule as a result of audience research findings. The column did not specify which research project was involved nor what the
method or findings were. According to the column, most listeners preferred longer
periods of similar types of programming, as opposed to frequent changes in program
type (WOSU, March 1949, p. 2). The findings were a precursor of suggestions by
public radio consultants in the 1970s, who called on stations to adopt consistent
formats instead of eclectic schedules. These audience-centered recommendations
were grounded in the idea that radio listeners used the medium as a service, from
which they wanted consistent programming, as opposed to television viewers who
generally tuned in for specific programs.

WOSU’s programming in 1949 included the "Ohio School of the Air" and the
"Radio College"; faculty lectures; a variety of musical programs, both recorded and
live, from the classics to jazz and folk to show tunes; the noon "Farm and Home"
hour; book readings; health tips: news and sports. Also included were programs
from the BBC and CBC, as well as sustaining programs from commercial networks
(ABC, CBS, Mutual and NBC). Audience reaction was actively encouraged in one
regular offering, entitled "WOSU And You," featured station managers discussing
new programs, schedule changes, and developments in broadcasting, as well as
reading and answering mail from listeners. Beginning in 1951 "WOSU And You"
was supplemented by a page in the WOSU Program Bulletin that printed listener

WOSU-AM signed on at 8 a.m. and signed off at local sunset; once WOSU-
FM went on the air in December, 1949, it simulcast AM programming until signoff,
then continued with music and commercial network sustaining programs until 7:30
p.m. (WOSU, April 1949; June 1949; September 1949; Madden, 1968, pp. 100-101).
FM signoff was extended the following year until 9:15 p.m. ("WOSU Radio History," 1970, p. 6).

The station's policy, restated in a program guide column, reflected a renewed interest in production values: "to present education and information...in as attractive a manner as possible....We use many programs of good music to surround the educational activity in an attractive manner" (WOSU, September 1949, p. 2). It is not clear from the historical record as to what provided the impetus for this emphasis upon the style and presentation of programs, which continued into the early 1950s, as discussed in the following section.

**Outcomes Summary: 1949**

WOSU in 1949 was categorized as an audience-centered, local-orientation station, making it the only one of the three stations under study to be located on the audience end of the speaker/audience continuum as early as 1949. Its grid placement (Figure 5) was one on the audience end and one on the local end of the continua. Factors leading to the early audience-centered assessment include: the audience research program initiated by Summers, which brought commercial broadcasting research methods to Ohio State; broadcast schedule changes driven by research findings, such as format consistency; encouragement of audience reaction through "WOSU And You"; and a variety of music offerings beyond classical. Movement along the local/national continuum was attributed to carriage of commercial network sustaining programs as well as BBC and CBC shows.
The 1950s

As with the other stations in the present study, there is a dearth of archival material from the 1950s relating to WOSU-AM as station managers turned their attention to developing FM and TV operations. However, the minutes of one 1950 staff meeting did pose an interesting issue relative to this study. The minutes cryptically indicate a unanimous decision to discontinue the use of a spot announcement identifying WOSU as "your station for education" (Minutes of WOSU Staff Meeting, November 6, 1950, OSU Archives). What cannot be determined is whether this decision marked a move away from associating the station with education, and therefore meant an early step toward the concept of "public" radio that would take hold after passage of the 1967 act. Because no further information was provided, the researcher cannot know whether such an inference is warranted, or whether there were more mundane reasons, such as technical problems with the tape on which that particular spot was recorded.

Minutes of other staff meetings reflected vividly the endemic speaker/audience tension in educational radio. At one such meeting Ewing presented results of an analysis of mail concerning music, of a survey conducted by Summers concerning the relative preference of classical and popular music, and of an FM-listener survey of evening program preferences (for the latter, see WOSU Program Bulletin, March 1951, p. 10). After the presentation, the minutes noted that discussion revolved around the following question: "Should we determine the amount and kind of music programs according to the demand as seen in our correspondence, telephone calls, and our own surveys?" (Minutes of WOSU General
Staff Meeting, March 29, 1951). This reflected the fundamental speaker/audience question: Who should determine the nature of broadcast programming, producers with their creative background and talents, or audiences who are the program's consumers?

The station's introspection continued into a meeting two weeks later. Emerging from a group discussion were these guidelines: "WOSU programs are to be educational. An educational station should supplement what commercial stations offer. WOSU programs should attempt to serve listeners and wants" (Minutes of WOSU General Staff Meeting, April 12, 1951). Staff members were invited to join a music committee to establish standards for the airing of popular music on WOSU. In addition, the committee was to consider whether such music should be used as "bait" to attract new listeners, and the role of music as "relief from talks programs." Someone suggested that improving the talks would do away with the need for "relief" music (Minutes of WOSU General Staff Meeting, April 12, 1951). This debate related to a common public broadcasting question: To what extent should "more accessible" programming be used as a "loss leader" to attract new listeners to the overall educational service? This was the idea of the BBC's "cultural pyramid."

Another committee was appointed to study non-music, adult programming. That group detailed three characteristics, in order of importance, of an effective radio speaker: (1) "personal' appeal; be a radio personality"; (2) "proper radio techniques," such as well-organized content; (3) comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter. The committee recommended that a pamphlet be prepared for faculty members with suggestions for improving their broadcasting techniques.
Further, the committee suggested that faculty speakers be auditioned and trained before going on the air, as well as recommending a program of "self-improvement" for all staff members (Minutes of WOSU General Staff Meeting, May 17, 1951). No records were available as to whether these recommendations were implemented. However, the fact that these discussions were held indicated a sensitivity in the 1950s to audience issues that were argued throughout the public radio system in the 1980s, further rationale for WOSU's audience-centered characterization.

WOSU became an active participant in NAEB's "bicycle" network in the early 1950s, both distributing its own programs nationwide and carrying those produced elsewhere. For example, in November, 1951, the station announced it would begin to broadcast four series distributed by NAEB (WOSU Program Bulletin, 1951, p. 6). WOSU's 1952 license renewal application indicates, for a composite week, that 13% of WOSU programs originated from networks, which could include commercial sustaining and NAEB shows ("Application for Renewal of Broadcast Station License, WOSU-AM," 1952).

In April of 1953 Ohio State applied to the FCC for a television station construction permit. After numerous delays, WOSU-TV began broadcasting on February 20, 1956 ("34 is 34," 1990). Novice G. Fawcett, who succeeded Bevis as Ohio State president in 1956, promptly reorganized the university's administrative structure, establishing a cabinet to reduce the large number of units that reported directly to the president's office. Fawcett created a Department of Radio and Television Broadcasting, to be headed by Richard B. Hull, a leader in educational broadcasting from the WOI stations at Iowa State (Blakely, 1979; Jensen, 1970, p.
Hull replaced R.C. Higgy, an early engineer who had risen to station director and was demoted upon Hull's arrival to supervising station engineers. The change reflective of a broader "changing of the guard" in educational broadcasting, as the engineers and educators who had helped establish educational radio gave way to a new wave of professional managers, many of whom had been specifically trained for educational broadcasting management in university programs such as Tyler's at Ohio State (Tyler, 1987). Hull would report to the university's vice president of educational services. The move marked the start of a transient period for the stations administratively; between 1957 and 1969, WOSU would have seven different reporting relationships with the Ohio State administration (Jensen, 1970, p. 69).

During the 1950s graduate students in Ohio State's Department of Speech continued to conduct research into the characteristics, habits and preferences of radio and television audiences in Columbus, under the supervision of Summers. Copies of a few of their research reports remain in the OSU Archives. An example was a 1959 study of the makeup of the available audience at different dayparts, which included questions on news and music preferences ("Listener availability and radio news and music preferences in Columbus, Ohio," 1959, OSU Archives). Though most of these studies were generic to broadcasting, rather than proprietary or specific to WOSU, WOSU managers had access to the findings, as evident by the presence of the research reports in station files at the OSU Archives.

The 1960s

WOSU radio announced plans to broadcast 365 days per year beginning in 1960. Previously the stations were silent during at least six holidays each year
("WOSU Radio History," 1970, pp. 5-6). Also in 1960 Fawcett established a Telecommunications Center at Ohio State, to encompass instructional media services and support as well as the WOSU stations, under Hull's direction. The university's long-standing Office of Radio Education, which had been directed by Tyler, was thereby eliminated (Jensen, 1970, p. 70). This was symbolic of WOSU's movement away from the speaker-centered philosophy that governed early educational radio. Nonetheless, evincing the speaker/audience tension within which the station operated, WOSU policy was stated in 1963 as "to extend the facilities of the Ohio State University and to bring together the best in educational and cultural productions from all over the world" ("Fact Sheet on WOSU Radio Station," 1963).

In the early 1960s an evolutionary process began that would lead in time to WOSU-AM's current news/talk emphasis. The shift in emphasis was driven initially by the interest in journalism of two mid-level station managers, Donald Quayle, who later became the first president of NPR, and Albert Hulsen, later an official with CPB, NPR and American Public Radio. They encouraged staffers to pursue news stories in the community and bring local newsmakers into the studios for interviews, generating actualities for news programming that previously involved straight copy reading (Donald G. Davis, former WOSU radio station manager, personal interview, May 4, 1990). Journalism students were recruited to augment the station's two-person news staff. In addition, the station experimented in the summer of 1959 with a call-in program and was "overwhelmed by the response....We usually didn't know if anyone was listening" (Davis interview, 1990).
To determine how many were listening and how they felt about WOSU radio, the station solicited audience response during on-air announcements made five times daily over a two-week period in May, 1964. The result was 1,700 letters representing 2,500 people, which Hull referred to as "impressive testimonials....It indicates radio is far from dead" (Hull letter, 1964).

WOSU's "Statement of Policy" was redrafted in 1966 to broaden the definition of "informal education" to reflect the station's emergent public affairs emphasis. Previous definitions differentiated "informal" from "formal education" primarily by whether academic credit was offered. The 1966 rewrite defined "informal education" as: "Programs and program elements which instruct, inform and enrich, including public service and discussion" ("Statement of Policy," 1966). In 1968 the policy was again revised, and concluded as follows:

WOSU attempts to expand the educational and cultural resources of the academic community beyond the physical limits of the University, providing members of the public with the opportunity to continue their education, and with news, information, and cultural material that would not otherwise be available via radio ("Statement of Objectives for WOSU Radio," 1966).

These policy statement reflected WOSU's evolution from an emphasis upon formal education to an informal education emphasis, which was compatible with the news and public affairs format that would soon emerge.

In the wake of the FCC decision limiting simulcasting, WOSU-AM and FM separated their program schedules in October of 1968. The AM station assumed the news, education and information programs; the FM outlet emphasized classical music and drama, though some overlap of programs simulcasting continued ("Statement of Objectives for WOSU Radio," 1968). Also in 1968 WOSU proposed
creation of a statewide educational radio network. The plan involved creation of a network news bureau in Columbus to produce newscasts and distribute other programming of statewide significance. Though station officials held several meetings, the plan was never implemented (Hull letter, 1968).

The first year for which annual reports were available in the OSU or station archives was 1967-68. That document included a "Gifts and Grants" section which listed four underwriters who provided support for music programs, such as Battelle Memorial Institute, which underwrote the cost of telephone lines to bring in New York Philharmonic Symphony broadcasts (Telecommunications Center, 1967-68, p. 9). A plan to increase business and corporate support for WOSU-TV was also included, though radio fundraising was not mentioned further (pp. 19-20). Curiously, annual reports for 1969-70 and 1970-71 covered WOSU-TV only (Telecommunications Center, 1969-70; 1970-71).

**WOSU in 1969-70**

WOSU was examined during a two-year period because events in 1969 set up major station developments in 1970. In 1969 WOSU radio Program Director Thomas Warnock and News Director Donald G. Davis applied for a CPB grant to establish a news and public affairs production unit. The newly created CPB hoped to vitalize the nation's public radio stations by offering grants for the creation of production units, primarily in arts and news. WOSU's application stressed the station's tradition of news programming, emphasized its efforts during the 1960s, and argued that a foundation existed for development of a strong news and public affairs format (Davis interview, 1990). CPB awarded its first news and public affairs
production grant to WOSU, to extend for five years, in the amount of $123,698 for the first year (Telecommunications Center, 1971-72, p. 16).

Fortified with the grant, WOSU launched an ambitious format called "News 70" in April 6, 1970 ("WOSU Radio History," 1970, p. 7). Prior to receipt of the CPB money, WOSU’s news department consisted of two full-time employees and one part-timer; afterward, the staff swelled to more than 20 full- and part-time employees. While WOSU previously produced three 15-minute newscasts daily, the "News 70" format called for three two-hour blocks of news: 7-9 a.m., 11 a.m.-1 p.m., and 4-6 p.m. News summaries were repeated every 12 minutes (Davis interview, 1990; Jensen, 1970). In October, 1970, WOSU added what it called the nation’s first radio "Ombudsman" service, in which station producers followed up on citizen and consumer complaints (Jensen, 1970, pp. 44-45).

In addition to programming news and the traditional educational offerings, WOSU targeted a younger audience in 1969 and 1970 with a local production called "Turn Me On." This hour-long, Saturday evening show featured "the various talents of today’s younger generation in the fields of comedy, satire, and contemporary music." The program attracted underwriting support (Jensen, 1970, p. 82). Amidst the emphasis upon local news and production, WOSU’s interest in regional and national distribution of its programs continued, with seven local productions carried on various stations and the Voice of America during 1969, as well as Ohio State football broadcasts which were picked up by more than 20 commercial and educational stations (Jensen, 1970, p. 83; Telecommunications Center, 1971-72, p. 24).
WOSU's efforts during 1970 were hampered on two fronts by political occurrences. A station-specific case concerned university budget cutbacks that forced the station to discontinue publication of the program guide. Campus unrest in reaction to national phenomena, the Vietnam War and the Kent State shootings, caused the stations to cease broadcasting from May 7 through 15, 1970 (Jensen, 1970, pp. 84-85).

Outcomes Summary: 1969-1970

WOSU remained in the audience/local quadrant in 1969-1970, having shifted further toward audience and local orientations. Its grid placement (Figure 5) was two on the audience end of the continua and three on the local end. The continued drift toward audience-centered strategies was evident by the start of an underwriting effort, planning for fundraising to supplement the CPB production grant, and contemporary programming aimed at the "younger generation." WOSU's movement toward the local end of the local/national continuum represented the only instance in this study in which a station did not shift in the direction of an increased national orientation over time. This return to localism was the result of CPB's production grant, which enabled WOSU to emphasize news, particularly local coverage, and local service, through the Ombudsman, to an extent unprecedented in educational radio.

The 1970s

Stations receiving CPB grants for production units were required to generate money through local fundraising, so that the units would become self-sufficient and would continue once CPB's five-year commitment ended. Local stations were
required to create fundraising operations to bring in $100,000 per year by 1976. Thus, as Davis put it, receipt of the CPB money "prodded" WOSU to start fundraising (Davis interview, 1990). Accordingly, early in 1972 the Telecommunications Center

began developing a plan designed as a 'self-help' effort. It was clear that university funding could never exceed the minimal amounts required to operate the base service and, without CPB funding, radio news service would be severely handicapped (Telecommunications Center, 1972-73, p. 30).

The "Friends of WOSU" organization was formed in cooperation with the University Development Fund, and a two-day "Friends-A-Thon" was scheduled for June, 1973. More than $15,000 was pledged (Telecommunications Center, 1972-73, pp. 30-31). The original development plan called for an appeal of the basis of expanding and improving programming. However, the university announced budget cuts for the 1973-74 fiscal year, creating a fiscal exigency that constituted another station-specific instance of historical serendipity that impacted upon WOSU. Accordingly, the fund drive's emphasis became "restoration of service" (pp. 30-31).

In fiscal 1972, Ohio State provided about $800,000 of WOSU's $1 million budget (Telecommunications Center, 1972-73, p. 25). The following year the university reduced by 10% its support of the stations, resulting in layoffs and programming cutbacks. WOSU AM and FM were forced to simulcast from July, 1973, to April, 1974 (Telecommunications Center, 1973-74, p. 1). WOSU responded by: obtaining extension of the CPB production unit grant into a sixth year; lobbying for changes in university administrative restrictions that freed the stations to solicit "small-donor memberships" on the air; and increasing the number of production
contracts (mostly for television work on behalf of state agencies) and grants. As a result, for the first time, income from non-university sources exceeded Ohio State's contribution to the stations during fiscal 1974 (p. 2).

During 1975-76 a development plan for WOSU was written by the "Friends of WOSU" board, the Development Fund and the Office of the Vice President for Educational Services. As part of that effort, a consultant drafted a document, Serving Some Great Need, to respond to anticipated questions as to why university stations would need private support: "to satisfy the ever increasing interest of listeners and viewers with an enhanced broadcast service that is of high quality, varied and unique in the mid-Ohio area" (document reprinted in Telecommunications Center, 1975-76, p. 22). Among the station needs listed in the document were increased advertising and promotion, and additional audience surveys, as well as funds for increased local production (p. 23).

Policy statements from the Telecommunications Center reflected a need and desire for increased ties with the university during the mid-1970s. A 1974 rewrite of the center's mission statement noted its roots in Ohio State's Land Grant tradition and claimed the mission was "to support the overall teaching, learning, research, public service and public relations mission of the University itself--both on and off the campus" (Telecommunications Center, 1973-74, p. 1). In 1976 the center's goals included clarification of its roles and relationships to the university's overall mission (Telecommunications Center, 1976, p. 7). This speaker-centered rhetoric during a period in which audience-centered development strategies predominated was further evidence of WOSU's dialectical tension.
During 1976 CPB's production unit grant, which had been extended for a sixth year, ended, and WOSU radio was forced to lay off six full-time news staffers (Telecommunications Center, 1976, p. 3). The stations stepped up their development efforts in the face of this exigency and gradually decreasing university support. In accordance with the consultant's recommendations, the "Friends" were reorganized to attempt to increase listener support (Telecommunications Center, 1976, p. 6). Further, station officials recognized a need to consider the long-range issue of university financial support, and to develop an "optimal" mix of funding sources (Telecommunications Center, 1978, p. 63, 67). Ohio State's share of the Telecommunications Center budget for fiscal 1977 was reported as only 37.3%; listeners and underwriters contributed about 8%, and CPB and production contracts made up the remainder (Telecommunications Center, 1977, p. 56).

Audience estimates were reported periodically during the 1970s. CPB purchased Arbitron data of the WOSU audiences in 1972, concluding that WOSU-AM's weekly cume rose from 37,500 in May, 1971, to 99,000 in November, 1972, ranking the station seventh among the Columbus market's 19 stations (Telecommunications Center, 1972-73, pp. 6-7). During years in which no audience information was available, the stations cited potential service in terms of percentage of Ohio's population within the coverage area (Telecommunications Center, 1977, p. 68). Further, growth in "Friends of WOSU" memberships was reported as "a critical gauge of audience support" (Telecommunications Center, 1978, p. 19).

The stations touted a survey of prominent Ohioans in which listening or watching the university stations ranked second only to Ohio State athletics as a
university "event" in which "opinion leaders" participated (Telecommunications Center, 1977, pp. 85-86).

Other research projects during this period included a CPB-funded study of FM-radio listening habits and a "Friends" questionnaire on TV program preferences that was inserted in Broadcaster, the program guide which was expanded to include more information for station members (Telecommunications Center, 1975, p. 5; 1978, pp. 29-30, 50). In addition, audience surveys were conducted by Ohio State's Department of Communication to augment Nielsen and Arbitron data (Telecommunications Center, 1979, p. 4). WOSU's goals for 1979-80 included the application of "available audience research and custom-tailored audience research to decision making about programming" (Telecommunications Center, 1979, p. 8).

WOSU-AM increased its commitment to call-in programming during the latter half of the decade. In 1974 the station experimented with "Metro Dial," a public affairs call-in produced in cooperation with the League of Women Voters, and made plans to expand such programs (Telecommunications Center, 1975, pp. 5, 15). The "Access" series of call-ins began in 1977 as a twice-weekly series; a third day was added in 1978 (Telecommunications Center, 1977; 1979, p. 1). During 1979 the WOSU radio stations moved closer to their goal of clearly delineated formats. WOSU-AM eliminated music programs from weekdays to broadcast news, public affairs, and university lecture/academic course programs exclusively; talk programs were eliminated from the FM station schedule (Telecommunications Center, 1979-80, p. 4).
The 1980s

Funding continued to be the dominant concern of the WOSU stations as the 1980s began, given the pincers movement of the Reagan administration's antipathy toward public broadcasting and university budget problems. Management warned in 1981 that "(w)hile we anticipate continued growth in funding from private sources, it is apparent that the WOSU Stations will suffer from both inadequate funding and lack of adequate financial information" (WOSU Stations, 1980-81, p. 9). Accordingly, fiscal initiatives figured prominently in the station's objectives for 1982, such as increased fundraising from individuals and businesses, a new direct mail campaign to current, lapsed and prospective donors; creation of an equipment replacement reserve fund; an improved accounts receivable system to generate prompt payment by creditors and reduce bad debts; and generating revenue through advertising in the program guide (WOSU Stations, 1980-81, p. 10).

The stations sought to generate additional revenue through creation of a Merchandise Exchange, to sell items with the WOSU logos; through leasing FM subcarrier channels; conducting teleconferences; by co-sponsoring a luxury cruise with a local travel agency; and selling advertising in the ever-expanding program guide, now called Airfare (WOSU Stations, 1982, p. 5; 1983, p. 1; 1983-84, p. 5). The number of on-air fundraising days (radio and television) increased from 33 in 1981-82 to 53 in 1982-83 (1983, p. 1). However, the annual report for 1983 noted the following caveat, grounded in the tension between speaker- and audience-centered orientations:

The necessity to focus our major efforts on fundraising detracts from the normal focus on creative programmatic activities. Our primary goal should be to provide outstanding services to our audience, to the
University and to the community. Instead, at the present time, our main goal is survival (p. 5).

The report also claimed that some Ohio State academic units mistook for "an uncooperative spirit" the stations' need to devote an inordinate amount of staff time and money to fundraising (p. 5).

Program-related activities during the early 1980s included creation of the Ohio Public Radio State News Bureau in July, 1980. WOSU news personnel staffed the bureau, located at the Statehouse in downtown Columbus, which provided news reports via satellite to public radio stations throughout Ohio; the bureau was funded by the participating stations and by a grant from the Ohio Educational Broadcasting Network Commission, which oversees public broadcasting in the state (WOSU Stations, 1980-81, p. 5). In addition WOSU-AM applied to the FCC in 1982 for permission to broadcast at night (WOSU Stations, 1981-82, p. 1). The FCC granted approval in November, 1984, for pre-sunrise and post-sunset broadcasting (WOSU Stations, 1984-85, p. 4). After a protracted process of transmitter construction and testing, WOSU-AM finally began night-time broadcasting in November, 1988 (WOSU Stations, 1988-89, p. 1). In 1984 WOSU-AM began producing call-in programs throughout weekday afternoons, and eliminated music programming from Sundays, except for evening hours, to move closer to its all-news/information format goal (WOSU Stations, 1984-85, p. 4).

Interestingly, the WOSU stations' mission statement was rewritten for the 1984-85 annual report to include a component on fundraising. Programming objectives were presented generically: "The WOSU Stations will provide quality services that meet the needs and interests of The Ohio State University and all
people within the coverage area" (WOSU Stations, 1984-85, p. 1). The statement went on to encompass funding: "The WOSU Stations will seek financial support on the local, state, and national level from both the public and private sector as well as explore revenue-producing activities to increase income" (p. 1).

That same annual report included, for the first time, audience-building goals for all three stations, which continued through the 1980s. WOSU-AM's audience was presented in terms of weekly cume, with a stated goal of a 15% increase in 1985-86 (WOSU Stations, 1984-85, pp. 4-5). The report noted the general decline in AM listenership, and cited attempts at building the AM station's audience by more consistent programming, improved local production, and increased on-air program production (p. 5). In addition, an "image campaign" was implemented for the radio stations, including the use of billboards, promotional spots purchased on commercial television stations, print ads in regional editions of national magazines, and bus-stop benchboards bearing the station logo (pp. 8-9).

The radio stations hired a consulting firm in 1985 to conduct a "psychographic analysis" of their listeners (Psychographic Survey Incorporated, 1985). The survey provided information on listener likes and dislikes related to types of programs and WOSU personalities; and consumer buying, reading, and leisure-time behavior. Data was broken down by contributor and non-contributor. The study concluded that 53.9% of WOSU-AM's listener support came from those aged 55 or over (p. 22). Accordingly, the consultants recommended that the station make a concerted appeal to increase listenership in the 35-54 age group, including on-air cross-promotion with WOSU-FM (pp. 17-18).
WOSU: 1987-1990

WOSU-AM weekday programming in 1987 consisted generally of NPR news; local news (though the afternoon newscast was reduced from 60 to 30 minutes); local call-in programs; and foreign-language instruction programs, a vestige of earlier days. Weekend programming included NPR, APR, BBC, and CBC public affairs programs; "Car Talk" and "What D'Ya Know?"; and jazz and bluegrass recorded music (WOSU Stations, 1987-88). When the station received FCC authorization to broadcast at night in 1988, a local sports call-in program was added, as well as rebroadcasts of NPR's "All Things Considered" and syndicated public-affairs shows until midnight weekdays (WOSU Stations, 1988-89). The sports programming, which included broadcasts of Ohio State baseball and women's basketball games, reflected WOSU's attempt to fill a market niche; no other Columbus station was carrying a sports call-in nor the games of the teams in question at the time.

In 1989 WOSU-AM brought suit against American Public Radio and competing Columbus public radio station WCBE-FM over carriage rights to "Garrison Keillor's American Radio Company of the Air," the successor to Keillor's popular "Prairie Home Companion" program. WOSU claimed it was entitled to broadcast the program because it was the primary APR affiliate in the market; WCBE claimed the rights because it had been carrying "PHC." A judge awarded the program to WCBE-FM (Singer, 1989).

The stations announced their intention in 1986 to add a staff member responsible for conducting and analyzing research (WOSU Stations, 1985-86, pp. 12-13). The position was not filled until February, 1989, when Mikel Wallschlaeger,
who had worked for advertising agencies, assumed the job (M. Wallschlaeger, WOSU research associate, personal interview, May 7, 1990). His responsibilities included interpreting the flow of research data from consultants (such as an "Audigraphics" study similar to WHA's) and creating in-house studies to meet station needs, such as a "VALS" analysis of "Friends" lifestyles and values. The latter study was intended to provide information about Airfare readers, which magazine advertising sales representatives could use in selling ads and which development staffers could use in attracting underwriters (Wallschlaeger interview, 1990). A graduate student from the Department of Communication at Ohio State was employed to assist with the research.

Development and marketing remained a station emphasis. A two-stage telemarketing campaign was implemented in 1987. Part one was aimed at lapsed members; the second stage involved acquiring new members during 1988-89 (WOSU Stations, 1987-88, p. 13). To increase the "on-air fundraising presence" beyond regular fundraisers, spots intended to foster membership renewal were produced and aired on each of the three stations (WOSU Stations, 1988-89, p. 10). Station personnel investigated the possibility of upgrading Airfare into an arts magazine to be sold on newsstands and the creation of a discount card as a member benefit (WOSU Stations, 1987-88; 1988-89). Neither idea had been implemented as of the spring of 1990.

Following a university Program Review of the WOSU stations, the stations' reporting line to the university administration was again changed. After reporting to a special assistant to the university president, WOSU began reporting in 1989 to
the dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences (Gerstner, 1989). The move reflected the Ohio State administration's attempt to make the stations more responsive to the wishes of the university, in light of WOSU's increasingly audience-centered stance and the influence of the "Friends" organization. Meanwhile, the state's share of WOSU's budget, which means Ohio State and the Ohio Educational Broadcasting Network Commission, had fallen from 49% in 1980 to 28% in 1990. Private funding sources increased from 27% of the stations' budget in 1980 to 51% in 1989 ("The WOSU Stations Progress Report," 1990, p. 3).

**Outcomes Summary: 1987**

WOSU was categorized in 1987 as an audience/national station. Its grid placement (Figure 5) was four on the audience end of the speaker/audience continuum, the most extreme of the three stations studied (see Figure 6 for comparison of the three stations), and three on the national end. The audience-centered assessment was based upon strategies such as the following: the inclusion of fundraising in the mission statement; a sophisticated development operation; the addition of sports programming to fill a niche in the local radio market; and the hiring of a staff research associate. The shift toward a national orientation resulted from a reduced commitment to the local news operation, which had fewer staffers and less airtime than during the CPB grant period or during the mid-1980s; and the inclusion of syndicated programming to fill most of the extra hours brought by night broadcast authorization.
Figure 5: WOSU
Figure 6: All stations
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes discussion of the data. Seven propositions are posited, implications and limitations of the findings are discussed, and recommendations are made for federal government policy regarding public broadcasting.

Propositions

Proposition #1: Public broadcasters operated in an environment of dynamic tension between speaker- and audience-centered attitudes since the early days of educational radio.

Proposition #2: Public broadcasters were interested in conducting research about their audiences long before CPB began funding such research in the mid-1970s.

Proposition #3: The nature of research conducted by public broadcasters changed over time.

Proposition #4: Public radio stations adopted increasingly audience-centered programming and operating strategies.

Proposition #5: The evolution of news and information formats in educational radio marked a significant shift from a formal instruction model to informal "enrichment."

Proposition #6: Historical serendipity, especially station-specific events, played a significant role in shaping the development of public radio stations.
Proposition #7: Public broadcasters sought to exploit the advantages of network interconnection long before such arrangements were economically feasible.

Proposition #1: Speaker/Audience Tension

The foregoing analysis of the radio stations and the key historical epochs in the present study indicated that internal debates over adoption of speaker- versus audience-centered operating and programming strategies occurred throughout the history of non-commercial broadcasting. As an example of the ongoing nature of this dialectic, consider the following admonition from the manager of WAPI, an Alabama educational radio station at the 1930 IER:

It has been my observation that a great many educators insist on doing broadcasting from their own standpoint and as they want to do it, rather than from that of the listener. Such a procedure means ultimate, if not immediate failure. Like everything that is worth while, radio broadcasting has requirements and characteristics, peculiar to itself, and failure to recognize these is like flying into the face of natural laws (Davis, 1930, p. 70).

Accordingly, WAPI in 1930 carried commercial network programs with the idea of drawing listeners who might then be attracted to the station's educational programs. A parallel philosophy was discussed in 1990 by WHA Radio Director Jack Mitchell in speaking of the role of such contemporary programs as "What D'Ya Know?" in drawing new listeners to public radio (Mitchell interview, 1990).

Evidence of the dynamic tension within which WNYC operated was provided by the case of the Patterson Report in 1934. The report, drafted by commercial broadcast executives, recommended that the municipal station sell advertising and adopt many of the programming techniques of commercial stations (Patterson Report, 1934). Though the suggestions ran contrary to the community-service tenets
of Progressivism under which the station was founded, the Patterson Committee was hand-picked by Mayor LaGuardia, which meant that its conclusions had to be taken seriously by station officials; indeed many audience-driven recommendations were ultimately implemented, such as adding a staff orchestra and station publicist, and conducting audience research.

Further evidence of this environment at WNYC was provided at the 1950 IER. Station director Seymour Siegel presided over a session on educational radio promotion and called on stations to employ "(a)ll the principles that go into the sales of soap, cigarettes and gasoline" in making audiences aware of non-commercial stations (1950, pp. 309-310). At the same conference, former WNYC director Morris Novik, then serving the station as a consultant, took offense to an NAB official's claim that broadcasters must be responsive to the majority. Novik countered that WNYC "owed an obligation to the minority" (1950, p. 27). Thus representatives from the same station at the same conference reflected both a commitment to minority service, a paternalistic, speaker-centered attitude, and advocacy of vigorous promotion, an audience-driven attitude.

WOSU's dialectical tension was evident during the 1930s when the station created a production workshop "to study methods of 'dressing up' the programs so that educational broadcasting no longer needs to be considered dull" (Frost, 1937, p. 284). Another vivid example of WOSU's sensitivity to audience concerns was provided by the series of 1951 staff meetings. Staffers debated guidelines for airing classical versus popular music; the use of music as "relief" from educational and
informational programs; and methods for improving the on-air performance of faculty and staff announcers.

One could conceive of such debates taking place at many public stations in 1990. In fact public radio music directors spent much of their 1990 convention discussing consultants' recommendations in such areas as whether or when to program opera, vocal and contemporary classical music (Robertiello, 1990). The contemporary question of programming music according to audience demand is a modern incarnation of the issues that dominated those 1951 discussions. Similarly, media critics noted that NPR's "All Things Considered" underwent major stylistic changes as a result of research recommendations (Fisher, 1989; Zuckerman, 1987). A parallel situation occurred in 1951 when WOSU's committee on talks emphasized announcer personality, a production value, as paramount over subject knowledge.

Interestingly, the historical record of WHA does not reveal evidence of speaker/audience debate similar to those data reported for the other stations until 1983. During that year Wisconsin Public Radio began a strategic planning process that required annual discussion and revision of goals. That prompted internal consideration of such issues as mission versus audience building. It was noted that WHA enjoyed stable funding and a supportive licensee relative to the other stations up to that time. Therefore, speaker/audience debate may be driven by financial exigency; the station with secure funding can afford to remain speaker-centered. However, even with a tradition of stable funding, WHA's interest in audiences was clearly manifest in the station's long-standing interest in conducting research.
A caution is in order here regarding the distinction between audience-driven and commercial strategies. For instance, WOSU (then WEAO), arguably a model educational station at the time, was subject to criticism as early as 1926 for carrying programs "of a direct advertising nature" and its 1930 program guide indicated early underwriting: an orchestra broadcast was "courtesy" of a local bank (Lentz letter, 1926; WEAO Program Bulletin, 1930a, p. 3). A broadcasting station may remain speaker-centered while pursuing commercial strategies such as those described for WEAO in order to meet its expenses so that it may pursue its mission goals. As exemplars of this paradigm, McCain and Lowe (1990) cited certain European "Independent local" radio stations that are privately owned by mission-driven community interest groups.

Carrying this distinction further, it is argued here that the rise of development activities at the three stations, both listener and corporate/foundation solicitation, preceded by almost a decade public radio's major audience-building initiatives. This may have been the result of the urgency, born of fiscal exigency, with which stations launched fundraising programs in the mid-1970s. Later research, which will be discussed below, provided information on the relationship between programming and development, which motivated the increased attention to programming that characterized the audience-building initiative. For example, a 1985 study of supporters and non-supporters of public radio concluded that a station's programming was the single most important variable affecting whether a person became a listener or supporter (Giovannoni, 1985, p. vii).
It should be noted that even speaker-centered broadcasters express concern about audiences. Concern for audiences underlies the speaker-centered paradigm, whether based in a desire to educate or uplift. Just as the instructional component of the school day is broken up by recess and gym class, educational radio always included non-educational or informational entertainment programming: music of all kinds, drama, comedy, and sports. Therefore an important lesson of the foregoing discussion is that the educational broadcasters in the present study were cognizant of audiences throughout their histories. None could have been classified as strictly speaker-centered. Instead these stations operated in an environment of dynamic tension -- between their speaker-centered desires to present programming which they believed fulfilled the missions of their licensees, and audience-driven needs to satisfy listeners and generate revenue.

Proposition #2: Interest in Research

The stations in the present study expressed interest in conducting and expanding their research programs on numerous occasions long before CPB began funding audience research for public broadcasting after 1969. As a former WHA radio station manager noted, "It's not that the interest wasn't there, the money wasn't. The key was the CPB money" (Ralph Johnson, personal interview, June 30, 1989). This interest was reflected nationally by NAEB's Research Committee, which considered hiring an audience research consultant as early as 1953; expressed dismay over the lack of funds for audience research in 1954; considered purchasing Nielsen ratings data in February, 1955; and noted in 1955: "The time has come for a more definite program of research and on a larger basis" (Reports of the NAEB Research
Committee, 1953; 1954; 1955a; 1955b). In 1957 NAEB held its first research seminar at Ohio State.

WOSU and WHA had long traditions of audience research stemming from their affiliation with major research universities. In fact, both stations originated as engineering research projects themselves, and were directed by faculty members in their formative years, which also contributed to a climate in which research was natural and expected. The UW formed a Radio Research Committee in 1932; Ohio State's Bureau of Educational Research created a radio division in 1929. WNYC, in contrast, lacked university affiliation. The municipal station's managers reported to city officials. As such, it is not surprising that the historical record showed WNYC initiated fewer research projects through the years. Even in the late 1980s, when public radio research flourished, the station lacked a research staffer and the AM station manager expressed disappointment at the relatively small budget afforded research (Orfaly interview, 1990). However, the hiring of a former commercial broadcaster as WNYC's vice president for radio in 1989 offered promise of an increased research emphasis. At the start of 1990, both WOSU and WHA employed full-time research staffers.

It should be noted how the stations' self-interest drove much of the early interest in research. For example, Ohio State's W.W. Charters reminded IER conferees in 1930 that research was important for educational broadcasters to justify the use of tax dollars for radio education. WOSU reported cost per pupil served for the "Ohio School of the Air." WHA computed its annual per-capita cost to Wisconsin taxpayers. Both stations regularly compiled and reported the number of
students served by their schools of the air into the 1960s. WNYC, which frequently faced calls for its elimination, reported the statistic of "cost per broadcast hour" to make a case for the value of the municipal station in the bureaucrat's cost/benefit analysis jargon. As tax-assisted entities, all were eager for data that justified and perpetuated their existence.

Proposition #3: Changing nature of research

When the nascent technology was still unproven, radio research emphasized quality of reception and extent of signal coverage. Research projects undertaken by the stations in the 1920s and early 1930s sought to determined whether conditions existed for radio communication to take place. That is, they were concerned with such factors as the diffusion of radio sets within their coverage areas as well as where and whether their signal was audible. Once transmission conditions were standardized and regulated by the FRC, broadcasters could turn their focus to programming considerations (Madden, 1968, p. 111). Research objectives changed accordingly.

The Payne Fund's willingness to fund research into education by radio and the creation of the Ohio and Wisconsin schools of the air provided impetus for research into the effectiveness of radio as a teaching tool and the extent of its utilization. The establishment of the IER in 1930 brought about an annual forum for sharing research findings; research panels became a standard part of the conferences throughout the IER's existence. Educational effectiveness studies were frequently discussed, but the types of research presented soon broadened to include considerations of audience size and interests. That shift was evident on the level
of the local stations in this study. WOSU, which had conducted a mail analysis as early as 1924, tried to recruit listeners to evaluate programs in 1930 and studied the size of its "Farm Night" audience in 1932. WHA conducted several mail analyses between 1933 and 1936, and asked listeners to report their program interests in 1934. Even WNYC, which traditionally lagged behind the others in terms of a research agenda, analyzed mail in 1936 and surveyed program interests in 1939.

Research methods utilized changed over the years until CPB funding made ratings data available to most public radio stations in the 1970s. Summers brought commercial broadcast research techniques with him to Ohio State in 1946, especially the coincidental telephone approach. WHA benefitted from A.C. Nielsen's donation of ratings data to his alma mater in the 1950s. When such audience measurements were not available, the stations cited mail response and program guide subscriptions as estimates of listener interest.

CPB instituted an audience research program to generate statistics to show Congress that Americans were indeed listening to public radio, to justify continued funding for the service. The focus of CPB's research effort shifted in 1977 when Tom Church began directing the operation. He viewed research as a tool for audience building; "up your cume" became his slogan. Church, who later founded the Radio Research Consortium, began to send out national rankings of stations in terms of cumulative audience, which motivated public stations to increase their cumes to better their rankings (Mitchell interview, 1990). As research became more accepted and expected in public radio, more sophisticated techniques were used,
some borrowed from commercial broadcasting, such as "Audigraphics," focus groups and auditorium testing of proposed programs (Mahler, 1989).

Consultant David Giovannoni conducted two influential studies with CPB funding. A 1985 study looked into the factors that influenced public radio listeners to choose whether to support their local station. The study was dubbed "Cheap 90," for its discussion of the roughly 90% of listeners who failed to support public radio. Major findings included:

* the number of public radio supporters was a direct function of audience size
* audience growth preceded membership growth by several years
* supporters were more likely to be well-educated and living in high-income households than were non-supporters
* people most likely to support public radio were those who believed it to be most dependent on listener, as opposed to institutional, support (Giovannoni, 1985, pp. v-vii).

In 1988 Giovannoni and three colleagues conducted a national analysis of public radio listeners, entitled "Audience '88," using geodemographic and lifestyle segmentation. Listeners were divided into several groups sharing common characteristics. The "VALS" method was employed to discern listener values and attitudes related to behavior and lifestyle. One significant finding was that listeners classified as "Societally conscious," while comprising only 12% of the U.S. population, comprised 42% of the public radio audience. Geodemographic information was derived by the "PRIZM" and "ClusterPlus" techniques, which
characterized lifestyles and buying habits based upon home addresses. This yielded the finding that public radio listeners tended disproportionately to live in higher socioeconomic status neighborhoods (Giovannoni, Liebold, Thomas, and Clifford, 1988).

Though the cume remained the statistic of choice for many local public radio executives, these influential studies of the public radio audience prompted renewed interest into audience demographics, or "what kind, instead of how many" (Giovannoni, 1988; Mitchell interview, 1990). The Giovannoni studies had important implications, discussed below, for many stations which began to target specific audiences identified in this research.

**Proposition #4: Audience-centered programming and operating strategies**

It is argued here that a programming or operating strategy is audience-centered when its primary objective is attracting a certain kind of audience or building a larger audience, as opposed to a primary objective of providing culture and insight to listeners. A perceptible shift toward audience-centered strategies was evident at each of the three stations in the present study and was manifest in several ways. Foremost was the increased effort to target the station's overall programming to narrow demographic groups, especially those upper-income listeners with the aptitude and ability to support the station, and who also comprise an attractive audience to "sell" to underwriters. (It is ironic that public broadcasters, who have chafed under and sought to dispel the "elitist" label assigned by their critics, are indeed targeting elite audiences.) WHA's Mitchell was candid about his station's target audience; WOSU included fundraising as a component of its mission
statement, and targeted a younger audience; and WNYC directed its development effort toward the educated, affluent listeners who were found by research to constitute the bulk of the station's audience.

Early educational radio mission statements spoke of providing service to all citizens; later versions also noted the needs of minority audiences, those who were not being served elsewhere along the radio dial. However, the idea of "targetting" a specific audience was not implicit in these concepts of mission. As WHA's Mitchell noted, "The old concept was that you put out good stuff and it will 'find' people. The new concept is that you put out good stuff that the people we want will want" (personal interview, 1990).

After the "Cheap 90" and "Audience '88" studies, station officials possessed reliable data regarding profiles of public radio listeners and supporters. This provided both the incentive for targetting desired listeners and a foundation of research about the means to attract them and secure their support. NPR's Audience-Building Task Force sought to assuage the concerns of speaker-centered public broadcasters by arguing that there was no inherent conflict between audience growth and the mission of public broadcasting:

While we have managed to appeal to an audience of significance—an audience of remarkable demographic character—it is clear that we are reaching only a tiny fraction of public radio's potential audience. If we fail to achieve an audience of significant size, public broadcasting loses not only its purpose but also its base of support and its legitimacy as a social institution (NPR, 1986, p. 1).

The task force cautioned that stations which ignored "audience development" would become an "underclass" of public radio, condemned to chronic funding problems (p. 3).
As the 1980s ended, it was "accepted as gospel in the system that public radio was going after" this well-educated, upper-income, societally conscious audience (Mitchell interview, 1990). Asked how this differed from the audience-centered approach of commercial broadcasting, Mitchell conceded it was "not that different," except that public and commercial broadcasters aimed for different target audiences (interview, 1990).

Providing quality programming remained a stated emphasis of public radio in 1990, codified in mission statements such as that of WHA: "a mission of high quality educational/ information and cultural/entertainment programming that extends the resources of the University of Wisconsin System and meets the needs and interests of significant audiences" (UW Extension, 1988-89, p. 21). While it was argued that WHA in 1990 was an audience-centered public radio station, it would be inaccurate to contend that it was as driven by audience concerns as were competing commercial radio stations in Wisconsin. Even "Afropop Worldwide," a program carried by WHA in 1990 on Saturday nights that featured pop music from across the world, included musicological explanations of the origins of the types of music. Further, all three stations in 1990 presented extensive schedules of serious and topical news and information programming. Nonetheless the increased attention shown audiences in the form of research, fundraising and more accessible programming clearly indicated a shift toward audience-centeredness in WHA, WNYC and WOSU.

Nationally, public radio's shift along the continuum toward increasingly audience-centered strategies had drawn the attention of critics by 1990. Consider
this excerpt from *Newsweek*’s review of "What D'Ya Know?:"

It's a Saturday morning on public radio, but instead of playing Schubert's "Trout" Quintet or narrating a documentary on llamas, a nasal male voice asks, "What percentage of people at a salad bar have committed some act of slobbery...(such as) sneezing, eating in line, dipping fingers in dressing or combing hair over the bacon bits(?)" Could this be public radio?...Public radio is no longer just a highbrow medium with low-key ratings ("Dairy home companion," 1990, p. 65; emphasis in original).

(For other examples of critical discussion of audience-centered change in public radio and television, see Aufderheide, 1988; Boyer, 1987; Fisher, 1989; Katz, 1988; Rowland and Tracey, 1988; Singer, 1989; Stavitsky, 1988; White, 1987; Zuckerman, 1987).

**Proposition #5: News and information formats**

The development of news and information formats on the stations in this study typified educational radio's shift from a formal instruction model to an informal enrichment model, which had significant implications for contemporary public radio. This shift, which preceded the semantic shift of "educational" to "public," was a logical progression of the process that began during World War II. The three stations modified their program schedules to provide war-related news, faculty talks and public service announcements, as well as well as patriotic music. The increased stress upon news and information marked the start of a shift in programming emphasis away from formal education (or routine information about city agencies, in the case of WNYC) toward informal education. The latter model broadened pedagogic notions of educational programming to encompass programs that informed and enlightened, such as news analysis and public affairs. WOSU’s
Hull described the concept as "public service... (providing) both sides of a question" (Hull letter, 1967).

This process was facilitated by the development of station leaders who were trained as broadcasters, instead of as educators, as the first wave of educational station leaders had been. Whereas trained educators may have viewed the speaker/audience relationship in terms of a teacher/student model, inherently speaker-centered, I. Keith Tyler noted that Ohio State students in educational broadcasting were also required to take coursework in the general, commercially oriented broadcasting curriculum directed by Harrison Summers (Tyler, 1987). These broadly trained students and their colleagues at other institutions, who were similarly cognizant of audience concerns as well as educational missions, made up many of the second wave of educational station leaders.

The movement toward news and information programming was fostered by the Allerton House seminar in 1949. Conferees issued a purpose statement for educational broadcasting that stressed the desirability of programs that enhanced understanding and served as an outlet for community expression (see Proceedings of the Educational Broadcasting Seminar, 1949, reprinted in Waller, 1950, pp. 384-392). In addition, Allerton House laid the groundwork for NAEB's "bicycle" network, through which stations gained access to a new vein of news and public affairs material, produced by other educational broadcasters. Foreign programs were also made available to U.S. educational radio stations through NAEB and through the Broadcasting Foundation of America, supported by the Ford
Foundation, which distributed international productions from 1959 until 1963 (Blakely, 1979, p. 127).

Given the evolution of news and information as a major component of educational broadcasting, the three AM stations in the present study were positioned to assume news and information formats when FCC non-duplication requirements caused large market AM-FM combinations to split in 1967. Further, public radio stations made development of a news and public affairs program, which became "All Things Considered," their priority when creating NPR in 1969-70. In 1990, WHA's Mitchell called NPR's news programs "the only necessary shows in public radio" (interview, 1990).

It is argued here that the shift away from the formal instruction model in the late 1940s and 1950s laid the groundwork for change in contemporary public radio. Stations directed by a new wave of managers accepted new types of programs. These factors fostered a conceptual switch from educational to public broadcasting, though the semantic shift did not occur until after the Carnegie Commission report in 1967.

**Proposition #6: Historical serendipity**

Historical serendipity takes two forms: station-general and station-specific occurrences. The former shaped the national environment within which public radio stations must operate, and include the three historical events selected for this study. Other station-general historical episodes included the Radio Act of 1927 and the Communications Act of 1934, which defined the regulatory milieu; the debates over frequency allocations for educational stations; the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967.
and subsequent creation of CPB, NPR and PBS; President Nixon's assault upon public television; and President Reagan's attempts to eliminate federal funding for public broadcasting in the 1980s. Rowland persuasively described the historical setting as the "long-term federal policy tendency to avoid building public broadcasting into anything more than a relatively minor auxiliary to the dominant private system" (1986, p. 271).

Influential as these national forces were, the fortunes of individual stations were also linked to historical serendipity within their communities or states. Such episodes, which would have been difficult to anticipate yet proved influential, could be of a political or circumstantial nature. They would be categorized as local/state political or economic factors in the structural model (Figure 2). Illustrative examples drawn from WNYC, WHA and WOSU follow:

**WNYC**

1922 -- Influential New York City Progressive Movement politicians created station over opposition from conservatives and AT&T.
1934 -- Mayor LaGuardia revived moribund station with advice of commercial broadcasters.
1970 -- City budget cuts forced mass layoffs and threatened station existence; "emergency" private and city funds were raised.
1975 -- City fiscal crisis drove New York to the brink of bankruptcy and forced station to generate bulk of its revenue; fundraising began.
WHA

1903 -- Governor Robert M. LaFollette arranged the appointment of Charles R. Van Hise to UW presidency; "Wisconsin Idea" of university outreach, which would govern and nurture WHA, developed.

1939 -- Station application for clear channel withdrawn after Progressive Governor Phillip LaFollette, who supported the idea, was defeated for reelection. Frustrated by its inability to obtain night broadcast authorization for WHA, the UW began work on what would become the nation's first educational FM network.

WOSU

1913 -- University experimental station established its value by providing vital communication link during major flood.

1932 -- Time-sharing conflict with Youngstown station caused state attorney general to intervene successfully in FCC proceedings; case prompted university administration to provide added support to expand schedule, improve programming and vitalize station.

1941 -- University trustees agreed to switch WOSU to daytime-only frequency, consigning station to 47 years without evening broadcasts.

1973 -- University budget cuts forced layoffs and programming reductions; "Friends of WOSU" formed to raise funds.

These examples reflect similarities and differences among the three stations stemming from station-specific historical serendipity. While fundraising efforts at WNYC and WOSU evolved out of fiscal crises that threatened their operations, WHA first sought private funds out of a desire to expand services. The governing
"Wisconsin Idea" assured relatively stable public funding for WHA throughout the years, and enabled the building of a major state network. In contrast WOSU suffered the vagaries of many fiscally conservative Ohio administrations, especially that of Gov. James Rhodes during the 1970s; proposals for an Ohio network to parallel Wisconsin Public Radio never materialized. As a municipal licensee, WNYC was subject to political interference, such as new managers with new mayors, in addition to uncertain funding linked directly to New York City's varying economic cycles.

Stations in different regions may prosper or suffer, in relative public broadcasting terms, within the same national public broadcasting milieu. As a case-in-point, Minnesota Public Radio developed into a major national program producer and distributor (through American Public Radio) during the 1980s, a time when other public stations struggled in the face of reduced government funding at all levels. It is evident that station-specific historical episodes played significant roles in the development of public radio stations.

**Proposition #7: Network interconnection**

NPR began broadcasting in 1971, marking the first permanent, national network interconnection of educational radio stations. However, U.S. educational stations sought network interconnection for decades earlier. At the 1930 conference of the Association of College and University Broadcasting Stations, the forerunner of NAEB, conferees formally expressed a desire to build a network of educational stations (Haney, 1981, p. 20). Aware that permanent interconnection was then not economically feasible, educational broadcasters experimented in the 1930s and 1940s
with networking through the exchange of radio scripts or through recordings on magnetic wire and disc. The effort coalesced at the Allerton House seminar with the birth of NAEB's bicycle network, facilitated by magnetic tape recording appropriated from the Germans after World War II (Blakely, 1979, p. 71; Hull, letter to Carlson, 1967). Twelve East Coast educational stations were hooked up with telephone lines in 1962 and 1963 in the Eastern Educational Radio Network, funded by the Ford Foundation; the interconnection was discontinued when the foundation switched its funding to educational television. In 1965, 70 educational radio stations were linked for three hours of live coverage of the German national elections, paid for by a German lobbying group; the experiment was repeated in 1969 and showed that live, national interconnection could work (Haney, 1981; Shayon, 1965).

The three stations in the present study reflected that interest in networking on numerous historical occasions. In 1930 WHA and WOSU participated in an abortive effort to form a network by sending the Ohio State station's signal via shortwave to six educational stations, which would then rebroadcast WOSU programs over the air. Both WHA and WOSU regularly made their sports broadcasts available for ad hoc network interconnection by commercial and non-commercial stations. The stations also allowed other stations to carry WHA and WOSU educational programs. WHA successfully implemented the nation's first educational FM network in 1947. WOSU planned such a network in 1946 and 1968, without success, before Ohio Public Radio's state news cooperative was established in 1980. WNYC affiliated with the United Nations radio network in the late 1940s
and 1950s, carrying UN proceedings, and played a seminal role in the creation of NAEB's bicycle network in 1949.

The tension between local and national interests that may be exacerbated by network affiliation was not as severe a problem in public radio as it was in public television. Public television stations created a decentralized system with a national program distribution service (PBS) unable to produce programs. In contrast, public radio stations allowed NPR to develop as a centralized organization, responsible for the production, acquisition, distribution and promotion of programs. Haney (1981) attributed the latitude afforded NPR by the stations to: stations' desire to "catch up" with the more developed and better funded public television system; the lack of a negative relationship with a national network (i.e., many educational television stations believed National Educational Television had an elitist, Eastern bias and was not responsive to their wishes); the cordial relations among the principal public radio leaders, who were not as fractious as their television counterparts; and the lack of attention paid by CPB and the general public to public radio, with its smaller audience and lower profile than TV (pp. 82-83). As a corollary to the last point, public radio's low profile spared the system the challenges from the Nixon White House, which took PBS affiliates to task for allegedly abrogating their commitment to localism (see Stone, 1985).

The educational radio stations in this study frequently broadcast non-local productions during the years before NPR was available. All considered carriage of national and international programming to be in keeping with their educational and public-service missions. Therefore the presence of network programming on their
broadcast schedules after 1971 did not appear to be a radical change. Further, each AM station continued to produce a large component of local programming through call-in shows. In 1990 WOSU and WHA offered local programming between NPR's signature news programs, "Morning Edition" and "All Things Considered"; WNYC was planning the same.

Therefore, though WNYC, WHA and WOSU shifted from local to national orientations during the period of this study (Figure 6), concern over becoming a de facto national station and failing to provide local service was not a relevant issue for these stations. That issue could be germane to public radio stations that carry virtually all NPR and syndicated programs, with little or no local production. For example, a consultant recommended, on the basis of focus group data, that Milwaukee public radio station WUWM eliminate local programming and carry strictly NPR and syndicated news and public affairs material (Mitchell interview, 1990).

Theoretical Implications

In sum, the concept of a speaker/audience continuum proved helpful in examining the historical development of these public radio stations. The concept of local/national tension offered less insight within a theory of what drives change in public radio. However, the grid (Figure 1) representing the interaction of the two continua was a useful tool in describing change. In addition, historical serendipity, especially station-specific, appeared promising as an engine of change. These implications will be discussed below.
The speaker/audience continuum concept served to advance theory of how mass communication organizations and systems operate within a nexus of political, economic and social constraints. Within this nexus change occurs incrementally, so the idea of a continuum is more efficient than that of either/or polar opposites. Because programming perspective is a fundamental issue in the design and operation of broadcasting systems (McCain, Stavitsky, and Patterson, 1989), tension between speaker- and audience-centered orientations was an effective concept for explaining and assessing change within such systems. In the present study the speaker/audience continuum seemed an appropriate organizing scheme in describing the gradual shift in the nature of public radio station operations and programming.

This was especially important for the present study given the dearth of models in the research literature for analyzing and comparing radio programming. As a result the researcher lacked a consensual framework for measuring and comparing programming among stations and over time. In addition, station operating strategies did not lend themselves to easy assessment. The speaker/audience continuum offered a qualitative framework for comparison between stations, across time periods, and between public and commercial broadcasting.

That the local/national tension concept proved less effective as a descriptive tool was more a function of the study's use of non-commercial radio stations. The local service versus national affiliation issue was fundamental to commercial broadcasting from the early days of radio, when stations scrambled to affiliate with chains to take advantage of high-quality entertainment programming, and carried
over into commercial television, dominated by the national networks. Similarly, local/national tension has been a fact of life in public television from its early days. However, public radio stations were not as subject to local/national tension until the late 1970s and early 1980s. By that period NPR had become a more sophisticated, bureaucratic entity, charging higher membership dues; local stations became more dependent upon the NPR-provided "Morning Edition" and "All Things Considered" programs (which Jack Mitchell likened to a "public utility" for their significance to local stations); conservative politicians began to criticize NPR's alleged liberal bias (see Barnes, 1986); and NPR business mismanagement plunged the network deeply into debt. Had this study concentrated upon the 1980s, local/national tension may have been more of a factor. Considering the longer time frame of this study, local/national tension appeared less prevalent; stations were generally supportive of efforts to share programming and create networks.

The public radio grid (Figure 1) was a useful tool in displaying change over time within an individual station (Figures 3-5) and comparing several stations, both within and across time periods (Figure 6). The study found that all three stations shifted from speaker- to audience-centered orientations and from local to national orientations between 1930 and 1987. Though they wound up in the same audience/national quadrant, the three-station grid (Figure 6) illustrated clearly the disparate paths each had taken.

An argument was made in Chapter I for the importance of three station-general historical periods. Each of those periods contributed to the exogenous sector in which all public radio stations operate in important ways. The 1930 IER
established a forum for sharing research findings and strategies, and contributed to the coalescence of an educational radio bloc able to lobby for favorable federal regulations. The 1949 Allerton House seminar imbued educational radio leaders with a renewed sense of mission and provided access to a new vein of programs by initiating the "bicycle" network. The creation of NPR in 1969-70 gave stations the network interconnection they had sought for four decades, as well as a consistent source of high-quality programming. That in turn attracted larger audiences -- a "new idea," in Jack Mitchell's words, for many local public radio stations -- which provided incentive and possibilities for further audience building.

The significance of these station-general historical episodes notwithstanding, it was interesting to note that the most dynamic periods in the development of the three stations were driven by events specific to the individual station. Therefore, diversity among public radio stations -- as well as why some prosper while others struggle within the same national, station-general environment -- may be largely a function of station-specific historical episodes. In the cases of WOSU, WHA and WNYC, the key local episodes (presented in the Proposition #6 section) clearly played major roles in shaping future station growth and relative prosperity. Further, the historical data related to the stations showed more turbulence around the station-specific events than the station-general episodes. That is, the archives generally included documents relating to the exogenous/station-specific sector rather than material concerning exogenous/station-general sector events, including the three historical episodes stressed in the present study. This indicated the importance which station officials afforded exogenous/station-specific matters such as the
local/state political environments and economies. Overall, station-specific historical serendipity was an important factor in understanding and explaining change in public radio; this was a major finding of the study.

In seeking to locate this research within the corpus of mass communication theory, the study supported the researcher's notion of "environmental determinism" as a driver of change. This concept holds that mass communication systems and organizations operate within a host of constraining forces: economic, technological, sociocultural and political. Environmental determinism posits that the impact of the mix of constraining forces is a catalyst for change in mass communication. This concept offers a useful middle-ground argument between traditional mass communication theories. There are several permutations for describing these theoretical lines of division. Some scholars refer to technological determinism versus cultural relativism. McQuail (1987) alluded to "media-centered" versus "society-centered" views of what constituted independent causal forces for change.

Further, this study was in keeping with the contemporary trend of mass communication research focused upon industrial and policy analysis, as opposed to research into media effects upon audiences. Though audiences were central to this study, the concern here was upon change in the broadcaster's relationship to the audience and upon the forces driving that change. The study thereby reflected the link between research and contemporary social exigencies. In 1989, when the study was conceived, the ideology of the firee marketplace was ascendant throughout the world, and there was less concern being expressed about potentially damaging effects of media content. Accordingly, many mass communication scholars had turned their
attention from effects research to studies of policy and markets. In keeping with this trend, implicit throughout the present study was the idea that audiences were influential forces upon broadcasters, who made strategic decisions in many cases based upon research into audience behaviors and preferences. This finding contrasted with theories of powerful mass media; the public radio audiences in this study were users rather than used.

**Structural Model Revisited**

The data from the three stations supported the development and use of the dynamic, integrative model (Figure 2) as an organizing scheme to identify the structural factors affecting public broadcasting stations. Each of the factors was found to exist in a state of flux at least once during the period under study. As a result, the factor undergoing change impacted upon other factors, lending the model its dynamism. One vivid example was the relation between New York’s fiscal crisis of the 1970s and WNYC’s operation. As the local economy, an exogenous factor, deteriorated, the station’s budget was affected by municipal cutbacks. The impact resonated through the endogenous sector, as budget reductions led to staff layoffs and reductions in local production. A similar situation occurred at WOSU during 1973 as state-level budget problems led to reductions in state support for Ohio State, which in turn prompted reduced staff and hours of broadcasting.

The model’s characterization as being integrative was supported, for bringing together the multiplicity of factors affecting public broadcasting. Such factors were often interrelated, as in the "domino-effect" examples given for WNYC and WOSU during the fiscal crises in their respective states. Therefore, these exogenous and
endogenous factors acted in concert to produce change at the stations in this study. Further, this structure proved internally consistent with the concept of dialectical tension posited in the first chapter. External factors, such as contained in the exogenous sectors, provided conditions that prompted change, which took place in the endogenous sector. There, the internal, dialectical tensions (i.e. speaker/audience, local/national) were impacted, resulting in movement along the continuua in response to the external factors.

The complexity of the model rendered difficult its use as an empirical research tool. Refinement, to be suggested in a later section, is necessary to enhance its methodological value. However, the model does offer heuristic value in demonstrating the challenging environment in which public broadcasters must operate.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study suffered from several limitations. Foremost among them was the amorphous nature of the speaker-centered/audience-centered concept. This concept involved values, attitudes and orientations which were difficult to operationalize. In addition, speaker-centered rhetoric may belie audience-centered intentions, or vice versa, making assessment difficult. Further refinement of this concept is necessary before it may play a significant role in a theory of environmental determinism as a driver of change in mass communication. Toward that end this researcher needs to examine more closely permutations of this concept, such as information versus entertainment or cultural policy versus market (or industrial) policy.
The public radio grids posed potential validity concerns. As a result of the amorphous nature of the speaker/audience concept, stations' grid placements were determined subjectively by the researcher, based upon the historical data. The norms of the public radio industry in 1990 were used as an external referent, in essence a control group, to provide a reliable benchmark. However, this subjectivity represented a potential problem given that the argument of a rise in audience-centeredness among the stations studied was constructed on the premise that the trends described in the grids were valid. Readers who challenge the grid placements may then disavow the propositions relating to speaker/audience change. Nonetheless, use of the subjective methodology was rationalized on the grounds that the matter of the validity of specific grid placements was not as important to the overall research project as the creation of a reliable means for displaying patterns of change. Viewed in that light, the researcher concluded that the public radio grids played a useful role in the study by providing a graphic representation of the changing nature of individual stations over time, as well as a scheme for comparison among stations.

The complexity of the structural model (Figure 2) posed significant problems. With multiple factors in several layers offered as inputs, it was often difficult to determine what factors were driving change. (However, when a given factor did stand out, its importance was clearly evident, such as the station-specific episodes of historical serendipity.) Further refinement of the model for parsimony is necessary, coupled with a less complex test case than the present study. For instance, a revised
model might be tested upon a single station, with an adequate corpus of data, over a more limited time period, such as a decade.

Because the changes described in this study occurred incrementally, it was necessary to examine a period of more than six decades. This required an emphasis upon breadth over depth which forced the researcher to prioritize his time and the use of historical materials. For example, annual reports were extensively utilized at all three stations as a concise, accessible data source. The self-serving nature of much of the material in annual reports meant that much data had been filtered before reaching this researcher. In addition, annual reports would occasionally note a historical event of interest, which the researcher was unable to pursue in depth through other documents because of time constraints. Some examples include the New York City Council’s 1938-39 hearings into alleged Communist propaganda on WNYC and the abortive attempt by WOSU and WHA to form an educational radio network via shortwave in 1930. The researcher hopes to be able to return to these topics in future studies.

Still another limitation of the study was the uneven nature of the data across the three stations. None of the stations’ archives contained complete sets of annual reports or program guides; either the documents were not available in the archives or were not continuously published. Budget and staff data were frequently unavailable, making it difficult to examine structural model factors. Numerous primary source documents in station files were undated. The researcher also experienced widely varying degrees of cooperation from archive and station
personnel. Some were reluctant to make available contemporary audience research reports.

Another concern was the degree of generalizability for the propositions derived from the historical data. The three AM stations studied were among the first educational radio stations, influenced their counterparts through conferences and national organizations, branched into FM and TV, and split their AM-FM programming into news/information and classical music formats. These experiences may be quite different from those in the development of most public radio stations, many of whom are FM-only and began broadcasting far more recently. Accordingly, it would be useful to test the concepts of historical serendipity and speaker/audience tension on other types of public radio stations. Future research of this sort on other public radio stations might focus upon differences between licensee types, or between radio-only and radio-TV public broadcasting operations.

It is reasonable to ask whether findings regarding public radio are generalizable to public television, and whether scholars and critics may posit reasoned generalities about "public broadcasting" as an entity. In Chapter I it was noted that the speaker/audience and local/national tension concepts are relevant to public television as well as public radio. Indeed, because of the higher profile of public television, PBS and its affiliates have been subjected to more attention in both the popular and scholarly press regarding these issues than have NPR and public radio stations (many of those works were cited in this study). Therefore, carefully drawn generalizations between the two public media are appropriate. It
is hoped that this study of public radio stations will enhance also our understanding
of public television, as well as of "public broadcasting."

**Policy Implications**

The thread running throughout this history of three public radio stations, from the perspective of the participants, was insufficient funding. This exacerbated the chronic speaker/audience tension argued in Proposition #1. Using WNYC as an example, the 1977 report of a mayor's task force was remarkably similar to the 1934 report of a similarly appointed group in calling upon the station to develop non-municipal sources of funding and more attractive, general-appeal programming. Thus station managers in vastly different eras were forced to balance their speaker-centered sense of mission with audience-centered strategies for attracting listeners to generate revenue. This condition was still evident at all three stations at the end of the 1980s. As WOSU's general manager noted in response to a question about the use of old commercial television reruns on public television: "Those programs may not be of the same quality as (traditional PBS fare). But is it better to go down proud?" (Dale K. Ouzts, personal interview, February 21, 1988).

The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 was initially viewed by some critics as a breakthrough for assuring regular federal funding to public broadcasters (Gould, 1967). However, the act's reliance upon direct Congressional appropriation subject public broadcasting to the vagaries of the political process (Witherspoon and Kovitz, 1986). Given the 1980s renaissance of market forces as economic panacea, the Reagan administration and some conservative Congressmen questioned the need for federal funding at all. Accordingly, a number of think tanks and citizen-activist
groups released reports in 1988 and 1989 recommending that federal support for public broadcasting come not from direct appropriation, but rather from a dedicated funding source. Suggestions included a levy on factory sales of consumer electronic products and studio equipment, a taxpayer checkoff to create a national endowment for public broadcast programming, a tax on transfers of commercial broadcast station licenses, and a fee assessed commercial broadcasters for the use of the frequency spectrum (Tracey, 1989). This student favors the latter recommendation.

The main implication of the foregoing study for federal policy is that public broadcasting needs a stable, adequate funding source if public radio and television are to fulfill their mission goals as public-service media. In this researcher's judgment, U.S. commercial broadcasters provide a broad range of entertainment services, yet fail to offer sufficient programming to meet important social goals -- such as education, culture, information, and service to minority audiences. In a democratic, free-enterprise society with Constitutional guarantees, it is not the role of government to dictate the sort of programming broadcast by private media. However, when those media enjoy private use of a public resource such as the electromagnetic spectrum, a degree of public intervention is warranted.

It has been argued here and elsewhere (see LeDuc, 1987) that public oversight in the form of FCC regulation is minimal, consisting primarily of policing technical matters. This researcher believes that an appropriate interpretation of public oversight would involve charging private broadcasters for the use of the spectrum, with the proceeds allocated to public broadcasting. There is precedent for making private users pay for the use of a public resources. In the western U.S.,
ranchers pay the government for the privilege of allowing their cattle to graze on federal land, and timber interests are charged for lumbering in government-owned forests. As a former TV station owner once told this student, "A broadcast license is a license to print money." Given the lucrative nature of broadcasting, as well as the ubiquity of commercial media, which affords them social impact, it is reasonable to expect commercial broadcasters to pay for access to the public spectrum. Taking the argument further, because commercial broadcasters have chosen to create an entertainment-oriented, mass-appeal media system, it is reasonable to use their spectrum fees to fund adequately a public broadcasting system that addresses societal needs unmet by the commercial broadcasting marketplace. This posits the view that commercial broadcasting represents a case of market failure, which justifies public intervention in the form of an alternative, publicly supported broadcasting system.

Dedicated funding through a spectrum fee would eliminate the need for the time-consuming and politicized Congressional appropriations process and would also render CPB superfluous. Spectrum fee revenue could be processed through the U.S. Department of Commerce, which already administers the Public Telecommunications Facilities Program of equipment grants to public broadcasting stations. Money would then be sent directly to stations on a proportional basis similar to the formula utilized by CPB in computing Community Service Grants. Stations would be free to return money to NPR and PBS for their operations in the form of dues. Assuming that the spectrum fee would be set sufficiently high to assure stations adequate operating income, stations would be relieved of the need
to seek listener and corporate/foundation support. Of course, some stations would choose to pursue outside support in order to provide expanded services, as was the case with WHA in the mid-1970s.

The proposed policy would be predicated upon the notion that public broadcasting met its service and mission goals. In the case of radio, it would be difficult to justify charging commercial broadcasters to help support an audience-driven public radio system that differed from commercial radio only in terms of a different target audience. Public radio in 1990 was "moving in that direction," in Jack Mitchell's words.

The danger will be if we become so addicted to audience dollars and big numbers (ratings) that we water down the programming so much that we are no different from the commercials....If we're doing nothing but trying to please audiences, we can't justify tax support (Mitchell interview, 1990).

Public radio's leaders must strike a balance. They must be sufficiently audience-centered to determine accurately the interests of their audiences. As media scholar Robert Pepper noted, "A top-down, paternalistic broadcasting system isn't really communicating" (personal interview, May 15, 1990). Here the development of sophisticated audience research techniques and the availability of consultants is necessary and appropriate. However, public radio must also remain true to its educational origins, at least in the informal enrichment sense, and to the lofty service ideals that comprise mission statements.

Toward A Vision for Public Radio

It was understandable that dealing with financial concerns became paramount over development of meaningful service and mission goals on the public radio
manager's daily agenda. To be sure, such goals existed, codified in mission statements and printed in annual reports. However, nebulous statements -- such as "to serve the community through quality programming" -- provide scant guidance toward devising strategies to realize the promise of public radio. What is necessary is an industry-wide effort to develop a consensus vision for public radio, which could then be transformed into concrete operating and programming strategies to vitalize public radio stations and networks.

Such activity would be essential to creation of a political climate in which the policy reforms described above could be attained. As Mulcahy and Widoff (1986) noted,

What public broadcasting still lacks is a strong, well-organized constituency that identifies its interests with the principle of governmental sponsorship of alternative programming....(I)t is understandable that Congressmen are likely to ignore those claims to the public purse about which the public is seemingly indifferent (p. 53).

Public broadcasters must generate a grassroots campaign among listeners and viewers who would let their legislators know that adequate support for public radio and television, such as the preferential treatment proposed above, is important. Unfortunately, while public broadcasting is in intellectual inertia, a groundswell of popular enthusiasm is unlikely.

U.S. public television in 1990 was losing the qualities and programming that rendered it distinct from commercial television. For example, cable's Turner Broadcasting System carried "National Geographic Specials" that had been among public television's most watched programs. Though PBS was respected for its children's shows, such as "Sesame Street" and "Mister Rogers Neighborhood," the
Nickelodeon cable channel was courting aggressively the children's audience. Commercial sources even intruded upon public television's instructional programming domain; Whittle Communications' Channel One, Cable News Network and Financial News Network offered educational programming, both with and without advertising, directly to schools. A public television executive was quoted as denying that differences existed between commercial and public television; there were only differences between "good and bad programs" (Boyer, 1987).

However, U.S. public radio in 1990 was not similarly under siege from commercial broadcasters. American commercial radio remained entertainment-based and format-driven. Commercial programmers showed little inclination to duplicate the in-depth news and public affairs offerings that distinguished public radio, such as "Morning Edition," "All Things Considered," "Monitoradio," and "Fresh Air." Even all-news stations approached broadcast journalism in the same way as their music-dominated counterparts: terse newscasts with brief soundbites and reporter packages, and infrequent news analysis and commentary. Nor were commercial radio broadcasters interested in offering the sort of musicological and cultural performance programs available on public radio stations, such as Karl Haas' "Adventures in Good Music," "Afropop Worldwide" and the various orchestra and opera broadcasts.

The overall result was that public radio remained distinct from commercial radio at this writing. While commercial television had impinged upon public television's traditional "turf," public radio was under less pressure from its private counterparts and remained free, in theory at least, to maintain and enhance its
distinctive character. Public radio's vision should have at its heart an emphasis upon preserving that difference. However, one of the findings of this study was that public radio stations increasingly were becoming market-driven and were adopting audience-centered strategies similar to those of commercial stations. Should convergence with commercial radio continue, public radio officials will face added difficulty in justifying governmental and citizen support. Put simply, once the difference between commercial and public radio is lost, if public radio offers sports call-ins or pop music programs similar to those found on commercial stations, the rationale for an alternative to the private system is lost as well.

To rationalize the governmental succor proposed in the previous section, public radio must provide a clear alternative to commercial program fare. Otherwise, public broadcasters will be unable to justify a policy that siphons funds from private media, if the money ultimately is spent competing with the private sector for the mass audience with mass appeal programming. Again, the metaphor of "public broadcasting as museum" is instructive: presentation of distinctive news/public affairs and cultural programs should take priority over the number of customers. Further, public radio must commit to serving audiences -- minorities, children, senior citizens, the disabled -- neglected by commercial broadcasters. The mix of programs should include offerings for these and other unserved audiences. These tenets should be at the heart of a vision for public radio.

Proposed: A Center for the Study of Public Telecommunication

Debate over a vision for public broadcasting was carried on during the late 1980s by a number of scholars, notably Rowland, and citizen activists, such as the
Working Group for Public Broadcasting convened by Ohio State's School of Journalism. Industry professionals were conspicuous by their silence, eventually prompting Rowland to write a scathing commentary in *Newsweek* in which he accused the leaders of public broadcasting with "shirking their political and moral responsibilities" (1990, p. 8) for failing to respond to critics of federal support for public television and radio. A panel at the 1989 conference of the International Communication Association in San Francisco typified the intellectual climate. Academics and activists lamented the lack of vision in public broadcasting, the dearth of scholarly research, and lukewarm governmental support; no public broadcasters were present.

Underlying the scholarly discussion at the ICA panel, this student sensed frustration among the academics for their exclusion from the world of public broadcasting. Some spoke warmly of their past affiliation with NAEB and regretted its collapse. Further, they noted that much of the research on public broadcasting dried up once NAEB's journals were no longer available as an outlet in the 1980s. For all their knowledge of and belief in public broadcasting, these scholars believed that public broadcasters viewed members of the academic community as outsiders.

One reason for this schism was the development of a new wave of leaders in public broadcasting, trained as broadcasters rather than educators. Some of these public broadcasting executives (especially those at university licensees) view academics as being out of touch with the day-to-day business of running stations, and may resent the scholars' insistence that a station hew to its institution's "academic mission" or provide training opportunities for students (Leigh, 1990). As
a vivid example, this researcher heard a midwestern public station leader regularly use profane language in describing academics and administrators at his licensee. Clearly a rapprochement is necessary. Public broadcasters need the academic community for the valuable research contribution that scholars could offer, as well as the support -- financial as well as moral -- of an influential sector of society. Obversely, academics, given their concern for the intellectual enrichment of the citizenry, desire a vibrant public broadcasting system for its potential to introduce educational and cultural elements into the mass entertainment-driven electronic mediascape.

Accordingly, this student recommends the establishment of a Center for the Study of Public Telecommunication, to be based at a research university. The center's functions would include fostering, sponsoring and disseminating interdisciplinary research into the processes and systems of public broadcasting; and staging conferences to bring together public broadcasters, academics, activists, and government officials. Conference topics should range from the mundane, such as regulatory or organizational matters, to the esoteric, such as questions of vision and future planning. (It is significant that the center's title mentions public telecommunication, to allow for consideration of alternative modes of transmission.) In addition, CSPT should offer fellowships in which faculty and public broadcasters could undertake advanced study; research could be both basic and applied. The center should publish a journal comprised of scholarly articles and conference proceedings, thus restoring the publication outlet lost when NAEB became defunct.
Governance of the center would be provided by a broadly based board of directors. The board should consist of representatives of public broadcasting organizations; citizens groups; and the academic community, to include interested scholars from a variety of disciplines from throughout the country, as well as faculty and administrators from the host institution. Encouraging broad participation on the board of directors could serve to alleviate the tension between public broadcasters and academics. Funding could be solicited from CPB; public broadcasting organizations; and foundations and corporations that traditionally support public broadcasting, with the host institution providing office space and clerical support. In sum, the center would serve as the focal point for deliberation and debate concerning U.S. public broadcasting. As such, CSPT could play a catalytic role similar to that of Allerton House or of Carnegie I; it is hoped that development of an operating vision would be an early priority.

WHA's Jack Mitchell noted that the subject matter of the present study was "the central issue" in public broadcasting in the 1980s and 1990s (interview, 1990). This researcher hopes that the study will drive further academic research into public broadcasting in general, and public radio in particular, to fill the void left by the dearth of such research in the 1980s. Finally, this researcher is hopeful that public radio officials might consider and debate the arguments posited in this study, and that such discussion would move them toward action to preserve and enhance a potential national treasure.
LIST OF REFERENCES

Note: References are presented in two sections. Books, scholarly works, news articles and legal documents are grouped in the first section, which begins on this page. Historical documents are grouped in the second section, which begins on page 216.

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